

SPRING 2013

BREAD CONNECTION

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

Addressing Senior Hunger



After a lifetime of work, many seniors are living on fixed incomes that often force them to choose between paying for healthcare or prescriptions and buying groceries. Nearly one in five older Californians are not able to afford enough food.

When the Food Bank was just getting started in the late 70s, stories started coming back to us about seniors eating less to save money and we knew we should try to make a difference with the food available to us.

The Senior Food Program was the first direct distribution program offered by the Food Bank. Starting in 1979 to 50 low-income seniors in Antioch, the program has grown to serve more than 3,200 seniors at 28 sites in Contra Costa and Solano counties. Today the Senior Food Program is run by more than 280 senior volunteers, some of whom have been with the program since its inception.

Twice a month the Food Bank gives out free bags of groceries to seniors from Brentwood to Richmond, and from Dixon to San Ramon. Last year more than 1.3 million pounds of food was distributed to the senior citizens who participated in the program.

Senior hunger is of particular importance in Contra Costa and Solano counties where the high cost of living means so many seniors rely on the Food Bank each month to put food on their tables.

As our elected officials make decisions about state and federal budgets, it's important that our community know that many seniors right here in Contra Costa and Solano counties rely on both federal nutrition programs and food banks to get by each month.

Use your voice to stand up for seniors.

On the web >> www.foodbankccs.org/seniorhunger

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The Food Bank has seen a significant change in our sources of food over the past several years. We were able to depend on the food manufacturing industry and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for our supply of shelf stable food. These donations of packaged goods could be stored until agencies needed the food. But the manufacturing industry is eliminating waste through their efficiencies and secondary market stores now purchase the donations we once received. Food donations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture are influenced by political decisions and today's budget climate limits how much food we receive.

Fresh produce has been the area where we can increase the amount we send into the community. We distributed 16 million pounds of donated food last year, nearly six million of that was fresh produce. We have made produce more available to our partner agencies through our remote distribution delivery system. We take fresh produce to our Senior Food Program sites and to our Food Assistance Program sites. We established Farm 2 Kids to deliver fresh produce every week to low-income children in after school programs. But as proud as we are about what we accomplished, we know we need to do more.

The Food Bank worked with the John Muir Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund to begin a Community Produce Program. The funding we received allowed us to purchase a refrigerated truck, hire a driver and a nutrition educator and obtain additional produce. We established 27 distribution sites from Martinez to Brentwood where we distribute fresh produce five afternoons a week. We are still improving the program, but since we have distributed over a million pounds of fresh produce in six months, we consider it a success.

Beginning in February, phase two of the Community Produce Program will roll out in western Contra Costa County and all of Solano County. We obtained another refrigerated truck through a grant from Kraft Foods administered by our national network Feeding America. Giving people in low-income neighborhoods access to millions of pounds of free produce helps families economically and nutritionally. The Food Bank is excited by what we will be able to do for those in need in our community.

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.



Facebook - www.facebook.com/foodbankccs

Twitter - @foodbankccs, E-news - www.foodbankccs.org/enews

Pinterest @foodbankccs, or let us know how we're doing on Yelp!



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NEWSLETTER DESIGN
MIGHTYminnow

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been serving the community for 37 years. We provide food to approximately 149,000 people at risk of hunger 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 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 neighbors at risk of hunger.



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ALZA has Fun for the Food Bank

The business community plays a major role in enabling the Food Bank to feed approximately 149,000 people each month. Many, like ALZA, a major pharmaceuticals manufacturer located in Vacaville, provide more than just financial support. ALZA's involvement with the Food Bank began with a friendly softball competition between ALZA and Genentech in 2006, with proceeds benefiting the Food Bank. Each year, during their annual United Way Campaign, ALZA invites the Food Bank to participate in the kick-off by sending representatives to distribute information about the Food Bank to ALZA employees. They also schedule three to four shifts during that same time period so their employees can volunteer at the Fairfield warehouse.

ALZA donates in-kind items to the Food Bank, such as a utility van that they no longer had use for. Every November, ALZA sponsors a Health Walk for employees; every employee who completes the walk receives a turkey and has the option to donate their turkey to the Food Bank. This year they donated 380 turkeys and \$240 in gift cards, which were distributed during the holiday season. ALZA has also supported an Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden, the Food Bank's major annual fundraising event, since 2007. The Food Bank is very fortunate to have the support of businesses like ALZA, who believe in giving back to their local community.

