



Food Notes

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

Fall Issue, 2013



The Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horseman of California kick off the Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive when they deliver their canned goods by horseback in top left photo; Volunteers get ready for the September People's Produce Market at Food for People in Eureka above and on right.

Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

By Laura Hughes, Local Food Programs Coordinator

It's that time of year again! The holidays are upon us in Humboldt County, and soon enough you'll be seeing a proliferation of food donation barrels, adorned with Food for People's familiar logo and list of most needed foods, popping up at various locations throughout Humboldt County. You'll probably also see me or other Food for People drivers zipping around in one of our vans, periodically emptying these barrels to bring donations back to the food bank.

These food collection barrels are just one part of our annual *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive*, our largest food collection effort each year. Last year, the collective efforts of everyone who participated in the *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive* brought in more than 64,000 pounds of food to help feed our friends and neighbors in need. We invite you to participate in these efforts again

this season, to help us ensure that children, families, seniors and other individuals have enough to eat during the winter months, including and beyond the holidays.

For many families the holidays can be a particularly stressful time. For low-income families in particular, providing additional meals to kids while they're home on break from school, the expectation of buying gifts, and the pressure to provide a special holiday meal for loved ones can be especially challenging when resources are already stretched to the max.

That's where the "Holiday Spirit" of our generous community comes in during the *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive*. Hundreds of businesses, organizations, groups and individuals pitch in across the county to participate in various efforts to raise funds and collect food in order to help make the holidays a little easier on families

who are struggling to put food on the table.

One of the essential components of our *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive* is the Hunger Fighter Challenge. Any group can participate and put together a Hunger Fighter team. If you're interested, contact us and we'll get you started. Our Hunger Fighter teams include businesses, churches, schools, civic organizations and community groups, all of whom sign up to participate in a friendly competition to determine which team can collect the most food and funds during the months of November and December. Each Hunger Fighter team has its own unique approach to raising food and funds, and we appreciate the creativity and enthusiasm of all of our participants. Not only does the Hunger Fighter Challenge bring in much-needed food, it is also a fun way to get people involved

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People's Produce Market

By Andy Nieto, Operations Manager

Beginning in the spring and continuing through the fall season, Food for People hosts a series of free produce markets for low-income households in Humboldt County. These markets are offered in four locations throughout the county between May and October, and provide a regular assortment of fresh produce to enhance the diets and health of our clients and their families. Our markets provide clients with access to fresh fruits such as peaches, watermelons, plums, apples, blackberries, strawberries and pears. Clients may also choose from nutritious veggies such as spinach, cabbage, broccoli, greens, sweet potatoes, onions, bell peppers, corn, cauliflower and tomatoes. Food for People works in partnership with various

entities, such as local farmers and gardeners, and statewide programs *Farm to Family* and *Donate, Don't Dump*, to supply our markets with nutritious foods.

This year marks the 5th season of the Fortuna produce market. In partnership with Fortuna Community Services, Food for People has already served more than 2,800 people at the Fortuna distribution this season. This equals the distribution of more than 39,000 pounds of fresh produce to people who could not otherwise have afforded it. This market, like our markets held in Eureka and Southern Humboldt, conducts regular outreach with clients, including CalFresh pre-screening, healthy meal planning assistance, information on child health insurance programs, vaccinations from Public Health

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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.

Senior Program Updates in Southern Humboldt

By Argelia Muñoz, Community Food Programs Coordinator

The Healy Center in Redway has been hosting Food for People's senior food distributions for the past six years. Their Coordinator, Richard Valentine, has been a huge part of the success in running the senior food program for Southern Humboldt. Although the program was small when it first started in Redway, it has grown steadily over the years. Currently, there are more than 40 low-income seniors served through this program.

"Everyone is so pleased with the canned goods, cheese, meats and all the fresh vegetables provided by Food for People. It was sometimes a challenge to juggle all my hats, helping with the lunch we provide at Healy Center as well as my other duties at the same time we distributed the food, but it always worked out. I also enjoyed working with the people who delivered the food. There are many selfless people helping with the distribution," reflects Valentine.

