

Second Harvest awarded Darden grants

Staff report

Second Harvest of South Georgia, the regional food bank serving 30 counties in southwest Georgia, announced it has been selected to receive \$5,000 in grant funding as part of the Restaurant Community Grants program from the Darden Restaurants Foundation Inc., the charitable arm of Darden Restaurants. The grants program, now in its third year, empowers each restaurant in the Darden family of brands to help award a \$1,000 grant to support local community programs. The donation will enable Second Harvest's Mobile Food Pantry program to distribute food directly into areas of concentrated need.

Darden's Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Bahama Breeze, Seasons 52, The Capital Grille, Eddie V's and Yard House brands participated in the program. Many restaurants and brands worked together to award one nonprofit organization with a larger grant and make a greater impact in their community. Nonprofits receiving grants support one of Darden's three key focus areas: education, preservation of natural resources and hunger relief. Second Harvest was chosen for hunger relief program funding by five individual Darden restaurants to receive this grant: Tifton's Olive Garden, Thomasville's Olive Garden, Valdosta's Olive Garden and both Red Lobster and Olive Garden in Waycross. "Second Harvest's mobile food pantry program delivers millions of pounds of food directly to those in need, aligning perfectly with Darden's goals of providing food to people who'd otherwise go hungry and giving access/delivering food to those in need. Using mobile food pantry trucks, we push food into areas that need it most," said Eliza McCall, chief

marketing officer with Second Harvest of South Georgia.

"We strive to make a positive impact in all the communities our restaurants serve," said Gene Lee, Darden's president and chief operating officer. "Our employees are incredibly passionate about getting directly involved in their local communities, and our Restaurant Community Grants pro-

gram enables each of our restaurant teams to make a difference right in their own backyard."

About Second Harvest of South Georgia

Second Harvest of South Georgia serves 30 South Georgia counties and is largest rural food bank in Georgia. Headquartered in Valdosta, the organization has locations in Albany, Douglas, and

Thomasville. Through our network of over 425 partner charities and through our programs, Second Harvest distributed more than 18.5 million pounds of food in 2013 to children, seniors and families struggling with hunger. For more information on how to help alleviate hunger in South Georgia, visit us online at www.feedingsga.org.