

# Food Notes | The Newsletter of Food for People

## SPRING ISSUE 2021

The Food Bank for Humboldt County



Food for People's Mobile Produce Pantry brings healthy foods to remote areas across Humboldt County to help families in need access fruits and vegetables. More on page 10.

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We feel it's important to keep you updated on our programs, policy work, and the progress we are making at the food bank. If you do not wish to receive a newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us and have your name removed from our newsletter mailing list.

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The Food Bank for Humboldt County

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# Celebrating Youth Leadership

## Notes from the Executive Director

As tough as this past year has been for everyone, there have also been some shining moments of hope and inspiration that give us the “juice” we need to keep moving forward. One such example this past year was the leadership of students from six of our local high schools who took on a daunting task and ultimately inspired all of us over the holidays.

Planning for the annual Humboldt Holiday Food & Fund Drive with Senator Mike McGuire typically begins in October and involves several face-to-face meetings and conference calls with student leaders and their advisors. It’s an event that has been structured as a “friendly competition” between six local high schools (Arcata, McKinleyville, Eureka, St. Bernard’s, Fortuna, and Ferndale) to see who can bring in the most food and funds, with the winning school getting the “Golden Can” award and funds for a school dance. Senator McGuire is always very hands-on with planning for the event and gets to know each of the student leaders and their advisors through in-person meetings and calls that include discussions about their leadership philosophy, why they feel this event is important, what creative ideas they plan to use to achieve success, how they’re going to implement their grand ideas, and a few questions about their hobbies, future plans, and pets. He is always their biggest cheerleader and invests a lot of time connecting with them.

As we started discussions for this year’s drive, we had no idea how we were going to mobilize an event that has relied on school rallies, community food drives, and other public activities that culminate in a very public final event in the middle of a pandemic. We also had to consider Food for People’s limited storage capacity for donated foods given the loss of our main facility, and the need to isolate donations for a period of time to ensure they would be safe to handle.

What we quickly learned was that the students are great at adapting! They immediately shifted gears and decided that in light of the immense challenges the pandemic has created for our community, they would unite and work together instead of competing against each other. It was totally their idea - Wow! They saved the competition for the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior class levels within their respective schools to engage classmates who were all missing each other and looking for ways to connect on something bigger than themselves. They organized drive up and drop off food donation events to



**Anne Holcomb, Executive Director.**

keep everyone safe; distributed food donation bags in local neighborhoods, instructing folks to leave them on their doorsteps for pickup on specific days and times; encouraged a shift to online financial donations to take advantage of Food for People’s purchasing power; and incorporated social media strategies to rally enthusiasm, all with the hands-on support of their leadership advisors. Food for People created an online platform for their supporters and the community at large to donate funds instead of food and provided individual pages for each school so that donations would be counted towards the school of each donor’s choice. This was all hashed out during several Zoom meetings in which we learned more about the distance learning challenges and loss of sports and other extracurricular activities these student leaders and their classmates have been navigating over the past year, and we got to meet the dogs and cats that have kept them company and made them smile during distance learning.

As little as two weeks before the final day it was looking like we might not meet the prior year’s totals of \$6300 and 21,866 lbs. of food. But then everything shifted and we actually had to increase our goals three times during the final week. When all was said and done, the net result of this fifth year of the Humboldt Holiday Food & Fund Drive blew us all away! December 10th was the culminating event at the Eureka Safeway, and even though we had to limit attendance to keep everyone safe, the excitement was running high as evidence of each school’s successes unfolded. Our amazing student leaders and the community members who supported them brought in a whopping \$55,414 in financial donations and 10,472 lbs. of food!



In a debrief Zoom held a few weeks later with Senator McGuire, it was clear that the students were enormously proud of what they had accomplished and the impact it would have on individuals and families who have been hit so hard by the economic effects of the pandemic. They get it. They love their schools and their communities and were grateful to be part of something that would make a difference. They also reflected on what they had learned as leaders, and thanked their advisors, and Senator McGuire for giving them the opportunity to learn firsthand what community engagement really means. We all know that strong, compassionate, and thoughtful leadership is critically important during challenging times and it is so reassuring to know that this next wave of leaders stand poised to step forward. We should all be proud.

