

“The food really helps us a lot and we use every bit of it!”

- Paul, age 95



A true love for giving back

The Vallejo home of Paul and Wanda is filled with laughter and warmth. The couple, ages 95 and 86, respectively, has lived in the house since purchasing it sight unseen for \$37,000 in 1977, and together they've built a bustling life over 44 years of marriage.

Paul, a World War II and Korean War veteran who served in both the Navy and Army, and Wanda, who retired from Wells Fargo, were active, dependable volunteers in their community until the pandemic forced them to hunker down at home for safety.

That's when **Rebuilding Together Solano County (RTSC)**, one of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano's 250 nonprofit agency partners, **stepped in to provide free weekly grocery deliveries to hundreds of people who couldn't leave home.**

“They would bring the food to our home so we didn't have to go out. **I don't know what we would have done because with our ages I was scared to get out** with a group of people or do anything at all. My immune system isn't as strong as it was,” said Paul.

The food they receive is a mix of shelf-stable pantry items, refrigerated and frozen goods, fruits and vegetables. When Wanda pointed out the fresh Brussels sprouts included in their latest grocery delivery, Paul's eyes grew as he enthusiastically exclaimed, “Those are my favorite—I love those!”

The food delivered by RTSC volunteers comes from the Food Bank's warehouse and the local Costco, thanks to the Food Bank's partnership with Feeding America. This type of partnership—nutritious food combined with a caring human touch—allows the Food Bank to support community members when and where they need it most.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

If I have learned one thing over the last 18 months, it is that we can accomplish great things when we work together. **Supporters like you have carried us through uncharted waters and continue to be the lifeline** that allows us to meet the changing needs of our community.

As we continue to serve more than 80,000 additional people each month than prior to the pandemic, **we're also working hard to make sure the Food Bank is prepared for the next disaster**, including what is shaping up to be another record-setting 'fire season.'

To ensure the Food Bank is ready to serve when disaster strikes, we are:

- Strengthening key partnerships so we can provide an immediate response.
- Stocking inventory of key emergency food, including ready-to-eat meals and water.
- Creating individual kitchen-free boxes which contain a day's worth of food that doesn't require heating or refrigeration.
- Planning for ways to best provide ongoing support long after the initial crisis response.

Your compassion reminds the entire Food Bank staff that kindness is very much alive and well in our community, and we are endlessly grateful for your support.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

Joel Sjostrom
President and CEO
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

ACTION ALERT

Hunger Action Heroes Unite!

Feeding America projects that more than 54 million people could face hunger this year in the wake of the pandemic. We need our community's support—now more than ever—to help our neighbors in need. **Together, we can end hunger one action at a time.**

September is Hunger Action Month, so it's the perfect time to take action to end hunger! Here are a few ways you can help:

Donate

Every \$1 provides enough food for two meals! Make a one-time gift or pledge to give monthly as a Nourish 365 member. Multiply your impact by getting friends involved and launching an online fundraiser to form a superhero giving team!

foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth



Turn Orange

Make a statement by wearing orange, the official color of hunger relief! Don't be shy—take a Hunger Action Hero selfie in your orange attire and tag us [@foodbankccs](https://twitter.com/foodbankccs) or email it to hello@foodbankccs.org.

Advocate

Follow the Food Bank on social media [@foodbankccs](https://twitter.com/foodbankccs) and share our posts about local hunger. Take action through advocacy by reaching out to local elected officials about the importance of fighting food insecurity in our community.

foodbankccs.org/advocate



Harnessing our collective powers, our advocacy helped achieve historic policy goals in 2021. California will be the FIRST STATE in the nation to implement Universal School Meals (Skinner SB 364), which will provide free breakfast and lunch to ALL public school students (K-12) regardless of family income or immigration status.

Whether you choose to use your hands to volunteer, your voice to impact the legislature or your social media channels to spread the word, there are plenty of ways to make a difference.



Fight on, heroes!



Rebuilding Together Solano County's Executive Director Elizabeth Hoffman sorts and packs boxes for delivery.

PARTNER AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

The power of partnership

We fight hunger alongside more than 250 nonprofit agency partners with a common goal of nourishing our neighbors in need.

With its mission of "repairing homes, revitalizing communities and rebuilding lives," Rebuilding Together Solano County (RTSC) provides an invaluable service to low-income elderly, disabled and veteran homeowners. More than 12,000 volunteers help renovate houses, conduct community facility workdays on public buildings and provide free groceries—and that's where the Food Bank comes in!

For the past three years, RTSC has operated a drop-in food pantry that serves the community twice a week.

