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Thomas Rincon carries a bag of pet food to a car during a drive-thru food distribution event at the Vacaville Storehouse, Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2020. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

Rural Vacaville fire survivors utilize drive-thru food distribution

By [Amy Maginnis-Honey](#)

VACAVILLE — Tuesday's food distribution at The Vacaville Storehouse took on a new look to serve its regulars along with victims of the LNU Lightning Complex Fire.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano set up the drive-thru in anticipation of serving about 500 people.

Distribution is usually done within the building, where six people are allowed at a time to shop. The interior is set up similar to a grocery store.

Community volunteers helped with loading the food Tuesday, so no one had to get out of their car.

The Solano County Sheriff's Office was on hand with about 500 to 800 pounds of cat and dog food to make sure people's four-legged friends would eat.

Some of the recipients shared stories of sorrow to Rachel Braver, the food bank's multimedia specialist.

One woman choked back tears as she told of being evacuated from English Hills with her boyfriend.



Joel Attardo gives away a bag of produce during a drive-thru food distribution event at the Vacaville Storehouse, Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2020. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)



Crystal Przybylski places a bag of produce into the trunk of a car during a drive-thru food distribution event at the Vacaville Storehouse, Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2020. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

They are staying in a hotel, the tab being picked up by her boyfriend's employer.

She told Braver they were down to their last few dollars and would have to choose between gas and food if not for the approximate 30 pounds of food she was able to secure.

Another woman and her young daughter lost everything in the fire, they told Braver. They also said they had been without food for two days after being evacuated.

Evacuees who had homes to return to had to wait for power to be restored. So perishable items could not be consumed, Braver said.

Living on a fixed income doesn't afford one the chance to go and fill the refrigerator, she said.

Raymond Beatty, who oversees The Vacaville Storehouse, said he's seen a 40% increase in people seeking food in the past week.

Prior to the fire, The Vacaville Storehouse was serving about 300 people a day, he said.

The area's food banks often count on one another for help during a crisis, Braver said.

"Now we are at capacity with Covid and fire and all the needs in the area we serve," Braver said.

The food bank is serving 50% more families than last year, she said. It equals about 178,000 people between Contra Costa and Solano counties.

The Vacaville Storehouse offers a daily bag of food as well as a monthly emergency supply.

Drivers go to area grocery stores to pick up the surplus for distribution.

Sarah Loudon was one of the volunteers. She also helps box food at the food bank warehouse in Fairfield.

"Without volunteers like these this wouldn't have happened," said Sharon Zeppengo, the food bank's outreach and volunteer manager.

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