



Food Notes

The Newsletter of Food For People • The Food Bank of Humboldt County

Fall Issue, 2011

Food Pantries as a Community Building Effort

By Jason Herwin, Pantry Network Coordinator

Food for People's Pantry Network Program consists of 16 local food pantries and six congregate feeding sites across the county. These sites, located at local churches, community resource centers and town halls, provide an essential service of feeding low-income families in their communities. Many of these sites are now moving beyond providing emergency food to including community building efforts. Our McKinleyville pantry has begun engaging its clients in discussion forums that have led to taking action through advocacy. In Fortuna, a garden attached to the food pantry has networked with local community agencies to grow food for the pantry, as well as provided an educational tool for clients and the community. These are two examples of the potential that food pantries have to bring positive change

Continued on page 9



Food for People's delivery driver, Seth Perez, with UPS driver, Michael Adams, send off a cooler of lunches to our Summer Lunch site in Redway (photo on left) and Seth loads coolers on the Humboldt Transit Authority bus bound for our Scotia site (photo on right).



The Road Less Traveled for our Children's Summer Lunch Program

By Niki Gribi, Child Nutrition Coordinator

Since 1997, Food for People has sponsored the Summer Food Service Program in Humboldt County. This program has grown from serving 3,500 lunches the first year, to over 16,000 lunches this past summer. The 21 lunch sites under our sponsorship are spread over 130 miles and consist of various site partners including schools, Parks and Recreation programs, day camps, churches, Boys and Girls Clubs and youth drop-in centers. Food for People staff deliver lunches within a 15 mile radius of our food bank, and we rely on United Parcel Service (UPS) and our local bus system,

the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA), to get lunches to more distant sites.

In 1999, our program coordinator attended a mandatory training and learned that the Oregon Food Bank had established a partnership with their local bus system to deliver lunches. She brought the idea back home and asked HTA if they would transport lunches on their regular delivery route to help expand our program to more remote communities. They generously agreed, and began taking coolers to the city of Fortuna. This summer marks our 12th year in partnership. HTA now helps us provide lunch to nearly 200

children in the towns of Loleta, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Scotia and Willow Creek daily during the week. The bus drivers donate 155 miles of food transportation per day, for a total of more than 8,500 miles during the summer.

In 2001, we sponsored a site in Orick, California, about 45 miles from our food bank. The volunteer who had been taking lunches there was no longer able to deliver them but we did not want to give up a site where 20 children were eating lunch each day. We put an ad in the paper seeking a volunteer driver. We approached Park Service employees who were commuting to Orick daily, but no one was avail-

able. Eventually, we approached UPS to ask how much they would charge to take lunches on their regular delivery route. They offered to do it for free! Over the last 10 years, UPS has helped us feed children at our most far flung sites. This summer they donated 130 miles a day equaling 7,150 miles.

We would not be able to serve lunch to at-risk children across our county without the support of our local UPS and HTA drivers. The innovative partnerships we have formed help minimize our costs so we can afford to continue sponsoring this valuable program. Thank you HTA and UPS!



Food For People, Inc.
The Food Bank for Humboldt County
307 West 14th Street
Eureka CA 95501
707-445-3166
www.foodforpeople.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Eureka CA 95501
Permit No 159

In This Issue

Backpack Buddy Night Rocks
Volunteer Spotlight
Day of Caring Rakes
Nutrition & our Pantry
Hunger Fighter Call to Action

We feel it's important to keep you, our supporters, updated on the programs and 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.

Food, Community and Family *Ivy Matheny, Food Distribution Coordinator*

In these challenging economic times, sometimes our definitions of family and community begin to blur as one. At Food for People's Choice Pantry, we have discovered that many of our families have begun slowly changing shape, reforming into units that stretch far beyond the historical nuclear family models: welcoming friends, neighbors, and extended family members into their homes and food cupboards. Sharing resources and leaning on each other, our pantry shoppers have given us countless examples of incredible strength and kindness, even during the days of their most difficult financial hardships.

One such inspiring example comes from a single working mother with six children, three adopted and three of her own. She came into the Choice Pantry last month for the first time, accompanied by her best friend who has recently retired from her work in social services. The two women had recently teamed up together in support of a neighbor's 12-year-old child that they had unofficially co-adopted. The boy and his parents had reached a critical level of pov-

erty that substantially lowered the boy's access to nutritional foods. His health had diminished rapidly, giving him a noticeable grey complexion and a slowed level of energy.

The women had been letting him stay at their homes, cook for himself in their kitchens, and once bought him a pair of shoes after they had noticed that he has extended the length of his current pair with duct tape. The two women had visited the Pantry regularly for the free bread that is available in the lobby, and attended the monthly free People's Produce Market that happens right here in our parking lot. At that time, the women had found that all of their combined resources were simply not enough, and had reluctantly decided to schedule an appointment for food in the Choice Pantry for the very first time. The women were presented with an array of choices in the Pantry that allowed them to choose kid-friendly items to prepare for the boy or send him home to cook on his own. This story is unique, but the willingness by our clients to assist friends and neighbors in need is surprisingly common.

This October, we celebrate the Choice Pantry's second year anniversary. Our shoppers have enthusiastically accepted this new distribution model, enjoying the ease and dignity that comes with being able to select their own food items within each food group based on personal dietary needs or cultural preferences. Personal choices can also be made in the selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy items and bread varieties. Our shoppers are welcome to visit the Pantry once each month with an appointment made in advance.

While many of our food resources have stayed consistent over recent years, the need in our community has grown to reach record highs, and the food supply has been stretched thinner than we have ever seen. Unfortunately, the struggling economy has now begun to negatively affect the Pantry food supply. Assisting over 1,000 families per month, the Choice Pantry has been able to provide an average of about 40 lbs of food assistance per family. In the last few months, we have been forced to reduce the total amount of food that is given out to each household in the pantry by about 20%, and

the emergency boxes (for households in extreme need) have been reduced in size as well. Our clients appreciate the amount of food that we are able to provide, but many of their families' nutritional needs are still not being met by our aid, even when combined with other food assistance services in the community.

Thank you to all of the volunteers, financial donors, and food donors who continue to make this Pantry a unique and positive experience for our friends and families who access our services. Your contributions are providing important nutritional assistance to our community members as well as presenting gestures of compassion, understanding and a tangible acknowledgment that we all need a little assistance sometimes. We believe that food is a basic human right. We work hard to reduce the negative stigma that can come along with receiving food assistance. Your donations and direct support provide our Choice Pantry shoppers with experiences that provide a level of dignity and respect within families, however we may each choose to define them.



Board of Directors

Judy Anderson

President

Jerome J. Simone

Treasurer

Theresa Malloy

Secretary

Alison Aldridge

Annie Bolick-Floss

Betty Osborne

Beverly Olson

Chelsea Barto

Jessica Osborne-Stafsnes

Melanie Williams

Nicholas Vogel

Staff

Anne Holcomb

- Executive Director

Andy Nieto

- Operations Manager

Art Brown - **Driver**

Barbara Zoellner

- Finance Director

Caleb Gribi - **Driver**

Chris Smiley

- Community Foods Coordinator

Corey Tipton

- Bookkeeper

Deborah Waxman

- Director of Programs

Harriet Pecot

- Fund Development Director

Ivy Matheny

- Food Distribution Coordinator

Jason Herven

- Pantry Network Coordinator

Jason Whitley

- Local Food Resources Coordinator

Laura Hughes

- Volunteer Coordinator

Megan Westersund

- Nutrition Education Coordinator

Michael Canning

- Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

Nicole Gribi

- Child Nutrition Coordinator

Suzanne Ross-Kohl

- Inventory Database Manager

Raise Your Glass to Food Day *By Michael Canning, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator*

Food Day is a time for people to come together and advocate for healthy, affordable food produced in a sustainable, humane way. On October 24th, Humboldt County will be participating in this year's Food Day activities with communities all across the country. Food for People, along with the rest of Humboldt County's *County Nutrition Action Plan* (CNAP) group, will be coordinating several sites throughout Eureka on Food Day focusing on the Re-Think Your Drink campaign. This campaign seeks to improve health and well-being by encouraging healthy beverage choices.

