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Food Bank Delivers Produce Where it's Needed Most

Concord, CA – July 16, 2012 -- The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano feels that improving access to fruits and vegetables to the community members who cannot typically afford such nutritious food is part of the solution to fighting both hunger and obesity as well as establishing positive, lifelong eating habits for children.

However, access and affordability are two common and significant obstacles for many people in our region when it comes to incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into their meals. Even if a household is near a store or farmers' market, they may not be able to afford to shop there. This is an ironic reality for a state that has the largest agricultural economy in the United States and produces large amounts of high-quality fruits and vegetables for much of the nation and the world.

Now, thanks to the generosity of John Muir/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund, the Food Bank's new Community Produce Program brings high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables in a refrigerated truck directly to people in need in our community!

“The Community Produce Program allows the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano to significantly increase the amount of healthy produce going to people in our community,” said Larry Sly, executive director of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. “Getting more fresh fruits and vegetables to the people we serve is the right thing to do and we would not be able to do it without John Muir/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund.”

Complete with canopies the clients can select their produce without getting wet. This enables us to come out to parking lots and neighborhoods lacking infrastructure. As most of the produce is contained in the vehicle's storage bays, distributions using these trucks are more efficient since clients simply walk around the truck to receive their produce.

The service model for the Community Produce Program is simple and effective. The Food Bank schedules monthly produce distributions with select community agencies and schools. That agency then gets the word out to their clients and informs the Food Bank how many to expect at the distribution, and unlike the farmers' market, no payment is required. Participants will go home with an average of three to four produce items, including: pears, oranges, apples, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage and carrots.

“Access to fresh fruit and vegetables is an essential part of strengthening any community’s health promotion and disease prevention efforts,” said Grace Caliendo, President and CEO of the John Muir/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund. “We think this is a proactive approach to overcoming the challenge of providing that access in underserved communities in Contra Costa.”

To learn more about the Community Produce Program, visit <http://www.foodbankccs.org/get-help/community-produce-program.html>.

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About the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been serving the community for over 35 years. We provided food to more than 132,000 hungry people in need every month directly at community sites and through a network of 180 charitable agencies, and distributed over 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 help of the hundreds of volunteers that donate their time to coordinate food drives, sort and pack the food, and help distribute it to their hungry neighbors. To learn more about the Food Bank and the work we do or to find out how you can help, please visit us on the web at www.foodbankccs.org or give us a call at 800-870-FOOD.