

“We help them,  
and they help us  
to get food for  
our home. It’s  
part of our way  
to be grateful.”

- Maria



## THE ‘GIVING BACK’ EDITION: NEIGHBORS SUPPORTING NEIGHBORS

*Did you know many people who receive food through our programs are also dedicated volunteers, supporting their fellow neighbors in need? In this edition, hear from a few of our neighbors who were inspired to give their time to make their communities stronger, healthier and more resilient.*

**MARIA** first visited our partner food pantry at The Bay Church two years ago. She and her sister Armida have been volunteering to help set up their weekly food distribution nearly as long.

“We help them, and they help us to get food for our home,” she shares. “It’s part of our way to be grateful.”

Maria says getting food from the pantry has meant so much to her personally – and not just because of the food. It has made a big difference financially for her family as she recovers from lung damage she suffered from a severe COVID infection. But more than

that, volunteering at the Bay Church has given her a community.

“I’m used to working a lot,” she explains. Having an opportunity each week to **give back and be part of something bigger helps with the change of pace her recovery requires.**

“I think coming here helps me a lot,” Maria says. “...we feel so nice to be here. All the people that come here are really nice and friendly. I think it’s like a family.”

*Meet more volunteers who are giving back on pages 4 and 5 →*





## A Message From Your Food Bank Family

The holidays are almost here, and so is one of the Food Bank's busiest times of the year. These next two months provide so many opportunities for joy and connection, but they can also be tough – emotionally and financially – for neighbors facing hunger. And with 1 in 4 people in our community using our programs each month, we know this holiday season won't be easy for many.

That's why, as we prepare for the season, **we've been reflecting on how we weather challenges together to create a more resilient community** for everyone. We are so grateful to everyone who is part of our Food Bank family for creating a community filled with neighbors who look out for each other.

Our family is a big one. There are volunteers who help get food to those who need it. There are advocates who speak up to strengthen our safety net. There are our nonprofit partners who help us reach every corner of our

community. There are supporters who make our work possible every day. And there are our neighbors in need – who are at the heart of everything we do!

In this newsletter, we wanted to introduce you to a few of your Food Bank "relatives," whose actions – big and small – are strengthening our community. We hope they inspire you to continue making a difference, too!

While our individual roles and stories may be different, **when it comes to ending hunger we are united**. And together, we can create a more caring, supportive community for all.

Thank you for being part of our family.

*- The staff of the Food Bank*





Angela  
Concord International Adventist  
Church

# Small Change – Big Impact

**WATCH YOUR  
IMPACT IN ACTION**

## HELPING OUR NONPROFIT PARTNERS STAY NIMBLE AS WE PREPARE FOR HOLIDAYS AND INCREASED NEED

Earlier this summer, Gabbi and Scott Groschel realized they needed a way to speed things up.

Like many of the nonprofit agencies we partner with, the food pantry the Groschels lead at Concord International Adventist Church has seen a big rise in need. Just this year, they've grown from serving 100 families per week to 180 or more.

“We noticed a few months ago that we were kind of hitting capacity at 130 families,” Scott shares. “Our building only fits so many, and we only have so many volunteers.”

Because neighbors pick what food they want to take from the pantry, Scott and Gabbi noticed many people were spending

a lot of time setting down and rearranging their bags each time they chose a new item.

So, Scott and Gabbi called the Food Bank. The pantry had received one of our agency enhancement grants for a refrigeration unit, but hadn't needed all the money. **Working together, we were able to use the remaining funds to help Concord International add a small, speedy fleet ... of shopping carts!** Putting food directly into a cart makes for a smoother experience and means neighbors aren't struggling with heavy bags.

“It's made a huge difference,” says Scott. “You wouldn't think it, but it does – imagine Safeway without shopping carts.”







## Neighbors Supporting Neighbors

*Continued from the front cover.  
Meet three more neighbors who pay it  
forward through volunteering.*

**IVETA** started coming to one of our community produce distributions at Mount Diablo High School when her bookkeeping job cut her hours. A mom of three growing teenagers, Iveta relied on the Food Bank to help her provide for her family. Then the pandemic hit – and the need for volunteers became urgent. Iveta put up her hand to help keep the distribution running, and she’s been volunteering there ever since.

"It's helping people," she says. **In addition to greeting neighbors and helping newcomers navigate the distribution for the first time, she also tries to make sure other locals know that help is available.** "I post when the Food Bank truck is there, and I'm volunteering,

letting people know we have bread, we have sweet stuff, so come on down."

Iveta says getting food through our programs has helped her keep up with her kids' big appetites as she works on building up a new bookkeeping business of her own.

**LINDA** was waiting to pick up food from our Senior Food Program in Hercules when she noticed the people setting up needed an extra pair of hands. "From that day on, I was volunteering," she says. **She's now given more than 500 hours of her time to our food distributions in Hercules and Rodeo,** where she helps her fellow neighbors check in and get to know the program.

"I'm retired. I would have nothing else to do but sit on my bed," she jokes. And volunteering gives her an opportunity to use the customer service skills she honed



through years of working in shipping and transportation.

"I like just talking to people and playing around with people," she says. "We have music out there, and they know that I'm gonna be out there moving around and dancing. And when they get to me, they'll start moving around and dancing. It's a fun thing."