At the national level, Food Day is sponsored by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a nonprofit watchdog group that has led successful fights for food labeling, better nutrition and safer food since 1971. Food Day is centered on six principles, including the reduction of diet-related disease by promoting safe and healthy

foods, curbing junk-food marketing to children and the alleviation of hunger. The full list of principles and more information on Food Day can be found at www.food-day.org.

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest source of added sugar in American diets and include sodas, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sweetened milk and sports drinks. These beverages are also a significant source of calories in the diets of many Americans. In 1965, sugar-sweetened beverages represented just 2.5% of calories consumed by adults. Today, it is estimated consumption of these sugary drinks accounts for 9% of adults' caloric intake and 11% of calories consumed by youth.

Increased consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages has been linked to obesity, which has increased at an alarming rate during the past few decades. Between 1980 and 2008, obesity rates among children aged 6-11 increased from 7% to 20%. The

problem is so severe that many researchers are anticipating younger generations may soon be living less healthy and shorter lives than their parents. Obesity is associated with heart attacks, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

Decreasing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is a top priority for public health advocates working to address the growing obesity epidemic. Some California lawmakers are already on board, having recognized the long-term impact on public health just by decreasing consumption of these beverages. Last year, the California Legislature passed two bills directly addressing this issue. One bill (SB 1413) requires all California schools to provide fresh, free drinking water to students in areas where meals are served and another (AB 2084) sets basic nutrition standards for beverages served in licensed child care centers.

This October 24th, CNAP is inviting the community to drop by one of three locations in Eureka and

enjoy various Re-Think Your Drink activities to celebrate Food Day. Attendees can learn about healthy alternatives to sugar-sweetened drinks by sampling some fruit infused water or taking a ride on the smoothie bike. There will also be a game that shows people how much sugar is in popular drinks. Children's water bottles and re-usable shopping bags will be offered to participants for free at all sites.

Those wishing to participate in this year's Food Day activities can visit Grocery Outlet, DHHS-Social Services Branch Office (929 Koster Street), or the North Coast Co-op in Eureka between 1p.m. and 4p.m. on October 24th. For more information on these events, contact Michael Canning or Megan Westersund at Food for People.



Notes from the Director

From Hunger to Action

By Anne Holcomb



September is a pivotal month seasonally. It marks the official end of summer when the kids go back to school, vacations come to an end and the bounty of the harvest reaches its peak. This year it also marked the interesting convergence of four very important issues that have a strong, if somewhat unusual correlation. They include **Hunger Action Month; Local Foods Month; Backpacks for Kids month; and Childhood Obesity Prevention and Fitness Week.**

Hunger Action Month provides an opportunity for each of us to get in touch with the issues of hunger and food insecurity and their impact on the health and well being of our communities. Many of the activities conducted during HAM focus on community education to create a better understanding about who is hungry and the root causes of hunger in our community. Hunger Action Month also represents a nationwide call to action highlighting how we as individuals, communities, congregations, service clubs, youth groups and businesses can help. Our list of "30 ways in 30 days" helps jumpstart that conversation, but the possibilities are endless. The emphasis is on letting people know that we can all be part of the solution.

Local Foods Month celebrates the wonderful bounty of fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, grains, meats and dairy products and reminds us of the importance of building a just and sustainable local food system. It reinforces our connection to the local farmers, ranchers and their farm and ranch hands that work so hard to provide such high quality foods

for each and every one of us. It also reminds us that their livelihoods depend squarely on our purchasing habits. Local Foods Month also provides an opportunity for Food for People to thank the backyard gardeners who donate their extra produce through the *Plant a Row for the Hungry* program and all the generous farmers and ranchers in our community who donate so generously through our Gleaning program, making it possible for us to provide fresh, healthy options for the people we serve. A special thanks to the authors of the *Locally Delicious Cookbook* and St. Joseph Health System for providing \$7,000 in grant funds that made it possible for us to contract directly with seven local farmers to grow nutrient-dense produce on our behalf, providing essential support for farmers who were struggling with the impact of a wet, cold spring to provide produce we would not otherwise have access to.

Backpacks for Kids Month, as designated by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, focuses on the fact that far too many of our children live in poverty and are at risk for hunger and all of its related, negative consequences. Each one of the children enrolled relies on the school meal programs as a primary source of nutrition; when school is out, there may be nothing at home to eat. On Fridays, the Backpacks for Kids program provides the children with a weekend food package that includes breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks so that they can return to school on Mondays healthy and ready to learn. The cost is \$200 to provide the food necessary to support one child for an entire school year. Our goal is to reach the neediest children in each community, providing them with nutritious food, a sense of hope and the knowledge that someone cares enough to help. Rotary Clubs, individual donors, foundations, businesses and other service clubs provide the support necessary to purchase the food and assemble the backpacks throughout the school year. "Backpacks for Kids Month" connects well with Hunger Action Month as an opportunity to educate our community about the

issue of childhood hunger and how we can help in very tangible ways.

Another BOS proclamation that cited September 26th through the 30th as **Childhood Obesity Prevention and Fitness Week** highlights the importance of establishing healthy habits at an early age. The proclamation was issued in recognition of St. Joseph Health Systems' efforts to promote healthier eating and active living habits for our kids. According to the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, "Children and adolescents who are overweight have a greater risk of developing Type 2 diabetes mellitus, asthma, and orthopedic problems; they are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease; and they are more likely to have behavioral problems and depression." More than 25% of Humboldt County's children are considered overweight for their age, which has earned us a ranking of 58th (the worst) among California counties for childhood obesity. This is of particular concern since an estimated 75% of overweight adolescents are obese as young adults.

Obesity can ironically be a major problem in food insecure households in which the quantity of calories consumed in foods that are high in fat, sugar and/or carbohydrates becomes more important than the nutritional quality of the calories consumed. Parents don't want their kids to feel the pain of hunger; they want them to feel full, so when resources are limited, they will choose foods that fill them up in place of healthier, more costly foods. Unfortunately there are long-term consequences; the annual cost of obesity and inactivity has reached a staggering \$41.2 billion - and that's just for the state of California. That is one reason why Food for People has incorporated nutrition education information and activities into each of our programs. We "walk the talk" by hosting free produce markets from May through October, providing large quantities of fresh fruits and vegetables in the food boxes, and offering recipes and cooking classes to help those we serve understand the connection between diet and health status.



Snack Site Partner Spotlight: Boys and Girls Club

By Niki Gribi, Child Nutrition Coordinator

Food for People partners with the Boys and Girls Club of the Redwoods to provide after school snacks to children and youth at three sites in Eureka and Loleta. Each day, the Boys and Girls Club staff at the Clubhouse, Teen Center and Loleta Elementary School serve snacks to more than 80 young people.

The Boys and Girls Club is about more than just snacks. "We envision healthy, empowered and engaged youth who appreciate and respect themselves, each other, their families, the community and the environment," reads their vision statement. The staff at each club are striving to fulfill that vision every day through the fun and enriching environment they create for the youth in their care. Each club has a power hour, where the kids have a chance to do their homework with adult supervision and guidance. The youth have an opportunity to participate in arts and crafts, sports, cooking and nutrition activities as well as field trips. They also provide career

guidance, prevention workshops and support groups for teens. The Boys and Girls Club motto, "Great futures start here," says it all.

Many of the youth who visit the Boys and Girls Clubs each day do so because their parents are working. Parents rely on the dedicated staff at each club to provide a safe place for their children to finish their homework, play and socialize. At the same time, this also provides peace of mind for parents so they may continue the hard work of supporting their families. This service is as vital to our community as providing enough food for children and youth to stay healthy.

Like Food for People, the Boys and Girls Club relies on community support to stay afloat and continue to provide their valuable services. For more information on how you can get involved, visit their website at www.bgcredwoods.org. Thank you to all the Boys and Girls Club staff for your commitment to partnering with Food for People to eliminate childhood hunger and promote healthy children in Humboldt County.