When COVID-19 hit, everything changed for RTSC. In-home services came to a screeching halt, and with already-high food insecurity rates rapidly rising among the people they serve, they **focused their efforts on fighting hunger**. Volunteers started delivering groceries to those who were homebound, like Paul and Wanda, and hosting drive-thru

pantries. **RTSC went from distributing an average of 750 pounds of food a week to 15,000 pounds!**

To help our partnering nonprofits expand capacity and further support their communities, **the Food Bank recently distributed a total of \$250,000 in agency enhancement grants to 62 nonprofit partners.** RTSC received one such grant in the amount of \$5,000 to purchase a commercial freezer, dollies and carts.

Elizabeth Hoffman, RTSC's executive director, shared, "We currently only have household freezers donated by various RTSC donors. A commercial freezer will expand not only the amount but the type of food RTSC can distribute. It will be a huge help."

Often the key to success lies in creating meaningful partnerships—like Paul and Wanda's—and by teaming up with organizations like RTSC, the Food Bank is able to expand its reach and deepen its impact in local communities.

"It is so heartwarming to have the support of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano to enhance our health and safety outreach to those in need during COVID-19."

- Elizabeth Hoffman, RTSC



Hoffman, pictured while delivering groceries, has become like family to Paul and Wanda.



RTSC Vice President Mel Orpilla delivering food to homebound seniors.



WELLS FARGO

Featured Partner: Wells Fargo

WHY WE GIVE

We asked Natalie Aliga, community relations senior consultant for Wells Fargo, why the organization chooses to partner with the Food Bank. Here's what she had to say:

“Wells Fargo believes in giving back and supporting organizations that strengthen the communities where our employees and customers live and work. The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano is a highly-respected and vital community resource. **We have shared values to end hunger in our communities, and we trust that every dollar we invest is maximized in service to the community.**”

For more than a decade we have provided financial support in the form of charitable contributions and event sponsorships.

In addition, our employees have volunteered to sort and package food, host collection drives and contribute their own personal donations to support the Food Bank’s mission.

With housing affordability identified as one of Wells Fargo’s core philanthropic focus areas, we believe that housing insecurity and food insecurity are interconnected. For millions of Americans, the cost burden of housing creates a trade-off of not having enough food in the household.

“We’re grateful to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano for being a direct source of assistance for those who may be experiencing hunger in our local community. Together, we can help end hunger!”

*For corporate partnership opportunities, contact John Calender
jcalender@foodbankccs.org or 925-771-1313.*

SAVE THE DATE

(Virtual) Empty Bowls is Back!

This year's Empty Bowls event will warm your heart as we applaud the kindness and generosity our community has shown their neighbors during these hard times.

This year's Empty Bowls will be hosted virtually on Thursday, October 14, but the fan-favorite event will continue to include all the most-treasured elements: familiar faces, handcrafted keepsake bowls, plus inspirational speeches and videos.

You are invited to learn about how the Food Bank has filled the hunger gap, adapted to meet the need and served more people than ever before. **Please save the date!**

Virtual Empty Bowls Thursday, Oct. 14, 3-4 p.m.

For more details or to RSVP, email Taevi Wilson at events@foodbankccs.org.

Sponsorships available.



4010 Nelson Avenue
Concord, CA 94520

Return Service Requested

MUST-TRY RECIPE

Charred Corn and Zucchini Salad

Photo and Recipe:
Budget Bytes

INGREDIENTS

2 Tbsp high heat oil
3 ears fresh corn
2 zucchini
1/2 red onion
1/4 cup cilantro
2 oz. feta
Salt and pepper



1. Shuck the corn cobs and cut the stems off. Brush the surface of the corn with oil.
2. Heat a cast iron skillet or gill pan over medium heat. Once very hot, add the corn cobs. Allow corn to cook, turning occasionally, until the kernels are bright in color and some have developed deep char marks. This should take about 15 minutes total.
3. While the corn is cooking, slice the zucchini in half lengthwise and the red onion into thick rings. Brush all sides of the zucchini and onion with oil.
4. When corn is finished cooking, set aside to cool and add the zucchini in its place. Cook zucchini on each side until charred (about 10 minutes total), then set aside to cool. Lastly, cook the onion slices until charred on each side (about 5 minutes total).
5. Chop the zucchini into half-rounds or quarter-rounds. Chop the onion into small pieces. Roughly chop about 1/4 cup of cilantro. Place together in a large bowl.
6. Stand the corn cobs on end and use a sharp knife to carefully slice down each side to remove the kernels. Place the kernels in the bowl with the zucchini, onion and cilantro.
7. Season the vegetables with salt and pepper, then toss to combine. Finally, crumble the feta over top and gently toss once more to combine. Serve immediately or refrigerate for later.

AT-THE-TABLE

What's inside

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- Partner Agency Spotlight
- Empty Bowls Returns