We are very grateful for the Healy Center and all of the volunteers for their help running this program. We all appreciate the nutritious food and good cheer it has brought to the clients who utilize the program. As the Healy Center has needed to shift

resources to ensure the longevity of their programs, they have worked with us to find a new site for serving southern Humboldt Seniors with Senior Brown Bags, Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and Homebound Delivery programs. We thank the Healy Center for all of their dedication to our Southern Humboldt seniors and wish them the best of luck with the Senior Lunch, Meals on Wheels and all of the other services they provide to the community.

We would also like to give Richard a special and heartfelt thank you on the part of Food For People for all of the coordination, guidance and help he has provided over the years. Richard would go out of his way to make sure that all of the clients received their food, going as far as driving to rural areas of Southern Humboldt to deliver some of the food boxes when clients were too ill to leave their homes. Richard will soon be leaving Healy Center, "This change will be an adjustment," he says, "but I hope to continue to do volunteer work for the Healy Center when I can. Working with other seniors and volunteers has been a very fulfilling time in my life. Food for People is a wonderful organization

and I truly enjoy working with the people you serve. There are many people here in Southern Humboldt who need the food you provide, and it was a great joy to be able to distribute food for so many."

Richards's dedication to his community is particularly evident with this transition. He has gone above and beyond by helping to arrange the new site for the Senior Food Distribution at the Garberville Presbyterian Church. Our new Southern Humboldt coordinator and current coordinator of the Garberville Pantry, Patti Rose, is excited and enthusiastic about taking on this new responsibility.

"I am grateful that the Presbyterian Church supports our efforts in the food pantry and is now willing to let us use the Fellowship Hall to provide the Senior Brown Bags and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) food boxes for seniors. We are excited to be working with the Lions Club and church members who help the program continue in Southern Humboldt. The fresh produce and bread really help provide a more balanced diet for our senior residents. This program is a great extension of the work we've been doing in the pantry for more than 20 years, helping

folks get the help they need," says Patti.

The new location is already on the ground and running and looking for volunteers within the community. We are especially in need of dedicated community members to deliver food boxes in the Phillipsville area for the second Thursday of the Month. We can easily arrange a drop off time in Phillipsville, or they can be picked up at our Garberville site. For more information, contact Argelia Muñoz at Food for People by calling (707) 445-3166 extension 303 or Patti Rose at the Garberville Pantry at (707) 923-3295.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who assist the senior food distribution program in Southern Humboldt. As an organization situated more than an hour's drive from Southern Humboldt, we rely heavily on community members to help ensure this program continues in their area. We look forward to our new partnership and working with dedicated volunteers who contribute to the continued existence of these programs.



CalFresh in Congress

By Heidi McHugh, Community Educator and Outreach Coordinator

CalFresh is California's name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the program formerly known as Food Stamps. Currently, 9,412 adults and 6,647 children in Humboldt County are receiving the nutrition benefits of CalFresh. In the United States almost 48 million people are enrolled in SNAP. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) most recent food insecurity report, *Household Food Security in the U.S. in 2012*, found 48.9 million Americans were food insecure in 2012 and 15.8 million of those are children. Coupled with the fact that the incomes of the bottom 40% of wage earners have fallen 6% since the end of Great Recession in 2009, there is high need for SNAP/CalFresh. We have our work cut out for us educating legislators on

why the program is effective and needed.

Funding for SNAP is decided in the Farm Bill, a massive piece of legislation that covers policies related to agriculture, nutrition, forestry, and commodity programs, just to name a few. The Farm Bill is set for reauthorization by Congress every five years or so. The current Farm Bill actually expired in September of 2012 because members of Congress could not reach a consensus about funding for the Nutrition Title of the Farm Bill; primarily the debates were concerning funding for SNAP. On January 1, 2013 a nine-month extension was given to the 2008 Farm Bill as part of the "Fiscal Cliff" negotiations; that extension expired on midnight on the evening of September 30, 2013. The expiration of the Farm Bill has different meanings for different

programs; SNAP is a mandatorily funded program that can be continued even if it expires with appropriated mandatory funding. But it is the journey that led to the 2008 Farm Bill expiring twice that is more telling of how Congress is choosing to respond to growing poverty in our nation.

