It’s tough to count the many ways Kroger supports Second Helpings’ mission. As the largest meat donor, Kroger proves a critical partner in our ability to prepare and deliver one million meals to our most vulnerable neighbors each year. In recent years, Kroger has shifted its corporate philosophy to focus more of its efforts on sustainability in the form of its “Zero Hunger | Zero Waste” plan, with the goal of eliminating waste in the company by 2025. This multi-pronged approach to better serve the communities that Kroger works within has deepened its commitment to nonprofit partners like Second Helpings. With this increased focus on fighting hunger and waste, Kroger’s partnership with Second Helpings continues to grow in meaningful ways. Kroger recently provided a gift of $36,347 to equip the Hunger Relief kitchen with RATIONAL SelfCookingCenters.

“Kroger is honored to be a partner in the Second Helpings commitment to #FeedIndy. Working together offers a natural extension of our Zero Hunger | Zero Waste plan to end hunger in Kroger communities by 2025.”

- Eric Halvorson, Manager of Corporate Affairs & Media Spokesman at Kroger

Eric Halvorson, Manager of Corporate Affairs & Media Spokesman at Kroger, explained why this gift aligns with Kroger’s effort to eliminate hunger and waste, saying: “Those of us who never go to bed hungry can only imagine what life is like for those who do. Indianapolis is fortunate to have the caring people of Second Helpings – staff and volunteers – who never stop thinking about our needy neighbors. Kroger is honored to be a partner in the Second Helpings commitment to #FeedIndy. Working together offers a natural extension of our Zero Hunger | Zero Waste plan to end hunger in Kroger communities by 2025. And, with the donation of the ovens, we know the Second Helpings culinary team has more options for the preparation of nutritious – and always delicious – meals.”

The addition of the new ovens is already paying dividends. In March, Hunger Relief staff and volunteers achieved its busiest month in the organization’s 21-year history, by preparing and delivering 94,755 meals. These record numbers are only possible with the support of strong community partners like Kroger.
NOW SERVING: HENDRICKS COUNTY

For over 100 years, family-owned Taylor’s Bakery has served delicious, mouth-watering pastries, cakes, doughnuts, and other sweet desserts. Started by the Taylor family in 1913 as a grocery and bakery, it now functions solely as a bakery in two locations. When fourth-generation brothers Drew and Matt Allen began with Taylor’s in 2002, they witnessed the large amount of waste that accompanies baking fresh baked items every day. “We were sick to see what was being thrown away and ending up in a landfill. A donut in the trash is pathetic,” Drew Allen stated. As a result, they searched for an alternative to the waste and found Second Helpings. “From the beginning, it was a perfect fit.”

Since then, both locations of Taylor’s Bakery have donated over 1,000,000 pounds of baked goods—an incredible amount of food that has provided a sweet touch to the millions of meals Second Helpings has served. “We donate any kind of baked item every day, since bakery foods deteriorate quickly. We also bake ‘heavy.’ Part of the reason for that is we want someone walking in at 5 pm (the bakery closes at 6pm) to have the same choices that someone coming in early has. We never want to run out of items for customers. In addition, we know that any extra we have will be donated to Second Helpings and put to good use. The benefits outweigh the cost every time,” Allen explained.

In addition to their daily donations, Allen and others at the bakery have also volunteered at Second Helpings. “We enjoy meeting the volunteers and hearing about their stories and how they ended up at Second Helpings. Everyone has a story there, and to see the number of volunteers and the time they give is quite something. In addition, to see the kitchen and the creativity they use in creating meals, as well as realizing the capacity of the culinary job training program and how it trains people to change their lives... you can tell that everything comes full circle, between the food rescue, hunger relief, and job training. It’s an organization that really serves the community well.”

He also hopes to continue the relationship between Second Helpings and Taylor’s Bakery, even after he finishes working. “Yeah I expect my kids to continue the relationship. I can’t imagine the food going anywhere else. I love working with Second Helpings – you know they’re using the food well and that someone is going to benefit from that recycled food.”

Our social media hashtag #FeedIndy extends well beyond the Indianapolis city limits. Thanks to a new partnership with Camp Camby, a transitional housing and job training community operated by Active Grace church, Second Helpings is now serving meals and distributing pantry food to Hendricks County for the first time.

