

Food Notes | The Newsletter of Food For People

WINTER ISSUE 2023

The Food Bank for
Humboldt County



Local Food Resources Coordinator Allison picks apples at a ranch in Blue Lake managed by Humboldt Area Foundation as part of our gleaning program.

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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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Notes from the Executive Director

Reflecting on Food for People's past, present and future

Food for People is entering a new chapter serving as Humboldt County's food bank. We have completed the move into our new building, I have taken over the role of Executive Director following Anne Holcomb's well-deserved retirement, and our staff — who have been separated and working out of various spread-out locations for several years — are once again under one roof, building new program efficiencies and working relationships.

At the same time, we are seeing unprecedented growth in the need for our services — a common thread among all of our programs, as you will read in this newsletter. At a time of such pivotal change, we took a moment to reflect on where we are as an organization and where we came from. We recently completed a staff retreat, taking note of what we are doing well and what challenges we still have to overcome. At the same time, we centered ourselves in the history of this organization that has been serving the community and fighting for solutions to poverty and the root causes of hunger for 44 years.



The street view of the facility on V Street which we occupied for almost 20 years.

When Food for People first opened in 1979, we were no more than a small food closet intent upon filling the void for emergency food assistance locally. All food sorting, packing, and distribution was done out of a 1,000-square-foot house on V Street in Eureka. Operations grew steadily from those humble beginnings, expanding to provide food for several pantries located throughout the county. However access to refrigeration and freezer space was extremely limited, and Food for People was soon bursting at the seams and ill-prepared to accommodate the steadily increasing requests for emergency food assistance. In 1998, thanks to support received through a Community Development Block Grant, and the generosity of local citizens and foundations, we were

able to purchase the 9,000 square foot warehouse at 307 West 14th Street in Eureka that housed Food for People for 22 years. During that time we added distributions, programs, and staff to expand our reach and better serve people of all ages experiencing food insecurity. Now, in 2023, following several hard years (sewer inundation, COVID, rebuild campaign, and more) we are working out of a brand new facility completed thanks to the generous support of our community, and Food for People now has 25 staff members, 18 countywide programs, and nearly 100 community partners who help us reach people throughout Humboldt County.



Former Executive Director Anne Holcomb (right) with former Ops Manager Chris Weisner (far left), Art "Butch" Brown in van, and two supporters.

As our team discussed the current state of Food for People, one overwhelming theme came across — how proud we are to serve people experiencing food insecurity through creative program models and partnerships. In Eureka, our new onsite Choice Pantry is state of the art and gives people the dignity of shopping for foods that fit their dietary, cultural, and health needs. Outside of Eureka, we have been working hard to expand our partner network and food distributions to the most rural areas of Humboldt County. These communities have historically faced a greater risk for food insecurity and more hurdles to accessing food — as well as less access to support services, fewer transportation options, and a scarcity of food retailers. Humboldt County encompasses 4,050 square miles of land, and getting to the far reaches is not an easy undertaking. Read more about our latest distribution expansions on page 9.



Guests at the Donor Appreciation Party reviewing the timeline of Food for People's growth over the last 44 years.

While celebrating what is going well at Food for People, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges we are facing. The overwhelming concern among all of our staff is how many more people are seeking our assistance than just six months ago. Last month was a record for Food for People, with the most people served in our 44-year history (not an encouraging record to set at a food bank). This dramatic change is happening as societal and economic shifts drive up the costs of food and other daily essentials, impacting more and more families at the same time that multiple assistance programs' benefit levels (CalFresh, Pandemic EBT, etc.) are decreasing or ceasing. It is difficult to see the growing need in our community and hear the accompanying stories from our friends and neighbors without feeling the weight of it in our hearts. With the new building, and a strong pool of food funding, we have been able to grow to meet this need, but it is a worrying trend that we hope does not continue.

We are dedicated to being here for those experiencing hunger and food insecurity, but we would all rejoice if our services were no longer needed, if hunger were eliminated in this community. Our ultimate vision is for a Humboldt County where everyone has ready access to the foods they need to lead a healthy life. Though that is not where we find ourselves right now, I would like to acknowledge the caring community that has supported Food for People as we have grown into the organization we are today. Thank you, to our supporters, partners, and dedicated team members, for helping Food for People to be there for people during the tough times.