Register for Agency Summit 2013



We invite our partner agencies to join the Food Bank for a day of learning and discussion on how to maximize your agency's success. This year's Summit will include options for six informative breakout sessions where you will interact with other agencies to share challenges and accomplishments. Topics will include: Fundraising, CalFresh, Public Relations, Nutrition, Distributing USDA Commodities and more! Enjoy coffee refreshments and a complimentary catered lunch with a keynote address from Lorrie Sullenberger, a passionate advocate for wellness and wife to Sully Sullenberger of flight 1549 fame.

April 19th

8:30am-2pm

Registration opens at 8am

Nelson Community Center

611 Village Dr.

Suisun City, CA 94585

Plenty of free parking available.

Spaces are limited and going fast, so please register online at www.foodbankccs.org/summit. Registration is for member agencies only.



Agency Summit Keynote Speaker

Lorrie Sullenberger

Lorrie is passionate about health and wellness. She serves as a regional ambassador for the California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, has made regular media appearances, including 60 Minutes, Better TV, the CBS Early Show, ABC San Francisco's View from the Bay, and It's Your Health radio. She has also been featured in People magazine, contributed to Women's Day Magazine, written a monthly fitness and exercise column for the San Francisco Bay Area's Alive East Bay magazine, and has served on the advisory board of Shape magazine. In a role very near to her heart, she is a national spokesperson for Big Brothers Big Sisters.



Much More Than Food

Every year, the Food Bank and its agency partners work to provide extra food and resources to the community during the holiday season and this year was no different. In November and December, over 175 agencies and community based organizations, like food pantries and soup kitchens, benefitted from the support of Food Bank food and fund donors, who made it possible to supply thousands of individuals and families in need of food assistance.

Over 1,100 turkeys, 64,000 pounds of chicken noodle soup, green beans, mac and cheese, peaches, tuna and 178,000 pounds of assorted nonperishable food items were distributed. In addition to the food items, the Food Bank also distributed 3,000 Safeway gift cards to agency partners enabling them to purchase extra items for their pantries or soup kitchens to customize the items they were giving out, or cook more amazing meals for the people they serve.

The Food Bank is grateful that every year our community makes the effort to share their holiday season with the people we serve. While hunger continues to be an issue year round, many need extra help to make the holidays a reason to celebrate. Your support not only helps end hunger, but also provide them with a sense of hope and peace to bring into the New Year.

County Food Fighters Hit the Million Dollar Mark

Zowie! Pow! Bam! Contra Costa and Solano County employees topped the \$1 million dollar mark in the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight of 2012!

Our friendly little Food Fight competition between county employees, which started in 2004, has become a superhero fundraiser. This year in the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight, county employee Food Fighters raised over \$128,000, topping the One million dollar mark since the beginning of the competition.

And the winner is... Solano County!

Contra Costa County - \$9.69 per employee

Solano County - \$10.38 per employee

Congratulations to Solano County, who beat all previous per-employee dollars raised and has won ownership and bragging rights to the coveted Big Apple trophy for one year! (Contra Costa County employees vow "We'll be back" in 2013.) Of course the real winners are the individuals, seniors and families in need of the food assistance these funds will provide.

During the past years of poor economy, layoffs and unpaid furlough days, we find this accomplishment amazing. In fact, let it be known that fewer county employees raised more money than in the 2011 Food Fight! Thank you Solano and Contra Costa county employees, you are the Food Bank's very own super heroes!



Food Drive Fun Fact

Food Drive donations make up 1,000,000 pounds of food per year on average. Volunteers sort the food into boxes with categories like peanut butter and jelly, pasta, beans, cereal and canned soup. Those boxes are then available for our partner agencies to choose via an online ordering system.

Season of Giving

We start preparing for the holiday food drive season as early as September and October with annual food drives from Weight Watchers, Pleasant Hill Community Service Day, Walnut Creek Community Service Day, KCRA3 Kids Can School Food Drive in Solano County and Scare Away Hunger on Halloween night at Concord High School.

Next we ready ourselves for the outpouring of support in the form of Thanksgiving food drives hosted by schools across the counties we serve, local businesses, faith based communities, grocery stores, the annual Scouting for Food drive and two Turkey Trots.

The season doesn't slow down with December. There are more school food drives, business drives and holiday party food drives through the end of the year.

