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CONTACT: Hannah Cather, Food Recovery Network, +1 (240) 615-8813, hcather@foodrecoverynetwork.org, www.foodrecoverynetwork.org

Food Recovery Network Hits New Heights: Three Million Meals Donated

COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND — July 15, 2019 — Food Recovery Network (FRN) recently surpassed another milestone for the food recovery movement: three million meals donated to those in need across the country. Since its founding in 2011, Food Recovery Network’s mission has been twofold: to prevent food waste and alleviate hunger. Student volunteers at chapters on college and university campuses across the country have helped FRN achieve this mission year after year by recovering perfectly good surplus food from college and university dining halls, as well as surrounding restaurants, and donating the recovered food to hunger-fighting nonprofits. The student volunteers that make up Food Recovery Network are dedicated to the challenging work of changing the way people on their campuses and in their communities think about and deal with surplus food. This milestone is a manifestation of their commitment to ending food insecurity wherever they see it.

The food that FRN chapters donate to their hunger-fighting partner agencies — nonprofits that receive food donations from chapters and distribute it to food insecure individuals — does more than just reduce food waste and alleviate hunger. FRN’s 2018 Nonprofit Partner Agency Survey found the donated food saves these nonprofits an average of $7,000 a year. These nonprofits can then use the money their organizations saved in other ways. Jade Lovett, Executive Director of Craig’s Doors in Massachusetts, said, “we are able to use the money [we save] to purchase other necessary supplies, pay staff a living wage, offer paid internships, and spread our money in the budget to other places, such as advocacy, advertising, fundraising, and training.” The most recent milestone of three million meals donated is not only feeding thousands of people, but also saving local nonprofits thousands of dollars, which allows them to expand their programming in their communities.

David O’Connor, an FRN alum from Providence College, said, “three million meals represents the power of collective action. I remember speaking with someone on the dining staff team, who thought a quarter-sized tray of pasta was too small to be saved and have an impact. FRN reminds us that each small bit of delicious and healthy food adds up to a meal that otherwise wouldn’t have [been available for someone to eat]. All
of these seemingly meaningless quarter trays have helped to feed a country and it took a movement to make that happen.”

Executive Director of FRN, Regina Anderson, is dedicated to ensuring that FRN continues to be a leader in the food recovery movement. “Eclipsing three million meals donated is a momentous occasion for everyone within our network. Every single volunteer hour and pound of food recovered contributed to our ability to reach this milestone. The dedicated people in this movement are going to be the ones who sustain us as we reach for our four millionth meal, while at the same time working to reduce food waste from happening in the first place.”

Food Recovery Network is continuing to expand its programs and influence across the nation, they work with more than 140 Food Recovery Verified businesses and events, check their website to find those near you. Chapters are piloting gleaning events — recovering perfectly good, unharvested produce from farms or unsold produce from farmers markets — to provide partner agencies with fresh fruits and vegetables. Regional Summits and Alumni Meet-Ups are also happening across the country, as FRN’s students and stakeholders promote food recovery in their communities. Become part of Food Recovery Network: join a recovery with a chapter, apply to become Food Recovery Verified, or conduct a gleaning at your local farmers market.

**About Food Recovery Network**

Food Recovery Network (FRN) unites and supports college student leaders in the fight against food waste and hunger in America. Since 2011, FRN students have recovered more than 3.9 million pounds of surplus food from their cafeterias and local restaurants. This food would have gone to waste, but because of their hard work it is feeding hungry Americans. Food Recovery Network has more than 200 college campus chapters in 44 states and the District of Columbia. For more information about Food Recovery Network, and to join our effort, visit www.foodrecoverynetwork.org. Follow us on Twitter @FoodRecovery and Instagram @FoodRecovery and like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FoodRecoveryNetwork.

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