



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

## Holiday Food For All

Food pantries, soup kitchens and other organizations come to the Food Bank during the holiday season, looking for assistance for the programs they plan for the public. For some organizations, this is the highlight of their year. Their efforts are focused on Christmas, and they serve hundreds, even thousands, of people. They have worked out deals with grocery stores and partnerships with service groups. They have raised funds throughout the year to put on a big community event. For other organizations, the holidays require additional effort over and above the service they provide during other months. They may be serving the people they have helped throughout the year. For almost all of the programs, the Food Bank is their largest donor.

Agencies receive a mix of food drive items, canned tuna, fruit cocktail and green beans, turkeys and gift certificates. They are offered produce as well. This year, they were offered apples, oranges, sweet potatoes, potatoes, onions and cabbage, depending on what was available when they picked up their orders. Not every agency takes all the produce they are offered, but a majority of the agencies distributed three to four produce items this year. This is a wonderful benefit for the people they serve, as consuming fresh fruits and vegetables has health benefits including preventing chronic disease.

The table below shows statistics for the programs in 2010. The number of meals and baskets is an estimate that is provided before the season occurs. It is the number that the Food Bank uses to judge how much food to share with each organization.

	<b>Contra Costa</b>	<b>Solano</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of programs	74	38	112
Projected number of Christmas meals	5,681	1,600	7,281
Projected number of Christmas baskets	15,532	4,175	19,707
Pounds of food drive	113,562	37,782	151,344
Pounds of produce	47,751	18,022	65,773
Number of turkeys	1,198	340	1,538
Total pounds of food	214,186	70,912	285,098
Number of \$10 gift cards distributed	1,378	1,207	2,585

Hundreds of volunteers throughout the two counties we serve came together during December to assemble and distribute food baskets or to cook delicious holiday meals for their less fortunate neighbors. Because you were there for us, we are able to be there for these volunteers. They can plan their programs, knowing that the Food Bank will come through with sufficient supplies for them to feel comfortable opening their doors to the community. Each year, we work with old friends, newly established organizations and people who have just learned that the Food Bank can help them put smiles on people's faces during the holiday season. We all appreciate the support that you provide.

## Advocacy Made Easy: The State Budget

In order to close the latest state budget deficit of almost \$20 billion the Governor has again proposed eliminating services that are vital to low-income families.

### Budget Lowlights:

- × Elimination of the California Food Assistance Program (a program for legal immigrants who have resided in the US for less than 5 years; these folks are not eligible for federal food stamps).
- × Elimination of the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI).
- × \$15 a month reduction in SSI grants for individuals. (In CA people receiving SSI cannot receive Food Stamps, so this cut can result in less money available for food).
- × Budget Trigger – depends on \$6.9 billion from the federal government to balance the budget or it will “trigger” elimination of the CalWORKs Program and the In Home Support Services Program.

You can help! Email [lherrill@food-bankccs.org](mailto:lherrill@food-bankccs.org) or call 925-771-1304 for information on how you can make a difference including letter templates and visits with legislators.

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## Letter from the Executive Director

When you hear economic experts discuss the impact of the major recession we are experiencing, much of what they say is pretty obvious. Experts pointed out that when the recovery came, the turn around for jobs would be the last to come. The service the Food Bank provides in the community demonstrates how accurate that statement is. Experts say that the recession ended several months ago, as early as last summer. Financial markets stabilized and the stock market began to recover. While there may be some small signs of job recovery (more temporary staff were hired over the holiday season) things are certainly not better for the people we serve.

The Food Assistance Program we operate is the most direct form of help we offer to people in need. In every city in Contra Costa and Solano counties, we distribute food from the back of our trucks to low-income people each month and through this program, people have a chance to receive food support on a consistent basis. Using this program as an economic indicator does not give a good picture of the short term future. Our service numbers are up by more than 20% overall, and are up by more than 30% in some areas. The frightening part is that the number of people we serve continues to increase every month, no matter what the economic news says. We serve 300 people one month and 330 come the following month. People in our community do not have jobs, including people who had good jobs a year ago. The people we serve are not seeing things get better and they see no signs it is going to change.

In spite of this negative news, I remain an optimistic person. The community is responding generously to our requests for financial support and that enabled us to increase our distribution of fresh produce to six million pounds last year, a 50% increase over the previous year. While we cannot get people jobs, we can get them food. I know the Food Bank is doing the right thing, helping those in need until they can work again.



### Save the Date... **For the Event of the Summer!**

Please join the Food Bank and celebrity host **Gene Burns**, legendary foodie and KGO radio talk show host, and sample a multitude of delicious award winning foods and beverages at our tenth annual "Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden". The fundraising event will be held on *Sunday, June 27, 2010* at the *Admiral's Mansion, Captain's Quarters*, and surrounding grounds on Mare Island in Vallejo. Look for more details coming soon!



