

Free grocery program in Pittsburg helps those in need

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PITTSBURG (KRON) - Volunteers from the First Baptist Church Family Life Center are handing out free groceries to residents needing help make ends meet in the city of Pittsburg.

These groceries were donated to the Family Life Center by the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

"We started the commodity maybe 12 years ago, the commodity came along and that's from the food bank and they bring food once a month and we give it out twice a month to residents in the Pittsburg area," said Pamela Matthews with Family Life Center.

In the early days of a program, it was primarily the homeless being fed through this charitable program, but that is no longer the case.

"Instead of a lot of homeless and single people we have a lot of families and seniors that are coming out and their income just isn't enough to last the whole month," said Sandra Johnson with Family Life Center.

In fact, this senior resident says he only has \$121 to live on each month after paying his rent.

"Almost \$800 out of \$921, so this is what helps you know," said Awni Erkaet, a Pittsburg resident.

"The distribution we do is 69 sites throughout Contra Costa and Solano. We're in Pittsburg today giving away food to low income individuals who need help with their nutrition," said Larry Sly with Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

The Food Bank executive director talks about the eye-opening results of a 2018 collaboration with St. Mary's College studying hunger in Contra Costa and Solano County.

"We found out of the people we surveyed, 75 percent are getting more fresh fruits and vegetables in their diets because of this program. What we're seeing is we are getting about 180,000 people coming to us every month looking for food assistance through this program, through senior food programs we do," said Larry Sly with Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been around for 40 years and they say if the need continues, they hope to be around for 40 more.