It is with great sadness we mourn the loss of Food for People board member and friend Dorina Espinoza (pictured far right). From her time on our board to her work at UC Cooperative Extension and Master Food Preservers, Dorina has been a tremendous force in the local food system and made a big impact on our region working to improve food security and the health of our community.

With gratitude,

Carly Robbins,
Executive Director

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Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

Ways to get involved this holiday season

by Allison Kenney, Local Food Resources Coordinator



Volunteers sort donated cans of food during Senator McGuire's Humboldt Holiday Food Drive Showdown.

The holiday season is quickly approaching, and Food for People is gearing up to host our 31st annual Holiday Spirit Food and Fund Drive! Spanning the months of November and December, this is our largest and most comprehensive food and fund drive effort of the year. Many local businesses, organizations, and community groups participate in various fundraisers, food drives, and special events each season. These combined efforts brought in over 38,000 pounds of food and nearly \$47,000 last holiday season!

During the holiday season, we are reminded to reflect on and appreciate what we have. For low-income families struggling to get by, the additional pressure to provide a special meal or buy gifts during the holiday season can be particularly difficult when resources are already stretched thin. As you've read elsewhere in Food Notes, rising prices for food, transportation, and other essentials combined with the end of pandemic-era assistance programs have caused record numbers of people to seek our help. Following the move into our new upgraded food bank facility, we saw a staggering 30% increase in community need for our services. We encourage you to participate in our food and fund drive efforts, to share in the holiday spirit and help make this time of year a little easier on families who are struggling to put food on the table now and into the future. We can't do it without the generous support of our community!

As always, funds are the most useful and efficient way to support us — they can be donated with one click online, making it a simple and secure transaction which requires no sorting, extra labor, or storage space! Monetary donations also allow us the flexibility to purchase highly requested items for our clients such as milk, eggs, and butter, which do not get donated through the food drives due to their perishable nature.

We realize not everyone wants to donate funds, and that's perfectly fine! There are lots of ways to support and get involved. Food for People makes it easy to donate, and we partner closely with our county-wide pantry network to ensure that donations made in a particular community stay in that community to help local residents.

Donation Drop Sites in the Community

Identified by the Food for People logo, donation barrels and boxes can be found at various grocery stores, businesses, and other organizations making it convenient to drop off nonperishable items anytime

Grocery store locations:

North Coast Co-Op (Eureka)
25 4th St, Eureka

North Coast Co-Op (Arcata)
811 I St, Arcata

Wildberries Marketplace
47 13th St, Arcata

Eureka Natural Foods
1450 Broadway St, Eureka

Murphy's (Cutten)
4020 Walnut Dr, Eureka

Safeway
2555 Harris St, Eureka

Donations can also be dropped off anytime between 9am-4pm, Monday through Friday at our warehouse which is located at 307 W. 14th St. in Eureka. Please access the warehouse from the alley at the back of the building.

Donations can also be dropped off at the food pantry in your community. Find a list of pantries at foodforpeople.org/programs/pantry-network.

Community Involvement

Cowboy Canned Food Convoy

The Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California will kick off our holiday season with their annual Cowboy Canned Food Convoy. Join us on Saturday, November 18th as horses and their riders parade 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.

Join the Hunger Fighter Challenge!

The Hunger Fighter Challenge is a collaborative effort to collect food and funds from November 1st through December 31st. Our Hunger Fighter teams include businesses, schools, civic organizations, and community groups, all with their own unique approach to raising food and funds. Everyone is welcome to form a team and Food for People can provide materials to ensure your team's success! Learn more and register your team online at www.foodforpeople.org/hunger-fighter-challenge

KHUM Week: On-Air Food & Fund Drive

For more than 20 years, Food for People has partnered with local radio station KHUM for a multi-day, on-air food and fund drive. Starting December 4th we will broadcast live from different grocery stores throughout the county, using this unique on-air opportunity to spread awareness and information on the work of the organization and programs we run. KHUM DJs are advocates of Food for People and do a great job of motivating and encouraging listeners to donate with challenges and matches. Consider calling in and making a donation during KHUM Week. Thanks to our KHUM friends for their dedication and ongoing support.