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The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been serving the community for over 34 years. We provide food to more than 100,000 hungry people in need every month through a network of 180 charitable agencies, and distributed over 11 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.



#### Contra Costa Location

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#### Solano Location

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Fairfield, CA 94553  
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## Buy A Bag!

Thank you to all individuals, businesses, clubs and schools that participated in the 2009 Holiday Buy A Bag program. To date, \$17,975.25 in Buy A Bag donations have been recorded, and we're still counting! Remember, you can sell Buy A Bags to benefit the Food Bank at any time during the year! For more information contact Kathy Gleason at [kgleason@foodbankccs.org](mailto:kgleason@foodbankccs.org) or 925-771-1313.

## Side Dishes...

### CREATIVE FOOD DRIVES

This holiday season, we had several businesses conduct some creative food drives. Their ideas increased their business and helped those in need. Here are two examples:

The Brenden Theater in Concord had two special offers: 1) On Tuesdays, buy one ticket, bring in a can of food and receive the 2nd person's admission for free, and 2) Bring in a can of food anytime and receive a free small container of popcorn. The Brenden Theater collected an amazing 1,970 pounds of food.

Clayton Valley Bowl in Concord offered one free game of bowling with a donated can of food. For those that love to bowl, this was a great deal. Their special offer brought in 816 pounds of much needed food.

### FEINSTEIN FOUNDATION OFFERS \$1 MILLION TO HELP FIGHT HUNGER

Once again, the Alan Shawn Feinstein Foundation in Rhode Island is helping to fight hunger -- 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. Your gift can make a difference!

## Food Stamp Outreach

For over five years, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been involved in Food Stamp Outreach. What does this mean? The Food Stamp Program, now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by the federal government, is the first line of defense against hunger. It is a direct transfer of federal funds to local communities; for every \$1 of food stamps distributed, the community actually spends \$1.73 because people have extra dollars to spend on food and other necessary non food (taxable) items at the grocery store such as toilet paper and toothpaste. Statistics demonstrate that over 50% of adults in the United States have participated in the Food Stamp program during their lifetime.

As you can imagine, the number of people enrolling in the Food Stamp program has increased significantly in the past year. In Contra Costa County, enrollment is up 27.7% over last year. The cash value of Food Stamp benefits

during the same period increased 66.6% from \$4,545,017 in September 2008 to \$7,572,767 in September 2009. Similarly, in Solano County enrollment was up 23.5% and the cash value of Food Stamp benefits increased 59.4% from \$2,969,597 to \$4,732,637 between September 2008 and September 2009. The Food Stamp Outreach team at the Food Bank, Barbara Stanley and Juan Orozco, are proud to be part of this program growth, as Food Stamps allow people to choose the items they like to eat at the store. While food baskets are a terrific supplement and help prevent hunger, they are heavy on shelf stable items. Food stamps -- now loaded on an electronic benefit card, similar to a debit card -- are easy to use and help people acquire the foods they need for a nutritious diet including fresh produce and milk.

**For every \$1 of food stamps distributed, the community actually spends \$1.7.**



We conduct food stamp outreach in partnership with the Food Stamp Analysts in Contra Costa and Solano counties. We have developed a "train the trainer" model with quarterly "Food Stamps Myths and Facts" trainings in both counties as well as Food Stamp Outreach partner luncheons. People who are

referring clients have the opportunity to meet and talk to county personnel who are experts on the complicated regulations and somewhat daunting office and eligibility processes. In addition, Barbara and Juan visit food distribution sites and parent meetings to share information with the low income community about the benefits of the Food Stamp Program. California has one of the lowest enrollments in the Food Stamp Program in the entire United States. The Food Bank is able to serve all the people who come to us for food, but we also want to help people get out of poverty by being sure they have good information about government programs for which they are eligible. Food Stamp Outreach is one of the ways we do that.





## Teen Board takes a BITE out of hunger

The holidays are over and the numbers are in! The amazing schools in our two counties went above and beyond with collecting over 160,000 pounds of food and over \$25,000. All sizes of schools participated from pre-school to college, from small schools to large schools. This year we had some new schools participate including Hercules High School, Pinole Valley High School, California Maritime Academy in

**The amazing schools in our two counties went above and beyond with collecting over 160,000 pounds of food and over \$25,000.**

Vallejo, Creekside Elementary in Danville, Ygnacio Valley Elementary in Concord, Verde Elementary in Richmond, John Muir Elementary in Antioch and Federal Terrace Elementary in Vallejo.

So who are the winners? We are all winners but the real winners are those that will receive our food and go to bed with full tummies. The holiday food drives would not be a success without the energy of the teachers, the parents and the students. Thank you to all of you for being the food drive organizers, the doers, the motivators and the supporters!