This food drive season reached an all time demand for our collection barrels as they visited all parts of our two counties many times over. Whether a location collected 10 pounds, 100 pounds or 1,000 pounds, every donated item put a smile on someone's face. Thank you to all our holiday food drive participants.



Holidays in the Bag

Empty paper grocery bags for holiday food collection were placed in newspapers throughout the two counties served by the Food Bank. The bags listed our most-needed food items as well as the many businesses that let us place collection barrels, including Mechanics Bank and Panera Bread. Mechanics Bank (19 locations) collected 3,581 pounds of food. Panera Bread (7 locations) collected 3,096 pounds of food. Of special note is Travis Credit Union (18 locations) which has been a holiday bag drop-off site for many years. This year Travis Credit Union collected 6,297 pounds of food from November through December. Having barrels at these businesses helped the Food Bank collect more food because their names and locations were easily recognizable to the public. Not only do these three businesses support the Food Bank, they also support many other wonderful nonprofits through special events and sponsorships. Thank you Mechanics Bank, Panera Bread and Travis Credit Union!

Hunger Checks Out

Local grocery stores made it very easy for people to donate and shoppers took full advantage. THANK YOU to the stores and our many generous donors that purchased bags of food or meals at a local grocery store this holiday season. Here are some amazing collection numbers:

Mi Pueblo Foods (Vallejo, Pittsburg): 7,455 pounds of food

Safeway Supermarkets (36 stores in our 2 counties): 156,110 pounds

Sprouts Farmers Market (Walnut Creek): 2,602 pounds

Whole Foods Markets (Lafayette, San Ramon, Walnut Creek): 38,405 pounds of food (the majority purchased through their "Grab & Give" Campaign)

Mi Pueblo Foods donations more than doubled and they also became a holiday bag food drop-off point. Sprouts Farmers Market (new to the area) jumped on board with bags of healthy prepacked nonperishable food. Whole Foods Markets tried a new "Grab and Give" approach where customers could donate money and Whole Foods would purchase a breakfast, lunch or dinner meal based on the customer's monetary donation. This campaign was extremely successful and added in several thousand pounds of food over last year. Safeway Supermarkets collected an additional 20,000 pounds of food mainly through their prepacked \$10 bags of food. Combined, these donations equate to over 160,000 meals!



Governor Proposes Balanced Budget

A balanced budget for the upcoming fiscal year was projected by Governor Brown in January when he released his proposed budget plan. The big budget news is increased spending on K -12 schools. We want to focus on two areas we feel will have the most impact on the people that rely on the Food Bank.

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program

CalWORKS provides cash assistance for 1.1 million low-income children as their parents find jobs. Significant cuts have been made to this program over the recent years including reducing General Fund spending on CalWORKS by \$469 million in the current fiscal year. In the governor's proposal, there is an increase of \$142.8 million in state support for CalWORKS. This is to support counties as they implement programmatic changes. Otherwise the proposed budget maintains the cuts that were made without reducing spending further.

Medi-Cal Program

California's version of Medicaid is called Medi-Cal and is a health coverage program serving eight million low-income children, parents, seniors and people with disabilities. Several cuts have been made to this program in recent years as well.

Governor Brown proposes two options for implementing the Medi-Cal expansion envisioned by the federal health care reform:

1. A state-based approach that would build upon the existing state-administered program and a managed care delivery system, or
2. A county-based approach that builds on the existing Low Income Health Program with the counties being the lead for the expansion.

Other proposals to Medi-Cal include:

- Extend a current fee on hospitals that is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2013, resulting in General Fund savings of \$310 million. The fee provides funding for children's health coverage as well as supplemental payments for hospitals.
- Implement unspecified "efficiencies" in Medi-Cal managed care in order to reduce General Fund spending by \$135 million.
- Require Medi-Cal enrollees to select their health plans during an annual open enrollment period and remain in that plan for a full year. This proposal would reduce General Fund spending by \$1 million in 2013-14 and each year thereafter.

We will keep you posted on how the budget will impact low-income people in our community as the budget process continues.

The information in this article was adapted from the California Budget Project brief on the Governor's proposal. You can read the full report here: www.foodbankccs.org/CAbudget.



Among client households with seniors, 30 percent have had to choose between paying for food and paying for medical care.

Senior Hunger Pop Quiz

How many seniors in California worry that they might not have enough to eat? Submit your answer in the poll at www.facebook.com/seniorhungerpoll Hint: The answer is in the cover article.

