

BREAD CONNECTION

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

Food for the Holidays

Heigh ho, heigh ho, it's off to work we go. The holidays may be several months away, but the Program Department at the Food Bank is already wishing that there were a Magic Mirror to help with figuring out what will happen during the holidays!

Each year we try to gather information and put plans into place that will support the people who come to us looking for assistance in feeding their neighbors during the holiday season. A number of years ago, most of the holiday basket providers were food pantries. As the recession continues, food pantry providers have had to work harder and harder to feed more people. This year was especially challenging because the funding that comes through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program that is typically available in early spring was not finalized and available to the pantries until early August. Pantries have had to

use their reserves to keep their doors open and it is too soon to tell whether that will change what they are willing to do during the holidays, but the Food Bank wants to be prepared no matter what happens.

So we are not Bashful about raising money and securing food resources. We started raising funds at Admiral's Garden when people donated \$6,120 to help fund holiday programs. Tuna for the holiday baskets is already in the warehouse, low salt green beans and fruit cocktail in juice (Doc recommended this for good health!) has been ordered and is on its way. These food items will be combined with assorted food drive items to make bags or baskets for people who are looking for help during the holidays. Holiday basket providers ask their communities for additional foodstuffs. The Food Bank also is able to share limited supplies of frozen turkeys and grocery store gift cards. We are Happy to do this, and we try not to be Grumpy when we do not have as much as is needed to help everyone.

We ask all the community programs who want our help during the holidays to complete a Holiday Assistance Application, so we can share information about what they are doing with the public including information and referral sources like 211. Last year, we worked with more than 60 groups at Thanksgiving and nearly 100 groups at Christmas. During the fall months, we can't afford to be Sleepy, Sneezzy or Dopey!

Thank you in advance to all of you who step forward like a Prince (or Snow White!) to help us share food with our low income neighbors during the holiday season!

Tropical Fun

The Food Bank's eleventh annual "Tropical Afternoon in the Admiral's Garden" was another great success! Guests swayed to the tropical sounds of Shabang Steel Drum Band, sang along with the Swinging Blue Stars of the USS Hornet, and enjoyed more music provided by DJ's Dennon and Doyle.

The array of delicious food in our Beverage, Appetizer and Dessert Tasting Tents was incredible! Many thanks to the following vendors for their part in making our Tasting Tents memorable:

Aidells, Batter Blaster, BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse, The Bread Project, Canine Wines, Claim Jumper, Classico

Gelato, Fresh & Easy Clayton, Frog Hollow Farm, Hansen's, Hummus Heaven, Lindsay Olive, Letter Carrier Cooks, Martinelli's, Panera Bread, Quady Winery, Spun Sugar, Stella's Gourmet Cookies, Sugar Garden Cakes, Trader Joe's, Unibic North America, Winterhawk Winery, Whole Foods Walnut Creek, and Yankee Pier. Continued on page 3...



Full holiday barrels in our warehouse

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One of the Food Bank's strengths has been our ability to change. Over 35 years, we have grown from an organization with two employees operating out of a trailer to become an organization that has 52 employees operating out of two warehouses distributing nearly 14 million pounds of food last year.

In responding to the recession of the past two years, we have had to be incredibly flexible. We have increased the fresh produce we distribute to over five million pounds a year, one third of the total we distribute. We also received additional food from federal stimulus funds, and have increased the food we receive from food drives. We needed this additional food because the number of people coming to us has increased by one third.

One year ago, we moved our Fairfield warehouse from a 5,000 square foot building to an 18,000 square foot facility. The new facility also has a 28 foot ceiling, so we were able to put an additional level of racks into our storage space. In addition, we increased our refrigerator and freezer space. By doing this, our Fairfield facility has been able to act as the receiving point for nearly all the purchased food and USDA commodities we receive. We are able to have a deliberate flow of food from receiving site to individuals in need because we can run our warehouses more effectively. The Fairfield facility has also allowed us the ability to effectively use Solano volunteers to help us in our work.

The community support we receive has enabled us to make the right decisions over the past year so we could improve our service. Change is the essence of the work we do, and because we adapt we are making a difference in the lives of those in need.

Executive Director
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

FARM 2 KIDS UPDATE

Beginning August 10th the Farm 2 Kids program expanded in Oakley to include two elementary schools. Last year the Food Bank delivered produce to Oakley Elementary, enabling them to serve 80 families a month. This year the Food Bank will deliver twice a month to Iron House and Oakley Elementary to serve 280 families every month. The expansion has been made possible by a great group of school staff and parent volunteers that are dedicated to serving the families in their community.