That brings me to the final September "event" that you won't see highlighted in a public proclamation - food shortages here at the Food Bank. Requests for assistance have been consistently running 40-50% higher than the same period last year, when the economic downturn really took hold. We are pleased to report that food donations from businesses, farmers and individuals have remained strong but they are just not enough to keep pace. In mid-September we had just five pallets of locally donated nonperishable food left in our warehouse - and we are using them at a rate of three pallets per month.

So here is the broader call to action: Let's take advantage of the awareness generated through the various food themes in September and get involved locally. Become an anti-hunger advocate, donate food, support a child in the Backpacks for Kids program, or support the local farmers who donate to the Food Bank. It's all part of building a healthy, resilient community.

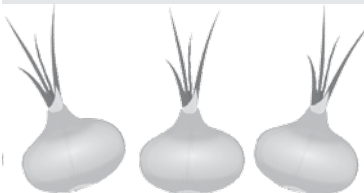




The 800 Club is our regular giving program that supports Food for People. In 1982, Food for People's yearly budget was roughly \$48,000. Calculator in hand, it was determined that if 800 Humboldt County residents gave only \$5 each month, the total operating costs would be met. Since then, we have greatly increased our services to children, seniors and working families in need throughout our community. We currently feed over 12,000 people a month and our yearly budget has increased to over \$900,000 to accommodate our many programs.

It's easy to become an 800 Club member. Just fill out the slip on this page and send it in. You will receive a packet of 12 envelopes that makes sending in your monthly donation easy. Or contact us directly to help you set up a monthly or quarterly charge on the credit card of your choice. You can also set up an automatic fund transfer with your bank. For more information, contact Harriet Pecot, our Fund Development Director, at 707-445-3166 extension 306 or email her at harriet@foodforpeople.org.

Only with the support of a caring community can we accomplish our mission to end hunger in Humboldt County. Your contributions as part of the 800 Club make it possible for us to help when needed most and thanks to you, no one has been turned away. Thank you for your continued support that allows us to feed people and also provides hope and dignity to the most vulnerable members of our community.



The Suddenlink Food Connection and Blues by the Bay

Jason Whitley, Local Food Resources Coordinator

The Third Annual **Suddenlink Food Connection** has officially been declared a success. This month long food drive benefiting Food for People fights hunger with a variety of methods. The 15th Annual **Blues by the Bay** served as the kick-off event, with festival attendees donating both food and funds to enter for a variety of donated raffle prizes. The food and funds drive at **Blues by the Bay** brought in several hundred pounds of food, as well as several hundred more in financial donations. Additionally, during the last part of the month, children at ten Eureka City Schools were encouraged to donate food as part of a friendly classroom competition. The prize - a pizza party! The schoolchildren collectively donated a total of 5,177 pounds of non-perishable food. During the month, accumulated food items overflowed the barrels over at Suddenlink's offices, representing several hundred additional pounds.

Food for People would like to thank Suddenlink Communications, Redwood Coast Music Festivals and the Eureka City Schools for their partnership and support. This year, the donated food comes at a time when supplies of locally donated food are especially low, due to the increased

need in our community.

The partnership with Suddenlink Communications, Redwood Coast Music Festivals and local schools has been cultivated to help meet this increasing need. Food for People would like to extend a heartfelt "thank you" to all the children at Washington, Grant, Alice Birney, Pine Hill, Cutten, South Bay, Ridgewood, Freshwater, Garfield, and Lafayette schools for their efforts.

A big thanks goes out to both Wendy Purnell and Darlene Morris at Suddenlink Communications for all their organizing and planning efforts. Our gratitude also goes out to Lynn McKenna for helping organize and plan both the Blues by the Bay festival portion and the school portion of this food drive. Thank you to Glenn Maxon at Redwood Coast Music Festivals for the support of the Blues Festival and of course the many donors, volunteers and participants in the **Suddenlink Food Connection** for a sustained dedication to a hunger-free Humboldt County!

This event is now in its third year and has helped to supply non-perishable food items to local seniors, children and families in need. If you would like to know how to organize your own creative food drive, please email Jason Whitley at jason@foodforpeople.org.



DONATE ONLINE BY GOING TO: www.foodforpeople.org

CLICK ON THE LINK:



Network for Good™



Senior and Homebound Programs Seek Funding for Specific Foods

Christopher Smiley, Community Food Programs Coordinator

Two of the programs we offer here at Food for People are currently seeking funding for the purchase of specific foods to meet special dietary needs. The Senior Brown Bag program provides food specifically for folks ages 60 or older. The Homebound Delivery Program is designed for persons under the age of 60 who are unable to leave their homes to get food due to illness or disability.

To sign up, prospective clients must get a referral from their doctor or care provider. Once signed up, they receive approximately 10 pounds of USDA commodities, 10 pounds of fresh produce, bread and some sort of additional protein (usually in the form of frozen meat or eggs) once a month, which is delivered to their homes. Both the Homebound Delivery and Senior Brown Bag programs utilize USDA commodities and locally donated foods. When the

overall demand at the food bank increases, our food resources are stretched thin and we have to search for new resources to meet that demand.

Demand for the Homebound Delivery and Senior Brown Bag Programs has risen nearly 20% in less than a year, and currently serves more than 450 clients every month. 25% of these clients have special dietary needs stemming from issues such as diabetes, cancer and food allergies. To accommodate these specific needs, we add diet-appropriate items from our locally donated food supply. This means doing the best we can, with what we have, if we have it. With increased funding, our Senior and Homebound clients would be guaranteed the most beneficial and appropriate foods to meet their specific needs and situations. It would make it possible to maintain the amount of food that our clients depend on

Continued on page 9

Please send me an 800 Club Packet

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please charge my credit Visa or Master Card:

Monthly Quarterly Amount: \$ _____

Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code (on back of card): _____

Nutrition and the Pantry

By Megan Westersund, Nutrition Education Coordinator

Grocery prices are continuing to increase, and affording healthy, nutrient-dense food is an ongoing challenge. A recently published study by the University of Washington concluded that eating the newly recommended amount of potassium (according to the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010) would add \$380 dollars to the yearly food costs for the average person. Potassium is the most expensive of the four nutrients that were recommended to increase (others include calcium, dietary fiber and vitamin D).

Globally, inflation adjusted food prices have tripled since 2004 (FAO Food Price Index), and are hovering at an all time high. How can people in Humboldt County make the most of their limited food budgets and have meals that are nutritious and inexpensive? To get a better idea of the local challenges that people face, I interviewed a pantry client about his personal struggles with eating well.

The person I interviewed is a working male, who lives alone in a studio apartment. He receives CalFresh benefits and also comes into the pantry once a month. His largest struggle is being able to afford protein. His diet consists primarily of homemade burritos, beans and stir fries. He loves fruits

and vegetables, but he can't afford to eat as much as he'd like. One way he saves money is by filling his small fridge with a pot of beans he eats throughout the week. Even though his diet is relatively inexpensive, he still faces other challenges that make his meal planning challenging.

Besides not having much money for food, he also has limited refrigeration. He has a small drink fridge, which means he has to shop more frequently, and buy food in smaller amounts. It also makes it harder for him to bring home the bulky fresh food from Food for People. He is grateful that he can come into the pantry every month to go shopping, but because of space, he limits what he brings home.

It's important to be reminded of the everyday struggles that people go through in order to eat healthy food. Refrigerators, ovens, microwaves and cooking equipment are luxuries that not everyone has. Some of the nutrition resources that Food for People currently offers include recipes that utilize commodity and seasonally donated foods, and monthly cooking classes that can help give people ideas for cooking with seasonal and commodity foods. The Humboldt Market Match Program (funded by Roots of Change and

the California Department of Food and Agriculture) helps give people an incentive to use their EBT card at local farmers' markets. The program matches some of the CalFresh money spent, making shopping at the farmers' market a better bargain.

Some simple ways to increase consumption of nutritious food include fortified juices, cereals and grains, which can boost necessary nutrients at a lower cost than eating strictly whole foods. Another good suggestion, from the University of Washington study, is for people to try to invest their grocery money in foods that fit into more than one nutrient category, such as bananas. They are rich in potassium and fiber, both of which are a necessary part of a healthy diet.

