

BREAD CONNECTION

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

Busy Volunteers from Barrels to Bread

The holiday season is the busiest time of year for the Food Bank volunteers and staff. Our red and white collection barrels are everywhere collecting much needed food. Before the barrels can go out to their collection destination, they need to be cleaned, wrapped and have sponsor labels added. For the past few years, this volunteer task has been taken on by current and retired employees from Shell Martinez Refinery. These amazing crews come in for a few hours and have 2000 barrels “ready to roll” in no time.

Another labor intensive project handled by a regular volunteer crew is bread. Donated bread is picked up by Food Bank trucks and transported in large rolling racks to our warehouse. Volunteers stack the bread in trays that can be easily taken to our distributions. Our volunteers help in so many ways. When new opportunities arise we are fortunate to have volunteers who are ready to meet the need.

RIGHT A volunteer fits bread into racks like puzzle pieces. Each tray must contain at least ten bread items.



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In my job, I spend a good deal of time sitting at a desk, signing checks, talking to volunteers and staff members, and doing that “stuff” that is part of being an Executive Director. I recently had the chance to go to our Food Assistance Program distribution in Antioch. This distribution site has nearly tripled service over the last eight years, with a good deal of that growth taking place in the last three years. We distributed over 12,000 pounds of food to more than 500 families the day I was there (in the recent past we have distributed

more than 600 orders in a single day).

I’m incredibly proud of the volume of service we deliver, but am more proud of the professional and caring way in which we provide food to the people we serve. Our trucks arrive at the Veteran’s Hall in Antioch two hours in advance of the 10:00 am distribution. Three staff members work with a crew of twenty volunteers to make this distribution happen. Half of the volunteers put the bags together, assembling food donations from the US Department of Agriculture, bread, canned goods and several produce items. Other volunteers are in the Veteran’s Hall building, registering new participants and checking in those who come each month. Each recipient walks away with nearly thirty pounds of food. This distribution is an excellent example of the way we work. The dedication of volunteers and staff members is amazing.

Sitting in my office, I know what we do as a statistic. I see the aggregate numbers that show we distribute nearly 14 million pounds of food a year. But going to a distribution site and seeing a mother balance a bag of groceries on her baby’s stroller as she walks away says more than statistics ever could and lets me know we are doing something right.

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](https://twitter.com/foodbankccs)
 YouTube - www.youtube.com/user/foodbankccs
 Blog - www.foodbankccs.org/wordpress
 E-news - www.bitly.com/foodbanknews
 Also find us on Google +, LinkedIn and Yelp.com

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NEWSLETTER DESIGN
MIGHTYminnow

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been serving the community for 36 years. We provide food to more than 132,000 hungry people in need every month through direct service programs and a network of 180 charitable agencies, which allowed us to distribute nearly 14 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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Wrapping Up the Holidays

Checking Out for Charity

Help Us End Hunger Holiday Food Drive

During the holidays, Safeway stores offered customers the opportunity to purchase \$10 pre-packed bags of groceries to fill our barrels. To increase the amount of food we would receive, Safeway and NBC Bay Area partnered for a special blitz on Saturday November 19th. In one day, volunteers collected 1,581 bags of food totaling 11,977 pounds of food (plus 368 turkeys). Hats off to NBC Bay Area, Safeway stores and its customers, along with a special thank you to the November 19th volunteers for donating their time in the battle against hunger! The total amount of food collected during this drive was over 136,000 pounds!

Serving Up Hope - Fight Hunger Together

Save Mart, Lucky and FoodMaxx stores joined in the fight against hunger inviting customers to donate \$1 or more by purchasing a "Serving up Hope" icon at the checkout stands. The stores also placed our barrels

in the stores for nonperishable food donations. Over 13,000 pounds of food was donated. We are anxiously waiting for the monetary donations to be presented. Many thanks to everyone for supporting this fight against hunger!

Food for Bay Area Families

CBS5 partnered with Whole Foods Market again this year to focus on hunger in our community. While CBS5 broadcast our needs, the Whole Foods Markets in Walnut Creek, San Ramon, and Lafayette invited their customers to purchase nonperishable food to help us provide for those in need in our community. Whole Foods Market even offered customers an additional 20% off (over and above the case discount) for any case of food purchased for the Food Bank. Customers were also offered the opportunity to make cash donations at the checkout stands. The Walnut Creek Whole Foods Market held a special 5% day in December, with 5 cents of each dollar spent at the store donated to the Food Bank. We couldn't be more pleased with a generous donation of over \$4,893. At the end of the holidays our barrels overflowed with over 14,000 pounds of food!

Counties Care Holiday Food Fight 2011

Once again, Solano and Contra Costa County employees stepped forward to help their neighbors in need during the holidays. Not easily discouraged by the poor economy, layoffs and furlough days, county employees raised a grand total of \$116,133.90 to benefit the Food Bank!