The current debate over funding for SNAP in the Farm Bill began in 2012 and has remained contentious, with big disagreements between the Senate and the House of Representatives on how much funding to cut from SNAP. The 112th Congress never came to agreement in 2012.

The 113th Congress resumed on January 1, 2013 and they again faced a September 30th deadline to reauthorize the Farm Bill. In June the Senate passed a bill that included \$4.1 billion in cuts to SNAP over ten years. The House

version with \$20 billion in cuts over ten years went to the floor in June but failed to pass because of the wide disparity of beliefs amongst the representatives; some felt the cuts were too steep while others felt they did not go far enough. In July the House put a new version to vote that did not even contain the Nutrition Title that covers SNAP funding, but did ensure that the farm subsidies that overwhelmingly benefit large agribusinesses were increased. Right now the top 10% of recipients receive 74% of all subsidies, according to the Environmental Working Group. Several members of Congress are also farmers who benefit from agricultural subsidies. The House passed this version, without the Nutrition Title.

On September 19, 2013, with a majority of 217 representatives voting, the House

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Notes from the Director

Food Policy?

By Anne Holcomb



There is a lot to talk about these days in terms of food policy (or lack thereof) at both the local and national levels. Locally, we've seen a rather contentious debate about homelessness evolve into questions about funding for basic safety net services and what our county should and should not be paying for. That same debate is playing out on the national stage as well, as the Farm Bill, which is already one full year past its expected reauthorization date, remains stalled in Congress due to disagreements on funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the continuation of subsidies and crop insurance for farmers, many of whom are millionaires.

The timing of these debates is also quite interesting as we recently learned that we still have 46.5 million people living in poverty in our country, despite reports of an economic recovery. But that shouldn't be all that surprising as we look at another set of statistics. According to Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize winning economist and NY Times columnist, "Adjusted for inflation, the income of the top 1 percent rose 31 percent from 2009-2012, but the real income of the bottom 40 percent actually fell 6 percent." He goes on to state that "almost two thirds of SNAP beneficiaries are children, the elderly or the disabled, and most of the rest are adults with children."

Many people who lost their jobs, lost their health insurance benefits, had their hours of work and/or wages cut and even some who lost their retirement benefits

are still struggling. If they have jobs, they may not be full time or pay the same and most do not offer benefits because businesses have also had to cut back. SNAP (known in California as CalFresh) has helped many of these households put food on the table as they've worked to keep a roof over their heads, and it has also been credited with keeping many of these households from slipping into poverty. This is how a true safety net works.

We also have evidence that providing essential nutrition assistance for children through the free or reduced cost school meal programs and programs like SNAP, does not mean that those children will be more likely to grow up poor and in need of public assistance. Economists Hilary Hoynes and Diane Whitmore, who studied the impact of the food stamp program in the 1960's and 1970's found that "children who received early assistance grew up, on average, to be healthier and more productive adults than those who didn't - and they were also, it turns out, less likely to turn to the safety net for help." As noted in the documentary film *A Place at the Table*, we had almost eradicated hunger in our country by the early 1970's thanks to an expansion of school meal programs, senior feeding programs and food stamps. Those gains began to decline in the 1980's as funding priorities shifted and the tax base shrunk following major tax cuts, leaving us once again with too many hungry people in our communities.