Below is a recipe for Lentil Sloppy Joes. Lentils are a great budget food because they are high in protein and fiber. In addition, they are a great source of iron, manganese folate, potassium, copper, phosphorus and zinc. They are also quick to cook, low in fat, and can replace meat protein in many of your favorite dishes.

Lentil Sloppy Joe's

Ingredients:

- 1 cup lentils
- 3 cups water
- 1 red onion (or white) chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 red pepper, chopped
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 6oz can tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon chili powder (or hot sauce)
- 1 teaspoon oregano (or other herbs)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon mustard
- 1 Tablespoon vinegar
- 8 buns

*If you don't have any of these vegetables feel free to substitute others!

Instructions:

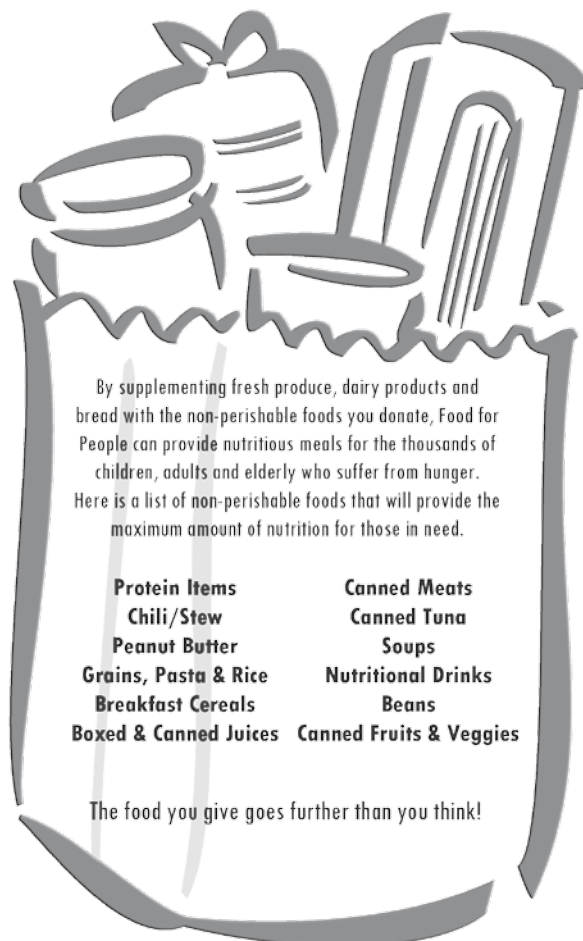
Simmer the first seven ingredients for about 20 minutes (until lentils are tender) in a covered pot. Add the last ingredients to the pot and cook until warmed. Serve on toasted bread.

Welcome Megan!

Megan Westersund has joined us as the Nutrition Education Coordinator. In this position some of her responsibilities include developing recipes and nutrition education resources for Food for People programs, teaching the food bank community about healthy, affordable eating, and providing nutrition and cooking classes. Megan has a degree from Humboldt State University in Environmental Science/Ethics. She has served as an AmeriCorps member of Watershed Stewards Project, an Environmental Educator, and most recently as a cook for Northcoast Children's Services. She has also volunteered for many local non-profits, doing riparian restoration and bicycle



advocacy. Last summer she rode her bicycle across Japan, sharing and learning about sustainability, and cooking healthy meals for her group. She has always been passionate about healthy food, and enjoys making creative dishes that are inexpensive and easy to prepare.



Mission Statement

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.

Our Vision

We envision a hunger-free community where everyone in Humboldt County has access to good quality, nutritious food, everyone in the community understands the consequences of hunger and poor nutrition, and each of us has a role to play in creating a strong, healthy community.

Our Values

- *Respect - We will treat all of our relationships with respect.*
- *Teamwork - We will foster cooperation among our diverse volunteers, staff and community partners.*
- *Innovation - We will continually seek to provide excellent services through the development of new and improved methods to reduce hunger.*
- *Stewardship - We will be accountable to all through the efficient and most appropriate use of resources entrusted to us.*
- *Integrity - We will demonstrate the highest ethical standards in all interactions.*



Day of Caring



Saturday, September 17th, Food for People participated in United Way's annual "Day of Caring," in partnership with Humboldt State University. Historically, volunteers have come together on this day to donate their time and energy to complete projects for local service agencies in Humboldt County.

This year, a handful of students from HSU joined us here at

Food for People to help complete a maintenance project at our Eureka warehouse. Led by our new Nutrition Education Coordinator, Megan Westersund, students hauled and raked ten cubic yards of river rock into the narrow easement behind the building. This project has improved the safety and maintenance of our facilities, while contributing to a more comfortable and welcoming space for

people in our community.

Thank you to Belinda Sparks, Jacob Schulte, Stephen Tomose (Jacob and Stephen in photo on near left) and Hannah Stutzman (photos on left) for your hard labor and wonderful help that day! Thanks also to Debbie Peticara and the North Coast Community Garden Collaborative for lending us rakes and shovels for the event.

Backpack Buddy Night By Niki Gribi, Child Nutrition Coordinator

The scene at Cher-Ae Heights Casino on Tuesday September 27th was lively, as members of the three Eureka Rotary Clubs and their friends and family gathered to support our Backpacks for Kids Program. The silent auction tables were bustling as people scanned items and bid on their favorites. Some of the 60 plus items offered included an inflatable boat, handmade scarves, potholders and ceramic cups, wine and beer packages, gift certificates to local restaurants and even autographed memorabilia from stars including Jeff Bridges.

As people arrived and found seats, members of the Lost Coast Rotaract engaged them in a bit of friendly competition. Each table was offered a chance to purchase food typically found in a Backpack and pile or stack it on their table. The table with the most food at the end of the night would then

be recognized for their generosity. We should have given prizes for creativity also, because many folks saw this as an engineering challenge - each trying to build a tower taller than that of their neighbors. Before the night was over, several tables boasted food towers over six feet tall as their centerpieces!

All this fun and more was part of the first annual Backpack Buddy Night, a new fundraising event held by the Rotary Club of Eureka, the Rotary Club of Eureka Southwest and the Rotary Club of Eureka Old Town. For the past four years, these three clubs have joined forces to provide financial and volunteer support to help feed children in Eureka on the weekend.

As we are all sadly aware, more than half of the children in our county are eligible to receive free or low-cost meals at school. Many of them rely on the breakfast and lunch they get at school as their only food for the day, and many go hungry over the weekend when those meals are not provided. As you might imagine, hungry children cannot concentrate in school, and can have serious conse-

quences for their long term health and well-being. Our local Rotary Clubs have stepped up to address the needs of children in our community through Food for People's Backpacks for Kids program. In addition to putting their money where their mouths are for over 100 kids, Rotarians also pick up the food, pack it into bags and deliver the bags to schools each Friday during the school year.

This year, the United Rotary Clubs of Eureka threw a great party at Cher-Ae Heights Casino to raise money for the program. The evening was a lot of fun with a delicious prime rib dinner, silent auction, live auction packed with great items, food stacking competition, and the friendly camaraderie of folks coming together to support a good cause. The event was a big success and we would like to thank Cher-Ae Heights Casino and all the Rotarians who helped in this undertaking by planning, selling tickets, donating auction items and coming out to have a good time. We're already looking forward to next year! Thank you so much for your wonderful efforts and generosity!



Table decorations included foods found in weekly Kids' Backpacks. Sculptures made of Backpacks foods spark a friendly competition with Rotary members. Quilt made and donated by Susan Clemenza commerates event.



Better Know a Farmer: Todd Heustis and Isaiah Webb of Mad River Hospital Farm

Jason Whitley, Local Food Resources Coordinator



Todd Heustis and Isaiah Webb are shown here with the Girl Scouts working on their garden project at the Mad River Community Hospital Farm where all produce was donated to the pantry at Food for People.

Located directly behind Mad River Community Hospital in Arcata is a farm that produces fruits and vegetables specifically grown for patients, staff and visitors. Isaiah Webb and Todd Heustis are responsible for farming and coordinating the produce grown, which benefits the kitchens of the Mad River Community Hospital (MRCH). This year, I had the opportunity to glean at the MRCH Farm, along with local Girl Scouts, on a special project benefitting Food for People.