In the employee to employee competition, Contra Costa County retained the big apple trophy by raising \$9.91 per employee, compared with Solano County's \$8.11 per employee.

The Food Fight competition began in 2004, with a combined total of \$72,103.70 raised. Since then, Contra Costa County has won the Big Apple trophy five times and Solano County has won it three times. In the eight year Food Fight history, county employees have raised a very grand total of \$927,643.73 for the Food Bank.

Although each county fights to win possession of the trophy each year, all employees understand that the real winners in this competition are the thousands of residents that their hard earned donations dollars will feed.

DONOR STORY

Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley

The Food Bank could not feed 132,000 people each month without the support of organizations like the Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley. Since 2005, members of this service club have been contributing time, energy, and money to helping the Food Bank. They have been a major force in assisting with several NBC Bay Area holiday food drives, providing numerous volunteers as well as their own trucks to transport food donations. On November 19th, their members spent the day at area Safeway stores encouraging customers to purchase \$10 bags of groceries or turkeys. They collected enough food to fill two trucks. In 2009 they set a record working at 6 CVS stores, 4 Safeway stores and Lundardi's, bringing in 20,635 pounds of food and turkeys. Total poundage from 2005 through 2011 is a whopping 110,536 pounds!

Kiwanis is a global organization with a membership of over 600,000, devoted to strengthening their communities through service and serving the needs of children, in particular. One in four of the people who receive emergency food assistance through Food Bank programs are children so these dedicated members truly live their commitment.



Hundreds of Kiwanians spent the day telling other shoppers about the Safeway Help Us End Hunger Food Drive. One of the many efforts that helped us place 21st in this national drive.

Agency Summit 2012 - From Hunger to Health

In the fight against hunger, access to nutritious food is as important as having enough to eat. This is the idea that inspired the theme of our annual Agency Summit 2012 that is being held on April 13th. Every year the Food Bank gathers its agencies and community partners to share ideas and learn from each other how best to serve our community. This year

the event will be held at the beautiful Craneway Pavilion on the Richmond waterfront and will feature a keynote address from the California Food Policy Advocates' George Manalo-LeClair. The event will highlight a variety of topics from how to expand agency capacity to serve more clients to the best ways to advocate for policy change. Anyone interested in participating in a day of learning and discussion surrounding hunger issues should call (925) 677-7010 or (707) 421-9777 x241 or email csly@foodbankccs.org to register. To learn more about the Summit or to register, visit www.foodbankccs.org. We look forward to seeing you there!



Travis Credit Union

Every November, we place a food drive donation bag in our local newspapers to remind our community to donate nonperishable food so we can make sure those in need have food for the holidays. Because Travis Credit Union has barrels in their offices year-round, they make it easy for us to tell our donors to drop off bags of food at their local Travis Credit Union. In 2011, the combined 18 locations brought in a fantastic 10,392 pounds of food! Thanks to Travis Credit Union, their customers and our other donors who help us collect food throughout the year for our local communities.

Feinstein Challenge March 1 - April 30

Once again, 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.



Empty Bowls

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 food to people in need.

You will enjoy a delicious meal and leave with a handcrafted bowl and ideas on ways to get involved in the eradication of hunger.

Chevron is sponsoring two events - one at each of our warehouses: In Concord on Saturday, 3/24, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

and in Fairfield on Sunday, 3/25, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

The cost is \$10 per adult, \$30 for a family of four and \$5 for children under the age of 9. Both events will feature a variety of soups, beverages, dessert, raffle and door prizes and speakers who are passionate about ending hunger in our community.

For reservations, raffle donations or if you would like to sell tickets on our behalf, please contact Reneé at rbaptiste@foodbankccs.org or (925) 771-1310.



Governor Proposes Harmful Cuts that Will Leave More Californians Hungry

In his 2012-13 budget proposal released in January, Governor Brown included \$2.5 billion in cuts to safety net programs that serve low-income households at risk of hunger. These proposals come on top of difficult cuts in last year's budget that contributed to a sobering \$15 billion in cumulative reductions to health and human services made since 2008. If approved, the Governor's cuts will increase the hardship for low-income seniors and families, leading more of them to experience hunger and seek out already overburdened food banks for assistance. Initial analyses indicate the Governor is proposing cutting \$946 million from CalWORKs, \$842 million from Medi-Cal, \$164 million from In-Home Supportive Services, \$447 million from child care, and \$87 million from various other health and human services. These cuts would mean significant reductions in vital services to the same vulnerable Californians who have been hit year after year by harsh cuts to safety net supports.