Senator Mike McGuire's Humboldt Holiday Food Drive Showdown: A drive-up and donate event on December 7th from 3-6 pm at Safeway in Eureka. Senator Mike McGuire and his team will be on hand collecting donations from student teams from Eureka High School, Arcata High School, McKinleyville High School, Fortuna High School, Ferndale High School, St. Bernard's Academy, as well as additional partnering schools and generous community donors.

These are just a few examples of ways to participate in the 31st annual Holiday Spirit Food and Fund Drive. Many organizations and groups host smaller independent food drives or events during the holidays, and we have great ideas and resources available to make the most of your efforts.

To start a holiday food drive please contact our Local Food Resources Coordinator Allison Kenney at (707)445-3166 ext 312 or FoodDrives@foodforpeople.org.

To start a virtual food drive or make a financial contribution contact our Development Director David Reed at dreed@foodforpeople.org or (707)445-3166 ext 306.



The Cowboy Canned Food Convoy kicks off the holiday food drive on November 18 at noon in Old Town Eureka.



Senator McGuire presents the Golden Can Award to students from St. Bernard's Academy, who raised the most funds out of all participating high schools in 2022.

Backpacks for Kids

Site Spotlight: Pine Hill & South Bay

by Carrie Smith, Child Nutrition & Senior Programs Coordinator



Food for People's Backpacks for Kids program serves children at 38 sites across Humboldt County.

The Backpacks for Kids Program has been a staple of child nutrition at Food for People for over 20 years. Bringing a bag of food home from school every Friday gives students the ability to be nourished over the weekend, so they can come back on Monday ready to learn. We currently serve 38 schools across Humboldt County with requests regularly pouring in from additional schools. With the recent end of the COVID CalFresh emergency allotments, coupled with escalating cost of food due to inflation, families are really feeling the pressures of financial hardship. What was once a program that filled the needs of a small portion of food-insecure students is now being sought by families who once considered themselves middle class.

Cassi La-Hue is the Family Resource Center Coordinator & Foster Youth Liaison at Pine Hill/South Bay Family Resource Center. She experiences first-hand the impact this program has on families she works with. I was able to ask her some questions about her impression of the program and its impact. (Note: Pine Hill/South Bay calls their Backpacks program Friday Food Bags):

How do you identify families for the program?

We identify families in a few different ways, but a big one is our housing survey that goes home with families at the beginning of the school year. About one out of every five of our students is McKinney-Vento, which is the education definition of homelessness. The housing survey is one way we identify which families fall into that category and they are also able to check off interest for our programs such as Friday Food Bags, CalFresh, and Holiday Assistance. We target these families with the slots we have and ensure they are connected if food is needed.

Can you tell me about some of the families you work with?

Many of them are facing multiple struggles. The big barriers we see daily are housing, basic hygiene, mental health, and food insecurity. Many of our families are trying hard to change patterns of intergenerational trauma, but to do that takes a village. Once a family is food insecure, it takes a long time to come out of that mindset and we see many kids who hoard food at school.

What are their lives like?

Many of our families' daily lives are just surviving. They are trying to figure out where they can stay that is safe and secure for their family. They are struggling to have clean clothes for school, gas to get their kids to school, and food for their family at home. They are often jumping through many hoops to gain access to services and trying to navigate the resources in our county can feel like a job all of its own.

"...every day I am amazed at all they can accomplish with a little extra support from a loving adult."

- Cassi La-Hue
Pine Hill/South Bay Family Resource Center

Continued on page 7...



Kids enjoyed decorating pumpkins at our latest Pints for Nonprofits event at Humboldt Bay Social Club.

Continued from page 6...

Are there any barriers to food access unique to your area?

While we are in Eureka, we are on the very south end of Eureka, just far enough away from town that many of our families struggle to get what they need. The only "store" in our district is the Country Club Market on Humboldt Hill and they have very minimal items that come at a very high cost. Many of our families don't have transportation, so taking a trip to WinCo is not as easy as it is for others.

Can you tell me about the kids?