The Girl Scouts chose to work on their community service award at MRCH Farm, growing produce they donated to Food for People. Six girls worked in the garden every Monday for three months. They transplanted seedlings, watered, weeded and harvested the produce. The girls grew nearly 200 row-feet of produce to help feed the hungry in our community. Near the end of the project, they invited me out to their farm to help harvest and pick up the hundreds of pounds of produce grown by the Scouts.

Todd and Isaiah have been strong supporters of the Gleaning

Program even before the project with the Girl Scouts. To date, the MRCH Farm has donated more than 1,300 lbs of fresh produce to Food for People. As part of our Better Know a Farmer series, we at Food for People thought it would be a great idea to learn more and share this knowledge about the Hospital Farm and its crew.

Todd Heustis is the Food and Nutrition Services manager, Materials Manager and Farm coordinator at MRCH. After graduating from California State University, Chico, he moved to Humboldt with his wife Melanie to raise their three children. His experience included working in food service through college and taking food service management positions after graduation. "Food culture at Mad River Hospital has changed due to the garden. Staff is excited to try new veggie offerings and we eat seasonal produce now. It is amazing how good fresh, vine ripened produce can taste," says Heustis.

Isaiah Webb has been the farmer at MRCH for the last two seasons. After relocating to Humboldt County, he continued to pursue his passion for farming, working several seasons with

local farms, including G Farm (now Organic Matters Ranch) and Earthly Edibles. Being interested in owning his own farm, Isaiah was excited for the opportunity at MRCH, where he now continues his trade. After two seasons, he recognizes that the unique farm-with-institution is a more sustainable farming model, and hopes to continue this specialized work in the future.

Isaiah tells us, "People's health suffers due to poor access to healthy food. Simultaneously, many farmers struggle to make a living while supplying healthy food to their communities. So, for a hospital (an institution in the business of maintaining community health) to commit to providing a living wage to a farmer, who grows food that improves the quality of the meals being served at the hospital, is such a brilliant and simple idea. It is surprising it's so rare."

It was my pleasure to work with the Girl Scouts, Isaiah and Todd on this special project. The Scouts' efforts paid off handsomely and they were able to donate several hundred pounds of fresh produce that directly benefitted local seniors, children and families.

Thank you Chuck Starnz and Leanne, Josephine Johnson, Dale Winget and Les Craig for generously donating your time this summer and filling our Free Produce Markets with wonderful musical sounds & good energy!



Volunteer Spotlight on Ozzie Pomeroy

By Laura Hughes, Volunteer Coordinator

Clyde Pomeroy, more commonly known around these parts as "Ozzie," has been volunteering with Food for People since 2003. Born and raised in Eureka, Ozzie says he had been in and out of the food bank since before 2003, but one Halloween he decided he would like to volunteer for a whole day. He saw the good things we were doing to help older folks in the community and wanted to be involved. Since then, he has been a permanent member of our Food for People family.

Ozzie began volunteering as an off-site distribution assistant with our senior and homebound programs, accompanying the program coordinator to distributions in Rio Dell and beyond. He helped load and unload the van, as well as distribute food boxes and produce bags. Later on, Ozzie began volunteering on-site during regular pantry distribution days, assisting additional families with their food box pick-ups. He likes seeing people, saying hello and giving a kind word. Often he says, they say nice things back.

Currently, Ozzie assists our driver, Art Brown, with his donation pick-up runs on a daily basis. Donation runs involve stops at several locations and vary from day to day but always start out early. Art usually stops first at the Safeway by Walgreens, then at Ray's and the Eureka Mall Safeway. Pick-ups are also made at Vellutini Baking Co., Murphy's in Cutton and Ramone's across from the hospital. Next, the dynamic duo heads into Old Town to pick up from Los Bagels and the North Coast Co-op before heading to Costco, Bien Padre and Eureka

Natural Foods. Pick-ups are also made at Target and CVS, as well as a few other locations when available. Once donation pick-up runs have been completed for the day, the pair returns to the Food Bank and Ozzie washes the vans. In addition to assisting Art with these pick-up routes, Ozzie also volunteers for our annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive, which occurs yearly during the month of May.

When asked what he likes about volunteering with Food for People, Ozzie says he "likes helping people out because it's a good thing." He remarks that the pantry is busier now as more people need help these days. He's seen many volunteers come through here, noting that he likes seeing others help people in need. Ozzie enjoys hearing people say good things about the food and fresh produce they receive from us, especially the seniors whom he says are always appreciative of the different breads, produce and non-perishable items they receive. He recalls when he assisted with senior distributions that different people would always say something nice like, "God bless you - this is the only place I can get free produce." Ozzie also mentions our free produce markets, where people are happy to line up to receive free fruits and vegetables. He says his friends ask him to remind them when the next one will be. Ozzie likes to help people where he can, just to see them smile.

In addition to his work at Food for People, Ozzie says his mother has spread the word that he likes to mow lawns. He says he has so many requests from her friends that it's gotten quite time consuming! Ozzie and his wife Betty also



belong to a group called People First. The mission of People First is "to help start, inform and support local chapters so that we, and all people with developmental disabilities, are able to speak for ourselves, know our rights and responsibilities, and are respected, valued members of our communities." Ozzie says the folks in his chapter get together and talk about the rights and wrongs of what people do for other people. Chapter members discuss the budget and how it affects people who don't have the ability or aren't allowed to get out and find jobs or volunteer. He says it's the little things that give people self-esteem and self-worth.

When asked why he feels it is important for people to help out in their community, Ozzie refers to the old saying, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." He says folks think that they're forever young, but it's surprising to see the time go by so quickly. It's good to be able to help when you can, so when you're older and it's more difficult to get out and do things, and you need a little help, you can think back to the day when you had a chance to help someone else. As you become older and a little handicapped, then you can say, "Well, I helped people." And it would be nice to have the programs there to help you.

Thank you Ozzie for your warm-hearted dedication to helping folks fight hunger in our community. You are a valued member of our Food for People family. Keep sharing the love.



Would you like to celebrate or honor the memory of someone you love?

Our Holiday Cards will be available soon!

For every \$30 donation, we will provide our lovely holiday card for you to send to the person of your choice (or send it for you). This year, our holiday card will feature a scene by local photographer, Ginny Dexter, shot in the forest at Lanphere Dunes. Your gift will help feed many families throughout Humboldt County during this holiday season.

Tributes, Memorials & Gift Contributions

We would like to sincerely thank the friends and family of those who have made donations in honor and in memory of others. Your generous donations go a long way toward helping the 12,000 and more people we feed each month which include children, seniors and working families in need.

Would you like to honor a friend or family member by making a donation to Food for People? Simply add a notation to your donation. If you include an address, we'll send an acknowledgement to that person to let them know about the donation in their name or the name of their loved one. You can also let us know if there is a favorite program of theirs and we'll make sure the donation goes to their program of choice. It is a great way to

celebrate or honor the memory of someone you love.

The holidays are coming and you can take advantage of our special Holiday Card (with a photo taken by a local photographer of a Humboldt County scene), letting people know you made a donation in their name. Just be sure to include the address of the individual and we will send them the holiday card to let them know about your donation.

We are always happy to know a bit more about the folks for whom you are making donations in honor or memory. Send us their photo or briefly tell their story and why you wish to honor your friend or family member and we will publish it in our newsletter.

I'd like to be a Regular Donor!