The Governor could hardly have proposed these cuts at a worse time. Like many other food charities in California, food banks experienced a jump in demand for services of 46 percent with the onset of the recession, and demand has continued to climb ever since. Recent reports from the Food Research & Action Center based on extensive Gallup polling show that 20.5 percent of California residents (7.5 million), and a staggering 26.7 percent of California households with children, are struggling with food hardship as the recession lingers. Given these sobering numbers, there is little doubt that the Governor's budget will drive demand even higher.

Governor Brown's budget assumes the passage of a ballot initiative in November will raise \$6.9 billion annually through temporary increases in the sales tax and income taxes on high-income earners, and includes cuts to K-12, higher education, and public safety that will be triggered if the revenue initiative fails. However, the Governor proposes making the devastating cuts to safety net services in March, regardless of whether his tax initiative passes.

Let your representatives know that you are calling on them to reject the Governor's proposed cuts to essential health and human services and to move forward with a plan that restores our social safety net and protects California's most vulnerable from worsening hardship.

Legislative Changes Reduce Barriers for CalFresh Applicants

Good news came in October for CalFresh outreach with the passing of AB 6, a law which brings changes to the application and reporting process for those eligible for the nutritional assistance program. A significant provision of AB 6 is the elimination of the Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System (SFIS) as a requirement for issuing CalFresh benefits, which went into effect January 1st of this year. Now, Californians are able to apply for and receive CalFresh benefits without being fingerprinted and photo imaged

as part of the application process. The finger imaging process was originally put into place to help eliminate duplicate aid (applicants applying for benefits in more than one county), but with the effectiveness of other tools already in place for preventing fraud, many advocates and those working with CalFresh have found the system to no longer be necessary and have viewed it as an obstacle and deterrent for those wishing to apply, due in part to the misconceptions and fears many have had about the system. The elimination of the SFIS requirement is also effective in streamlining the application process thanks to other recent changes for CalFresh, such as the option to complete the application and interview process online and over the phone. Now, CalFresh applicants can choose not to go into the county office at all, which benefits the many eligible

participants who work full time or who have issues with transportation. Another change coming with AB 6 is the shift from a quarterly reporting system to a semi-annual reporting system, which will come into effect in 2013, and will mean those already receiving CalFresh benefits will complete required reporting twice a year instead of every three months. As the Food Bank continues its work with CalFresh outreach, we are excited about these changes that will help us with our continued goal of increasing applications and helping to feed more people in our community.



Make It a Habit

By Kelly Webster

At Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek, our Food Project Committee discussed how to increase the giving nature of our members. We posed the age old question: How do we get people to give all year round and not just during the holidays and on special occasions? I had a vague memory of a study that said it takes 21 days to form a habit. What this means is that if I purchased some food for the Food Bank every time I went to the store, after 21 times this action would automatically be a habit, I wouldn't need to write myself a note and I wouldn't find myself running down an aisle when my cart was ready for checkout. So we agreed to create a business size card called "Get the Habit" with numbers 1 through 21 on the card and hand the card out to our congregation. Here are the easy steps to follow:

Step 1: Every time you go to the grocery store add one item for the Food Bank to your grocery cart.

Step 2: Cross off one number on the card.

Step 3: Repeat.

Step 4: Bring the food to a Food Bank barrel.

After 21 times, your food sharing habit will be engrained. Not only will you be learning a new habit, you will be helping the Food Bank collect food year round for those in need in our community. We hope you will share this idea with your place of worship, your children's school, your friends and anyone else willing to listen. Together we can "Make a Habit" of making hunger go away.

Sign up for the
Food Bank e-news

www.bitly.com/foodbanknews

Upcoming Events: Spring 2012

DOUBLE YOUR GIVING IN MARCH AND APRIL!

Feinstein Challenge. Once again, 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.

MARCH 24/25

Empty Bowls. Join us for a simple meal served in a handcrafted bowl and get a behind the scenes look at the Food Bank. Keep the handcrafted bowl you use as a reminder of all of the empty bowls in our community. March 24 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at our Concord warehouse and March 25 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at our Fairfield warehouse. Both events cost \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, \$30 for a family of 4.

APRIL 28

Benefit Concert for "CROP" Hunger Walk. 6:00 pm at First Christian Church of Vallejo. For more information please contact Reneé Baptiste at rbaptiste@foodbankccs.org.

APRIL 29

Second Annual CROP Walk Vallejo Waterfront. The CROP Hunger Walk is an annual event organized to raise awareness about hunger throughout the world as well as to raise funds to help stop hunger. The Food Bank is one of the local organizations participating in the walk. Registration opens at 9:00 am at the Ferry Building in Vallejo, with the walk starting at 9:30 am. For more information contact Reneé Baptiste rbaptiste@foodbankccs.org.

MAY 12

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 Saturday mail delivery.

MAY 7-18

17th Annual Food From the Bar Food/Fund Drive. Attorneys, law firms and court employees participate in a competitive food and money drive benefiting the Food Bank. Please encourage your lawyer or law firm to participate. Contact Reneé Baptiste at 925-771-1310.

