



**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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### **Clyde W. Fitzgerald, Jr. Awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine**

**Winston-Salem, N.C. – July 10, 2018** — Clyde Fitzgerald, who served his first 26 years with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC as a community advocate, volunteer, fundraiser and board member, with three terms as board chair, and the last 10 years at the organization's helm, has received the state's highest civilian honor.

A Winston-Salem resident and long-time leader of the region's leading anti-hunger organization says that in retirement, he may be giving up a title, but he will never give up his passion for Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC's mission of feeding our community and helping families become self-sustaining.

Fitzgerald was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine at a recent community event held to honor his leadership and years of service and provide support for the organization's work into the future. Conferred by N.C. Governor Roy Cooper, the award recognizes "exemplary service to the State of North Carolina and their communities that is above and beyond the call of duty and which has made a significant impact and strengthened North Carolina."

At the event, Fitzgerald was also awarded the Ambassador of Agriculture Award by N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, presented with numerous letters from members of Congress and the N.C. General Assembly and given a flag flown over the Capitol by North Carolina Senator Burr.

Fitzgerald announced plans for his second retirement (he came out of retirement to lead Second Harvest in 2008) more than a year ago, explaining that a transitional Chief Operating Officer role would be established to ensure a seamless executive leadership transition and no disruption to the critical mission of Second Harvest. Fitzgerald says this goal was accomplished in the selection of Eric Aft, who came on board at Second Harvest in September 2017 and assumed the reins of Second Harvest effective July 1, 2018.

"Eric has my full support and that of our board and staff," Fitzgerald said. "It has been my unparalleled honor to lead our food bank for the last 10 years. I have been blessed to serve with a phenomenally talented team of passionate professionals. My heart, soul and mind have been touched profoundly and forever."

During Fitzgerald's tenure at Second Harvest Food Bank, financial and food donations, as well as volunteer support, grew exponentially from all sources. Second Harvest Food Bank's total food distribution through its region-wide network of local partner agencies increased from 7 million meals annually to more than 31 million meals provided annually for families who face financial hardship.

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Thousands of volunteers collectively contribute more than 41,000 hours annually to support the organization's mission.

Under Fitzgerald's leadership, addressing childhood hunger became a top priority for Second Harvest. Existing and new program models were expanded and launched and today provide nutritious snacks and meals for thousands of children who need them throughout the 18 counties Second Harvest serves at schools, after school, on weekends and during the long summer break.

In 2015, Fitzgerald, along with Chef Jeff Bacon, Executive Director of Second Harvest's culinary job training program, led the launch of Providence Restaurant, a "dining for a cause" establishment. At Providence, graduates of the training program gained extended, paid training to prepare them for higher paying positions in the food service industry, and proceeds from patrons tabs provide funding for the core training program. A second, more casual restaurant enterprise is set to open in downtown Winston-Salem's BB&T building later this summer.

Fitzgerald understood that hunger and health go hand-in-hand. He prioritized sourcing increased donations of fresh fruits and produce for the organizations network of local food assistance partners and deepened relationships with the healthcare industry to bring new and greater resources to Second Harvest's mission. In 2016-2017, donations of fresh fruits and vegetables to the foods increased by 89% and continues to increase.

In 2017, Second Harvest Food Bank was one of only five food banks to be chosen by Feeding America, Second Harvest's parent organization, to initiate Service Insights to gain a deeper understanding of hunger in local communities. Service Insights will standardize, streamline and enhance the Second Harvest network's data gathering and analysis; inform the organization's responses and strategies; and support effective advocacy. All of Second Harvest's partner food pantries will be brought on the Service Insights system over the next two years.

"Clyde has been instrumental in combatting hunger in the City of Winston-Salem and throughout an 18-county area of Northwest North Carolina," said Mayor Allen Joines. "His leadership has improved the quality of life for residents in need and of our communities as a whole. He is a model citizen and will always be a valued member of our community."

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

Second Harvest Food Bank is a leading agency and advocate for a healthy, hunger-free Northwest NC, serving as a central resource for healthy food, nutrition education, SNAP/FNS outreach services, advocacy and more for a network of more than 290 local agencies overseeing more than 460 food assistance programs (pantries, community kitchens, shelters, and meals programs for children and seniors). Second Harvest's strategic focus on addressing hunger among children includes partnerships with local schools and agencies to provide nutritious food for kids through BackPack, Kids Cafe, School Pantry and Summer Meal sites. Second Harvest's work to address root causes of food insecurity includes a nationally recognized culinary training and job skills program; leadership and partnership in systems change work across our service region; and advocacy for community action and policies that support our communities.