

# BREAD CONNECTION

A Not Quite Quarterly publication of the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

## New Produce Program Takes Root

The Community Produce Program truck has been delivering produce into the community for less than a month and yet has already reached over 2,800 low-income households. Each family who picked up a bag at the Community Produce Program received roughly 30 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables and word about the program is spreading. Located at churches, health clinics, schools, and community centers, the Community Produce Program spans central and east Contra Costa County serving Concord, Oakley, and everywhere in between. On average, each of the 28 sites has doubled in size since the first distribution and we expect them to continue to increase.

The desire and need for healthy, nutritious foods is apparent in the families' gratitude and excitement over the items the Food Bank is able to provide. So far, the truck has distributed tomatoes, zucchini, cauliflower, corn, celery, oranges, pears, plums, and cantaloupe (to name a few). The variety of the produce will not



People line up with bags to fill with produce. Photo by Doorstep Photography 2012

only help people obtain essential vitamins and minerals that are lacking in many diets, but also help kids grow to love healthy foods. With a nutrition educator on site, the program participants learn how to prepare the items healthfully and learn why the fruits and vegetables are so important to a balanced diet.

Come 2013, the Food Bank will be expanding the Community Produce Program to west Contra Costa and Solano County to provide more produce to the communities we serve.

For site locations or information on volunteering for this exciting new program, visit [www.foodbankccs.org/communityproduceprogram](http://www.foodbankccs.org/communityproduceprogram).



Nutrition Education Coordinator Corrine Quinn is available to give nutrition and cooking advice. Photo by Doorstep Photography 2012

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[www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org)



The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano is in a time of change. The number of people who need our help has increased significantly. More people are coming to the food pantries and soup kitchens we serve. We have also increased the number of direct distribution programs we operate, providing food to children, seniors and thousands of people in need. Through these efforts, we are providing food to about 132,000 people each month.

We are able to do these amazing things because we have access to fresh produce. Because the agricultural community organizes their donations through the California Association of Food Banks, we distributed over six million pounds of fresh produce last year. This year, we have initiated a Community Produce Program that will allow us to distribute another three million pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables. We are on track to distribute 20 million pounds of food to those in need, with nearly half the food being fresh produce.

We are able to do this because the community cares. The financial support we receive allowed us to double the amount of warehouse space we have in our Fairfield facility, as well as install a 9,500 cubic foot refrigerated cooler for produce. We have also obtained a packing machine to bag produce, and are engaging as many volunteers as possible to prepare our food for distribution. We are able to expand our service because Fairfield has become our new produce center.

We are lucky that we have the resources we need and the flexibility necessary to allow us to change. We have built the distribution system necessary to get more food, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, to the people we serve. We are dealing with both hunger and nutrition and are making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Executive Director  
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

## KEEP UP WITH US!

When you engage with the Food Bank on social media, you help us spread our mission to end hunger while showing people how much you care. We are able to reach more people than ever before when you comment, share and "like" us.



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The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been serving the community for 36 years. We provide food to about 132,000 hungry people in need every month through direct service programs and a network of 180 charitable agencies, which allowed us to distribute 16 million pounds last year!

The Food Bank works to reduce food waste, feed hungry people, and raise public awareness of issues related to food and hunger. The work could not get done without the support of many generous financial donors or the help of the thousands of volunteers who donate their time to coordinate food drives, sort and pack the food, and help distribute it to their hungry neighbors.



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[www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org)





## Community Produce Program Launches with Donation from the John Muir/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund

The John Muir/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund doesn't just hand out grants; they make partnerships and fund initiatives. Funded by John Muir Health, the Community Health Fund's mission is "Improving the health and well-being of people residing within central and east Contra Costa County communities who are un- or under-insured, who have limited access to health care, who are most at-risk for poor health, and are most likely to experience disparities in healthcare". Their goal is to expand access to affordable, high quality and competent health care, as well as to expand supportive services that connect to health care and enhance well-being.

Thanks to their initiative/partnership process, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano was able to launch our newest direct distribution program last



Photo by Doorstep Photography 2012

month: the Community Produce Program. With the help of a \$400,000 award from the John Muir/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund, we were able to purchase and customize a beverage truck, purchase fresh produce to distribute from it, hire a certified nutritionist, and pay for the other expenses required to start up the program. The truck will make regularly scheduled distributions of free fresh produce in low-income neighborhoods. Nutrition education information as well as cooking and serving tips and demonstrations will be provided at the sites. The program is starting off with distributions in central and east Contra Costa County, but after the purchase and customization of a second truck early next year we will be able to start distributions in west Contra Costa County and Solano County.