Your help is needed every day of the year. Did you know that some of our schools are just starting food drives because they

**The holiday food drives would not be a success without the energy of the teachers, the parents and the students.**

know that food is needed year round. Food drives coming up include Benicia High School, Green Valley Elementary in Danville, Walnut Acres Elementary in Walnut Creek, Acalanes High School in Lafayette and Hercules Middle School. Let's all join in and have a spring food drive before school is over so we can continue helping our local community. Just call to order your barrels and get your campaign going!

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## Volunteer Spotlight: What's Up? Volunteering Of Course

The Food Bank is serving more clients than ever before. The positive news is we are hearing from more people wanting to volunteer and we are putting as many as

**The positive news is we are hearing from more people wanting to volunteer and we are putting as many as possible to work.**

possible to work. There are many reasons why people in our community are rallying to help. President Obama has established United We Serve and has called upon Americans to make a difference. High unemployment and an already eager-to-serve generation of young people have spurred

interest in lending a hand. We have more schools, Scouts, and clubs volunteering. The recent holiday season brought many corporate volunteers in to help. Some companies were able to send help during the day and others after work hours. All made a huge impact on our ability to sort and box donated food. Just one example is AAA who opened its new headquarters in Walnut Creek this past November. Groups from AAA sorted and boxed thousands of pounds of food in December. We are receiving more calls from families who want to volunteer together to teach their children to serve.

**AAA employees volunteer at the Food Bank's Concord warehouse sorting donated food.**

While young children are not normally able to help in our "working warehouses", our recent Family Volunteer Days saw over 100 volunteers starting at age 5 and up helping in our Concord and Fairfield warehouses. The need is certainly up but volunteers in our community have seen the need and are here to help.



## A Donor Story... **Bank of the West**

Bank of the West on Treat Blvd. in Walnut Creek has been a constant supporter of the Food Bank since 1996. They began with United Way donations, celebrating our 25th Anniversary with us along with volunteering at our Food Bank. In 2003, they became annual sponsors of our Holiday Food Drive Bags as well as participating in “ABC7/Safeway Thanksgiving Meals”

which funds are used to purchase food for our holiday baskets. They have taken time to come out for a live interview to give out prizes such as Bank of the West Beanie Bears for anyone willing to donate monetary and food donations. Over the years, we have received over \$50,000 to purchase food for the residents in our community. Bank of the West has been

one of our hidden treasures that quietly continue to support behind the scenes to help our Food Bank feed the community. It is an honor to work with John Lavezzoli and Faud Omran throughout the holiday season each year and knowing we can count on their support to help us.



**ABC7s Leslie Griffith and Bank of the West Faud Omran.**



**Jessica and Jacob Laurente holding their Bank of the West Beanie Bears.**

## Upcoming Events

### **February** **Fenton's at the Nut Tree**

Stop by Fenton's at the Nut Tree (1669 East Monte Vista Avenue in Vacaville) and indulge in the creamy goodness of the “Berry in Love” sundae during the month of February – and Fenton's will donate a portion of the price to the Food Bank. Don't forget your nonperishable food donation to be placed in the red barrel in the lobby.

### **February 21** **Warriors Benefit Game**

Bring your family and friends to enjoy this specially discounted price and see the Warriors take on the Atlanta Hawks! \$10 of every ticket purchase is donated back to the Food Bank and the first 50 purchasers will have an opportunity to sit courtside before the game to watch the players warm-up! To purchase tickets or learn more, download the flyer.

### **March** **Curves Food Drive**

Donate nonperishable food at participating Curves during the month long food drive.

### **April 24 – 25** **Tossed Treasures Sale**

The Lafayette Service League is sponsoring a Tossed Treasures Sale on Saturday, April 24 from 9 am to 3 pm and on Sunday, April 25 from 11 am to 2 pm at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road in Lafayette. Proceeds from the sale will benefit the Food Bank.

### **May 1** **“Through the Garden Gate” Garden Tour**

Whether you are looking for a relaxing way to spend a Saturday afternoon or are in the midst of planning your own garden transformation, we hope you will join us for what promises to be another fun and inspirational day touring five of Lamorinda's awe-inspiring gardens. Tickets are

\$30 each (\$25 is tax deductible) and will be available for purchase online at [www.moragajuniors.org](http://www.moragajuniors.org) in mid-March. All proceeds from the event this year will support the Food Bank's Farm 2 Kids program.

### **May 8** **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 this day.

### **May 17 – 28** **17TH Annual Food From the Bar Food/Fund Drive**

Attorneys, law firms and courts participate in a competitive food and money drive benefiting the Food Bank. Please encourage your lawyer or law firm to participate. Contact Renee' Baptiste for Contra Costa County at 925/771-1310.