### The Leadership Teams that Made it Happen!

#### Arcata High:

Student Leader: Lola Renteria  
Advisor: Jennifer Coriell

#### McKinleyville High:

Student Leader: Isabella Sundberg  
Advisor: Daniel Carmesin

#### St. Bernard's Academy:

Student Leader: Joey Dugan  
Advisor: Catherine Scott and Principal Paul Shanahan

#### Eureka High:

Student Leader: Klayre Barres  
Advisors: Tera Sanchez and Principal Jennifer Johnson

#### Fortuna High:

Student Leader: Devin Butcher  
Advisor: Raven Coit

#### Ferndale High:

Student Leader: Colson Renner  
Advisor: Alexa Alexandre

# Thank you

First and foremost, we want to thank everyone in our community for your incredible generosity over the holidays and through all the stages of the pandemic. Your support has made it possible for us to help when needed most, serving an increasing number of people whose lives have been upended. I typically open all the incoming mail and have the privilege of reading the heartwarming notes that so many of you include with your financial donations. Some have written to say that they were donating their stimulus check because “we need it more than they do” or that they appreciate the fact that we’ve been able to help so many people during such a difficult time. Even a quick note saying “thank you for all you do to help those in need in our community” means a lot and reinforces our commitment to providing healthy food for the many individuals and families who are facing a multitude of financial challenges. Please know that we are tremendously grateful, as are those who rely on us for help when times are tough.

Anne Holcomb, *Executive Director*



Student leaders drop off the donations they collected during the December 10th Drive up and Donate event at the Eureka Safeway.





Volunteers unload pre-packed food boxes and bags in preparation for a food distribution.

”

I appreciate knowing that those who can help out, do. I plan to pay it forward somehow."

- Don

## A Greater Need

### A story of the real people we serve

By Julie Ryan, Volunteer & Direct Services Manager

As 2020 comes to a close and 2021 begins, the effects of the pandemic are coming to a head. We have seen an increase in the number of people who have come out to our food pantries. December was the busiest month of the past year with about a 20% increase from the months prior. Additionally, we went through a large amount of pet food and also a few hundred toothbrushes donated by the Smile Humboldt Program – which shows that people are having a hard time meeting other basic needs. Couple that with the fact that the average room and utilities for rent in Eureka is \$600.00/ month – and you can see why people are struggling

The wonderful thing about our community is that there are so many people who want to help others by volunteering, donating funds, or both. When you give to Food for People, you are helping fellow community members stay healthy and maintain their independence. People like Don from Eureka. Don moved to Eureka about 20 years ago and used to work full time until he became physically disabled. "I hate it," Don said with a furrowed brow, "it's really frustrating to have the skills and know-how but not physically be able to work full time and support myself. I used to work on my car on the weekend for fun, and I had to sell it a while back."

When Don isn't visiting the Choice Pantry, he likes to listen to music, read, and go bird watching at the marsh

as long it's not too cold or rainy just to stay busy. A work-related injury and other health issues have kept Don from working full time for the last several years. Don reluctantly signed up for CalFresh in 2019 and started accessing Food for People's Choice Pantry in Eureka about a year ago. "The extra food from Choice Pantry helps stretch my food budget - I like the good quality cheese, milk, eggs, and veggies as I feel better when I have a balanced diet." He said he likes that Choice Pantry staff and volunteers are friendly and welcoming and joked that he doesn't mind having a gal offer to carry his groceries to the car.

Don, who has a college degree, had been doing part-time contract work but said that has slowed down with COVID-19. He said he feels luckier than a lot of other people he sees because his housing is owned by a family member and he pays below reduced (below market value) rent. "I see people I know who used to be comfortable living paycheck to paycheck and when I do errands and then I see houseless folks on the street and it worries me that I could be next. The way things have played out for me and people I know has made me believe that people don't just end up hungry and needing help because of a few bad choices or bad luck. It's more complicated than that and I definitely see things differently. I appreciate knowing that those who can help out, do. I plan to pay it forward somehow."





Left: Hunger Fighters from Glen Paul School celebrate their collections that will go to Food for People. Right: Staff and volunteers at the final drive-up and donate event with Senator Mike McGuire.

# Holiday Food Drives in Review

## Huge Thank You to the community!

By Allison Kenney, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Food for People had a very successful 28th annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive. Together our community raised more than 14,000 lbs of food and \$55,000.00! Our food drive participants - including Hunger Fighter teams who held individual food and fund drives within their businesses or organizations, local schools who participated in the Senator McGuire Food drive, KHUM listeners, and many other generous individual community members all rallied despite the difficult times, and really strived to focus on financial donations this year, which will help Food for People tremendously in the future months, as we continue to meet the increasing need for food assistance due to the economic repercussions of the pandemic.