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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, 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 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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Continued from cover - Tropical Fun...
Once again Englands Catering provided a sumptuous gourmet lunch. Guests bid on over 100 unique Silent Auction prizes, and competed for fabulous Live Auction items during lunch.

The big hit this year was the Cupcake War. Local pastry chefs Jan Loomis, Tracy Wirta, Mitchell Hughes and Marla Erojo competed for the best cupcake! A crowd watched as a panel of celebrity judges chose Mitchell Hughes as the winner of the competition.

Thanks to our celebrity guests who

always add spice to our event: Survivors Yau-Man Chan, Sylvia Kwan and Sonja Christopher, Heather Holmes from KTVU Channel 2, John Young and Don Potter of the KUIC Hometown Morning Show, Renee Richardson of the KFOG morning show, and Officer Vic/Tom Benner, morning traffic reporter for KSFO. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped pre-event and throughout the day.

Special thanks to our sponsors who helped raise over \$108,000 for the Food Bank: Presenting Sponsor Pacific Service Credit Union, Chevron, Air

Products, Shell Oil Products US, Tesoro Golden Eagle Refinery, Walmart, AAA, PG&E, Bill Eames, California Pacific Federal Credit Union, R.J Roberts, Inc., Dave Aaker, ConocoPhillips, Valero Benicia Refinery, Maze & Associates, GRACE Davison, Conco Companies, Dow Chemical Company, Tom Chowanec, Kaiser Permanente, Sartorius Stedim Biotech, Bigge Crane & Rigging, Westamerica Bank, Claire and Howard Spencer, Susan Alonso, Bay Area Development, Alza Corp/GPSG West and Insperty.

AGENCY CORNER

East County Churches Step Forward

During the past year, four pantries in East Contra Costa, an area that has been hit hard by unemployment due to the loss of construction jobs, have joined the Food Bank to help us with our mission of providing food to hungry people. Pantries provide food bags or boxes to the public during the hours

they are open. They provide a mix of perishable and shelf stable food to the people who come to their doors. Kings Chapel and Power For Living Ministries both opened in Antioch. Kings Chapel is open every Sunday and two Saturdays a month. Power for Living Ministries is open on the fourth Saturday of each month. In Pittsburg, there is also a new Food Bank member pantry, Church of the Good Shepherd St. Vincent de Paul Conference. This church provides space for a Senior Food Program distribution twice a month, and their pantry is open

every Saturday. The newest pantry, the Delta Food Pantry, is a collaboration of several churches in the Byron/Discovery Bay area. The pantry site is hosted by Byron United Methodist Church, and the administration is being handled by the St. Anne Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. Many people benefit from the services provided by these pantries. Thank you to all the people who volunteer at food pantries for taking action to address the issue of hunger in their communities.

DONOR STORY

Chevron Sponsors Farm 2 Kids



The Food Bank gratefully acknowledges corporate partner Chevron for their generous donation of \$100,000 in December 2010. \$57,000 of this donation will cover the cost of the Farm 2 Kids Programs in the cities of Richmond and Concord for one year.

Through the Farm 2 Kids program, the Food Bank provides fresh fruits and vegetables to children whose families cannot afford to keep food on the table. As produce is perishable and expensive, many families have trouble feeding their children the nutrients that are essential for developing children. Every week, Farm 2 Kids provides 3-5 pounds of fresh produce to more than 7,900 children in 69 after school programs in Contra Costa and Solano counties, with plans to expand to 10 additional sites in the coming year. Chevron's donation will cover the costs of this program in two cities, providing fresh produce weekly for 1,195 children in Richmond, and 1,300 children in Concord.

The Food Bank is able to purchase truckloads of fresh produce at greatly reduced prices, which Chevron is helping to fund.

Each week, Food Bank trucks deliver the produce to schools where students fill a bag to take home. In many cases, this produce will be their evening meal.

The Food Bank commends Chevron for their active role in supporting many local non-profit organizations, resulting in a better community for all. We are grateful that Chevron chose the Food Bank as a recipient, and almost 2,500 children in Richmond and Concord are grateful for the fresh produce they receive weekly.



Thanks to Chevron, students at Meadow Homes school in Concord enjoy fresh produce weekly.