So where does that leave us today? I saw tears streaming down the faces of many of those who attended one of our screenings of *A Place at the Table* as they listened to stories of hunger told by an 11-year-old girl, a dad working two jobs to put food on the table and a single mom with dreams of going to school while faced with the pain of listening to her two young children cry when she had to put them to bed hungry. We hear those same stories every day. I personally feel we need to stop blaming those who are in need of help and start talking to

each other about solutions that make sense for our community and our country. Hunger and poverty are complex issues that do not exist in a vacuum. They have their roots in the quality of our educational system, the availability of living wages, access to affordable housing and health care and the influence of positive mentors and leaders in creating resilient communities that offer a good standard of living for all. We may not all agree on how to reach our goals, but the first step is to educate ourselves about the problems our community and our country faces and find meaningful ways to work together moving forward.

Here is the link to Paul Krugman's article in the NY Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/23/908n89n/drugman-free-to-be-hungry.html?hp>



Nutrition in the Garden

By Ciel Hoyt, Nutrition Education Coordinator

During this past September, Food for People and the Public Health Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) hosted "Nutrition in the Garden" at the Fortuna Community Garden which is located next to Fortuna's St. Joseph's Pantry Shelf. Fruits and vegetables are grown in the community garden which sits on nearly two acres. Community and student volunteers tend to the area. Food grown in the garden supports St. Joseph's Pantry Shelf and Fortuna Community Services. This educational event was a huge success and attended by more than 150 students from the Fortuna School District as well as children from the local Head Start, and of course, clients from the Fortuna pantry.

In this era of processed food, many people have lost touch with the origins of their food. Being disconnected from the food we eat can result in unhealthy choices. Many children today cannot tell the names of specific fruits and vegetables and where they come

from. Studies show that when children (and adults) are involved in growing and preparing vegetables and fruits they are more inclined to eat them with enthusiasm. The goal of this event was to encourage the consumption of fruits and vegetables for residents of Fortuna through awareness of where food comes from, supported by interactive recipe tastings, a seed starting workshop and a tour of the garden.

Participants started at the cooking demonstration booth. Everyone took turns rolling

their own lettuce wrap using garden-fresh ingredients such as apples and cucumbers. Afterwards they learned about how much sugar is in most soft drinks and how to read nutrition facts labels. They sampled flavored waters using ingredients from the garden, which they exclaimed, "are delicious."

At the smoothie bike station, children took turns on the bike blending up delicious green smoothies that included fresh spinach from the garden. They were surprised at the delicious taste of the green smoothies and all brought recipes home to their parents. Some even had the idea to make them for dessert, which was music to my ears.

The light exercise the participants got from pedaling their way to smoothies warmed them up for the next station - physical activity. Here they learned about the importance of getting physical activity and that "working out your thumbs with video games doesn't count." Participants were provided with hula hoops and fun imaginative games that promote physical activity, and they loved it.

Next everyone toured through the abundant garden to the pumpkin patch and received a free pumpkin (Kids return to school with pumpkins in photo on top left). Lastly they made their way to the seed-planting station where Steve Palecki, the Fortuna Community Garden Coordinator, demonstrated how to plant seeds and starts using whatever space and/or containers you have on hand (Steve shows student how to plant starts in bottom photo). Each participant received a free pack of spinach or kale seeds as well as plant starts. Once each station was completed, everyone received a free kids' cookbook with easy and healthy recipes.

The event exceeded our expectations. The new interest, knowledge and inspiration that each participant gained was clear as we moved through the stations. Our hearts were warmed by the sight of long lines of school children moving through the five learning stations and walking back to their schools proudly carrying their freshly picked pumpkins, starts and seeds, and a cookbook full of healthy recipes. Best of all were the huge grins on their faces - priceless!



Why 800 Club?

The 800 Club is our regular giving program comprised of community members who donate monthly or quarterly. Many, many years ago, 800 people donating \$5 a month is what it took to cover our yearly budget. Since that time we have greatly increased our services to children, seniors and working families in need throughout our community. We currently provide food assistance for more than 12,000 people monthly and our yearly budget has grown proportionately.

What remains the same is that everyone doing their part, and donating a comfortable monthly amount turns into something powerful. Money we can depend upon allows us to make long-term plans while building strong foundations for our programs. Your donations will make a direct impact locally. Thank you to all 800 Club members - your commitment is making a difference and is allowing us to help when we are needed most.