Many of the kids that we serve have been food insecure at some point in their lives. At our school, our students receive breakfast, lunch, and dinner for free. Our kids are extremely resilient and have so much success when they are supported. Many of our students are homeless, and we also have a high percentage of students who are Special Education and English Language Learners. The kids are extremely sweet, caring, loving, smart, and funny. They are truly our future and every day I am amazed at all they can accomplish with a little extra support from a loving adult.

What impact do you see from the Backpacks for Kids program?

Many of our families who are food insecure really look forward to getting the bags on Fridays. Some of the kids carry a sense of pride in bringing the food bag home to their family and in a sense providing for their family. We don't see as much of the hoarding food for the weekend since we are able to provide a weekly food bag.

How do the children and families feel about Backpacks for Kids?

The children and the families are really excited about the Friday Food Bag Program. If there ever is a week where we don't have them or have to push them back, families or the students ask about them. When we deliver them to classrooms across both campuses the kids get super excited and happy when we drop them off. We are often met with cheering in the classroom. There's a sense of relief.

Have you seen any changes in the children who participate in the Backpacks for Kids program?

The children who participate are happy when they leave school with their Friday Food Bag. They feel a sense of pride and responsibility in bringing food home to their family. Sometimes if there are multiple siblings they fight over who is going to carry the bag home.

New Volunteer Group Putting Rescued Food to Use

by Julie Ryan, Volunteer & Direct Services Manager



Volunteers stock the fridge at the Eureka Choice Pantry.

Food banks have been working with local grocery stores for decades to rescue quality, usable food that would otherwise be sent to the landfill, and instead, they get the food to people who need it. In California, SB 1383 codified that relationship with a goal of reducing food waste being dumped, and as a result, producing less of the powerful greenhouse gas, methane, in landfills. The result at Food for People has been a tremendous increase in the volume of store donations as well as the work required to pick up, sort, and stock these foods.

We have started a new volunteer crew to keep up with the increase. Volunteers work 2-3 hours every day helping staff sort through donations in order to adhere to food safety guidelines and stock food in the coolers and shelves of the Choice Pantry.

I've already noticed some discoveries this diverse group has made:

- The volunteers delight when they see pies and cakes because clients get special treats on their "Birthday Month" visit.
- A new high school volunteer enjoys stocking the cooler after school and likes that they are helping to rescue usable food that will add to the amount people receive.
- Two college intern sorters were impressed that we occasionally receive non-food items like housewares and clothing.
- Cal Poly Humboldt Social Work student, Kaley, likes to bundle up in the freezer jacket when working in the refrigerator. She's not used to the cold but says she's willing because it helps the clients have better options.
- Alex, a fall semester Cal Poly Humboldt Social Work student, was impressed to learn there are strict USDA guidelines on rescued food, and that Food for People adheres to them for client safety.
- Everyone likes that Food for People supports local farmers by passing on food that's past its prime for people to a local farmer who feeds pigs and goats.

Food for People stocks a variety of fresh store donations daily, and volunteers help share and use these resources sustainably. Donation sorting happens Monday through Friday. Please contact Volunteer & Direct Services Manager Julie Ryan at 707-445-3166 ext 310 or volunteer@foodforpeople.org to get in on the fun.



We Can Choose to End Poverty

Food Bank Advocacy

by Heidi McHugh, CalFresh Outreach and Policy Advocacy Coordinator

This September, the Census Bureau released data for poverty, income, and health insurance in 2022 from its Current Population Survey (CPS). The report delivered a dire snapshot:

- Child poverty more than doubled from 5.2% to 12.4% from 2021-2022, the largest one-year increase ever.
- The data demonstrates continued racial inequities, with poverty rates of 17.8% for Black children and 19.5% for Latinx children, compared to 7.2% for non-Hispanic white children.
- Overall poverty was 12.4%, 4.6 percentage points higher than 2021, also the highest one-year increase ever.
- Non-citizens experienced disproportionately high poverty, more than twice the U.S.-born population (24.4% vs. 11.2%).

