

- [Stay Connected](#)
- / Monday, March 28, 2011

Search in site...



Reporter
Newspapers

- [Home](#)
- [Brookhaven](#)
- [Buckhead](#)
- [Dunwoody](#)
- [Sandy Springs](#)
- [Special Sections](#)
- [About us](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Where to find us](#)
- [Photo Galleries](#)
- [Digital Paper](#)
- [Classifieds](#)

Second Helpings rescues food to feed the hungry

By Cathi Arora



Temple Sinai volunteers, left, Toby Bridenhall and Linda Harris, help prepare 40 pans of chicken, rice and vegetable casseroles.

With nearly 100 billion pounds of food trashed every year in America, one local synagogue is bridging the gap between hunger and waste.

By “rescuing” would-be waste from area businesses and organizations, Second Helpings, a community service program conducted by volunteers from Temple Sinai, delivers food to area shelters and charities.

According to program founder Guenther Hecht, about 125 volunteers support Second Helpings, which operates seven days a week collecting nearly 35,000 pounds of food per month.

Volunteers are assigned regular pickup and delivery routes. They typically work in teams using their own vehicles to collect and distribute surplus food that would otherwise be thrown away. Each trip takes about an hour, Hecht said.

They pick up prepared foods, unsold meat, soup, vegetables, fruit and baked goods from dozens of donors. These sources include Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods, Fresh Market, Publix and Costco, as well as local restaurants, caterers, bakeries, churches, synagogues, farmers’ markets and school cafeterias.

The food is immediately delivered to community-service agencies in the city of Atlanta and the north metro area for distribution to their clients.

“We love what we are doing and feel there is a tremendous need,” Hecht said. “And that need is growing.”

And Second Helpings, which began in 2004, continues to grow as well. According to Hecht, a recent donor’s generosity will enable them to purchase their first delivery truck.

“We are always expanding and looking for new donors and volunteers from outside the congregation,” he said.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 96 billion pounds of food – or 27 percent of the 356 billion pounds of edible food available – is wasted each year in the U.S. Couple that with the fact that one in 13 Georgia families live in poverty, and it is clear that Second Helpings is providing a much needed service for the Atlanta area.

Temple Sinai's Second Helpings is modeled after the highly successful Hilton Head-based Second Helpings, which Hecht and his wife founded nearly 20 years ago. Hecht recognized the need in metro Atlanta and worked with his congregation to develop the program.

"We started with one donor and one agency," said Hecht. "Now we support 17 agencies from 45 donors."

The first collection came from Holy Innocents Church in Sandy Springs, and was delivered to the Community Action Center (CAC), which assists families in need from the Dunwoody/Sandy Springs area.



Second Helpings volunteer Arnie Katinsky uses his own vehicle to pick up and deliver food donated by Holy Innocents' School.

"Second Helpings has had a huge impact on CAC and the agency's ability to give food to those in need," said Tamara Carrera, CAC's executive director. "Second Helpings allows us to give clients fresh food once a week as opposed to just giving dry and canned goods once a month. They now get fresh produce and freshly prepared meals once a week and that is a huge difference."

In addition to CAC, Second Helpings regularly serves North Fulton Community Charities, Atlanta Day Shelter for Women and Children, Atlanta Union Mission, Buckhead Christian Ministries, Mary Hall Freedom House, My Sisters House, The Gateway Center and the Dorothy Benson Senior Center, to name a few.

Second Helpings volunteers recently toured several charities they support in order to better understand how those agencies help their own clients.

“This is giving me a whole different perspective,” said volunteer Linda Harris, who recently attended all four tours. “They were all very interesting and different.”

Food Donor Coordinator Myron Smith, a volunteer with the program for the last five years, said he “loves being part of the program.” “I am amazed by the response we get from potential donors,” said Smith. “I find that most people I approach are willing to donate.”

Second Helpings is always searching for ways to increase its scope and reach. For more information, contact volunteer @ secondhelpings . info.

Did you like this? Share it:

[Tweet](#) Be the first of your friends to like this.

Related posts:

1. [Marist women build Habitat homes with ‘a solid foundation’](#)
2. [USO volunteers provide ‘touch of home’ for traveling troops](#)
3. [Lions, food, fireworks usher in Chinese Year of the Rabbit](#)

« « [Spruill Center welcomes spring with Print this page](#) [Lenten season is time for giving, as well](#)
[multimedia art exhibit](#) [as for giving things up](#) » »

Posted by [Chris](#)

[North](#) on Mar 24 2011. Filed under [Brookhaven Making A Difference](#), [Buckhead Making A Difference](#), [Dunwoody Making A Difference](#), [In The News](#), [Sandy Springs Making A Difference](#), [Slideshow](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#). You can leave a response or trackback to this entry