Once again, the Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California officially kicked off our holiday season with their annual Cowboy Canned Food Convoy in mid-November. Horses and their riders paraded through Old Town Eureka with saddlebags full of nonperishable food to be donated to the food bank, exciting on-lookers and passers-by, and spreading holiday cheer. On the same day, we held our first drive-through food drive at our Broadway Choice Pantry location to collect food donations from the general public and our Hunger Fighter teams, offering a safe, socially-distanced and contact-free option for those looking to donate nonperishable goods.

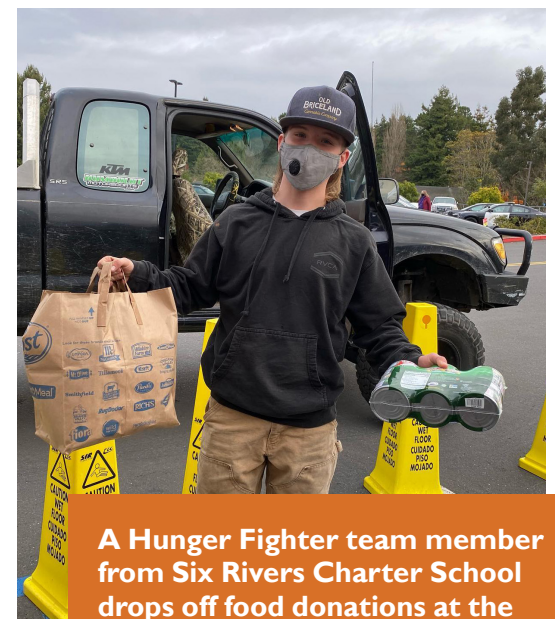
And what would Food for People's Holiday Spirit Food and Fund Drive be without the highly anticipated KHUM on-air food and fund drive week? Typically Food for People staff join our enthusiastic and fun-loving KHUM DJs for live broadcasts at various grocery stores throughout the county to highlight our efforts and meet community needs, offering an opportunity for community members to stop by with donations and meet some of our staff and local DJs. In true 2020 fashion, the KHUM drive looked a bit different this year but was nevertheless wildly successful—bringing in thousands of dollars/pounds to support Food for People's work.

Senator McGuire and his staff helped coordinate the large-scale Humboldt Holiday Food Drive Show-Down in partnership with Eureka High School, Arcata High School, McKinleyville High School, Fortuna High School, Ferndale High School, St. Bernard's Academy, and Eureka Safeway to contribute more than 10,000 pounds of food! This food drive is typically a competition between schools, but this year everyone decided to come together and raise food and funds as a unified team, and despite many of the participating schools practicing distance learning, they definitely knocked it out of the park!

Although many local businesses and organizations are either closed temporarily or employees are working from home, we had some resolute Hunger Fighter Teams who rallied despite the circumstances to raise food and funds for Food for People. A special thanks to all of our teams, and to everyone who participated this season to help make this Holiday Spirit Food and Fund Drive such a success:

### Hunger Fighters:

- Six Rivers Charter School
- Project Kindness
- Mikki Moves
- Arcata Bottoms 4H
- Pacific Union School
- LACO Associates
- Bayside Women's Golf
- Starbucks of the Lost Coast
- Glen Paul School



A Hunger Fighter team member from Six Rivers Charter School drops off food donations at the Drive-up and Donate Event.





Following the sewer disaster of 2020, Food for People's flagship building at 14th Street in Eureka has been demolished in preparation for a rebuild.

# Putting the "Crap" Behind Us

## Rebuilding - One Year after the Sewer Disaster

By Carly Robbins, Development Director

### Building Progress

Can you believe it's been one year since the poop storm at Food for People? Are you scratching your head wondering how you never heard the story?

On February 28, 2020, hopes, dreams, money, paperwork, food, trash cans, and so much more floated out the front door of Food for People on a river of city sewer water. It was a blow to our operations, especially as COVID-19 found its way to our community, stressing our local economy and food system. But worry not, with the hard work of our amazing team and wonderful community, food bank operations were able to start back up mere weeks later.

Now, one year later our Eureka Food Pantry continues to serve food at the temporary location at 2112 Broadway, and the rest of our operations that serve the whole Humboldt County area, including our Mobile Produce Pantry, Child Nutrition, Senior & Homebound, and CalFresh assistance programs, are run out of several leased warehouse spaces. Services have adapted and increased to meet the need in our community as many people struggle financially as we deal with the hardships 2020 presented.