Please send an 800 Club Packet to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please charge my credit Visa or Master Card:

Monthly Quarterly Amount: \$ _____

Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code (on back of card): _____

Clip and mail to:

800 Club, Food for People, 307 W 14th St., Eureka, CA 95501

IN HONOR

THE HOMELESS & NEEDY
EVELYN KAMENETZKY
STEVE FURNISS
LINDA MORTENSON
HUNGRY PEOPLE
MICHAEL CANNING
THE WORKING POOR
ROBERT HUNT DOUGLAS
JACK FRICK
BUNNY MOORE WESTBROOK
EPSILON ZETA MASTER SISTERS
JUDY ANDERSON
RICHARD & LORRAINE
MILLER-WOLF
PAMLYN MILSAP
DAVID MARTINEK
ARLENE SANTIAGO
NELLIE THOMPSON
ALEXA PUNNAMKUZHJIL

IN MEMORIAL

JOHN TURLEY, JR
VA & ELA CARACAPPA
FLOYD SMOLLER
DANIELLA REXFORD
DAVID RUDIN
DAVEN
JANET DECKER
VICKY CHANES
CAROL MYERS
JOHN & JASON DIAMOND
ARNOLD JEPSEN
JIM VAUGHAN
CAROLINE SEGUM
RANDY HINES
MR & MRS CLETIS VAUGHN
CAROLYN REGAN
DANIEL & CAROL SIEGEL
JAMES SMITH



Food Pantries as a Community Building Effort

Continued from page 1

in the community.

Below is an interview with Alex Reid, a long-time volunteer with the McKinleyville Food pantry (formerly known as the Grace Good Shepherd Church pantry) who implemented the discussion forums at the pantry and engaged clients in both advocacy and community action.

Could you give our readers a brief description of your project?

“Our project started with a series of large group conversations at the food pantry and is now expanding to what may be monthly lunch discussions at the church next door. During these get-togethers, we hope to become better acquainted, feel more comfortable expressing our opinions and values, learn to listen well to others, share resources and possibly find a course of action to pursue together that may improve the course of our lives.

A few months ago, pantry shoppers, along with available volunteers and staff, began talking together each Friday while shoppers were waiting for their appointments. We had already done our best to create a pleasant and relaxing environment with the warm room and comfortable seating provided by the McKinleyville Family Resource Center and the hot coffee, tasty snacks and background music provided by some of the volunteers. The next logical step was to see if we could talk together about a topic of general interest, demonstrating respect for each person’s contribution to the conversation. A volunteer initially posed a question, wrote it on a flip chart and then wrote down the responses of a few participants before leaving the pen available for other people to write what they wanted.

It didn’t take long for participants to feel comfortable enough to pose their own questions for the group and to express their honest concerns about the downturn in the economy and how it was affecting them at the most basic level. This soon led to a suggestion that we write postcards to Congressman Mike Thompson about the proposed reductions in

funding for Social Security, SSI, Medicare, MediCal, USDA commodities and FEMA food. A volunteer provided postcards and we discussed as a group how we might most effectively communicate our concerns before writing and mailing our cards.

At a subsequent meeting, participants asked if we could have someone from Mike Thompson’s office come to the pantry to hear the group’s concerns and share information about the programs people were concerned about. In response, volunteers invited John Driscoll from Mike Thompson’s office and organized a light pasta lunch for the approximately 30 people who attended. Before John arrived, we set some ground rules so that the meeting would be organized and respectful. Participants planned what they would say within a three minute time allowance, following an agreed upon outline. John Driscoll and all the participants did an excellent job communicating clearly and respectfully. After John’s departure, the group decided that next we would like to invite Anne Holcomb to attend a similar lunch discussion and talk about her advocacy efforts for food at both the state and national level and how we might support her in this effort.”

What need did you see that led you to take action?

“The four of us who started this project, Javan Reid, the Minister at Grace Good Shepherd Church; Steve Lundeen, Pastor at Church of the Joyful Healer; Hillarie Beyer, Executive Director of the McKinleyville Family Resource Center; and I, a pantry volunteer, were dismayed by the sense of isolation and alienation we sensed from those who came to shop at the McKinleyville Food Pantry. People expressed through words and/or through body language that they felt shame at having to ask for help. They felt as though they had failed in not being able to provide for themselves or their children. They blamed themselves.

Both Javan and Steve have had training and experience in com-

munity organizing. Along with them, Hillarie and I shared a strong conviction that all of us who had anything to do with the pantry could work together to create a shared community in which we would all be happier, more hopeful and better able to experience a greater sense of self dignity and mutual respect by working together. This is in keeping with First Five Humboldt’s “Better Together!” programs. We enlisted the help of Lane Levine, a local, highly skilled community organizer who has been most generous with his time, advice and wise counsel. We meet with him monthly to discuss how best to proceed.

I think you would sense a difference coming into the McKinleyville Food Pantry. It’s been gradually changing since we first opened as a Choice Model about a year ago. We have new people coming every day, but those who have been coming for awhile smile and greet one another like friends. Some people come by for coffee even if they are not getting food. We are learning each other’s names. We hug, tell jokes and share news. New people sense this spirit of camaraderie and pick up on it. More pantry participants are joining in and sharing skills and resources. We talk about the fact that nobody ‘makes it on their own’ in this country or any other. We all give and receive from one another. There are hard days when we are pretty much just tired and hungry, but even on these days there are still moments when I think we are gradually beginning to build a little community.”

What is your vision for this project?

“It could be wonderful if we grew into a political action group that advocated for improving laws/systems that are meant to help low-income households. That might be one thing we do together or that some of us pursue. But I don’t really know where we are going with this. As I understand community organizing, the group sets its own goals as it evolves. It doesn’t matter what those goals are. What matters is the process of learning to work together to accomplish what we think is most important in our community life.”

What advice would you give someone interested in starting a similar project?

“Ask for help from a professional community organizer like Lane Levine or from staff at First Five Humboldt or Humboldt Area Foundation. Study the People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) model of community organizing. Remember, it’s about the process rather than any particular end product. Enjoy working with others as equals.”

More on our Pantry Network Potential and Future Plans

Food for People has recently partnered with the California Center for Rural Policy to design and implement a client survey to show how effectively our pantries are meeting the needs of low-income families from our clients’ perspectives. The survey will identify food and nutrition levels, health of household, access to food and healthcare, community services that families may be accessing or could benefit from, and how well our pantries are meeting the needs of the clients. The goal is to use the data from the survey to identify gaps in services and areas to improve our food pantry operations to better meet the needs of our clients.

Our food pantries have great potential to help our clients and community beyond providing food, as Alex has demonstrated. Food is one piece of the puzzle of helping the growing number of families in need as a result of the economic downturn. Working in collaboration with community agencies, our pantries can help inform clients on how to access further services that can benefit them, how to get involved in advocacy (especially when so much

of the proposed budget cuts are targeting programs benefitting low-income households), and opportunities for further assistance with meeting food and nutrition needs such as CalFresh and local community gardens. We are excited about strengthening our pantries and building on the relationships that our pantries have with our clients.

Senior and Homebound Programs

Continued from page 4

every month and make sure those with special needs get what they require to stay healthy when other resources are stretched thin.

There are many factors that contribute to the success of these programs. Having the available resources to fill the bags with food is crucial, and so is the help of the many volunteers who donate their time, gas, and wear and tear on their own cars to deliver food and serve the community. They work hard assembling bags of commodities and produce, delivering the groceries and interviewing potential clients.

There is a reason that some of our drivers have been delivering to the same folks for nearly 20 years. The delivery drivers form lasting relationships with their clients who look forward to their monthly visits not only for the food, but for the friendships. The clients appreciate it, and so do we here at Food for People. With the right funding and continued help from the community and our volunteers, we look forward to helping those we serve through our Senior Brown Bag and Homebound Delivery Programs.

I want to become a Volunteer at Food for People!

Call 707-445-3166 or email:

Volunteer@foodforpeople.org. Or fill out and send in:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please have someone contact me:

Phone: _____

Email: _____



New Project Gives Incentive to Use CalFresh at Farmers' Markets

By Michael Canning, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

This year, Food for People launched a new incentive program designed to increase access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables for low-income households. The program, known as the Humboldt Market Match, allows households receiving CalFresh (formerly food stamps) the opportunity to double their spending power at any North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) Farmers' Market.

The NCGA Farmers' Markets have accepted CalFresh benefits for the past several years and make the process very easy for people to use their benefits at the market. People simply bring their EBT cards (the debit card CalFresh benefits come on) to any NCGA Farmers' Market, have the card swiped by the market manager for an amount of the customer's choosing, and are then issued wooden tokens which can be used like cash at the farmers' stalls. With the Humboldt Market Match in place, households can match the first \$15 in tokens they receive with the privately donated funds, in effect doubling their spending power.