Camp Camby serves 500 people each month, with 16 families living on site. It’s a 53-acre transitional housing and job training community serving veterans and families in need. Camp Camby’s services include a food pantry, clothing pantry, community meals, safe housing, activities, on-site church and a pain management clinic. They are able to serve up to 125 families at a time.

Second Helpings has already prepared and delivered 4,020 meals to Camp Camby in just the first seven weeks of this partnership. In addition to the meals, Second Helping Food Rescue team has provided the organization with 2,873 pounds of bulk food to ensure the shelves of their food pantry remain stocked to service the homeless veterans and their families.

“Camp Camby is our first transitional housing and job training community,” Executive Director Ryan Chapman recently told WISH-TV’s Dick Wolfsie during a segment on Daybreak. “So, we really focus on the individual and family to give them all the skills and tools they need to succeed. A lot of my families are either going through trauma or recently homeless or different things like that. And they just need a little bit of a hand up, instead of a hand out. So, we give them opportunities for training here in various different fields, and also opportunities for them to get jobs afterwards.”

Thanks to the partnership with Second Helpings, Camp Camby is able to increase its focus on the job training and wraparound services it provides to the families they serve. Chapman knows those skills are essential to a successful life beyond the camp.

“We call it our path to success. We really focus on a holistic approach around the family - whether that be addiction issues or job loss - we focus on jobs first. Housing is very important, but if they don’t have a way to sustain that, then they’re in trouble.”
NEW CULINARY LEADERSHIP

As Second Helpings embarks upon its 21st year of service, new leaders bring their collective decades of experience to the leadership of the Culinary Job Training program. In 2018, Chef Kathy Jones transformed her role as Director of Hunger Relief to Executive Chef of Second Helpings. In this new role, Chef Kathy oversees the day-to-day operations of both the Hunger Relief and Culinary Job Training programs. “Overall, it’s going to help mold the two departments together,” Chef Kathy says of her new role.

Under Chef Kathy, Second Helpings was excited to welcome Culinary Job Training instructors Chef Keith Brooks and Chef Kyle Burnett towards the end of last year. While Chef Brooks is new to staff, he is not new to Second Helpings. He began working with the Culinary Job Training students on salads and salad dressings as a volunteer when he moved to Indianapolis from Chicago in 2005.

“Helping people to change their lives. That’s what we’re all about,” Chef Brooks says. “If I can help them learn about food, and they can get a career and service their families and whatever they need to get their lives on track, then that’s what I’m looking for.”

Chef Burnett echoed his fellow instructor, saying: “I love what we do here. I’m sold on the mission. I’m really into integrating more of the motivational life coaching and coming up with our own curriculum for that and our own development process behind that.”

Both chefs are Hoosier natives with a variety of culinary experiences under their belts. After several years in the restaurant industry in Chicago, Chef Brooks settled in Indianapolis. He has owned his own restaurant and catering business, where he estimates he employed as many as 20 Second Helpings graduates over the years.

Chef Burnett graduated from Chef’s Academy in 2009. Since that time, he cut his teeth on the more institutional side of the Culinary Industry working in a senior center, in hospitals at Community Health and Major Hospital in Shelbyville – where he helped launch their entire front-of-house operation, as well as a role with Campus Cooks at Butler University.

“Even going to culinary school, I knew I didn’t want to go into it opening a restaurant or working in a restaurant. I just didn’t want to do that,” Burnett says. “I want to have time for my family or any other adventure that life may throw at me… I love cooking, but how can I utilize it in a way that can make an impact?”

With just a handful of classes under their belt, Executive Chef Kathy Jones is already thrilled with the approach of the two instructors. “I think they fit together perfectly,” she says of the chefs. “Their personalities complement each other... They’re both natural-born leaders and mentors.”
A BIG THANK YOU to sponsors, attendees, chefs, and bartenders for making this year’s Corks & Forks a tremendous success! Together, the money raised will send more than 191,000 meals into Central Indiana in the coming months. For the second year, we are proud to report that Corks & Forks qualified as a zero waste event. We are thrilled this event serves as a reflection of our daily commitment to eliminate waste in our community.

Special thanks to our 2019 Corks & Forks sponsors:
(Full sponsor list at secondhelpings.org)

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