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.



Special Senior Deliveries

By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director

Beth Bray has been one of the delivery drivers for our Senior and Homebound Programs for three years this October. Beth is also the Director of Marketing and Development at Six Rivers Planned Parenthood. Once a month, she takes time from her busy day to deliver food to local seniors and homebound folks who are eligible to receive food through these programs. She currently delivers food to ten people on her monthly route which usually takes about 45 minutes. Some of the people she delivers to are suffering from an illness and some are seniors living on fixed incomes. Beth drives a Mini Cooper and she always has to reassure the person helping her pack up her car that, "Yes, it will all fit in." And it always does!

One of her favorite stops along her route is two brothers who live next to each other in an apartment building. Sometimes her route has changed over the years but she always asks if she can continue to deliver to the brothers in order to maintain their connection. They are both characters - quirky and friendly - and she always enjoys the monthly visits. Over time she has watched a lot of the people go through life struggles including health challenges. Sometimes they make it through and she gets to see the same people doing well and looking great. Sometimes her route changes which can mean some of the people she delivers to have also changed over the years. Beth gets attached to the people she delivers to and in addition to that, enjoys meeting new additions to the program. Sometimes it will take a while to get to know people. She remembers one elderly gentleman who became friendly over time and always expressed his genuine gratitude for the food she delivered. She also sees the impact of a small amount of nutritious food on the world of the people on her route.

Some of the people where she travels to like to be helpful and some housing complexes will bring out the occasional helper who will carry the boxes and bags of food for Beth. These are the places she feels good about because of the sense of a community where people are friendly and connected to each other. For the past few

months, she has delivered to a new stop on her route, which is a rooming house. One of the people she delivers to at the house is blind and when she helps carry his groceries inside, she sees how everything in his home is very carefully positioned and has its own place. There are four people in the same rooming house and this is another place where people are friendly and helpful. The majority of the people she delivers to live alone - they have no one. "I think that part is kind of sad," says Beth. Some of the people over the years are just happy to have a visitor in addition to receiving the food. She is surprised that the majority of people she delivers to are elderly men who live alone, unlike the brothers, who watch over each other and live in a more connected community.

Beth tells me that some of the living conditions are hard to see. A lot of the people live in rooming houses where their world is a tiny room which is either totally bare or overwhelmed with clutter. Some of their living spaces are small and dark and not at all cheery. Beth will develop a relationship with the people she delivers to regularly but often in the beginning people will not want to make small talk. Some of the people are embarrassed for her to see where and how they live. For a while she was delivering to a senior apartment complex on Myrtle Avenue. She could tell that one of the women in the Homebound Delivery Program was embarrassed and consequently not friendly. Most of the people live in small spaces such as rooming houses or apartments and it is very rare to deliver to anyone living in a house. She sees a lot of people who are pretty weathered, and the darkness and clutter they live in reflects it, although there are some exceptions, and there are those who have tidy apartments.

Over the years there have been changes in the food. There used to be chicken and other meats every month but that isn't always the case now. Beth points out that people don't get to choose what they are receiving which makes her aware that she gets to choose her own food and she can be as fussy as she wants. One friendly woman is vegan and loves the produce we



Beth is shown in above photo with her Mini Cooper that always manages to fit all the food for deliveries on her Eureka distribution route.

provide. "She struck me as more educated and living a different kind of poverty," says Beth.

Some weeks are easier than others to make the time from her busy schedule to deliver the food. The logistics can be hard because sometimes the food can be pretty heavy. Her husband used to deliver food with her but in time the deliveries ended up conflicting with his work schedule so now she delivers on her own. In spite of the challenges, she is always recharged by the people she sees and the opportunity to connect one on one. She feels that delivering food is a little something she can do to help. Her father volunteers at the food bank in St. Louis, Missouri and he is passionate about the work they are doing. She first became involved with Food for People when she took teens from her church group to volunteer

here and appreciated how nice everyone who was working at Food for People was. Now she volunteers because it is a part of her.