But things are looking up! Back at 14th street, the water has been drained, and we are well on our way to a new journey. The building has been entirely demolished, and with the help of our friends at Greenway Partners, and Pacific Builders construction of a new and improved facility is set to start in the next few months.

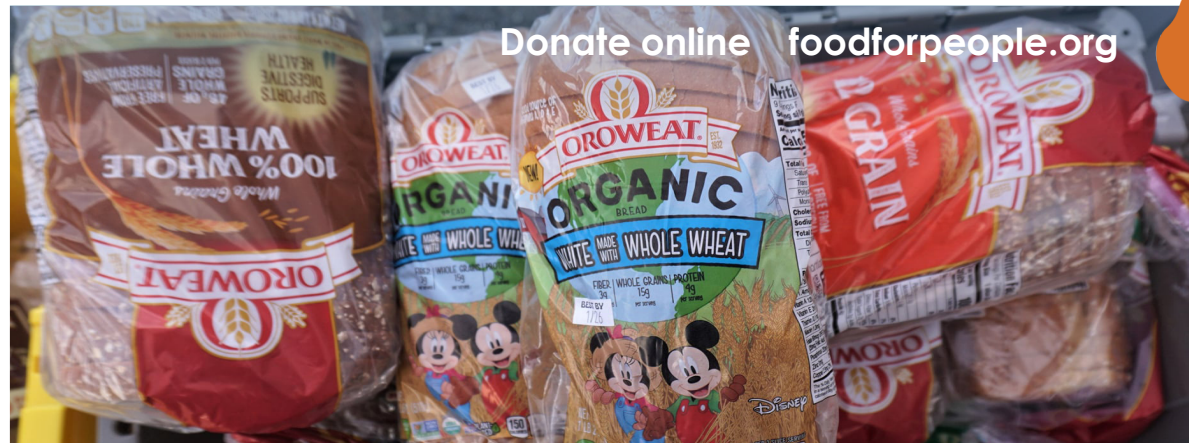
**The new building will allow for exciting additions to Food for People's services:**

- Added warehouse space will enable us to better support and enhance our countywide services.
- It will enable us to expand services and build space for partners to connect people with an array of community support services that promote stability and lead to a better quality of life.
- Expand Job Training - To improve employment prospects for people experiencing adversity by providing work skills.
- Improve the quality of food we serve by expanding cold storage to prioritize healthy foods and reduce food waste.
- Increased space for Disaster and Emergency Response to serve everyone during a pandemic, emergency, or natural disaster – which has never been more important.
- A Large Choice Pantry will give people enough space to choose their food with greater dignity to meet their health needs.

Our goal is to open our new doors for full use in fall of 2021. To make this all possible we are working to raise \$5 million. Thanks to the generous support of lead donors and our community we have already raised \$4 million towards the project.

You can support this effort! Let's put this "crap" behind us and make this year better than the last. Find out more at [RebuildFoodforPeople.org](https://RebuildFoodforPeople.org) or by contacting our Development Director Carly Robbins at (707)445-3166 ext. 306 or [crobbsins@foodforpeople.org](mailto:crobbsins@foodforpeople.org).





60% of Humboldt County children qualify for free or reduced-cost meals at school, and the shift to virtual learning has made accessing food hard for many families. Food for People's Backpacks for Kids program is committed to helping children in need.

# Backpacks for Kids

## Connecting with the families in need

By Carrie Smith, Child & Senior Programs Coordinator

In my years as the coordinator for the Backpacks for Kids Program, I rarely have a chance to connect with the direct recipients of the food, as the Schools and Resource Centers' staff provide most of the one-on-one contact with the students and families.

This was until recently when I was contacted by a mother whose family has received the weekend food bag for nearly four years now. Her story is familiar, sometimes heartbreaking, but overall inspiring. The dedication and motivation of this single mother to provide the best for her family is truly touching. "Bonnie" was married young, and had four babies before the age of 30. After struggling to make ends meet, and the marriage coming to an end, she had to pack up her car with her children and the bare necessities, and traveled out of state. She landed in Eureka, where family members resided. She and her kids slept on couches, in her car, and in homeless shelters while she figured out what to do next. She eventually found a job at a local nonprofit through the Work Experience (WEX) Program and got her kids enrolled in the local public school system. After months of waiting, she was able to move into her own two-bedroom apartment. Life was looking up! She was getting a regular paycheck and felt like her life was finally starting to make sense!

