



Peas & Carrots

Little Bites of Second Helpings News • Spring 2025



Food Rescue and Transportation provides “full circle” volunteer opportunities

In 2024, we rescued more than four million pounds of food, a calendar year record. For our Food Rescue & Transportation team, growth has become the norm.

A variety of factors contribute to this program’s growth, according to our Food Rescue & Transportation Director Jon Meinert. “The longer we’re around, the more popular we become. I don’t often run into someone who hasn’t heard of Second Helpings.”

It’s now an industry standard to have a food rescue plan in place for venues and events – and in central Indiana that plan often includes Second Helpings. Collectively, everyone is more responsible on food waste, Meinert explained. “People are realizing the environmental impact of food waste, not just the sales lost from unused food.”

To help meet this growth, we’ve added an additional box truck to our fleet. This additional vehicle allows the flexibility needed to accommodate large donations and keep up with our largest wholesale partners.

Now is a perfect time to volunteer with our Food Rescue & Meal Delivery team. “We need more hands

to keep up with this growth,” Meinert said. “We’re distributing more meals to partners across seven counties, rescuing from more places, and providing more kinds of meals than we used to.”

If you’ve never volunteered as a Driver or Driver Companion on a food rescue or meal delivery route, both volunteer opportunities are a great chance to see different parts of the city and the full circle of our mission – loading food rescued from a grocery store, and delivering the completed meal to an emergency shelter or after-school program.

What makes a great volunteer driver? You need a clean driving record, a passion for Second Helpings’ mission, and be ready to be a reliable and friendly representative with our partners.

Plus, you get to work with our incredible team. “Our Food Rescue team is like a Swiss Army knife,” Meinert shared. “Everyone is trained in every area. We build relationships with our volunteers and we all work together to make it happen.”

Interested in joining the team? Learn more and sign up at www.secondhelpings.org/drive.

RecycleForce partnership a match of values

Have you ever wondered how electronic items like TVs or phones are recycled? In Indianapolis, you don't have to look far for the answer. Located just three miles from Second Helpings is RecycleForce, a nonprofit committed to reducing crime through employment and job training.

Their 11-week workforce development program is designed specifically for formerly incarcerated individuals and provides jobs in their recycling facility as De-Manufacturing Specialists, breaking down electronic items into pieces that require different recycling processes. Successful participants can be promoted to serve as team leads and peer mentors on the warehouse floor, where more than 120 people work.



RecycleForce's 11-week workforce development program is designed specifically for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Between on-the-job experience on their warehouse floor and classroom training to earn certifications in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), forklift operating, financial literacy, and more, this program prepares graduates for a variety of jobs – including at RecycleForce.

“Most of our staff started here going through our program,” said David Davis, Reentry Case Manager. “We have had lots of internal promotions – we’re always watching for people with leadership potential.”

RecycleForce also provides a variety of wrap-around services for their program participants, including help getting a driver's license, social security card, housing, and other basic needs that become incredibly difficult to secure post-incarceration.

Those additional services include food from Second Helpings. Since December 2023, we have provided more than 3,800 pounds of non-perishable food items for RecycleForce. When food arrives, the newest class is invited to partake first. “People often go straight from prison to orientation here, and their first paycheck comes at the end of the first week, so we prioritize helping tide people over that week,” Davis said.

“The food you provide is invaluable for our team,” Davis continued. “Not only is it much healthier than what people can get other places with a limited budget, but any stressors that we can help alleviate for our people can increase their chance of success.”

If the details of this program sound familiar, it mirrors many of the wrap-around services we provide for our Culinary Job Training students. In addition, our partnership with RecycleForce extends beyond a bi-weekly food pickup.

Since February 2024, RecycleForce has also helped us expand our own recycling program. Twice a week, RecycleForce picks up pallets of plastic and metal from Second Helpings to recycle. In that time, we have recycled nearly 12,000 pounds with RecycleForce.



Since December 2023, Second Helpings has provided more than 3,800 pounds of non-perishable food for RecycleForce.

From sustainability to workforce development, Second Helpings and RecycleForce make a perfect partnership.

“Work is therapy,” said warehouse manager Rob Smith, who has worked at RecycleForce 13 years, after first graduating from their program. “So many people here

haven’t really worked before, so it’s pretty powerful to have the opportunity to earn your own wages doing such important work. Everyone here is an earth hero!”



Second Helpings Events

Souper Bowls Recap



Second Helpings CEO Linda Broadfoot and Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett announced Chef Eli Laidlaw as the winner of this year’s Souper Bowls competition.

Congratulations to our 2025 Souper Bowls champion, **Chef Eli Laidlaw** of **The Alexander Hotel**! Their **Potato Poblano Tortellini Soup** received the most votes at our friendly competition on February 1.

Together, this event raised enough money to provide more than 6,000 meals. Thanks to everyone who attended, volunteered, and all the chefs who participated in the event.

Save the date for Souper Bowls 2026: Saturday, January 31. Tickets will go on sale in December.



Culinary Job Training

Culinary Job Training program celebrates newest graduates



Class 165 of our Culinary Job Training program graduated on January 24 and it was a full house celebrating our 12 graduates.

This free training program is geared towards unemployed and underemployed adults in central Indiana. Our chef instructors, along with numerous community partners, teach our students the skills they need to secure employment and succeed as a great employee. Thanks to donors’ support, every student is provided with uniforms, transportation, textbooks, and other assistance, so they can concentrate on their education with fewer barriers.

Do you know someone who could benefit from this program? Learn more by scanning the QR Code underneath the picture.




Scan to learn more about our Culinary Job Training program.



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CORKS & FORKS

March 25 | 7:00 - 9:30 PM

Join Second Helpings on the court at Gainbridge Fieldhouse for our annual spring event, Corks & Forks, presented by Kroger.

Enjoy food and drinks from top chefs and bartenders across central Indiana, silent auction, and more. We hope you'll join us for a special night to support Second Helpings' Food Rescue, Hunger Relief, and Culinary Job Training programs. Each ticket purchase provides 87 meals to fight hunger in central Indiana.



Visit our website to learn more about the event, including participating chefs and beverage partners.

 secondhelpings.org/corksandforks


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