

“When the baby is a little older, I want to go back to school so I can work in the medical field.”  
-Yelani



## Rising Costs, Harder Choices

Parenthood is often defined by difficult choices, but for parents facing food insecurity, those choices can feel impossible.

We recently met Yelani at a Food Bank distribution in Pittsburg. Yelani is a young mother of two who loves to cook and make purees for her baby with the fresh fruits and veggies she receives from the Community Produce Program. She lives in a household of four and told us how the free food she receives helps alleviate some of the stress created by limited resources and rising costs.

“This program is super helpful and means we don’t have to shop as much,” she said. “With rising costs like childcare and gas, we have to make cuts. Thank God for EBT.”

CalFresh, a grocery assistance program for qualified individuals and families, provides a supplemental monthly benefit through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), which can be used in grocery stores and participating Farmers' Markets. The Food Bank works closely with agencies and programs, like CalFresh and Women Infants and Children (WIC), to ensure that those who qualify can receive helpful benefits. This helps create a safety net for neighbors like Yelani.

Support from the Food Bank reminds Yelani that there are brighter days ahead as she works to raise her children and provide nourishing food.

“I am saving money and when the baby is a little older, I want to go back to school so I can work in the medical field,” she said.

## A NOTE FROM OUR CEO



"Your gifts of time and money have allowed the Food Bank to adapt to our community's needs—and stay a reliable source of healthy food no matter what crises may arise."

As a hunger fighter, you know that the last couple of years have been incredibly taxing on the most vulnerable members of our community. Your gifts of time and money have allowed the Food Bank to adapt to our community's needs—and stay a reliable source of healthy food no matter what crises may arise.

Most recently, the combined impacts of the pandemic and rising inflation have led to a **87% increase in the number of senior citizens who turn to us** for food. Our Community Produce Program (CPP), which recently marked its 10th anniversary (see page 4), has seen similar increases in demand, highlighting the importance of produce and nutritious foods as healthy food gets more expensive.

Your support allows us to distribute food through 10 different direct programs and 260+ nonprofit partners—7 days per week. In September, we are excited to launch our new **Kids Nutrition on Weekends (K-NOW)** Program, which will provide more than 2,000 school-age children with nutritious, balanced meals during the weekends when they aren't provided school lunches.

Serving more people means that your support is more vital than ever, as it makes a direct and positive impact during a time of increased need. Thank you for continuing to adapt with us.

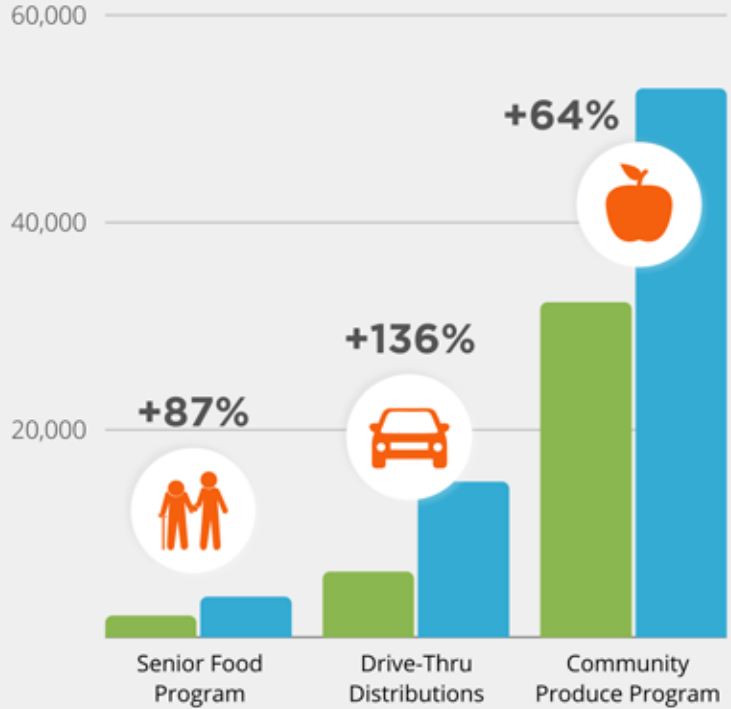
Joel Sjostrom  
President and CEO  
Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