It's not just the joy of giving back that Linda appreciates – **it's also how the support allows her to stretch her dollar while eating nutritiously.** Linda says being able to get fresh produce through the program is what helps her the most: "When you go to the grocery store – especially produce, it's so expensive. I don't know how people do it."

**MARGARET** says it was getting to know Will Gregory – one of our longtime Food Bank truck drivers – that inspired her and her husband Bill to start volunteering at the

food distribution they had visited several times. Over time, the two of them did a little of everything: unloading and distributing food, greeting neighbors and getting to know newcomers, regulars and other volunteers. "I liked it a lot," she says. "Seeing the other people that were there handing out the food, and seeing the regulars. Everyone was so nice."

While their health isn't permitting them to volunteer right now, Margaret says **getting food from the Food Bank remains a big help, especially with most of their fixed income going to rent each month.** She appreciates that the food is also healthy for Bill, who has diabetes.

"They serve food that you can eat, and it's not full of a lot of sugar," she says.



**VOLUNTEER TODAY**

[FoodBankCCS.org/Volunteer](https://FoodBankCCS.org/Volunteer)



Linda  
Mobile Pantry Distribution, Rodeo

# WARM HEARTS WITH VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVES

Our Virtual Food Drives are a great way to inspire kindness and support your neighbors as we head into the holiday season. Setting up a drive is quick (less than five minutes!) and with our bulk buying power every \$1 you raise provides two meals of food! Here are five fun ways you can add a virtual drive to your plans and change lives this holiday season and beyond...

## 1 FRIENDSGIVING GRATITUDE

At your next holiday gathering, put a place card on the table representing 1 of our 4 neighbors facing food insecurity and ask your guests to donate in their honor.

## 2 GATHER FROM HOME

Organize a virtual movie night or happy hour and ask guests to donate the price of a movie ticket, snacks and a soda or what they would have spent on restaurant drinks and appetizers.

## 3 FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Host a Halloween costume, ugly sweater or holiday baking contest. Set a donation fee to attend and vote on your favorites.

## 4 COLLECT FOR CLUTTER

Coordinate a community yard sale and request that all proceeds are donated to your drive. Ask each participating household to display your link prominently for shoppers!

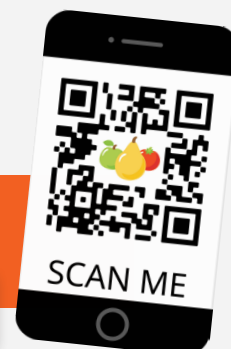
## 5 CONNECT FOR A CAUSE

Utilize social media to request contributions in honor of a special someone, a life event or in celebration of a holiday. You can also include your fundraiser in existing neighborhood events by adding your drive link to invitations and event information.



**START YOUR DRIVE**

[FoodBankCCS.org/VirtualFoodDrive](https://FoodBankCCS.org/VirtualFoodDrive)







## Corporate Spotlight: Chevron

### WHY WE GIVE

Since 2003, Chevron has been a steadfast partner in the fight against hunger. That's 20 years of making a difference for our neighbors!

Chevron is one of our top corporate partners, donating enough funds for over 120,000 meals each year. In addition to this generous financial support, many Chevron employees also give back through regular volunteering. Last year, employees volunteered almost 800 hours of their time at the Food Bank! Their helping hands ensure we can keep getting food to those who need it most in our community.

"Chevron is extremely honored to work hand-in-hand with the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano to address the critical issue of hunger in our local communities," said Leticia Melendez, social investment advisor for Chevron.

"We partner with local food banks to promote wellness and continued access to nutritious food because a healthy community is better for everyone."



For corporate partnership opportunities contact:  
[sponsorships@foodbankccs.org](mailto:sponsorships@foodbankccs.org)

4010 Nelson Avenue  
Concord, CA 94520

*Return Service Requested*

# Donna's Banana Bread

## VOLUNTEER-APPROVED RECIPE

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup shortening  
1½ cups sugar  
(can be reduced if using  
really ripe bananas)  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
2 eggs  
2 cups plain flour  
½ teaspoon soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
4 tablespoons  
buttermilk (I usually  
use sour cream or  
yogurt)  
1 cup mashed ripe  
bananas  
1 cup walnuts  
(optional)

It's not just volunteer Donna's welcoming presence that makes life sweeter for everyone at our Richmond Civic Center drive-thru distribution. She also uses some of the food she receives at our distribution – like eggs, seasonal fruits or butter – to bake for her fellow volunteers. Her banana bread recipe, tested over a year and a half of regular volunteer shifts, is a particular favorite!

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla, mixing well. Mix dry ingredients together then add to the shortening mixture, alternating with sour cream/buttermilk/yogurt. Add bananas and nuts. The batter will be thick.
3. Pour into greased pans and bake on the center rack of your oven. The bread is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

### MAKES

One Standard loaf (9 x 5 x 3 inches) about 50 minutes  
Two 8 x 4 x 2½ inch loaves – about 40-45 minutes  
Nine or so 4½ x 2½ x 1½ mini loaves – about 35 minutes



## AT-THE-TABLE

### What's inside

- Meet the volunteers paying it forward
- Gving back is fun with a Virtual Food Drive
- A note from the Food Bank staff: Preparing for the holidays