

Friday forum in Vallejo to discuss ways food banks can boost healthy offerings

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Battling obesity and diabetes while facing hunger and food insecurity is a common problem the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano wants to address.

A special forum on how to increase healthy food offerings in Vallejo is 9 to 11:30 a.m. Friday in the Joseph Room at John F. Kennedy Library, 505 Santa Clara St.

The event, "Strategies for Bringing Healthy Food to Vallejo," will bring together a number of agencies, county officials and local residents interested in the issue, said food bank project director Lindsay Johnson.

"Over the past five years or so there's been increasing attention to the environment as one of the causes of high rates of obesity and health disparities in low-income neighborhoods," Johnson said.

In some parts of Vallejo, no grocery stores are available, leaving residents to travel long distances to the store or resort to food available at local convenience markets, Johnson said.

Friday's session will cover where people buy and get food in Vallejo, how to improve food in "corner stores," and opportunities for growing food in the city.

Efforts to make Vallejo neighborhoods more amenable to walking and other forms of exercise will also be discussed.

"I think our hope is that we're planting seeds," she said of Friday's forum.

Small group discussions will be held at the end of the meeting to foster connections and communication among those interested in improving healthy food choices in Vallejo.

About 35 people have signed up so far for the event and anyone else who is interested in attending can show up Friday morning at the library to participate, Johnson said.