## ADAPTING TO THE RISING NEED

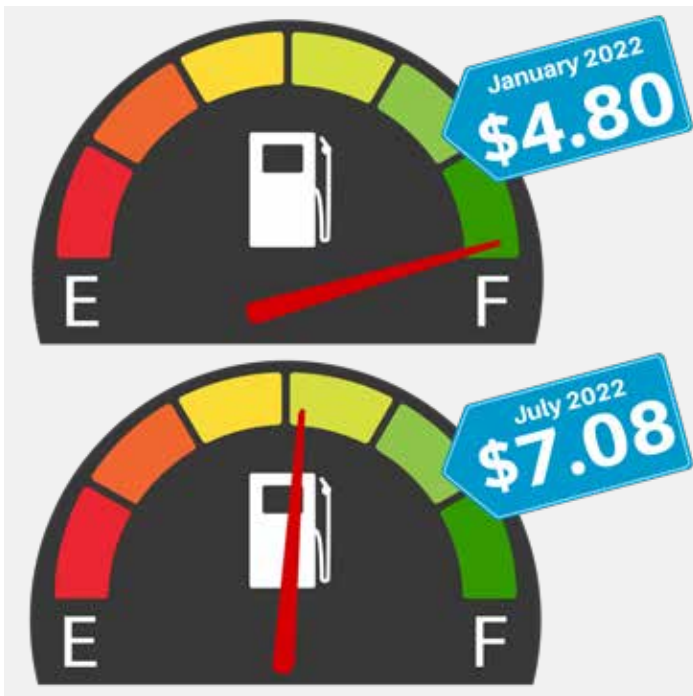
Rising costs have affected us all. At the Food Bank, we're seeing donations decline—while our service numbers continue to climb. We're still seeing record-breaking client numbers at our most popular programs, including the Community Produce Program (CPP), Drive-Thru distributions, and the Senior Food Program (SFP) (see chart to the right). It seems people are turning to us more than ever.

With your support, we remain hopeful and committed to rising to the occasion—and adapting to meet our community's needs. We've doubled down in serving our clients, and continue to focus on expanding key programs that offer nutritious meals for our neighbors in need.

# of people served each month



\*Comparing number of people served July 30, 2021 to June 30, 2022



The cost of diesel fuel (at peak levels) has increased the cost of running our trucks by more than **47%** since the beginning of the year.



Prices for our most purchased foods, including eggs, milk and peanut butter, increased by more than **30%** in the past year.





# 10 Years of Building Community Health

Just over a decade ago, with support from the John Muir Health/Mt. Diablo Community Health Fund, we launched our Community Produce Program (CPP), an initiative to make fresh produce more accessible in our community. Over 30 million pounds of produce later, our belief that fresh fruits and veggies should not be an unaffordable luxury continues on.

It's now you—our generous supporters—who fund this program and support its evolution and growth. With your help, CPP now:

- Serves fresh produce at over **154 monthly distributions** (almost 3x the number in 2012).
- Offers clients food from the safety of their

vehicles through contactless **drive-thru** sites.

- Provides perishable proteins, including meat, dairy and eggs—in addition to fresh produce—through **Community Produce Program Plus**.

The need for this program is more evident than ever, as **the number of people served by CPP has increased by over 60% in just the last year**. As inflation hits our communities, we want our neighbors to know that they can still access nutritious foods.

Mobile Distribution Supervisor **Matthew Durkin**, who started with the program in 2012, recalls helping a family: “One time we were at Cleo Gordon (in Fairfield) and kids stopped by, so we gave them apples. They went home and their family sent them back to get the rest of the produce we were offering, which would have been almost 30 pounds of produce! They couldn’t even carry it all.” One apple at a time, CPP has helped our

neighbors in need for more than 10 years. To learn more about CPP or see sites near you, visit [foodbankccs.org/findfood](http://foodbankccs.org/findfood).



"One time we were at Cleo Gordon (in Fairfield) and kids stopped by, so we gave them apples. They went home and their family sent them back to get the rest of the produce we were offering, which would have been almost 30 pounds of produce! They couldn't even carry it all."

-Matthew Durkin, Mobile Distribution Supervisor



**Matthew Durkin at one of our first sites in Concord.**

Continue reading as our first Community Produce Program Driver, Will Gregory, shares memories of the program. —————>



**Driver, David Bosuego, has seen a dramatic increase in the need at the produce sites on his route.**



**Today our produce trucks serve more than 50,000 people each month.**



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

# Will Gregory Keeps on Trucking

When you visit one of Will Gregory's Community Produce Program sites, you'll be greeted with a warm smile—and you'll need to be on your toes. The fast pace of each increasingly busy distribution is matched only by Will's abounding passion and energy.

