

A stronger community means building for better health.



Nourishing our neighbors is about more than feeding people; it's about creating equal opportunities so everyone can live a healthy life. Even as we are all being hit with skyrocketing inflation—including the increased cost of fresh food—the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano is determined to improve health outcomes. We are not only focused on providing more food; we're committed to offering **more nutritious food than ever before**.

To provide additional fresh, whole foods, we need to build capacity. One way we are accomplishing that is by fostering our existing partnerships and forging new ones.

One such collaboration is with the medical community. With the shared beliefs that **food is medicine and access to nutritious food is essential for optimum health**, we're already seeing positive results through our collaboration with Contra Costa Health. ([Read about this on page 4.](#))

Of course, we wouldn't be able to serve 270,000 residents a month without our incredible **260 local partner agencies**. To help them scale, **we offer Agency Enhancement Grants**. These transformative grants empower other hunger-fighting nonprofits to expand *their* services and to distribute even more nutritious food. This spring we are doubling our investment in grants to strengthen our partners; common applications include refrigeration to help store and distribute more perishable food.

With your steadfast support, we know we'll collectively continue making health advancements that will change lives and strengthen our community. We thank you for YOUR partnership.

What's inside:

- More Capacity = Better Health
- Our Biggest Match Ever
- Volunteers Make it Happen



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

I'm humbled to get the chance to recognize the importance of partnership in this edition of At the Table. As so many of our most vulnerable recover from the pandemic, only to now face the costs of inflation, we couldn't help our neighbors in need without our supporters.

You have entrusted us to nourish those battling food insecurity. This is why I'm proud to share with you our 3-year strategic plan – our proactive, multi-pronged roadmap to closing the hunger gap in Contra Costa and Solano significantly over the next three years.

Our plan is to distribute not just more food, but even more nutritious food than ever before. Understanding that health outcomes are the bedrock of a strong society, our plan focuses on capacity, partnership, nutritional value and systemic change.

With your generosity, we've already begun the work. We've added our partner agencies to our online Find Food map so clients can easily find their nearest distribution. Our brand new 8,600 square-foot cold storage unit will triple the space for storing and distributing perishable food, such as dairy, poultry and meat. Shortly, we will be rolling out a nutritional scoring system to ensure a more balanced selection of food in our food programs.

Thank you for your support as we meet the need today—and build for a healthier tomorrow.

Read more about our three-year strategic plan on our blog: foodbankccs.org/StrategicPlan

"Our plan is to distribute not just more food, but even more nutritious food than ever before."

- Joel Sjostrom

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

ACTION ALERT



"To end hunger worldwide, we must start right here at home."

-Don Williams, Behring Foundation

The unrelenting rise in the cost of living makes **putting food on the table nearly impossible** for many members of our community—especially, healthy whole foods.

The Bay Area-based Behring Global Educational Foundation (Behring Foundation) realized they could do something by inspiring others to give—and the **2 Million Meal Challenge** was born. According to Board Member Don Williams, "We wanted to make a serious dent in hunger in our community."

If we can meet this \$500,000 dollar-for-dollar match, we'll be able to provide enough food for 2 million nutritious meals that include healthy fruits, vegetables, poultry, meat and other protein-rich items. This is the type of food that is becoming even more out of reach to our neighbors living paycheck to paycheck.

It's hard to comprehend the magnitude of this historic match, but to give it some context, the Food Bank could purchase **three days' worth of food for each of the 270,000 people we serve every month**—a serious dent, indeed!

This incredible fundraising opportunity **ends May 31!** Please accept the challenge by visiting foodbankccs.org/2MillionMealChallenge today.



Dr. Michelle Wong is passionate about the connection between food and health.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Food is Medicine

Our partnership with the health community allows us to build better health, together.

“Ohhhh, wow—cheese!”

It’s not the response you’d expect out of a patient who had just completed her chemo treatment for the day. Yet, that’s what Pamela exclaimed as she looked through the box of food she just received from the Food Bank.

Like many patients, Pamela was referred by her doctor to the Food Bank truck on the campus of the Contra Costa County Regional Center. It was her first time coming to a Community Produce Program+ food distribution. She was thrilled with the fresh fruits and veggies and was surprised and overjoyed when she learned she could also get a Fresh Plate box filled with milk, butter, eggs—and yes, cheese.