These shocking increases reverse historic lows in poverty as well as progress in closing systemic racial inequities just one year earlier. What happened to cause such a rapid rise? The discontinuance of programs put into place to bolster Americans through the economic uncertainty of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The 2022 data only captures the results of ending just one of these critical programs: the expansion of the federal Child Tax Credit, which has reverted to a maximum of \$2,000 per child and no longer is fully available to all low-income children. Some 19 million children live in families whose incomes are too low to qualify for the full credit. In 2023, the COVID-19 SNAP Emergency Allotments, Pandemic-EBT, and WIC expansions ended. Governors in 17 states pre-emptively denied SNAP Emergency Allotments for their constituents in 2021 and 2022. This contributed slightly to the 2022 jump in poverty; 2023 Census data will include the combined impacts of the loss of all pandemic expansions.

Given that these expanded programs were put in place to specifically address the economic impacts of the pandemic; their end might seem acceptable, even if it causes societal harm. But the expansions themselves mirror the safety net improvements that anti-poverty advocates have been pleading for decades. These were not new solutions for a new, temporary problem; these were old solutions for a consistent and worsening problem that were only put in place to address a temporary and unrelated problem.

A single year of the Child Tax Credit expansion lifted 5.2 million children above the poverty line. An additional 3 million would have risen out of poverty in 2023 had the expansion been extended or made permanent. What would our country look like if public benefits were fully-funded and easier to access so that families could progress towards self-sufficiency? What would an investment in the health of our children do for their world? We can choose to hold our leaders accountable for policies that increase suffering. We can choose to not elect leaders that see investment in children and adults living in poverty as a taxpayer burden. We can choose to end poverty.

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 Honor

Anne Holcomb	"In honor of my sister, Anne."
Barbara Barratt	
Judy Anderson	"In Honor of Anne Holcomb's Service and Retirement as Director of Food For People. Thank you and God bless you Anne!"
Kristine J. Brenneman	
Mark Sommer	
Matt Taylor	
Mike Machon	
Paula Lacy	
Rev. Amy Beth Durward	"In honor of Patty and Dave Roberts' 50th anniversary."
Stephanie Perrett	
"Craig and Carol West. Happy 50th anniversary!"	"In honor of Sandy Crowl's 70th birthday"

In Memory Of

Barbara Peters	"In loving memory of Suzanne Simpson, and with love to Lew Litzky."
Bill Jackson	
Dorina Espinoza	
Carl Meyers	
Cathy Richards	"In memory of my daughter April Conant."
David Jager	
Ethan Allen Zwicker	
Frank Weber and Laurey and Jay Sullivan	"In memory of Mentor/Teacher Terry Myers."
Frank Weber	
Frankie Stansberry-Shea	"In memory of my sister. My sister died suddenly on 4/16/23. She lived in poverty all of her life."
Goldie	
Janet Nelson	
Jay and Laurey Sullivan	
Jocelyn Pauli	
Joe Myers	"This gift comes from selling Gravenstein apples picked from my tree and offered up to the FB group Humboldt Foodies for 1/lb."
Kelley Kyle	
Kristine Brenneman	
Laura Rose	
Laurence S. Kaminsky	
Magdalen Weyhmiller	
Marie Giampaolo	
Mario and Jane Brenta	
Melinda Groom	
Millie Kennedy	
Nancy Sano	
Nicholas Motto	
Paul and Evelyn Corrigan	
Peggy Bort Jones	
Sue Quast	
Vernon Whitney	
Vicky Farmer	
Virginia Vogt Astrue	

Big Impact in Small Towns

Expanding Our Services to Rural Humboldt County

by Robert Sataua, Emergency Food Response Coordinator



Volunteers at Food for People's new pantry site in Alderpoint.



Earl the chicken helped out the Mobile Produce Pantry team in Blue Lake.

Food for People received another boost to our efforts serving the most rural areas of the county with a second grant from the USDA Reach and Resiliency program. During the first round of this grant, we relied on partnerships with community organizations and tribal agencies to assess needs and develop monthly food distributions in areas we were not previously serving. Working with community and family resource centers has been a great way to tap into small towns. The staff at these organizations typically live and work in the communities they serve and can represent the lived experiences in these areas. Each resource center represents a unique community with localized needs, and we recognize them as experts in their areas. At our Pantry Summit this year, Emily Herman, Executive Director of the Mattole Valley Resource Center, illustrated this point, "If you've seen one resource center, then you've seen one resource center" explaining that no two resource centers are alike.