Will is a shining example of commitment and service. As the first truck driver for our Community Produce Program when it began years ago, Will served alongside thousands upon thousands of volunteers over the years to help our neighbors in need.

Will's career as a truck driver started in 1971 after leaving the Marine Corps. Looking back at the last 10 years with the Food Bank, he says, "This is the best part of my trucking career." His fondest milestone? The first time the program exceeded a million pounds of produce.

A natural "people person," he enjoys interacting with volunteers and giving back to the community. He credits his daughter for helping him cultivate a passion for nutritious foods, both eating well and helping others eat well, too. As for his boundless, contagious energy, he nods to yoga and his "mostly plant-based diet". We're grateful to have Will on staff to help provide fruits and vegetables to those he serves!



**JOIN US**

[foodbankccs.org/nourish365](https://foodbankccs.org/nourish365)

## GIVE MONTHLY. CHANGE LIVES DAILY.

You'll provide life-changing support to your community 365 days a year with:

- Secure, automatic monthly donations
- Lower administrative costs
- Reliable funding to sustain and grow programs



## Corporate Spotlight: Valero Benicia Refinery

Pictured left to right: Melissa Manke-Fimbres (VLO), Paul Adler (VLO), Scott Anderson (VLO), Paul Heggen (KPIX)

### WHY WE GIVE

One of the Valero Energy Corporation's guiding principles is to do the right thing and make a positive impact within the communities in which we live and work. We believe supporting basic needs is imperative to helping families in the Bay Area.

Valero supports the Food Bank by sponsoring a number of events, including the popular "Refinery Motorcycle & Food Run," a friendly competition between Valero and three other Bay Area refineries that raises proceeds for the Food Bank. We also sponsor the Food Bank's Nourish Gala, Farm 2 Kids Program and annually donate to the 'Fight to End Hunger' holiday campaign.

Many Valero employees also donate their time to the Food Bank by volunteering at the Concord and Fairfield warehouses. In fact, the Valero Volunteer Council tracks our employee volunteer hours, and the Food Bank is one of the most popular organizations at the refinery.

I wish everyone in the community knew what a great and necessary organization the Food Bank is, and I am proud to represent the refinery on the Food Bank's Board of Directors. More and more people are becoming food insecure for the first time, and nonprofits like the Food Bank help strengthen the safety net for our neighbors in Contra Costa and Solano counties. The Benicia Refinery is committed to supporting the Food Bank, as we have for more than 45 years!

**Melissa Manke Fimbres**  
*Board member since 2022*  
*Director, Technical Services*  
*Valero Energy Corporation*



For corporate partnership opportunities contact Julia Bermudez  
[jbermudez@foodbankccs.org](mailto:jbermudez@foodbankccs.org)  
or call 925-914-5064.



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## **MUST-TRY RECIPE**

### **5 Ingredient Tomato Soup**

Recipe: [inspiredtaste.net](http://inspiredtaste.net)  
Photo: [foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com)

#### **INGREDIENTS**

4 tablespoons  
unsalted butter  
1/2 large onion, cut  
into large wedges  
1 (28-ounce) can  
tomatoes, or about  
2 pounds fresh  
tomatoes  
1 1/2 cups water, low  
sodium vegetable  
or chicken stock  
1/2 teaspoon salt

#### **TOPPING IDEAS**

Croutons  
Toasted garlic bread  
Basil or basil oil  
Pesto  
Sour cream



1. Melt butter over medium heat in a Dutch oven or large saucepan.
2. Add onion wedges, water, can of tomatoes with their juices, and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Bring to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, for about 40 minutes. Stir occasionally and add additional salt as needed.
3. Blend the soup, then season to taste. An immersion blender does make quick work of this, or you can use a blender. If you use a regular blender, it is best to blend in batches and not fill the blender as much as you usually would since the soup is so hot. We like to remove the center insert of the lid and cover it with a kitchen towel while blending — this helps to release some of the steam and prevents the blender lid from popping off.

## **AT-THE-TABLE**

What's inside

- o Adapting to the growing need
- o 10 years of fresh produce
- o Yelani's story of hope and hard choices