InterAmerican Coffee Buzzes Around the Food Bank

The InterAmerican Coffee Company believes in supporting their community. Fueled by coffee, most likely, the team from the local Pleasant Hill office sorted and boxed thousands of pounds of apples in early November. Ready to do more, they returned in December with their boss from Texas who joined in to sort incoming food drive food. This small team is the perfect example of what a few volunteers can do in a short time to help so many.

Volunteers help in so many ways all year long. During the holiday season hundreds of additional volunteers help us every week, enabling us to provide many of our agencies food for their holiday distributions. We thank all of the business groups, service clubs, school and faith based volunteers and individuals who make the holidays special for those we serve.



Collage by InterAmerican volunteers

If you would like to volunteer, please contact volunteerhelpdesk@foodbankccs.org

Upcoming Events: Spring 2013

MARCH 1 - APRIL 30

Make your gift go further with a match this spring! The Alan Shawn Feinstein foundation in Rhode Island is helping to fight hunger on a nationwide basis, as well as here in our community. All financial and food donations received by the Food Bank during the months of March and April will be matched proportionately by the Feinstein Foundation, meaning your gift will have an even bigger impact! For more information, contact Marilu Boucher at mboucher@foodbankccs.org or (925) 771-1309.

APRIL 21

CROP Walk Communities from Sonoma to the South Bay will come together this spring to fight hunger at home and around the world when they participate in the Bay Area Hunger Walk. Held annually, the purpose of the Walk is not only to raise money to fight hunger, but to raise awareness about the many people around the world who must walk long distances to secure basic necessities such as food and water. The walk takes place on Mare Island in Vallejo on April 21 with registration at 1:30 pm and a 2:00 pm walk time.

The Walk route will follow a path along the picturesque Mare Island Shoreline. So, pull out your walking shoes, enjoy a day outdoors and the beauty of the Mare Island waterfront, while joining your community in walking for hunger! For more information or to register, go to www.bayareahungerwalk.org.

APRIL 29-MAY 10

22nd Annual Food From the Bar Contra Costa County attorneys will once again hold their annual competitive fundraiser to benefit the Food Bank from April 29 through May 10. This is a great way for law firms to have fun while collecting food and money. Some participants form teams to compete, and offices use creative fundraising ideas like Bake Sales, Carnival Day, and Survivor Day. Some people have even shaved their heads to collect donations! There will be a multi-firm Walk-A-Thon around downtown Walnut Creek. Even better – there's a Cyber Competition! You can support your favorite attorney or law firm from the convenience of your home or office by donating online through Contra Costa County Food From the Bar's Virtual Food Drive!

MAY 3

Fore! Break on Hunger Golf Classic at Franklin Canyon Golf Course with a 12:30 pm shot gun start. For more information contact Mark Pitzlin at 925-286-8127 or Noreen Rognlien at 510-549-4651.

MAY 11

Letter Carriers Food Drive Letter carriers will be collecting food for the Food Bank as they deliver the mail in this one-day national food drive. Mark your calendar to leave a bag of nonperishable food by your mailbox prior to your regular mail delivery on May 11 and remember to thank your letter carrier for their efforts in fighting local hunger.

Donate. Volunteer. Advocate.

Visit www.foodbankccs.org
Call 800-870-FOOD

Empty Bowls March 9 and 10

This community event is for all ages, with food, fun and a tour of our warehouses. Join the Food Bank this March for a simple meal served in a handcrafted bowl and learn about how we are working to get more nutritious food to people in need and what you can do to help.

Chevron is sponsoring two events – one in each of our warehouses: in Concord on Saturday, March 9 from 5:00-7:00 pm and in Fairfield on March 10 from 3:00-5:00 pm.

The cost is \$10 per adult, \$5 for children under the age of 9, or \$30 for a family of four. Both events feature a variety of soup with bread, a raffle, and speakers who work with hunger first-hand and are passionate about ending hunger in our community.

Register online at www.foodbankccs.org/events or contact Renee at rbaptiste@foodbankccs.org or 925-771-1310.



Save the Date June 23, 2013

www.theeventofthesummer.com

Enjoy fine wine, appetizers and a gourmet lunch at An Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden. There will be opportunities to win exciting prizes all while helping to end hunger in your community. Mark June 23 from 12-4 pm on your calendar, so you don't miss the event of the summer!

Sponsorship and prize-donation opportunities are available.