

This past summer, I completed an internship as a development assistant at the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee. Based out of Nashville, the nonprofit organization aims to eradicate hunger in forty-six counties in Tennessee by implementing programs that distribute food to families and individuals in need. Due to the fact that nearly seventeen percent of Middle Tennesseans are food insecure, Second Harvest has become a large and in demand nonprofit organization. Consequently, the development department plays a fundamental role within the organization because it is responsible for cultivating the monetary funds and resources needed to execute Second Harvest's programs. Thus, throughout my internship, I assisted in several areas of fundraising—such as grant writing and special events—that are crucial to the sustainability and long-term success of the organization.

My main project in grants was analyzing the outcomes and effectiveness of the Backpack Program, which was started by Second Harvest in order to supply children who are food insecure with backpacks over the weekend that contain nutritious food. Not only does it satisfy their hunger and eliminate stress about where their next meal would come from, but it also positively affects their schoolwork and conduct in the classroom. Based on surveys completed by teachers and school officials in three counties where the program was implemented, I found that 59% of 293 participants in the program demonstrated higher academic performances, and 57% displayed improved behavior, attention span, and confidence in the classroom. I examined the surveys further and graphed the outcomes, which detailed more specific information about how the Backpack Program was perceived to positively affect participants' scholastically and behaviorally. The graphs were used for an interim report for a foundation that donated \$40,662 to the program, and due to the affirmative findings of the survey, the foundation granted the second half of the funding to the program.

In addition to grants, I gained experience in special events, which are social functions that are hosted for the sole benefit of raising money for Second Harvest. I helped setup and collect donations at Ode to Otha—a neighborhood block party with live music and festivities—and market Stars for Second Harvest—a benefit concert in which the ticket sales go directly to Second Harvest since the venue and musical acts are in-kind donations. Not only are special events profitable but also beneficial since they help broadcast Second Harvest's mission to the general public, which helps cultivate new donors for the organization.

When I was not working on grants and special events, I assisted with donor relations. I made sure donors sent in their pledges by the end of the fiscal year, called them if there was a payment issue, updated their information in the Raiser's Edge database, and sent them and volunteers thank you notes for their charitable acts and nature.