

## Larry Sly – Charles Laird Award

Larry Sly is the executive director of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. What started out as a three-person operation in Martinez now serves thousands of people in two counties.

By [Clarisa Morales Roberts](#) | May 4, 2011



Larry Sly is the Executive Director of the [Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano](#) and the 2011 recipient of the Charles Laird Award from the Martinez Chamber of Commerce.

"I'm quite honored. I always focus on the fact that it's really the organization that's being honored, and I'm just the person at the head of the parade," Sly said.

He began working for the food bank 35 years ago in Martinez, the organization's first home, as a driver.

"When I began, the organization was two individuals, and a Safeway trailer parked in a church parking lot, and a truck," he said.

Since then, it has grown to a 35,000 square-foot warehouse in Concord, a 19,000 square-foot warehouse in Fairfield and a fleet of trucks. Its first year, the food bank distributed about 30,000 pounds of food to people in need. In 2010, it sent out more than 12 million pounds of food from El Cerrito in West Contra Costa County to Dixon in East Solano County.

Sly said that the need for the food bank has grown in east Contra Costa since the economic downturn and housing crunch. The organization provides service in Martinez on a regular basis at numerous locations, including the [Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen](#), the [Boys and Girls Club](#), many church-based pantries and directly to families in need. The food bank serves more than 100,000 pounds of food in Martinez alone per year.

"It's a pretty significant number of folks who get help in each community, but every community benefits from our ability to help folks in need," Sly said.

Do you donate to food banks? [Tell us in the comments.](#)