### AGENCY CORNER

## Stop Holiday Hunger

The Holidays are approaching, and as we all know by the end of summer it's not unusual to see holiday decorations and gifts galore being sold at department stores. More and more, people are preparing in advance of the holidays to hopefully have a more relaxing and less rushed holiday season. The Food Bank practices in a similar fashion, but not with decorations or with gifts. We begin in the summer raising funds to support those in need of food assistance during the holiday season.

The Food Bank, with the help of our 200 agency partners, distributes holiday meals in the months of November and December to communities all over Contra Costa and Solano counties. This support is welcomed every year by these community partners and even more so this year. The changes and decreases in federal and state funding that typically would help offset the cost of food for these agencies makes the support from the Food Bank to help them with their holiday meals increasingly important and necessary. With the task of helping more than 30,000 households in our community, the Food Bank's ability to raise money for the holiday season is crucial to the success of distributing enough food to those in need.

There are a number of ways we raise funds throughout the year including our annual event *An Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden* every summer, virtual food drives and many other ways. These funds will help us place canned and fresh vegetables and fruit, canned tuna and chicken and other items into Holiday Baskets that are provided to families and individuals by their local community agencies to make their holidays a little easier. The Food Bank is also able to provide limited numbers of turkeys and gift cards from local grocery stores to agencies to be distributed as well.

So while you are preparing for the holidays, we thank all of you who also helped us prepare in advance for our holiday food shopping for those in need of food assistance. Visit [www.foodbankccs.org/givehelp](http://www.foodbankccs.org/givehelp) to find out how you can help.

# Overcoming Barriers of CalFresh (Food Stamps) for Seniors

CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) outreach has been increasing targeted efforts at addressing the high rates of seniors who are eligible for the program, but for several reasons, are not using it. Below are some of the main barriers seniors are faced with and some ways these are addressed.

**Barrier: Isolation** Many seniors live alone, have disabilities, language, or geographical barriers, so they may know less about the program and have less interaction with those who participate in the program. This is why targeted outreach is important for addressing these issues and helping those who may be eligible.

**Barrier: Stigma** While many people feel there is stigma with applying for CalFresh, this is especially common for seniors. Outreach requires the explanation that CalFresh isn't welfare but rather a nutritional assistance program and an entitlement program like Social Security.

**Barrier: Belief** that applying for CalFresh takes benefits away from someone else. Since CalFresh is an entitlement program, it is meant to expand as demand expands, which differs from other food assistance programs that have budget constraints.

**Barrier: Belief that the amount wouldn't be worth it** Many seniors believe they would only receive the minimum amount of \$16. The truth is that many seniors receive much more than this, and that even if someone does receive \$16 a month, this equals \$192 for the year.

**Barrier: Belief that having social security or disability assistance makes one ineligible** Social Security benefits count as income, and as long as seniors meet the income requirement, they would still be eligible. While it is true that someone with SSI/SSP is ineligible, those with SDI or SSDI would be eligible.

**Barrier: Application Process** Now, the process is simple. It is currently possible to conduct the interview over the phone and therefore complete the whole process without going to the county office.

Seniors and agencies may also contact the Food Bank for questions about eligibility and application materials.



Food Bank employees share how CalFresh may help seniors stretch their limited food budgets.

## ADVOCACY MADE EASY

### Oppose a Farm Bill that Cuts SNAP

Food banks across the nation continue to see unprecedented need. The number of people seeking emergency food assistance from the Feeding America network of food banks increased 46 percent from 2006 to 2010. At the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano we are serving about 132,000 people each month, an increase consistent with the national average. Food banks like ours across the country could not provide current levels of food assistance without support from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), nor could we meet added demand if the current funding levels and structure of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly food stamps, now CalFresh in California) were eroded.

We are pleased that the Senate Farm Bill included an additional \$174 million in additional funding for TEFAP and the House Farm Bill an additional \$250 million in recognition of heightened need at food banks nationwide. These increases, welcome though they are, are not enough to make up for the declines in TEFAP we are currently experiencing let alone the increased demand cuts to SNAP will create as more people turn to food banks for help.

