

THE RICHMOND STANDARD

Story of senior sickened by dog food raises awareness about hunger



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A shocking story about a local senior citizen who suffered from an intestinal infection after cooking with dog food is raising awareness about a dire need for donations to food banks ahead of the winter holiday season.

Michelle Denise Milam, Richmond's crime prevention manager, reported about the case online after attending the Shields-Reid Neighborhood Council meeting Tuesday night.

There, Corrine Sain, senior center director for the [Neighborhood House of North Richmond](#), told attendees about a local woman who resorted to cooking with dog food so she would have enough to pay her bills. She was sickened with an infection and is in recovery, Sain said.

On Wednesday, we went over to the senior center on Silver Avenue to speak with Sain about the case.

"We believe she may have been eating dog food for a while," Sain said.

What shocked Sain most about the woman's condition was that it wasn't uncommon.

Sain said she attended the Senior Rally Day in Sacramento back in May and heard similar stories of poverty-stricken senior citizens resorting to dog food.

Sain says the issue is being used to raise awareness and encourage pre-holiday donations to organizations such as the [Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano](#), which supplies the North Richmond senior center.

While the North Richmond center holds a number of fundraisers, and while local companies and individuals typically donate every holiday, Sain said she doesn't know if enough will come this year.

The number of seniors in need is growing at a time when "people are cutting back," she said.

"Many of our seniors only receive [Supplemental Security Income]," Sain said. "They aren't eligible for CalWORKS food stamps."

Another problem is letting low-income seniors, and even individuals and families, know there are resources available to them, Sain said. They can tap a number of food programs at the Neighborhood House of North Richmond, including free meals and bags of groceries. The Food Bank delivers food to the center every second and fourth Friday, Sain said.

"While many issues are systemic there are things we can do to help others immediately," Milam said. "Even a small donation helps."

To make a donation or to seek more information on what help is needed at the Neighborhood House of North Richmond, call Sain at (510) 232-3511.

On Saturday, Oct 8, the center is holding a fundraiser for the center at Red Hawk Casino. For tickets and info, call Linda at (510) 232-2851.

Also, this month is "Hunger Action Month" and the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano is holding a fundraiser. For more info, go [here](#). Or make a usual donation to the Food Bank [here](#).