

## **Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina Packages 25,000 Meals for Hungry Children at Start of Summer Vacation**

Fayetteville, NC (May 31, 2019) – Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina (SHFB), an Action Pathways program, joined forces with businesses across the Fayetteville area to package 25,000 meals for children and families in need this summer season. Presented by Food Lion Feeds, this year’s Sort-A-Rama event, held on May 23 in honor of Red Nose Day and childhood poverty awareness, brought together staff from Food Lion, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, the Crown Complex and Quickie Manufacturing in a half-day of service, jam-packed with team-building and compassion.

Teams packaged bulk quantities of rice and beans, protein-rich items that have become staples of SHFB’s 260 pantries across its seven-county service area. Employees also packaged individual bags of single-serving snacks, soups, and breakfast meals that will be distributed to children facing hunger during the summer months away from school.

“One in five people struggle with hunger in Cumberland and the surrounding counties including more than 51,000 children,” said Cortez Phillip of Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina. “Many of the hard-working families we serve find the free and reduced meal plans offered by their children’s school systems to be a blessing throughout the year. We are thankful for these businesses who’ve helped to ensure these children continue to have access to nutrient-rich food while on summer break.”

Addressing hunger is one of Action Pathways’ focus areas in its mission to help those facing economic hard times get back on their feet. SHFB partners with nearly fifty schools across the region for its Backpack Program, which sends meals home each weekend with children facing hunger to supplement what may or may not be available in their kitchens. Teachers of children enrolled in the program have reported improved test scores and behaviors as children come to school rested and well-fed, able to focus on schoolwork instead of a growling belly.

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**ABOUT SHFB:** A member of Feeding America, Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina serves seven counties: Bladen, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Robeson, and Sampson. With a large, rural service area, the organization relies on strong partnerships with over 260 churches, food pantries, and other nonprofits to distribute food to those in need. Led by the principles of “Feed – Advocate – Empower,” SHFB is committed to improving access to healthy foods; advocating for those in need; and empowering the community with emergency aid and education.