Struggling families in our community need our help, and thus we need your action – urge Congress to oppose Farm Bill cuts to SNAP in a time when food assistance is needed the most. Tell Congress to support additional funding for TEFAP in the Farm Bill to make sure food banks have the resources we need to ensure we can help alleviate hunger at home.

# Food All Year

Around the holidays, the public traditionally tends to be generous with food donations. But at other times of year, giving slows and our donated food runs low. In order to bring in food year round, the Food Bank has joined many more communities in the Neighborhood Food Project, a grassroots movement that makes it easy for people to donate food in their community.

The Food Project is a revolutionary idea. It's a donor drive, not a food drive. Rather than asking for one-time contributions of food, volunteers become neighborhood coordinators who enlist their neighbors to become long-term donors. People commit to giving a small amount of food every two months, which provides the Food Bank and our partner agencies with a steady, year-round supply, and provides the donors with the ongoing satisfaction of making a real difference. Donors and neighborhood coordinators also get to know each other better, which builds a powerful sense of community.

It's amazingly simple. A neighborhood coordinator (NC) signs up a small group of neighbors to be food donors. Each donor gets a reusable green Food Project bag to store food in. Every two months the NC picks up their neighbors' full bags, leaves them an empty one, and brings all the bags to the Food Bank.



The Food Project started with a small group of 10 Ashland, Oregon residents picking up food. About a year later, there were over 150 volunteers. The first Pickup Day, in 2009, netted about 600 pounds of food. By December, 2010, the collection was over 28,000 pounds! Now the Food Project is here in Contra Costa and Solano Counties and we need your help to make it grow.

If you would like to be part of the Contra Costa & Solano Food Project visit [www.ccsfoodproject.org](http://www.ccsfoodproject.org).

**Turn your car into cash  
for the Food Bank**



**Car Donation Services**

**1-888-686-4483**

**[www.cardonationservices.com](http://www.cardonationservices.com)**

## Grocery Outlet Stores -Independence from Hunger Food Drive

The Grocery Outlet stores conducted their second annual Independence from Hunger food drive during July. We are very fortunate to have received a fantastic total of 2,958 pounds of food from the Concord, Pinole and San Pablo stores! Our local Grocery Outlet stores are independently owned and operated by people who are committed to giving back to the local community. Thank you Grocery Outlet owners, employees and customers for so generously giving and helping us provide for the needs of our community.

## Food From the Bar

In May the Contra Costa County Bar Association held its 21st annual Food from the Bar drive. Over 900 attorneys and staff in 43 law offices raised \$64,000. Over the years the Bar Association has collected \$955,000 and 110,000 pounds of food for the Food Bank. They look forward to hitting one million dollars in 2013!

## Letter Carriers Food Drive

This past May 12th, our Letter Carriers rallied to collect over 218,000 pounds of food in one day – up 25% over 2011! Not only do our friends at the post offices deliver your mail, they loaded up their satchels and postal trucks to make sure we had food for those in need. This food drive has kept our volunteers busy through the summer and has provided the food we need so much. Our everyday heroes are the Letter Carriers in our two counties who worked so hard to make sure we had food to share from May through September. They are truly building community!





## A Tribute to a Volunteer Bob Foscett

The Food Bank is incredibly fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers. Bob Foscett, one of those very amazing and talented volunteers, passed away on July 1, 2012. Bob and his wife Cheryl were recognized for their years of outstanding volunteer service last October at our annual Volunteer Recognition. After the event we received a wonderful note from Bob thanking us -- "We are thrilled to be a part of this organization that makes a huge contribution to the community". Bob was passionate about volunteerism, donating countless hours to the Food Bank and also Meals on Wheels. He and Cheryl helped anywhere they were needed. One day they would be working in the office preparing hundreds of thank you letters for mailing and the next day they would be representing the Food Bank at an event. Bob, a great speaker, would get up early and speak at 3 post offices a day prior to the annual Letter Carriers Food Drive each year. He would talk about the need in the community and rally the carriers to make sure this important food drive was successful. Bob was dedicated, generous, selfless, and had a wonderful sense of humor and the Food Bank staff and volunteers are feeling the loss of a great volunteer.



Bob (right) with wife Cheryl and our Executive Director Larry Sly.