The Mattole Valley Resource Center is one of our newest partnerships in this project. The center's pantries in Honeydew and Petrolia have, until now, been self-supplied and self-funded, which required a significant amount of staff labor and resources. Now that Food for People supports the logistics of procuring and delivering food, their staff can spend more time focusing on the wider food security issues in the Mattole Valley.

From the typical measurements that food banks use (households served and pounds of food distributed) these pantry sites might not appear like high-impact areas. But from the Mattole community's perspective, the project has provided a major injection of resources. In smaller communities, data points like numbers of households or

amount of food don't tell the full story. Our partnership in the Mattole Valley has a sizable impact for Lost Coast residents, an area whose nickname speaks to the nature of their imperceptible experiences. We are honored to work with such a dedicated organization.

While most of Humboldt County's small towns would be considered "Rural California," the Reach and Resiliency grant allows us to seek out communities that are particularly remote. Similar to work in the Mattole Valley, we've been partnering with the Southern Humboldt Family Resource Center for a monthly distribution in Alderpoint, a town with a population of 186. We started this distribution in April and now serve 45 households every month. The Family Resource Center provides oversight and program compliance, but this distribution would not be possible without a dedicated crew of volunteers that shows up every month and the help of the Volunteer Fire Department that makes its space available.

Since we began, volunteers have seen a change in people coming to the distributions and a stronger sense of community in Alderpoint. Dawnita, one of the main organizers, previously distributed food from her own pantry and freezers. She says she's seen changes, observing that people are noticeably happier when they come to pick up food now compared to the first few months. Before, they would hardly make eye contact, and now are pleasantly engaging in the process. She thinks some people even look healthier. With round two of this grant underway, we are excited to build upon our experiences, develop new partnerships, and make the most of these resources for the biggest impact on communities.



Pumpkin Cornbread Muffins

by Magnolia Bowman, CalFresh Nutrition Education Coordinator

Why Nutrition Education is Important to Our Mission:

Nutrition education is a pivotal component of Food for People's holistic approach to community wellbeing. By providing valuable education and a nutrition educator, Food for People empowers individuals to make informed choices about their diets. This promotes better health and tackles the issue of hunger at its root, by enabling individuals to make more economical, nutritious food choices. Our Nutrition Educator, Magnolia Bowman, incorporates nutrition classes, cooking videos and demonstrations, recipe cards, and on-site education alongside CalFresh outreach, to ensure that community members are not only able to access nutritious food, but also understand how to prepare it. The educational conversations and recipes shared often encourage people to experiment with a new ingredient or a healthier preparation of a well-loved dish. Our nutrition education program is a key aspect of shifting Humboldt County into a healthier and more food-secure place. Read on for an example of a recipe Magnolia put together to highlight seasonal foods available in our programs.

Pumpkin Cornbread Muffins

Ingredients:

1 cup milk (can use cow's milk or dairy-free alternative)
 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice
 1 cup whole wheat flour (see note*)
 1 cup cornmeal
 1/3 cup brown sugar (can sub cane sugar or coconut sugar)
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon sea salt
 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice (can sub cinnamon)
 1 can pure pumpkin puree
 2 eggs (see note*)

Notes on ingredient substitutions:

*For a gluten-free recipe, you can substitute the whole wheat flour for a gluten-free 1:1 flour blend or oat flour.

*For an egg-free recipe you can substitute the 2 eggs for 2 tablespoons ground flax seeds (flax meal) and 5 tablespoons water. Mix and set aside to gel up for 5 minutes before adding to the batter.

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
- In a measuring cup, measure out the milk and add the vinegar or lemon juice. This mixture is mimicking buttermilk. You may see the milk thicken or curdle, that is normal. Set aside while you prepare the dry ingredients.
- In a large bowl, measure out the flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and pumpkin pie spice, sifting any ingredients that are clumpy. Stir to combine.
- Into the dry ingredients, add the milk/vinegar mixture, pumpkin puree, and eggs or egg substitute.
- Mix until everything is combined. Do not over-mix.
- Into a lined or greased muffin tin, scoop about 1/4 cup batter into each compartment.
- Bake for 20 minutes, testing with a toothpick to make sure it comes out clean or with crumbs. If the toothpick comes out wet, bake for another couple of minutes until they are cooked through.
- Allow the muffins to cool to room temperature before serving, this ensures a fluffier texture. Serve with breakfast in the morning or with a bowl of savory soup for dinner. Pairs well with chili and stew.