Unfortunately, the reality of single motherhood and raising four growing children was still a harsh one. Bonnie simply could not provide the food necessary to feed her hungry kids, even with the help of CalFresh and the meals provided at the kids' school. Through word of mouth, she heard about the Backpacks for Kids Program and called the office to find out more.

After filling out the brief application, Bonnie's two oldest children were given a bag of groceries each

to take home on the following Friday. What a treat! Two breakfasts, two lunches, and two dinners for the entire weekend! This food filled her pantry with easily prepared meals and snacks for her kids.

Bonnie helped to sum up her experience receiving this extra help for almost four years:

### What is your favorite part about receiving the Backpacks for Kids weekend food bag?

"My kids are always hungry! Even when I plan out our meals for the week, it never seems like there is enough. I love that I can say, 'go make yourself some mac and cheese.' and know there will always be a couple in the pantry for them. Or I can throw a can of beans into a soup for extra protein and fiber. Or not have to run to the store last minute because I discover we are out of cereal - oatmeal packets it is! It's so nice to have a consistent source of backup food."

### Are you still receiving your Backpacks for Kids food even though your kids are doing virtual classes from home?

"Yes, I go pick up the food every Friday at the front office. It's nice to keep getting it. I'm lucky to be an essential worker so I continue to work and have been getting extra CalFresh benefits. So I don't feel like I'm of the worst off. But I know a lot of families are really struggling."

### Is there anything else you'd like to share?

"I'd just like to say thank you to Food for People and the community members that help to support the program. It really has relieved so much stress over the years and has allowed me to focus on other aspects of raising my kids without the worry that they are hungry. I really have appreciated the help."





# New Leadership Signals Opportunities to Reduce Hunger

By Heidi McHugh, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

After four long years that saw continuous efforts to reduce access to federally funded nutrition assistance, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided a glimpse of things to come. On January 19, 2021, the USDA formally withdrew two proposals to change rules to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, CalFresh) that would have kicked three million people off the program, dis-enrolled nearly a million children from free school meals, and cut billions in funding for the federal government's strongest response to hunger. Now that the administration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris has assumed control of the Executive Branch, they are quickly taking action to relieve hunger and poverty that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Several of these short-term actions include long-sought changes to the SNAP program from policy experts and economic equality advocates. The installation of some of these experts and advocates at the USDA signals the potential for long-term changes that will significantly increase food access.

The administration's bold economic relief plan, the American Rescue Act, is a major step in centering the needs of those who have suffered disproportionately during the pandemic: children, people of color, families, workers with low incomes, and people living in poverty. Two days into the administration, the President signed an Executive Order to roll out portions of that plan immediately. Included in this package are specific actions to address the current hunger crisis that is impacting 1 in 7 households, and more than 1 in 5 Black and Latino households.

The following highlights are from the official White House Press Release:

Established under Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) connects low-income families with kids with food dollars equivalent to the value of the school meals missed due to COVID-related school closures. To date, the program has only allowed P-EBT benefit amounts up to \$5.70 per child per school day and many households have had trouble claiming benefits. To address these concerns and expand needed relief, the President is asking USDA to consider issuing new guidance increasing P-EBT benefits by approximately 15% to accurately reflect the costs of missing meals and make it easier for households to claim benefits. For instance, this action could provide a family with three children more than \$100 of additional support every two months.

Allow larger emergency SNAP allotments for the lowest-income households. Congress authorized emergency increases to SNAP benefits to help address food insecurity during the pandemic. So far, those benefit increases have not been made available to all of the lowest income households. USDA will consider issuing new guidance that would allow states to increase SNAP emergency allotments for those who need it most. This would be the first step to ensuring that an additional 12 million people get enhanced SNAP benefits to keep nutritious food on the table

Update food assistance benefits to reflect the true cost of a basic healthy diet. More than 40 million Americans count on SNAP to help put food on the table. Currently, however, USDA's Thrifty Food Plan, the basis for determining SNAP benefits, is out of date with the economic realities most struggling households face when trying to buy and prepare healthy food. As a result, the benefits fall short of what a healthy, adequate diet costs for many households. Therefore, as directed by the 2018 Farm Bill, the President will ask USDA to consider beginning the process of revising the Thrifty Food Plan to better reflect the modern cost of a healthy basic diet.

