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## LOCAL ARTIST COMBINES HIGH ART AND LOWLY POTATO FOR HUNGER RELIEF

Who knew one person could have a passion for both high art and the lowly potato?

Matt Jones, Seattle artist and entrepreneur, believes in feeding both the body and the mind, and his Passion for Mashin' parties help put the potatoes on many a family's holiday table.

Every first Friday of each month, visitors to Jones's Gasworks Gallery in Wallingford (across from Ivar's restaurant on Lake Union, in the big blue Jones building) are invited to donate a sack of potatoes, and become "Spud Donors." Then Jones loads the 3,000-6,000 pounds of assorted fingerlings, jumbos, Idahos, Yukon Golds and various other varieties into the truck he uses to haul his eight-foot abstract paintings and delivers the potatoes to Northwest Harvest.

Jones and his enthusiastic group of MashedPotatoes.org volunteers and Spud Donors have delivered over 50,000 pounds of potatoes to the statewide hunger relief agency over the past year. Jones works closely with his longtime friend David Sterling, communications director for MashedPotatoes.org, and David's mother, Jan George, to manage the Passion for Mashin' parties. Jones says it couldn't be done without all the help he has received from the volunteers, spud donors, artists and friends.

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Jones believes artists have a responsibility to give back, to live up to their “cool” reputations. He views potatoes as the supreme comfort food, the “top of the food chain of cool,” and notes they store well and are economical and nutritious.

Jones will be on hand at the Northwest Harvest warehouse at 2 p.m., Thurs., Nov. 17, to greet a 20,000-pound truckload of potatoes as it arrives just in time for the holidays. The 15-pound family packs of red potatoes, which Jones says are “known for being mashable with the skin on,” were donated, along with the freight costs, by Bill Bloxom of the F.C. Bloxom Company, longtime Washington produce distributors.

“We’ll be bringing this load with a smile,” Jones says. “There’ll be a lot of mashin’ goin’ on.”

**About the gallery openings:** The Passion for Mashin’ Gallery Openings are from 7-11 p.m., on the first Friday of each month. They’re free and open to the public, and include food, beverages and music. Gasworks Gallery is located at 3815 4th Ave. NE, Seattle. For more information: [www.gasworksgallery.com](http://www.gasworksgallery.com); [www.mashedpotatoes.org](http://www.mashedpotatoes.org).

**About Northwest Harvest:** Washington’s only statewide hunger relief agency, Northwest Harvest distributes food from warehouses in Grays Harbor, King, Stevens and Yakima counties, supplying it free of fees to 300 member food banks and meal programs. Donations comprise about 80 percent of the over 18 million pounds of food Northwest Harvest secures each year.

Northwest Harvest was founded in Washington in 1967, and is independently operated and privately supported, depending entirely on monetary and food donations from individuals, businesses, foundations and other organizations, taking no government funds. Individuals contribute most of its funds, and all of its volunteer labor, totaling 43,400 hours last year. For more information, visit [www.northwestharvest.org](http://www.northwestharvest.org) or call 1 (800) 722-6924.

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