The project's first year concluded this September as a tremendous success. The amount of CalFresh benefits and matching funds spent at the NCGA Farmers' Markets increased by 474% since 2008 (269% if matching funds are not included). This money directly supports local agriculture, while

simultaneously putting food on the tables of struggling families in Humboldt County. This increase can be attributed to the success of the Humboldt Market Match, the NCGA's hard work and welcoming atmosphere, as well as the outreach efforts of Food for People.

The Humboldt Market Match project is funded through Roots of Change (ROC) and their California Farmers' Market Consortium (CFMC) project, which aims to increase farm revenue for California specialty crop producers, while improving public health. The Consortium is currently operating with a Specialty Crop Block Grant for incentives at participating farmers' markets in California.

This September, the Executive Director of the North Coast Growers' Association, Portia Bramble, wrote an article for the Roots of Change CFMC blog discussing Humboldt County's agricultural community, the NCGA's partnership with Food for People, Local Food Month, and the success of the Humboldt Market Match. As you will see, the article beautifully captures many of the wonderful things about life on the North Coast and highlights the important role our community partners play in reaching our goal of a healthy, hunger-free Humboldt County.



CalFresh recipients can have their EBT cards swiped at any NCGA Farmers' Market and receive wooden tokens in exchange (above left). The wooden tokens can then be used at the farmers' stalls to purchase fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables (above right).

Sharing Humboldt's Bounty through Community Partnerships

By Portia Bramble, Executive Director of the North Coast Growers' Association

In Humboldt County, on the remote north coast of California, September is Local Food Month. You may be surprised to know that here in Humboldt County we have an abundance of local agricultural production with a huge range in variety of products due to the existence of multiple microclimates.

With a long history of agricultural production we have developed many specialty crops from wheat and grains to peaches, sweet corn, dry beans, heirloom apples and unique varieties of tomatoes. Humboldt County also has a hugely successful and award winning grassfed beef and dairy industry. This rich agricultural production has allowed us to create a uniquely successful local food system, including thriving farmers' markets

that feature farm fresh products all grown within the county lines.

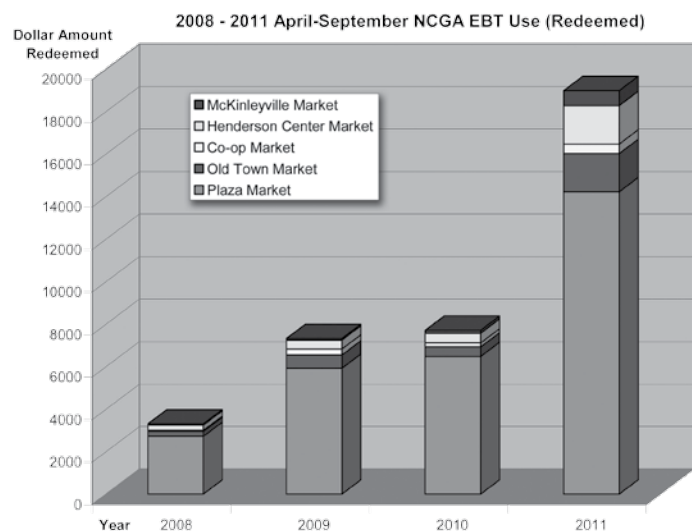
Through a partnership with the local food bank, Food for People, the North Coast Growers' Association has been participating in the Roots of Change Certified Farmers' Market Consortium (CFMC), and has implemented the CalFresh incentive program at all five of our weekly farmers' markets in Arcata, Eureka and McKinleyville. The incentive program has allowed NCGA to offer additional dollars to CalFresh recipients, who deeply cherish the program. In a community where unemployment figures are as high as 20%, every dollar counts.

Greg Rhodes, one of two-hundred CSA shareholders at Deep Seeded Community Farm in Arcata, and a weekly shopper at the Arcata Plaza Saturday farmers' market, said recently that without the ability to use his CalFresh benefits and the incentive dollars to pay for his CSA share he wouldn't be able to afford to provide his family with the fresh fruits and vegetables that he now can. Because NCGA is a farmer-member organization serving over 100 family farms, we are able to serve the unique needs of our community through direct daily contact with our farmers and a very tightly knit relationship; facilitating a system of weekly payments for Greg's CSA share through NCGA is something you will only find in such a close community. These types of relationships are what contribute to such a vibrant and successful agri-

cultural system here on the north coast.

Our farmers are also the largest donors to FFP food pantries, contributing 64,304 pounds of produce from direct donations and gleaning between October 1, 2009 and October 31, 2010. The partnership between NCGA and FFP has served both organizations well for many years; joining the larger CFMC partnership has only strengthened and developed the programs NCGA and FFP manage jointly.

Humboldt County is an extremely remote and often isolated part of California, hidden behind what the locals refer to as the "Redwood Curtain". While the tight community bonds that we have formed here give us strength and allow us to prosper despite many obstacles, having ties to the larger local food movement and the support of organizations like ROC with the implementation of the incentive program has allowed us to realize even more of our potential for the growth and prosperity of agricultural productivity. Direct marketing of agricultural products has become increasingly popular throughout the United States with the rise in popularity of farmers' markets and CSAs in recent years, but here in Humboldt County we never left that tradition because of the abundance of agricultural production, a high volume of farming families, the quality of our products, and the commitment of our local consumers to eating locally produced foods.



Increased use of CalFresh at farmers' markets means more federal dollars are coming into Humboldt County each month, feeding families and supporting local agriculture. Sharing Humboldt's Bounty through Community Partnerships

Volunteer Perspectives

By Deborah Waxman, Director of Programs

The following is an excerpt written by a Food for People volunteer about his experience volunteering with us:

After considering the relative benefits of two "miscellaneous" items on the Choice Pantry rack at some length, Ms. "C" chooses the peanut curry sauce "It will taste better on a stir-fry!" she declares. Now "C" pushes her cart to the bagging table, where shoppers pack up their food before leaving the pantry. I compliment her on her large insulated tote bag, and she replies,

"My daughter got it somewhere. Since my bike chain broke I've had to walk here, and the kids' milk was warm by the time I got home."

"How far away is your place?" I ask, concerned about the 15+ pounds of food that this 60-something year-old grandma would be carrying up hill and down dale.

"I think it's about 3 miles, but it's a beautiful day today!"

Inspired by my friend, who always finds opportunities to volunteer for those in need, I decided I should do something when I arrived in Eureka on July 4, 2011. Food for People is close to my house, has a great name, an inspiring façade, and serves the community as Humboldt County's official food bank, with many on-site programs and satellite services (that include 16 pantries and monthly free farmers' markets across the whole county) for those without the resources to purchase adequate food.

Even on the days when the Choice Pantry is closed (such as orientation Mondays) there are at least a dozen folks performing a variety of tasks to keep all of the Food for People's programs running. A buzz of goodwill permeates the building, bouncing off of the diverse educational posters on the walls and the pamphlets strewn about on tables that provide facts, figures, and illustrations on the growing need for affordable and nutritious food in the wealthiest nation on earth.

What follows was gleaned from attending two successive orienta-

tions, my first three days working as a volunteer, and formal and informal interviews with staff, other volunteers, and clients.

In addition to being the food bank for numerous pantries throughout Humboldt County, Food for People has 12 different programs that provide food to walk-in shoppers, people that suffer a sudden food emergency, seniors, children, and the homebound, among others.

Shoppers at Food for People are assisted cheerfully and without judgment, since the circumstances that brought them to the foodbank are much more complex than the stereotypes presented by many in the media and politics. To date, my primary job has been as a "shopper's helper." I love this job because it offers personal contact with the folks that Food for People's Choice Pantry was created to serve. Every new client has an intake interview before they can shop in the pantry. The interviewers are highly trained volunteers that try to identify each client's overall household needs, and provide any available assistance to get those needs met. There are scarce, but still existent, public and private resources available to help some obtain low-cost healthcare, childcare, housing, and job training. The intake interviewers provide referrals to eligible clients.