Grocery Outlet Independence from Hunger Food Drive

The Grocery Outlet stores conducted their first Independence from Hunger food drive during July. We are very fortunate to have received a fantastic total of 3,323 pounds of food and \$544 from the Antioch, Concord, Pinole and San Pablo stores! The champ was the Concord store that rallied everyday and made sure every customer had the opportunity to help others in need.

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.



Safeway Summer Food Drive

This summer Safeway conducted a three week food drive from July 5th to July 26th. Safeway selected the items that we need most such as cereal, tuna, peanut butter, rice, canned vegetables, pasta and canned tomato products, packed them in a premade grocery bag ready for the customer to purchase and place in our barrels. For a simple \$10 the customer, had an easy way to donate food to us. And thanks to you, we received over 25,000 pounds of much needed food from this summer food drive. If you missed this opportunity, no worries, as Safeway will be bringing back the \$10 prepacked bag from mid-November through early December. What an easy way to donate the most needed food items to us. Thank you Safeway and all of you that purchased a bag for us!

Letter Carrier Food Drive

This past May 14th, our Letter Carriers rallied to collect over 173,000 pounds of food in one day! Not only did they 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. By the time you are reading this, there will be approximately 240 days until the next Letter Carrier Food Drive on Saturday May 12th and we are already in our planning phase to double the amount of food collected. Our Letter Carriers' goal? STAMP OUT HUNGER!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

One Volunteer's Persistence Pays Off

By Jenay Ross, USC journalism student: Julie Ruttenberg has been volunteering at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano for about a year and a half now, but it took an entire decade for her to be able to.

When Julie and her husband first had their son, who is autistic and now 21 years old, they were going through some hard times as a young couple. Fortunately, they had enough money to get by. Knowing that her family didn't have it as bad as others, she frequently thought about other

mothers and babies. "Babies should never go hungry," she said.

Starting off her relationship with the Food Bank in small proportions, every payday she bought an extra box of cereal to donate. "I remember one year just going through the grocery store with a hundred dollars for the Food Bank. I would fill a grocery cart," Julie said, and when the bagger went to take it to the cart I said, "No, just put it in that barrel." When she was ready to become more involved with the Food Bank, she asked if there were any volunteer opportunities in the office. Unfortunately, office help was not needed and she was unable to sort food due to the arthritis in her ankles prohibiting her from standing on cement for a long period of time.

Ten years later, Julie finally became an office volunteer when help was needed at the Fairfield warehouse. She has become involved with the CalFresh (Food Stamp) outreach efforts at the Food Bank. When people lose their jobs and find it difficult to make ends meet they usually go to the Food Bank. "They figured out that the food banks tend to find people," she said. The Food Bank has been working with the state to make sure everyone gets access to CalFresh.

The CalFresh requirements are based on how many eligible people there are in a household and how much money is coming in from everybody.

The Debt Ceiling and Food Banks

The Federal Deficit Reduction Deal: What it Means to Food Banks and the People We Help.

Everyone agrees that a plan to reduce the Federal deficit was necessary. Our risk of default was real, and would have had extreme consequences for our economy. However, the plan must still be executed by the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, a group that cannot make their decisions on number crunching alone. There are also people to consider. When federal nutrition programs get slashed, the need doesn't go away, but gets transferred to food banks already operating beyond capacity. The Congressional Budget Office reports that the deal trims at least \$2.1 trillion in spending over the next 10 years, and raises the debt limit in a two-step process.

1. The first round of cuts are limited to discretionary spending. This means that cuts will not come from CalFresh/SNAP (Food Stamps), school meal

programs, and other entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Social Security. However, this means that WIC and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) are eligible to be cut. In addition, other discretionary programs that impact low-income families, such as housing and heating assistance, will also be on the table. The net effect of these cuts will surely put a squeeze on household budgets and make it more difficult for low-income families to afford a healthy diet.

2. In the second stage of the deal, the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction can consider cuts to entitlement programs, including CalFresh/SNAP. If Congress fails to pass the Joint Committee plan or enacts less than \$1.2 trillion in cuts, across-the-board cuts will occur placing an unfair burden on middle and low-income families.