## Upcoming Events: Fall 2012

### SEPTEMBER 1-30

September is Hunger Action Month, when the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano joins Feeding America food banks across the country to urge people to take action in their community. You can help. Simply Speak Out Against Hunger™ this September. Why speak out? Because the nearly 49 million people in America who struggle with hunger often do so in silence. They live in our communities; they are our neighbors, our co-workers, and our friends, yet their struggles can go unheard. By simply lending your voice, you can make a tangible contribution to mobilizing the public in the fight to end hunger. Visit [www.foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth](http://www.foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth) for actions to take.

### OCTOBER 16

**Walnut Creek Community Service Day** Volunteers can help at a variety of projects including a neighborhood food drive. Gather at Heather Farm Park at 7:30 am to receive a pancake breakfast and your free t-shirt. To sign up go to [www.walnut-creek.org/about/resources\\_n\\_programs/csd](http://www.walnut-creek.org/about/resources_n_programs/csd)

### OCTOBER 13

**The Contra Costa & Solano Food Project Pick Up** is Saturday October 13. Learn more on page 5. To find out how to be part of this new way to build community and share food go to [www.ccsfoodproject.org](http://www.ccsfoodproject.org).

### OCTOBER 13-14

**Contra Costa Coin and Collectibles Show.** For the fifth consecutive year the Diablo Coin Club is supporting the Food Bank by donating a portion of the proceeds from its annual coin show. The show provides a safe, convenient venue for anyone wanting to buy, sell or trade coins and other collectibles or receive free appraisals from over 30 coin dealers. This family friendly show will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Drive, Concord starting at 10:00 am each day. More details are available at [www.diablocoinclub.org](http://www.diablocoinclub.org).

### SAVE THE DATE OCTOBER 28

For the Food Bank's Volunteer Recognition event, held at our Concord warehouse from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

### NOVEMBER 3

**Gourmet East Bay.** It's time to eat, drink, and dance the night away at Gourmet East Bay on Saturday, November 3 from 7:00 pm -10:00 pm at Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit [www.gourmeteastbay.com](http://www.gourmeteastbay.com).

### NOVEMBER 17

**Scouting for Food.** Local Scouts will be collecting nonperishable food during this huge, one-day food drive benefitting the Food Bank.

For more events visit [www.foodbankccs.org/events](http://www.foodbankccs.org/events).

# We Feel Like a Million Bucks!

Contra Costa and Solano County employees are approaching the 2012 Counties Care Holiday Food Fight with a new mission – to hit the million dollar mark in fundraising for the Food Bank. The annual County Food Fight began as an innocent little competition to do good in our communities in 2004 when Contra Costa County employees decided to challenge Solano County employees to raise funds for the Food Bank. Solano County immediately accepted the challenge and the Food Fight was born. Employees in both counties wanted to help their community and dove into the Food Fight with gusto, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Each year, the county bringing in the highest dollar amount per person wins possession of the coveted “Big Apple” trophy. In the past eight years, possession of the Big Apple trophy has bounced back and forth from Contra Costa County to Solano County many times.

This year the Food Fight will hit a milestone. By the end of Holiday Food Fight 2011, over its eight-year history the counties have raised a grand total of \$927,993.73! County employees will need to collectively raise just over \$72,000 this year to hit the unbelievable \$1 million dollar fundraising mark. Can they do it in this poor economy? The Food Bank thinks they can, and is asking you to help by donating online in the month of December. Visit [ww.foodbankccs.org](http://ww.foodbankccs.org) in December and donate in support of the employees of your own county! Let’s help them hit that million dollar mark!

## Wrapping Up - An Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden

The Food Bank’s 12th annual Afternoon in the Admiral’s Garden, presented by Pacific Service Credit Union, was a great success, with hundreds of guests attending! The sunny, 70 degree weather was perfect, with a slight breeze drifting off the water. Guests enjoyed a variety of gourmet appetizers and fine wines in the Tasting Tents, and grooved to the soulful blues sounds of Big Cat Tolefree. Vigorous bidding took place in the Silent Auction Tents and in the Live Auction, and happy winners claimed their treasures with ease. Englund’s Catering served their usual delicious lunch in the garden while our creative auctioneer Donnie Schwartz played “FUN”draising games with our guests. A wonderful treat after lunch was a variety of delicious cookies from the Family Cookie Company and Fentons Ice Cream! Many guests took the opportunity to tour St. Peter’s Chapel and the Naval Museum, and to self-tour both historic mansions. The day ended with our second annual Cupcake War, where guests sampled scrumptious mini-cupcakes while they watched our celebrity judges pick a winner. The day was perfect, and the Food Bank raised over \$128,000, the equivalent of 256,000 meals for those in need in our community. Guests are looking forward to next year’s extravaganza!