The intake interviewer also finds out if a new client has dietary restrictions or lacks cooking facilities. These issues may lead to adjustments in the types of foods that clients will be able to use. As Volunteer Coordinator Laura explained it, "The interview is a chance for us to touch base with those that come to the pantry, and to make sure that we're serving them to the best of our ability."

After intake, each new shopper is introduced to a shopper's helper. The helpers are given a laminated card that has been filled in by the interviewer. This "shopper's guide" lists all of the categories of food for which the shopper is eligible. These categories include federal surplus goods of various types, fresh fruits and veggies, and

canned, packaged, and wrapped goods from dairy, grain, and miscellaneous categories. The amounts and types of food each shopper receives are determined by household size and the stock on hand.

Some decline some foods that they don't like (or are not familiar with), or items that they know they would not be able to prepare or consume due to their particular living circumstances. Examples of such limitations include not having a stove, or a fridge, a kitchen, or even a stable residence.

The foods in the Choice Pantry include the federal surplus staples (including canned, frozen, and refrigerated items), as well as local donations of all types. My favorite area is the fresh fruit and veggie table, which I have seen laden with the following good foods: lettuce and spinach (both bagged and fresh), diverse veggies such as peas, potatoes, onions, parsnips, greens of many types, beets, leeks, and more; and, fresh fruits, such as fresh picked strawberries, oranges, limes, and plums.

After a few hours helping shoppers, during a momentary lull, I found myself rocking on my heels, dazed by the cognitive dissonance I was experiencing: bumper-sticker stereotypes versus real flesh-and-blood people; small piles of food for the too many in need; faces of joy and of shame; etc. The food distribution coordinator, Ivy, happened by at that moment, and I muttered something like "This place is amazing!" while tears welled up in my eyes.

Ivy later confided that the first 6 months can be emotionally trying - for volunteers and staff alike - due to the desperate circumstances of too many ordinary Americans. Nonetheless, the overall vibe amongst the staff and workers is a cheerful, can-do spirit that is uplifting, not depressing. As with most other experiences in life, each volunteer brings their personal perceptions into this new environment, and over time perceptions change as new experiences change the person.

The KHSU Food Challenge!



Ed Subkis, General Manager of KHSU, shown here on the air with Anne Holcomb, Executive Director of Food for People.

KHSU hosted a Food for People Challenge in the early morning of September 27th. During this portion of their Fall Fundraising Drive, all pledges were matched by an equal donation of food (up to \$1500) by Wildberries Marketplace and by a monetary donation (up to \$500) by Ken Houldsworth, Inc. Wildberries owner, Phil Ricord,

and Ken Houldsworth have been big supporters of both Food for People and KHSU for years. KHSU listeners met the challenge and raised over \$2000 in donations during that time. Thanks to all who participated in this event for supporting Food for People and helping us to fight hunger in this creative and fun way!

Your donation is important!

- I am enclosing a donation to help eliminate hunger in our community.
- I would like to join the 800 Club & donate regularly. Please send me a packet of envelopes

or
Please charge my Visa or Master Card:

Monthly Quarterly One Time

For the amount of: \$ _____

CC#: _____

Exp. Date: _____

Security Code (on back of card): _____

Name _____

Street _____

Town, ZIP _____

Please contact me about including Food for People in my Estate Plans

Food for People, Inc., is a 501 (c)(3). Donations are deductible to the fullest extent of the law.



The Hunger Fighter Challenge Wants You!

Jason Whitley, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Now that fall is here, Food for People is officially gearing up for the holiday season and would like to invite the community to participate in the 2011 *Hunger Fighter Challenge*, which is part of our *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive*. This year's Hunger Fighter Challenge will encourage local businesses, organizations and individuals to donate all they can to ensure everyone in Humboldt County has a holiday season free from hunger. The drive will collect food and financial donations through a variety of methods, with donations going to support Food for People's anti-hunger operations throughout our community.

Food for People currently provides some form of food assistance to more than 12,000 people each month, which is more than 10% of the county's population. The majority of those served are children and seniors. Within the last year, Food for People has seen our reserve of locally donated food supplies dwindle due to an immense increase in need. With your help, we could ensure all families have enough to eat over the cold winter months including and beyond the holidays. Consider forming a Hunger Fighter Team with your friends, family or co-workers. Last

year, Catalyst Church took home the honor of top Hunger Fighter in Humboldt County. This year it could be you and your group!

Watch for our custom-printed grocery bags that will be appearing within copies of the Times-Standard and Tri-City Weekly over the holidays. The bags will list the various locations where donation barrels are available to fill with



food donations throughout the county - all food collected will stay in the community where it was donated to help meet local needs. Donations of non-perishable food can also be dropped off at Food for People in Eureka, which is located at 307 W. 14th Street. Grocery stores and other high-traffic locations participate in order to make it as easy as possible for people

to donate. At this time of the year, some of the most needed items are those containing a good amount of protein - foods like peanut butter, canned tuna, beans and hearty stews - as well as items such as canned fruits and items containing whole grains, such as pastas and cereals.

The food collected during this holiday season will be distributed through Food for People's main site in Eureka, as well as through our Pantry Network, which works with fifteen other local pantries in different communities throughout the county. The food collected during the holiday season is not just used to meet the need now, but is actually something that we depend on to carry us through the coming months. The generosity expressed during November and December will continue to feed people throughout the winter months and beyond.

If you are interested in taking the Hunger Fighter Challenge or would like more information about the Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive, please contact Jason Whitley at (707) 445-3166 (ext. 312). More information about Food for People can be found on the web at www.foodforpeople.org.

Harvest Share Fresh Food Drive a Success

Jason Whitley, Local Food Resources Coordinator

You have no doubt heard of Food for People's canned food drives, but have you ever heard of our fresh food drive? On September 10th, Food for People held the Third Annual Harvest Share Fresh Food Drive at the Arcata Farmers' Market. This event was designed to help thank local farmers for the support they give the food bank each year, while simultaneously providing additional fresh fruits and vegetables to families, children and seniors served by the food bank.

Food for People was present at the farmers' market that Saturday, accepting donations and gleaning the market, as well as offering information on the Humboldt Market Match and presenting a "Rethink Your Drink" demonstration by our Outreach and Nutrition Education team. Michael and Megan offered water infused with blackberry and basil, as well as lemon and cucumber water. Staff was also present to inform the community on the many programs offered by the food bank.

Last year, local farmers donated more than 64,000 pounds of fresh produce to community members in need through Food for People's Gleaning Program. As part of this event, market goers were encouraged to purchase extra fruits and vegetables at the market and donate the produce to the food



bank. This increased sales at farm stands, while also providing fresh, nutritious food for those in need - a win-win situation! At the end of the market, this food drive filled an entire van stuffed with produce. Loaded from floor to ceiling, our van made its way back to Eureka, where we made sure that local seniors received the bulk of these nutritionally dense, tasty fruits and veggies through our senior food programs.

We would like to thank each and every donor that helped to make this event a success. We would also like to thank the North Coast Growers' Association - especially market manager Portia Boni Bramble - for the support and opportunity to hold this event at the farmers' market as well as their ongoing support of Food for People. Thanks to generous donations of produce from both market customers and local farmers, we received more than 1,000 lbs of fresh fruits and vegetables that day!



Food for People invites you to join us
Thursday, October 27, 2011 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
307 W. 14th Street in Eureka (two blocks up from Broadway)

Please come and tour our facility, meet staff and board members, walk through our Choice Pantry and view displays explaining our programs. Food and beverages will be served, donated by your favorite local businesses.

A beautiful locally quilted placemat & napkin set for four has been donated for a drawing that evening.



Please reserve a place by emailing your name and number in your party to RSVP@foodforpeople.org or call Harriet Pecot - 707.445.3166 X 306 by October 21st
We're looking forward to seeing you!

A special thanks to our printer!

Our newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper using soy inks. All paper waste generated in the process of printing is sent directly back to the paper mill for recycling.

western web

www.western-web.net - 707.444.6236