Next Steps:

Even if your Representatives and Senators aren't on the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, you can still weigh in with them. The various authorizing committees (such as the House and Senate Agriculture

Committees, House Education and Labor Committee, etc.) will be providing recommendations to the Joint Committee as will individual members of Congress. Moreover, appropriations committees* will have a large influence over the specific cuts resulting from the first stage of \$1 trillion in cuts over ten years as well as any potential cuts resulting from the automatic trigger. Be sure to call or write your Representative and our two Senators and deliver two messages:

1. Protect programs that impact low-income families, such as SNAP, TEFAP, and Medicaid.
2. As a practical matter, this cannot be done without including fair, progressive increases in revenue.

**Senator Feinstein of California is on the Senate Appropriations Committee.*

Stay tuned for more ways to help as events develop.

Thank you to our friends at the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas and California Food Policy Advocates for contributing to this update.

Working every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Julie does the majority of the documentation for the program including making copies of the paperwork and sorting all of it. She also helps out with different training meetings throughout the year with the Food Bank's partners.

Julie has completely been enjoying her time at the Food Bank. "They make me feel like one of the group," she said. She was even invited to a staff potluck. The staff told her she was one of them even though she does everything unpaid.

"I get paid in wonderful good feelings," she said. She is a prime example of it never being too late to volunteer. Her persistence to be involved led her to her goal of helping those in need.

"Babies should never go hungry..."



Julie Ruttenberg at the Food Bank's Solano location

County Food Fight Leaps Forward!

This year marks the 8th anniversary of the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight. Since the first Food Fight competition in 2004, employees of Solano and Contra Costa counties have collected a grand total of \$811,509.83 to help neighbors in need in their respective counties!

This year's Food Fight will end in 2012, a calendar leap year. Given that, the theme of this year's Food Fight will be "Leaping Forward". The coveted Big Apple Trophy will go to the county that raises the highest dollar per employee amount, and this part of the competition will be based on employee donations only.

Last year Contra Costa County employees won the Big Apple trophy by bringing in \$61,764.01 or \$9.46 per employee. Solano County employees raised \$21,580.92 or \$8.75 per employee. Friends of Contra Costa County donated another \$51,236 and Friends of Solano County raised an additional \$8,419.09. The grand total raised in 2010 was just over \$143,000 - an incredible fundraising feat given the state of the economy!

County employees put their hearts and souls into this competition. They care about their neighbors, for whom they work year-round. Support your local county employees in their fundraising efforts by donating online during the holidays. Visit the Give Help page on www.foodbankccs.org. Make your donation as a friend of your favorite county. Your donation will help residents in that county needing assistance. Leap into action and make a difference in your community!

Sign up for the
Food Bank e-news

www.bitly.com/foodbanknews

Upcoming Events: Fall 2011

SEPTEMBER IS HUNGER ACTION MONTH

This September play a role in fighting domestic hunger during Hunger Action Month. Get involved and find daily ways to make a difference with the Food Bank's 30 Ways in 30 Days calendar.

Learn more at www.foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth.

SEPTEMBER 22-25

WALNUT FESTIVAL. Join us at Heather Farm Park (301 N. San Carlos Drive) in Walnut Creek for the annual Walnut Festival. Carnival hours are Thursday 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm, Friday 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm, Saturday 11:00 am to 11:00 pm and Sunday 11:00 am to 8:00 pm. For more information, visit www.thewalnutfestival.org or call 925-935-6766. The Walnut Festival will work with the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano to collect canned food from attendees. Bring a can of food to receive \$1 off admission.

SEPTEMBER 24

Pleasant Hill's seventh annual community service day. Volunteers can help at a variety of projects including a neighborhood food drive. Gather at Pleasant Hill Park at 7:30 am to receive a pancake breakfast and your free t-shirt. To sign up go to www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us and click on Community Service Day.

OCTOBER 8-9

CONTRA COSTA COIN SHOW. 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. Especially beneficial for the general public is the availability of free appraisals from over 30 coin dealers. The show will be held at a new location, The Crowne Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Drive, Concord starting at 10:00 am each day. More details are available at www.diablocoinclub.org.

OCTOBER 23

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

NOVEMBER 5

GOURMET EAST BAY. It's time to eat, drink, and dance the night away at Gourmet East Bay on Saturday, November 5 from 7:00pm -10:00pm at Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.gourmeteastbay.com.

NOVEMBER 19

SCOUTING FOR FOOD. The Scouts will be leaving notifications in many neighborhoods one week before the food drive. Put out a bag of nonperishable food for your local Scouts to collect during this huge, one-day food drive benefitting the Food Bank. If you do not receive a notification, check our website for barrel locations or warehouse hours.