Under the new leadership at the USDA, these requests will likely be honored. Secretary Tom Vilsack, who formally served in this position under President Obama, has a proven record of supporting the SNAP program. But new appointments at the USDA bring the potential for broad changes that could increase food access. Included in these appointments are two advocates familiar to Food for People! Kumar Chandran has been named Senior Adviser in the Office of the Secretary of the USDA. Kumar began his professional career at Nourish California (formerly California Food Policy Advocates) in 2007. Kumar worked on child care nutrition and school meals as well as CalFresh. Notably, Kumar was a crucial part of the team that passed legislation to increase access to water in schools. Stacy Dean has been nominated as deputy undersecretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services. During her time with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, her work was critical to removing prohibitive barriers to CalFresh, particularly excessive paperwork and the finger-imaging requirement. Stacy also worked to encourage the federal authority to expand direct certification in school meals to Medi-Cal. As we have seen in the California Department of Social Services in recent years, the appointment of anti-hunger advocates in key positions has a real impact on the day-to-day well-being of people struggling through the inequity of our economic structure. I look forward to the positive impact these advocates will have here in Humboldt and across the nation.



# GIVE IN THE NAME OF A LOVED ONE

You can honor a friend or family member by making a donation to Food for People. Simply add a notation to your gift. If you include an address, we'll send a card to let that person know about the donation. It is a great way to celebrate and/or honor the memory of someone you love.

## In Memory Of

Ann King  
Ann McClary  
Betty Lee Mott  
Carlos Avelar  
Cheryl Ash  
Curt & Phyllis Wilson  
Dave Leland Weidling  
Dell & Milt Diver  
Denise Beaupre  
Don Brady  
Dr. Scott Sattler  
Earleen Bean Sasser.  
*Who was a nurse in the area For 32 years. She took great joy in helping people*  
Ed & Yvonne Pugh  
Ed Bognuda  
Elaine Grosso  
Esteban Gonzalez  
Felicia Biscarret  
Galen Martin  
Gottardo Benzonelli  
Greg Gilchrist  
Helen Person  
Jack Altman  
Jeff North  
Jeff Weisman  
Jim Gandee  
Jim Hunt  
John Michael Asmundson  
John Rogers  
Judith Rose Rex  
Kelly Marie Alcorn  
Larry & Mike Francesconi  
Laura Myers  
Laurey & Jay Sullivan  
Marion Miller  
Nick Frank  
Patric Nagle  
Paula  
Robert Finn  
Sally Sachs  
The Partons  
Tim Willits  
Tom Colbert  
Vina Simmons  
Wes & Marilyn Olsen  
William Noellert

"Kindness & Love."

"That all may share this table."

## In Honor Of

*2021 & Hope for change!*  
Abram Voronov  
Alex Clifford  
Alice Jensen  
Alyse & Larry Nichols  
Amy & Angelo Alfano-Van Loon  
Anne Holcomb  
Annette & Michael Davis  
Arcata Posts  
Asa & Elana  
Ashley Largen  
Barbara & Neal Carnam  
Barbara Keating  
Ben Benzonelli  
Beverly, Larry & Dave  
Bill & Gayle Sides  
Bill Keil  
Bob Shephard  
Brendan Tyrrell  
Carol McNeill  
Carol Vander Meer  
Carolyn & Brad  
Charmayne Repolge  
Christine & Robert Cogen  
Cindy & Ron Kersbergen  
Cliff & Amy Berkowitz  
Codie  
Cooper & Kloee Donnelly  
Craig Hansen  
D. Downie & P. Shelley  
Dan Plato  
Darcy McCovey  
Dave & Carol Dillon  
Dave Creech  
David Aronovici  
Dell'Arte  
Denver & Hawaii Hobobooms  
Dorothy Rivers  
Dr. Lei Han  
Dr. Sarah Jaquette-Ray

"Do Good; Avoid Evil. All Things In Moderation - Including Moderation."

"In recognition of food insecurity and the related hardships that our fellow community members face."

"Merry Christmas, may everyone have enough."

"Those who feel invisible or unseen."