FOR MORE EVENTS VISIT THE FOOD BANK WEBSITE

www.foodbankccs.org/events

Ask us how you can host an event on behalf of the Food Bank by contacting Reneé - rbaptiste@foodbankccs.org.

A Lesson in Giving

The schools in our two counties are amazing during the holidays! Not only did they collect over 150,000 pounds of food and over \$35,000, but many students also volunteered by sorting food at our warehouses. No matter what the size of the school population, the age of the students or the location of the school, we couldn't do what we do without these critical food drives. We LOVE our schools!

Here is an example of a very creative

food drive: For the last two years, Stanley Middle School in Lafayette has dramatically increased its food drive collection to an amazing 8,957 pounds of food. What is most noteworthy is that they do this in one day. We asked about the secret to their success: Part 1 - The Physical Education teacher is in charge of the drive and asks all students to bring in a bag of food. If they do this their reward is to NOT have to run the mile that day. Considering the amount of food they collect, I don't think any

students are running the mile. Part 2 – Ask the students to help sort the food into the proper categories to make our job at the Food Bank easier. This provides a fun and educational volunteer opportunity for the students and they can do it at school.

The teachers found a reward that the students desired and added in a fun and giving volunteer opportunity. Who wins? We all do!



Also in Lafayette, the 4th grade class of Lafayette Elementary School shows off food collected by the PTA who have sponsored a food drive for over 20 years.

TEENS TAKE A BITE OUT OF HUNGER

When I woke up today, it was rainy and cold. Not a good start to the day, but people are hungry so I had to forge ahead. I met the other volunteers at the Food Bank and we carpoled to Vallejo for this Saturday food distribution. We had wonderful food to give out including bread, carrots, potatoes, pistachio nuts, juice and canned goods. We had to have the bags of food ready to go by 10:00 am when the recipients would start to come through the line. You don't often get a chance to make 340 bags of food, so the time seemed to go slowly, which is a good thing. The recipients actually receive two bags of food – one with fresh produce and bread and one with canned goods. Many people had started lining up by 8:30 am, even in this cold weather

– obviously the bags of food were important for their families or they probably would have rather been home in bed. At the end of the two hours, we were out of carrots and bread and had greatly reduced our load of potatoes. I looked around and saw the look of accomplishment on all of the volunteers' faces. The rain had stayed away from Vallejo until we were ready to leave, so we were lucky this time.

Now you might ask, why would I get up early on a Saturday (especially when I completed finals the day before) when I could be home in a warm bed? I don't need the volunteer hours for school and I already have lots of volunteer hours for college applications. I choose to volunteer

at this food distribution because I know people are hungry and the Food Bank is committed to helping our community. I always meet great volunteers and very thankful recipients. I see many senior citizens (they remind me of my grandparents) and many children (they remind me of my cousins). Did you know that one out of every 6 people in our community struggles with hunger? I want to make sure that I will not be 1 of the 6, so if we all come together and address hunger, maybe my number won't come up. And if it does, I will certainly know of a wonderful nonprofit that is working to end hunger – the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano!

Donate. Volunteer. Advocate.

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

Welcome Debbie Fabriquer Our New Director of Programs

In November of 2011, the Food Bank welcomed our new Director of Programs, Debbie Fabriquer. Debbie comes to the Food Bank with over 15 years of non-profit management experience. Her experiences include development of non-profit programs both locally - working for the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts in the bay area, and nationally, including serving on the Camp Fire Boys and Girls (Camp Fire USA) National Board of Directors for 4 years. Debbie comes to the Food Bank from the national office of Feeding America, the nation's food banking network and largest hunger relief organization of which the Food Bank Contra Costa and Solano is a proud member. There she managed the capability development and compliance standards for the 32 food banks in the

Southwestern Sector of the United States. Her other work while at Feeding America also included national training curriculum development, food bank standards and best practices development and organizational development/strategic planning consultation.

Debbie's primary goals will be to continue to develop and expand the Food Bank programs and to create new programs in order to achieve the mission of the Food Bank." Moving more food to more people is what we do. I'm excited to be part of an organization that has done it well for many years and look forward to continuing this work for many years to come."



Save the Date for an Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden - Sunday, June 24, 2012

Please join local and global celebrities for food and fun as you help fight hunger in our community. Sample a multitude of delicious award-winning foods and beverages at the 12th anniversary of "An Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden." Enjoy fine wine, appetizers and desserts in the tasting tents and dine on a gourmet lunch in the garden. Bid on fabulous silent auction items and win great door and drawing prizes. Stroll through the Admiral's and Captain's turn-of-the-century mansions, St. Peter's Chapel and the Mare Island Historical Museum.