



## Summary of Findings from Hunger in America 2010, Santa Cruz County

### **Child hunger is a growing problem.**

- 45% of those served by the food bank are children, an increase from 39% in 2006.

### **Hunger and food insecurity have increased.**

- The number of people suffering from food insecurity and hunger has increased since 2006 (79% food insecure, 47% hungry).
- 19,000 different people receive emergency food assistance from Second Harvest agencies every week (up from 12,000 in 2006).

### **Living expenses (medicine, housing, utilities and fuel) have gone up, incomes are down overall, and unemployment has risen.**

- 1 in 3 households have a monthly income of less than \$500.
- 73% had incomes below the federal poverty level in the previous month.
- 40% of clients had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage, 33% between paying for gas for a car or food, and 35% had to choose between paying for utilities/heating fuel or food.
- Only 22% of households include at least one employed adult, from 41% in 2006.
- 32.7% of all clients are without health insurance, while 21.5% of the clients have unpaid medical or hospital bills.

### **Hunger and malnutrition are related to serious health care issues.**

- 71% report that they couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.
- 34% of food bank clients chose between paying for food and paying for medicine/medical care (up from 24% in 2006).
- The number of adults who reported they went for an entire day without food for lack of money has increased since 2006.

### **Federal nutrition programs are still under-used in the fight against hunger.**

- There is an increase of households receiving SNAP benefits (23%, up from 13% in 2006).
- 83% of households with pre-school children participated in WIC, a program which serves pregnant women, infants, and children under 5 years old.
- Only 19% of children participate in the summer food program which provides free lunches to needy children.

### **Member agencies struggle to meet the need.**

- 12.7% of pantries, 16.2% of kitchens, and 36.5% of shelters had to turn away clients during the past year.
- 12.5% of the pantries and 17.5% of the kitchens indicated that they sometimes or always had to stretch food resources.
- Kitchens needed 30 additional meals per week.