Dr. Teresa Frankovich  
Edie Jessup  
Emily Owen  
Emily Reinhart  
Employees of H.T. Harvey & Associates  
Erika Makino  
Gabe, Victoria, & Eve Lubowe  
Gail Harrison  
George & Teri!  
Gregory & Emilee Tsukahara  
Glen Paul School  
Gordon Lewis  
Grace Sterner  
Grandpa Dennis & Grandma Sue  
Harriet Hill  
Holly Yashi  
Jacque Kesenger  
James & Kim Jurgemeyer  
James Thompson  
Jami Crowell  
Janousek Family  
Jason Bray Family  
Jason S. Hood  
Jean Basemore  
Jeff Pauli  
Jennifer Smith  
Jesse Wheeler & Emmet Bowman  
Jesse Wood  
John & Gail Gai  
John Bennett  
John Gai  
Jordyn Neal  
Joyce & Patrick Collins  
Joyce & Phyllis Matyi  
Judi Andersen  
Julia Scully  
Kai & Madhu  
Katie Tsukahana  
Katy & Mike Yanke  
Keith Flamer  
Kelly Sanders

Ken & Troy Dean  
Kendall Keil  
Kevin O'Neil  
Kim Thorpe  
Laura Olson  
Leslie Stalder & Kira, Riley & Erika  
Liam Furniss  
Linda & Joe Doody  
Lisa Matsubu  
Lisa Whitchurch  
Lizzy Ebert  
Lois Andersen  
Loren & Jess  
Loren Palmisano  
Luke Hernandez  
Maeluise Barkin  
Marcy Manning & Kent Hallsted  
Mari Fer  
Marina Cheney  
Marisa Mendosa  
Mark & Margaret Shaffer  
Mary Lou Daurey  
Marylou Scararda  
Matthew Kidwell  
Maureen Saunders  
Maya Zwerdling  
McGuire Family  
Michael Kiso  
Michael Welch  
Michelle Ostronkoski  
Mike Zoah-Henderson  
Mrs. Adam's 5th grade class at Arcata Elementary School  
Ms. Riley Martel-Phillips  
Nellie Johnson  
Nicholas Holland  
Lassiter  
Noah Lurtz  
Norman Kingshill  
Opal & Larry Lovatto  
Pam Brown  
Pat Girczyc & Steve Durham

"ALL of you who work so hard to meet the needs of our Humboldt Community. Thank you so very, very much!"

"Food for People Staff and Volunteers. Thank you for what you do."

"Thank you for your giving nature and all those masks for everyone and anyone!!"

"We would like to thank you for continuing the fight for the hungry!"

Paul Shanahan - Principal, St Bernard's Academy  
Peanut & Ericka  
Peggy & Chas Dreyfus  
Phyllis Rudzitis  
President Biden & Vice President Harris  
Princess Marvin  
Randy & Lori Vogt  
Renee OKeefe  
Rev. Doug Thompson  
Rev. Fred & Carol Blacksmith  
Rich Harkey  
Richard & Chris Beresford  
Ronald Anders  
Sandy & Al Ussia  
School Children Solutions for Small Businesses  
Sovereign Bodies International  
Spring & Justin Cogswell  
Stella Benzonelli  
Stephanie & Greg Strasser  
Stephanie Perrette  
Steve & Cathy Caldwell  
Steve Salzman  
Steven Flannes  
Sue Wahler  
The Post Carlsons  
The Santa Fe Posts  
Thomas Sellers  
Tom & Amy Dewey  
Tracy Monteforte  
Trudy Keltz  
Trudy Keltz  
Tuck Family  
Virginia Shockley  
Wendell Cole  
Zoe & Skyler Tinseth





Left: Jessica Beyer, Food for People's Mobile Produce Pantry Coordinator, handing out produce. Right: The County Mobile Engagement team set up in front of Food for People's Mobile Produce Pantry distribution to help folks in need sign up for CalFresh and other services.

# It's Not Just About Hunger

## Improving Nutrition in our County

By Allison Kolb, Development and Communications Assistant

Food for People recognizes the dignity of all people and believes equitable access to food is an essential right. But people do not just have the right to food, they have the right to access nutritious foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.

When I first arrived on the North Coast, I took a job in Redway just a few doors down from where Food for People sets up their Mobile Produce Pantry. Once a month I would see large groups of folks walk past my window with their reusable bags, excitement in their eyes, and smiles on their faces. "What's going on?" I said to my coworkers. "It's free produce day!! It's the day Food for People comes down to Redway and gives out fresh fruits and vegetables to the community," they said. I could feel the strong sense of admiration and appreciation in their voices as they told me about the work that Food for People does and how they make sure to reach the most rural communities in Humboldt. "Wow! That is so cool," I said. It was very clear to me that for so many people in Redway Food for People's Mobile Produce Pantry and Free Produce Markets filled an important need, not just for food assistance, but the need to nourish their bodies with quality, fresh produce.