## Holiday Food and Fund Drives

Take a look at just some of the many ways the community supported the Food Bank during the Holiday Season. Please visit our website [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org) to see other ways individuals, businesses and groups have been helping the Food Bank.

During the holiday season, ABC7 and Safeway sponsor the Share Your Holiday food drive in local stores which brought in over 92,000 pounds of food -- a tremendous help throughout the winter months. Community members purchase non-perishable groceries and put their bags into the barrels in the front of Safeway stores. In addition, ABC7 and Safeway sponsor a one day event in which the Food Bank teamed up with the Alameda County Community Food Bank at the new Safeway Store in San Ramon. This one day we were able to raise over \$???? and ??? pounds of food. We are truly grateful to all those involved in this event for their time, hard work and energy to make the event successful.

Beginning on Nov. 1 all bay area Whole Foods Markets kept barrels in their stores to receive non-perishable food donations for the holiday months during the CBS5/

Whole Foods Market Food for Bay Area Families food drive and collected ??? pounds of food. On Dec. 8, Whole Foods held a 5% Day in support of Food for Bay Area Families which made a donation of \$?????. During the drive, CBS5 also generously provided on air-time to recognize donors.

### Many thanks to all of those involved for the much needed food.

For many years, ABC7/Safeway Thanksgiving Meals has continued to help us raise the money needed to make almost 15,000 holiday baskets for our neighbors. Our special donors -- who gave \$??? and ??? turkeys -- had the honor of having their names announced on the 6:00 evening news by ABC7's Spencer Christian.

In an effort to lend a helping hand this holiday season, CVS/pharmacy stores partnered with local food banks to aid in the fight against hunger during the NBC Bay Area's Holiday Food Drive. Volunteers at Bay Area stores handed out information and asked for donations food

on November 21, making a huge impact to this food drive. The drive collected, 16,115 pounds of food and \$??? in one day. The overall food drive collected ??? (is this the 16,115???) pounds of food that will be distributed during the winter months to those desperately in need.

Other Holiday Food drives include Travis Credit Union: 5267 pounds, Food Maxx: 3,562 pounds, Save Mart: 2,360 pounds, and Luckys: 26,454 pounds. Over 300 community food drives were held during the 2009 holiday season and every single one made a difference to the Food Bank and the people we serve. Many thanks to all of those involved for the much needed food.

Throughout the year the Food Bank is the beneficiary of so many wonderful events and food drives thanks to the generous community. These are the events that raised over 1000 pounds of food or \$500. Unfortunately space prohibits us from listing all of our generous donors, but we are deeply appreciative of all that we are given.

[See Photos on next page >>>](#)

## Big Winners in Holiday Food Fight 2009!

Solano County Employees won the coveted Big Apple trophy, and Contra Costa County Employees broke through the \$100,000 barrier! Who would have thought this was possible in the drastic economic times we currently live in?



Using the Food Bank Buy A Bag program to raise funds, in the employee to employee Food Fight competition Solano County employees donated \$25,340.29 equaling 28 meals or \$9.33 per employee! Solano County collected an additional \$1,205 from "friends" in online donations. In the employee to employee competition, Contra Costa County employees raised \$59,316.74 equaling 27 meals or \$9.10 per employee. Contra Costa raised another \$20,631.16 from "friends" and \$23,800.84 in on-line donations, raising a grand total of \$103,748.74! Together both counties raised a grand total of \$130,294.03 in The Counties Care Holiday Food Fight 2009!

Congratulations Solano County, you are proud owners of the Big Apple Food Fight trophy for one year! Kudos to Contra Costa County for raising over \$100,000! And congratulations to residents in both counties as your community will now benefit from the efforts of county employees.

In the current economic climate, these figures are shocking! Hats off to employees of both counties and additional donors for a job well done! Special thanks to the following for promoting the Food Fight: Gene Burns at KGO Radio, and Coast Radio stations: KUIC, KKVD and KUIC.

And now the question of the year -- who will win Holiday Food Fight 2010?





Round Hill



Apple Hill



ABC's Laura Anthony and County Connection.



WestCAT



Stonegate



ABC's Leigh Glasser and kids.



Travis Credit Union



CBS 5 recognizing the Student Food Drive.



Moraga CVS store manager & volunteers from Key Club & Kiwanis.



Cal High Food Drive



Muir Orthopaedic Specialists



NBC's bay area's Jessica Aguirre



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Agency Corner... Agency Summit 2010:

## Thinking Outside the Food Box

Join us on March 19 as we think outside the food box and learn about hunger issues in our community. Come to broaden your awareness of community resources and improve communication between agencies, the Food Bank, and other partners. Learn about disaster planning, healthy eating, food safety, and much more! For early-bird registration go to [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org).