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For Immediate Release
September 25, 2019

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**Bayou Community Foundation and Second Harvest to Host
“Bayou Region Summit on Hunger” October 8**

*Event will promote greater awareness of growing food insecurity in our community
and cultivate new initiatives to address this critical need.*

Bayou Community Foundation and Second Harvest Food Bank will host the first-ever “Bayou Region Summit on Hunger” on Tuesday, October 8 to increase awareness about food insecurity in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes and Grand Isle, and to strengthen efforts to address hunger in our region. Participants will include local nonprofits, government agencies, churches and other volunteer groups involved in providing food and other services to the needy in our area.

“We often think of hunger as a problem for other countries or an issue in larger cities, but hunger is also very real here in our Bayou Region,” said Bayou Community Foundation President Stephen Peltier.

“In recent years, Bayou Community Foundation has experienced a substantial increase in grant requests from local organizations who provide food to the needy as economic conditions have forced more and more of our local residents to rely on food banks and other organizations to feed their families,” Peltier said. “The Bayou Region Summit on Hunger will shed some light on this growing need and cultivate new initiatives and partnerships to help close the meal gap. Bayou Community Foundation is excited to work with Second Harvest Food Bank to begin this critical community discussion.”

“Second Harvest Food Bank provides more than 2.7 million meals annually to children, families, and seniors in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes and Grand Isle through our local partner agencies,” said Second Harvest Board member Ruth Boulet of Larose. “Our partners include food pantries, churches, mobile pantry sites, schools, and programs for children and seniors in locations throughout the Bayou Region. We know, however, that just meeting the need requires that we double the number of meals we provide. We look forward to the Bayou Region Summit on Hunger to better understand the unmet need, strengthen our partnerships, and work towards building a thriving community.”

According to a 2017 data from nonprofit organization Feeding America, 11,630 residents of Lafourche Parish and 16,000 residents of Terrebonne are food insecure, meaning they lack the financial resources to provide adequate and regular meals for their household. Included in this number are 11,260 children.

- More -

Bayou Region Summit on Hunger
Release Date: September 25, 2019
Page 2

Other staggering statistics for the Bayou Region, provided by Second Harvest:

- Second Harvest partner agencies and food banks in Lafourche and Terrebonne served 8,000 people per month in 2018, up from 5,000 per month in 2012.
- In fiscal year 2019, Second Harvest provided 834,241 meals to needy Lafourche residents.
- In fiscal year 2019, Second Harvest provided 1.5 million meals to needy Terrebonne residents.
- Two million meals annually are needed to close the meal gap in Lafourche Parish.
- In Terrebonne Parish, 2.7 million meals are needed annually to close the meal gap.
- In Louisiana, 23 percent of children are identified as food insecure, compared to the national rate of 17 percent.

The Bayou Region Summit on Hunger will be held Tuesday, October 8 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon at the Lafourche Parish Government Complex in Mathews. Support is provided by Lafourche Parish Government and Nicholls State University, with Nicholls Associate Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Michele Caruso as facilitator.

Nonprofit and government agencies, as well as local volunteer groups that provide food to the needy or other services to residents who may be food insecure are invited to participate. Registration is required by October 1. Email Bayou Community Foundation Executive Director Jennifer Armand at armandj@bayoucf.org for more information or visit www.BayouCF.org.

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About Bayou Community Foundation: Bayou Community Foundation was created in July 2012 to provide donors a meaningful way to invest in the long-term sustainability of our coastal communities in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes and Grand Isle. The foundation serves as a “community bucket” to receive and distribute recovery donations following a natural disaster or emergency in our region, awards annual grants to nonprofits filling critical needs in our communities, and provides workshops and other development programs to strengthen local nonprofits. www.BayouCF.org

About Second Harvest Food Bank:

Second Harvest Food Bank is an affiliated ministry of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans, a member of Feeding America, and a United Way Partner Agency. We build food security and lead the fight against hunger in South Louisiana by providing food access, advocacy, education and disaster response. Second Harvest provides food to hundreds of partners and programs across 23 parishes, from the Mississippi border to the Texas state line. Together, we make up the largest charitable anti-hunger network in the state. With our community’s help, we can make food security a reality for every household in South Louisiana.

To join us in the fight to end hunger, please visit www.no-hunger.org. Follow us on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/2ndHarvestGNOA; fan us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/2ndHarvestGNOA or Instagram at @2ndHarvestGNOA.