Partnering with the health community is one of the many ways we are working to build a strong community. The Food Bank has collaborated with the County for about five years to find solutions to food insecurity for

their patients—95% of whom are on Medi-Cal. Dr. Michelle Wong from Contra Costa Health shares Pamela’s sentiment, “Pre-pandemic, we were getting about 100 referrals from our clinics every month to the Food Bank, but it has increased...fourfold. Patients go to our clinics to see their doctors and pick up their medications, but they also receive free produce and healthy groceries—**it’s really part of their healthcare.**”

Dr. Wong knows food is medicine, and the program she runs has found that when participants have access to fresh food and are taught how to prepare it, they decrease both their weight and their A1C, a measure of blood sugar, in just three months.

“There are so many chronic health conditions that are related to food insecurity. It is this vicious cycle of food insecurity [causing] stress not only financially, but mentally [and] physically. Once households are stressed with food insecurity, then it leads to other problems. Maybe it's hard to find housing or pay other bills, but there's a direct link to chronic disease. So it is important that we address food insecurity as part of our patients' health problems.”

“Before we can teach folks about how to eat healthy, we have to make sure they have access to food.”

-Dr. Michelle Wong

Watch **Dr. Wong** talk more about our partnership and the connection between good health and proper nutrition.



Community Produce Program+ recipients receive up to 30 pounds of fresh produce twice a month.



Matthew Durkin, Mobile Distribution Supervisor, holds up the Fresh Plate Box with dairy items.



Featured Partner: Patelco Credit Union

COMMUNITY COMES FIRST

In their words: "Patelco Credit Union is a proud supporter of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. The past two years have been challenging, to say the least. Despite those challenges, the Food Bank has been there to help ensure food security for the growing number of people struggling to put meals on the table.

Patelco made it a priority to continue and increase our partnership through these uncertain times. When the Food Bank found a new and creative way to gather safely with the community last year, Patelco supported the first Nourish Gala Drive-in to Fight Hunger. It was such a fun and creative way to support the essential services provided by the Food Bank that we also sponsored this year's sequel!



Every day the Food Bank is here to meet the basic needs of people in our community. This perfectly aligns with our purpose at Patelco, which is to fuel hope and opportunity for personal well-being. We value and appreciate the Food Bank and all that they do to ensure healthy communities."

For corporate partnership opportunities, contact sponsorships@foodbankccs.org

WAYS TO HELP

Volunteers help meet a “humbling necessity”

Lois Appleget has helped distribute food to local seniors at the Oakley Senior Center, a Food Bank partner agency, for more than six years.

She registered people for the program and welcomed recipients, reminding them to come back the following week. She made sure neighbors felt welcomed and comfortable because, as she said, “There are people who never thought they would be in a position to need free food. It is a very humbling necessity for many.”

Lois now finds herself turning to support at the Senior Center, as she cares for her two elderly sisters (ages 88 and 92), who are dependent on her to provide food and assistance in their homes.

Lois shared, **“I am so grateful for the groceries to supplement their needs and mine. What a blessing this program is for many people, including me.”**

The Food Bank relies on dedicated volunteers, like Lois, to provide food in our community seven days a week. Volunteers package food in our warehouses and distribute food at sites throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties. **Your help is more crucial than ever** as we’re seeing more people turn to us each week who are struggling with the inflated cost of groceries and gas.

Learn more about current volunteer opportunities, including weekend and evening shifts, at foodbankccs.org/volunteer.



Volunteers from the Senior Food Program site at Church of the Good Shepherd in Pittsburg.

foodbankccs.org/volunteer

MUST-TRY RECIPE

Rustic Stone Fruit Galette

Photo & Recipe:
[The Seasoned Mom](#)

Filling Ingredients

3 cups sliced fresh
peaches
½ cup granulated
sugar
Juice and grated zest
of ½ lemon
3-4 Tbsp cornstarch
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp ground ginger
Pinch of salt

For the crust

1 rolled store-bought
pie crust
Egg wash (1 egg
mixed with 1 Tbsp
water), reserve
for assembly
Coarse sugar,
for topping



1. Preheat oven to 400° F
2. Prepare the filling: In a large bowl, toss together peaches, sugar, lemon juice, lemon zest, cornstarch, cinnamon, ginger and salt.
3. Assemble the galette: Arrange the filling in the center of the dough, leaving a 1 ½-inch border. Gently fold the pastry over the fruit, pleating to hold it in. Brush the crust with egg wash; sprinkle with coarse sugar.
4. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the filling bubbles and the crust is golden brown.