

SPRING 2018

# BREAD CONNECTION

A not-quite quarterly publication of Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

## You helped us accomplish so much in 2017!

The Food Bank was able to provide more food than ever before and expand a few critical programs. Take a look at some of the things we accomplished together last year.

We provided enough food for 18 million healthy meals made up of **60% fruits and vegetables**.

People can pick up fresh produce when and where it is convenient for them with the Community Produce Program now running seven days a week. A notable **15 program sites were added for a total of 69 sites**.

Food and staff resources were sent to aid agencies facing overwhelming need during the **North Bay fires**.

Over **3 million pounds of usable food was recovered** from local grocery stores instead of going to waste.

You raised your voice and helped our advocacy team secure legislative wins at the local, state and federal levels, including a **\$6 million increase in funding for California food banks**.

With around half of community college students at risk of hunger, more students can reach their potential with **new food pantries at Los Medanos College, Contra Costa College and CSU East Bay – Concord**.

Our School Pantry Program now serves 12 sites and provided enough food for **78,000 meals to high school students** and their families.

**Outreach staff helped 1,510 families** apply for CalFresh so they can purchase healthy food from local stores.

**Without you, it wouldn't be possible!**



## Looking back and moving forward



We at the Food Bank are usually focusing on the future. However, it is important to occasionally reflect on the quantifiable accomplishments of our work. It allows us to better measure the positive impact we are making in our community, which in turn fuels our motivation

and empowers us to do even more to end hunger. Here are just a few highlights from 2017:

- We distributed the most amount of food in our 42-year history (22 million pounds) AND increased the percentage of fresh fruits and vegetables to an all-time high of nearly 60% of all food served.
- Our Community Produce Program added 15 new distribution sites (for a total of 69) and increased its operation from 6 days a week to 7 days a week, making fresh produce more accessible than ever.
- We significantly increased our outreach efforts by helping over 1,500 families apply for CalFresh benefits, giving them the help they need to obtain healthy food every day.

I am incredibly proud to work with our dedicated staff, board members, volunteers and supportive community who believe no one should be hungry. I have no doubt that a year from now I will proudly be reflecting upon all we accomplished together in 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Sly'.

Larry Sly  
Executive Director

## Advocacy wins in 2017

In 2017 the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano worked with our anti-hunger partners across the state to win an additional \$6 million in state funding for food banks through the CalFood program! We have used our CalFood allocation to purchase fresh, California-grown fruits and vegetables for our neighbors in need.

The Food Bank's capacity to advocate for CalFood and other anti-hunger programs expanded greatly in 2017. We piloted a workshop series on public policy, leadership, and public speaking to support the growth of community advocates. The Food Bank organized graduates from this program and nearly 30 other community members to advocate for policy solutions at Hunger Action Day in Sacramento. We also hosted 10 listening sessions throughout our two counties to better understand the challenges our clients face and partner with them to advocate for policy change.



We look forward to continuing to expand our advocacy program in 2018 to win greater investments in California food banks, strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through federal Farm Bill negotiations and focus on hunger prevention for children, seniors and people with disabilities.

## Upcoming Events

**APRIL 2**

Drive Fore Break on  
Hunger Golf Tournament

**MAY 12**

Letter Carriers Food Drive

**JUNE 2**

Nourish Gala

## You keep the Medina family going

Jorge and Silvia Medina of Richmond work hard to provide for their boys (ages 7 and 9). Jorge is employed full time at a popular restaurant in Marin County and Silvia has a job at a restaurant in Berkeley. Even with two incomes, it is difficult providing their children with the necessities of life.

To save money on childcare they switched schedules; he now works at night and she works during the day. They were lucky to find affordable housing on a friend's property, but with a for sale sign hanging in the yard, they will lose their lease if the property sells.

The Medinas receive help through our Food Assistance Program, which allows them to pay for other necessary expenses like utilities, clothes for their growing children and transportation to get to work.

Your continued support of the Food Bank lessens the burden for the Medinas and so many hard-working families like them.



The Medina family spending the one day both parents have off together.

### Slow Cooker Minestrone - from [eatfresh.org](http://eatfresh.org)

This cozy soup uses budget ingredients including many found at Food Bank distributions. Like the food we purchase, we recommend using low-sodium and reduced-sugar canned ingredients. Try it out and let us know what you think on Instagram @foodbankccs.

#### Ingredients

½ onion diced to ½-in pieces  
2 garlic cloves  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
½ tbsp. dried oregano  
pinch of red pepper flakes  
3 C. low-sodium veggie broth  
1 C. tomato sauce  
½ C. dried cannellini or pinto beans soaked overnight  
1 carrot cut into ½-in pieces  
1 small zucchini quartered lengthwise and sliced ¼-in thick  
3 Swiss chard (or kale) leaves ½-in wide slices  
salt (to taste)  
pepper (to taste)

#### Directions

- Sauté onions and garlic on the stove until translucent (ok to skip this step).
- Add ingredients through carrots to the slow cooker.
- Cook for 8-10 hours on LOW or 5-7 hours on HIGH.
- Add zucchini and chard and cook until vegetables are tender (about 20-30 minutes).
- Add salt and pepper to taste. Top with fresh basil or parmesan, if desired.





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## Food safety is a matter of dignity

For many consumers food safety isn't a major concern until a food recall or a food-related outbreak makes the headlines; for us at the Food Bank, it's a major priority.

**"I feel good knowing that we are serving high-quality food in a safe manner. That's what I would want for my own family."**

**– Willie Mendoza, Food Bank Staff**

As a member of Feeding America, we are held to a very high standard of food quality and transparency. We must pass a third-party audit every two years (brag alert: our warehouses most recently scored an extremely impressive 985 and a practically unattainable perfect score of 1,000).

In fact, we follow the same food-safety standards as the corporate food industry because the people who need our help deserve food that is as safe as it would be from the grocery store.

We require partner agencies to abide by this same strict food handling criteria. We monitor them to ensure they are giving out food in the safest possible manner. This commitment to excellence allows us to partner with retailers like Whole Foods, Blue Apron, Walmart, Target, Sam's Club, Lucky and other chains with established procedures.



**Our Operations Department has food safety top-of-mind every day.**

### Helpful reminders to keep your food safe at home

1. Keep your hands, kitchen surfaces and cooking utensils clean.
2. Use a food thermometer to confirm that foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature. You can find and follow a Safe Minimum Temperature Chart online.
3. Keep your refrigerator below 40°F. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends defrosting food in the refrigerator, cold water or in the microwave.
4. Visit [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) for information on food recalls and alerts.