Growing up being raised by a single, struggling mother and being one of four kids I was no stranger to receiving food from food banks. My mother is a hard-working, ambitious woman who did her best to create a good life for us. But

with little help and a sexist boss who gave raises and promotions to the men over the women, things didn't always add up. I could feel my mother's relief each time she picked up our food. I know it hurt her pride to ask for help. She never imagined she would end up a single mother or in need of help, but she set her pride aside to keep a roof over our heads and food in our bellies. I know receiving that food made her feel more connected to the community. We knew there were people who cared about us.

I never remember getting much fresh produce from the food banks. All I remember is cans and boxes of things. I remember that can of cranberry sauce that sat in our cabinet for months. I still don't like cranberry sauce to this day. I will admit that I did not eat enough fresh fruits and vegetables as a kid. Sometimes I wonder what kind of effect that had on me.

Seeing kids with their parents walking past my office window towards the Food for People Mobile Produce Pantry always made me feel warm and fuzzy inside. I hope it makes those kids feel like there are people that care about them too. With the impacts of COVID, Feeding America estimates that in 2020 one in 6 Americans and one in 4 children in America experienced food

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insecurity. I am glad that now I get to do work that helps give these children the nourishment that is so vital to their development. I am glad that all of you that support us get to be a part of that too.

Research shows that people with more money eat more fruits and vegetables than those with less. In turn, poorer people also assume a greater disease burden relative to their wealthier counterparts. There is clear evidence that eating your vegetables can help ward off heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. One price survey found that Americans typically spend 15 percent of their food budget on fruits and vegetables, but low-income families would have to spend 40 to 70 percent of their budget on fruits and vegetables to meet federal dietary guidelines for healthy eating. A second study found that in rural areas, convenience stores far outnumber supermarkets and grocery stores – even though the latter carries a much wider choice of affordable, healthy foods.

So, when I got a chance to accompany Jessica Beyer, our amazing Mobile Produce Pantry Coordinator, on one of her distributions last week I felt honored. Getting to fill up bags with onions, apples, oranges, lemons, Brussel sprouts, beets, potatoes, and an array of root vegetables and hand them to folks in the community filled me with pride.

Jessica and I got a chance to chat about our similar experiences as children. “I experienced food insecurity growing up being raised by a single parent. I remember counting on local food banks and churches to make it through tough times. The generosity and kindness were always something that resonated with me, and when the position became available at Food for People for Mobile Produce Pantry Coordinator it sounded like a perfect fit. I enjoy connecting with people in the community, and it's wonderful to get out and about,” Jessica told me. Throughout the worst of this pandemic Jessica has been on the front lines distributing free produce at regular distributions across our county, all the way up north to Orick, down south to Redway, east to Orleans and so many places in between. With the greater need for food assistance this pandemic has created, I know her work has never been more important.

See the full schedule of the locations of our Mobile Produce Pantry visits each month at [foodforpeople.org](http://foodforpeople.org).

SOURCES: Angela Liese, Ph.D., associate professor, epidemiology and biostatistics, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Diana Cassady, Dr.P.H., assistant professor, public health sciences, University of California, Davis; Tom Farley, M.D., co-author, Prescription for a Healthy Nation, and professor, community health sciences, Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, New Orleans; November 2007 Journal of the American Dietetic Association.

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I remember counting on local food banks and churches to make it through tough times. The generosity and kindness was always something that resonated with me.

- Jessica Beyer,  
Mobile Produce  
Pantry Coordinator



Top: Jessica Beyer pre-packs produce to distribute to families in need in the Eel River area. Below: Fresh oranges, apples, and local Brussel sprouts ready for distribution.





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The Food Bank for Humboldt County

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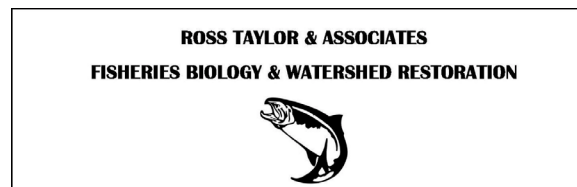
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**Food for People**

The Food Bank for Humboldt County

**Mission.** Food for People is working to eliminate hunger and improve the health and well-being of our community through access to healthy and nutritious foods, community education, and advocacy.

**Vision.** We envision a community where everyone has access to good quality, nutritious food, understands the consequences of hunger and poor nutrition, and is committed to creating a stronger, healthier Humboldt County.