### Thank you to our sponsors

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Alza

### Thank you to our Tasting Tent Vendors

BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse  
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Culinary Capers and Chef Lori Mazon  
Fuji Food, Inc.  
GV Cellars  
Hannah Nicole Vineyards  
IZZE  
Kinder’s Meats & Deli  
Letter Carriers Tasting Tent Cooks  
Lindsay Olives

Schubros Brewery  
Trader Joe’s Concord  
Whole Foods Market Walnut Creek  
Wilma Lott Catering  
Winterhawk Winery  
Yankee Pier and Chef Michael Dunn

### Thank you to our Cupcake War competitors

Misti Short Cakes - Winner!  
Just a Simple Cup Cake  
JuneBug’s Bakery  
Miglets Cupcake Shop  
Sinful Bliss

### Thank you to our celebrities

Cecelia Mansilla, Survivor Cook Islands  
Sonja Christopher, Survivor Borneo  
Cheryl Hurd, NBC  
Eric Thomas, ABC 7 Bay Area News  
Chef Lori Mazon, Culinary Capers  
Chef Michael Dunn, Yankee Pier  
Lafayette

**Donate. Volunteer. Advocate.**

Visit [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org)  
Call 800-870-FOOD

## Building Community by Sharing Food

Hunger is closer than you think - one in every six people in our community struggles with hunger. Your neighbor, co-worker, or the person in front of you at the grocery store might not share with you that they are hungry, but you can help them. We can build community and take a stand against hunger by sharing our food and resources. It is as simple as that. Here are some ways you can make a difference and help us build community by sharing:

**FOOD DRIVE** Host a food drive at your business, place of worship, neighborhood, favorite store or your children's school. A Food Bank donation barrel is a stylish addition to any business or community room and we help you every step of the way. We will deliver empty barrels, pick up full barrels and send you a thank you letter with the weight of food you collected. See [www.foodbankccs.org/fooddrive](http://www.foodbankccs.org/fooddrive) to learn more or contact Joan Tomasini at [jtomasini@foodbankccs.org](mailto:jtomasini@foodbankccs.org) or 925-676-7543 extension 208.



**VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE** Let us shop for you. We are able to take your dollar and turn it into more food because we buy in large quantities. We give you ten choices of our most needed foods that you add to an online shopping cart and checkout. We can even create a drive just for your business or organization to get your family, friends and co-workers involved in a fun competition. Visit [www.foodbankccs.org/virtualfooddrive](http://www.foodbankccs.org/virtualfooddrive) to learn more or contact Patty McDowell at [pmcdowell@foodbankccs.org](mailto:pmcdowell@foodbankccs.org) or 925-676-7543, extension 243.

**BUY A BAG** Help raise money for the people served by the Food Bank and decorate your office, business or school for the holidays at the same time! Buy A Bags are colorful (die-cut) paper bags and Christmas stockings. You collect donations for each bag or stocking - \$1, \$5, \$10, etc. - you choose your donation price and start decorating! It's fun and easy. Every \$1 you collect allows the Food Bank to provide two nutritious meals for our neighbors in need. Visit [www.foodbankccs.org/buyabag](http://www.foodbankccs.org/buyabag) to learn more or contact Kathy Gleason at [kgleason@foodbankccs.org](mailto:kgleason@foodbankccs.org) or 925-676-7543 extension 218.



**CONTRA COSTA & SOLANO FOOD PROJECT** Meet the neighbors while helping the hungry! Neighbors set out a bag of food every two months. It's incredibly easy, because we supply the bag, and a neighbor picks up the food! This provides the Food Bank with a steady, year-round supply of food, and provides donors with the ongoing satisfaction of making a real difference. People also get to know their neighbors, which builds a powerful sense of community. So everyone wins. Visit [www.ccsfoodproject.org](http://www.ccsfoodproject.org) to learn more.