Store in a tightly sealed container for up to 5 days, or wrap tightly and freeze for up to 2 months.

Getting to Know Our Seniors

by Deborah Waxman, Operations Manager

Our Senior Programs distribute food at 19 sites countywide, as far north as Orleans, east to Bridgeville, south to Garberville, and many communities in between. One of my favorite parts of each month is helping to sign folks in at a few of these sites. I meet some of Humboldt's most fascinating, unique, and kind people, with so many stories to tell. Often we share laughs, and sometimes it's just about compassionate listening. We learn about our seniors' careers, adventures, and independent spirits on these days. We meet kind-hearted people who drive their senior neighbors to their monthly food pick-up day and represent the essence of the kind of world I want us to live in—looking out for each other, with kindness, as neighborhoods and communities.

At one site, I could barely tear myself away from the stories someone had about what it was like to be a woman in firefighting back in the day. At another site, several people with dementia were accompanied by loving family members, to help them enroll in the program. One was a war veteran. I took my time explaining the program's details to each applicant and their family members, and we set up a reminder system for family members to also be notified about each month's food pick-up day. Our CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food) Program for seniors has migrated to a new digital system that can automatically send monthly texts and phone calls to each site's participants, reminding them the day before their senior food pick-up day.

I wish we lived in a world where our seniors did not need to reach out for help with food or other life essentials due to lack of resources, but given the economic realities, we're grateful there are programs to help. The high price of food and gas is a frequent conversation topic. This has been hard on so many people across Humboldt County. It is nerve-wracking to make sense of monthly expenses when living on a fixed income such as Social Security or SSI, as the majority of our senior program participants are.

We had a lot of success encouraging seniors to apply for CalFresh during the pandemic when a special Emergency Allotment program boosted CalFresh benefit levels quite significantly for households' monthly food purchases. In fact, the CalFresh benefit levels were finally at a reasonable level for many seniors to make ends meet monthly in a meaningful way. When the Emergency Allotments ended this spring, a large number of seniors saw that nice benefit level drop down to \$23 per month.

I think all of us can attest to how little \$23 buys at the grocery store these days. And as a result of these changes, visits to our pantries and senior sites have surged significantly. Our numbers are the highest they've ever been in our 44-year history. We will continue to do our best to meet the need with high-quality, nutritious foods, while also advocating for legislation and policies that take care of our most vulnerable with respect and dignity.

Art created by Timothy Clewell for Pastels on the Plazo.

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Full Plate Partners Switch to Direct Debit

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- No need to update when your card expires or is compromised
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Call Judy at 707-445-3166 ext 320 to make the change!

Pantry Summit Returns

by Nora Lovell, Pantry Network Coordinator



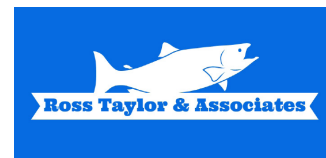
Break-out discussion group at 2023 Pantry Summit

Food for People recently hosted the first Pantry Network Summit since 2019. Representatives from 18 pantries from all over Humboldt County gathered at the new Eureka facility to share ideas and get needed training.

“The people who run food pantries are in a very specialized line of work,” says Pantry Network Coordinator Nora Lovell. “The summit gives them a chance to come together and figure out how to support each other as they all work to feed their communities. Each site is unique but they shared a lot of the same concerns, like how the cost of food and transportation are affecting the people they serve.”

The 22 pantries in the Pantry Network operate independently and receive food and support from Food for People. To find a food pantry near you, visit foodforpeople.org/programs/pantry-network. To find out how to volunteer for a pantry in your area contact Nora Lovell at nlovell@foodforpeople.org or 707-445-3166 ext 313.

Thank you to our Sponsors!



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.

More. For more information on Food for People and our countywide hunger relief programs or for ways you can get involved visit foodforpeople.org.