



**Second Harvest Food Bank  
of Northwest North Carolina**

3655 Reed Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27107



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## For Immediate Release

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### **Second Harvest Food Bank Selects Eric Aft as Chief Operating Officer**

**Winston-Salem, N.C. – August 21, 2017** — Eric Aft will join Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC as Chief Operating Officer, a transitional position established in advance of the planned retirement of CEO Clyde W. Fitzgerald, Jr. in June of 2018 to ensure a seamless transition in executive leadership for the organization.

Fitzgerald, who has served at the helm of Second Harvest Food Bank for nearly nine years and overseen tremendous growth in the reach and impact of the organization said Aft is joining the organization at an exciting time in its long and accomplished history.

“We have just completed a comprehensive, strategic planning process,” Fitzgerald said. “Through the strategies and innovative practices we are laying out now for focus over the next three to five years, Second Harvest Food Bank will further strengthen community capacity to meet immediate needs for food assistance and continue to build, support and advocate for sustainable, collaborative solutions to address the root causes of persistent hunger in our communities. Eric has a proven track record of strategic, results-oriented leadership and success leading collaborative approaches to pressing community issues, as demonstrated during his 27-year career in non-profit senior positions. As important, he shares our passion for supporting individuals and families striving to reach their full potential.”

Aft will be joining the Second Harvest Food Bank team in his important role effective August 28, 2017, with a focus on gaining a deep and through knowledge of the organization’s internal operations.

“I am honored to be joining a group of exceptional individuals doing important work in local communities across our region,” Aft said. I look forward to working with the leadership team, our committed board and the compassionate, engaged staff of Second Harvest Food Bank as we build on the accomplishments of the organization into the future.”

Milton Kern, II, chair of Second Harvest Food Bank’s board of directors, said Aft is the right person for the job.

“Persistent high rates of food insecurity across the 18 counties Second Harvest Food Bank serves are an alarm calling our organization to lead and support deeper dialogue and action to address the root causes of hunger in our communities. Eric’s proven abilities engaging and partnering with diverse stakeholders to achieve deep and sustainable impact on community issues, combined with his commitment to innovation and success in building philanthropic support are chief among the reasons he was selected to the COO role.”

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Linda Milone, a member of Second Harvest Food Bank's board of directors and chair of the board's executive transition committee, offered insight into the extensive executive search process that culminated in Aft's selection.

"Clyde announced his intention to retire to the board well over 18 months ago, recognizing the importance of stability and continuity in executive leadership to the continued success of Second Harvest Food Bank into the future. Our executive search firm conducted over 80 interviews with candidates from across the country, and Clyde and his leadership team worked alongside the transition committee to interview all finalists. Eric is a seasoned senior executive and non-profit leader whose credentials and passion for the mission rose to the top and concluded our search for the next leader of our organization."

Aft comes to Second Harvest Food Bank from his position as Director of Development for Wake Forest University. He is well known to many through his service as Chief Operating Officer of the United Way of Forsyth County for nearly 12 years, from 2004-2016, and was a staunch supporter and partner of Second Harvest in this role.

Prior to moving to Winston-Salem, Aft served seven years as President and CEO of the United Way of Central Virginia, covering 4 counties. He also previously served 4 years as CEO of the United Way of Wooster, Ohio, another multi-county operation.

Aft holds a Masters of Health Administration from the University of South Carolina. He has also served as adjunct faculty at Salem College since 2012, teaching courses on Organizational Planning and Evaluation and Non-Profit Management and Governance. He's long been involved with a number of community activities in Winston-Salem and is a past board member of the Piedmont Triad Regional Council's Workforce Development Board, past member of United Way Worldwide High Performing Community Partnerships Committee, past board member, alumni chair and treasurer of Leadership Winston-Salem and past member, Equity Profile Team, of Piedmont Together, among others.

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### **About Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC**

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC is the leading organization addressing hunger across an 18-county service area, with a dual mission to provide healthy food to meet immediate needs for food assistance and engage our communities in eliminating hunger and its root causes. Second Harvest Food Bank is a central resource for food, grants, nutrition programming and other services for more than 450 frontline partners, supporting strong local responses to hunger and leading effective advocacy and community collaboration to address the roots causes of persistent hunger. As the Feeding America affiliate for an 18-county service region, Second Harvest leverages the resources of a nationwide network to serve Northwest North Carolina and strengthen local impact. To learn more, visit [www.hungernwnc.org](http://www.hungernwnc.org).