THE VERDICT IS IN:

LEGAL FOOD DRIVE COMPETITION RAISES MORE THAN \$56K FOR THE FOOD BANK

For two weeks in May, the Contra Costa County Bar Association (CCCBA) and 39 law firms participated in a competitive food and money drive to benefit the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. 2011 marked the 20th year for the Food from the Bar drive. Since its inception, the drive has collected more than \$890,000 and 54 tons of food for hungry Contra Costa County residents.

Each year, the drive starts with a Comedy Night kickoff event. The 2011 Comedy Night, featuring Rocky LaPorte and Andrew Norelli, was a smashing success. The event drew a crowd of more than 130 guests, many of them carrying cans of beef stew for the Food Bank as they walked in the door. Almost 180 pounds of beef stew were collected that night – a great start to the 2011 food drive!

Now, the verdict is in: The food barrels have been picked up, donations tallied, and per-capita contributions determined. This year, the legal community raised over \$56,000 and more than 2,500 pounds of food for the Food Bank.

Four winners in categories based on the size of the law firm have emerged.

The winners of the 2011 Food from the Bar Competition are:

1 – 10 Employees

Law Offices of Suzanne Boucher

11 – 20 Employees

Bramson, Plutzik, Mahler & Birkhaeuser

21 – 50 Employees

Morgan Miller Blair

51 and over Employees

Archer Norris

SIDE BARS:

Comedy Night Sponsors

Nevin, Ramos & Steele

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Law Offices of Suzanne Boucher

Archer Norris

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Gagen, McCoy, McMahon, Koss,
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Smith LLP

Timken, Johnson, Hwang LLP

McNamara, Ney, Beatty, Slattery, Borges
& Brothers LLP

Sports Basement



Emily Newton of Archer Norris with her mother



Food from the Bar winners

TEENS TAKE A BITE OUT OF HUNGER

By Jenay Ross, USC Journalism Student

Towards the end of my spring semester at the University of Southern California, I was offered an internship as a blog and newsletter writer for the Food Bank. I've volunteered at the Food Bank on several occasions in the past and decided it would be a great way to become more involved and stay active during the summer.

As a print and digital journalism major with an emphasis in music related topics, I was used to interviewing people, but usually only musicians. Reaching out and speaking to various agencies, volunteers and recipients was eye opening. Being able to share their stories with our community through my articles became more than a job, it was a humbling experience.

The Food Bank is a bustling environment with a mission that tries to ensure that no one goes hungry, and they're very busy due to the large number of people in need. Whether I was talking to an agency or recipient, everyone seemed appreciative of the Food Bank's aid, no matter how big or small.

While I was busy interviewing and writing about the people I met at food distributions or those volunteering at the Concord and Fairfield warehouses, I also got my hands dirty as I helped box produce, put donated bread onto trays and sort food. I would normally go in once, twice or sometimes three times a week to do some interviews in the morning and then spend the afternoon helping out where I could.

The best part of my internship was leaving every day feeling like I made some sort of difference to help someone in need. Whenever I have a break from school, I plan on returning to the Food Bank to volunteer.



Jenay Ross

Donate. Volunteer. Advocate.

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

Operation Holidays

Every year the need for food increases - people in our community who never thought they would be out of work and in a line for a bag of groceries. But thanks to you, the Food Bank feeds over 132,000 people every month! Your generous financial donations help us buy the food we need to supplement the food we receive through food drives. A good deed never goes unnoticed. Now is our opportunity to "Pay it forward". Here is how:

FOOD DRIVE: Have a food drive at your business, place of worship, neighborhood, favorite store or your children's school. A Food Bank barrel can match the holiday décor anywhere you can think of and we will be more than happy to help. 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, click on GIVE HELP, TRADITIONAL FOOD DRIVE to learn more or contact Joan Tomasini at 925-771-1315 or jtomasini@foodbankccs.org.

VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE: Would you rather have us shop for you? We can take your dollar and turn it into more food because we buy in large quantities. We give you 10 choices of our most needed foods. You select what you want us to buy. Visit www.foodbankccs.org, click on GIVE HELP, VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE to learn more. The Virtual Food Drive is a great way to get your family, friends and co-workers involved in a fun competition.

BUY A BAG: Help raise money for the Food Bank and decorate your office, business or school for the holidays! 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, GIVE HELP, BUY A BAG to learn more or contact Kathy Gleason at 925-771-1313 or kgleason@foodbankccs.org.

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



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