What has she learned? "Good question," replies Beth. She has learned she can be comfortable with different types of people. It was appealing to her to learn more about seniors and their personal stories. People are really so grateful for the food - everyone she has delivered to over the years has been grateful and thankful to receive food. And some want to find a way to play their part. Beth was struck by one woman on her route she delivered to because she would save the brown bags her food came in to be used again. The woman wanted to feel she was doing her part. She wanted to give back and this was something she could do.



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Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

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and educated about the realities of hunger and how it touches the lives of members of our community. For more information, go to <http://www.foodforpeople.org/hunger-fighter-challenge>.

Another important part of our holiday collection efforts includes partnering with several different businesses and organizations throughout the county to host the food collection barrels mentioned earlier. These businesses and their locations are listed on our red and white holiday bags, to make it easy for people to donate wherever they can. We partner with the Times-Standard to distribute these holiday bags with the newspaper, and you can expect to receive our bags the week of Thanksgiving. Keep in mind that food donations stay in the communities in which they are donated. Thanks to Advance America, Bank of America, Community Credit Union, Curves, Grocery Outlet, Les Schwab Tire Centers, Murphy's Markets, North Coast Co-Op, North Valley Bank, Ray's Food Place, Safeway, Scotia True Value Hardware, Umpqua Bank, U.S. Bank, Valley Grocery, Wildberries Marketplace and all of our partners for hosting food collection efforts this season.

Several fun events also punctuate the months of November and December, reaching out to get people involved and excited in our efforts. Each year, the Cowboy Canned Food Convoy serves as the big kick-off event for the *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive*. The Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California collects non-perishable food items, and makes the trek across Eureka with saddle bags full of nutritious goodies that are donated to the food bank. Once they arrive, the Food for People team provides apples and carrots for the horses while their riders unload hundreds of pounds of food. It's a great event for families and kids!

Another fun and highly-anticipated event is the week-long, on-air food drive we host in partnership with KHUM just after Thanksgiving. Each day KHUM broadcasts live from different grocery stores throughout the county, and the KHUM DJs are joined by Food for People staff members to speak on-air about

their programs and the work of the organization. Cliff, Amy, Mike and Larry of KHUM are wonderful and well-informed advocates of Food for People, and do a great job motivating listeners. In addition to creating a fun, festive atmosphere that encourages folks to donate, with challenges, matches and more, we also have the opportunity to educate our community about the work we do and have fun while doing it. We appreciate our KHUM friends for their dedication and ongoing support.

In addition to these larger coordinated efforts, we help facilitate a number of smaller independent food drives run by different groups in the community. In particular, local schools, colleges and universities participate in the *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive* in a variety of ways. Humboldt State University's Service Learning Department has partnered with Food for People for several years, hosting their own Hunger Fighter challenge on campus with students, faculty and administrators. Stacy Becker, Community Partner Coordinator, and Annie Bolick-Floss, Director for Service Learning & Academic Internships and Board President for Food for People, work with interns to distribute our holiday food donation bags on campus and in surrounding neighborhoods. These bags are then filled with non-perishable food items and donated to Food for People. We appreciate Stacy Becker and Annie Bolick-Floss for their planning and support.

There are many ways to participate in our *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive* this season and even more reasons to do so. This year your donations are just as important as ever. Requests for assistance increased dramatically during the recession and have not gone down. Although some sources report that the recession is over, we continue to see high numbers of people in the community in need of food assistance. There is sustained pressure on our very limited resources because people are still recovering, or trying to, from the recession. Low income families are struggling harder than ever, and our efforts to battle hunger and poverty are urgently needed.

We cannot serve the people we

do - more than 12,000 a month - without the support of generous people in our community coming together to give what they can. Every can, every dollar, and every hour you donate can make a big difference in a person's life. Help us share the Holiday Spirit by helping families put a special holiday meal on the table. Help us ensure that our friends and neighbors are free from hunger not just during the holidays, but through the winter months as well. Help us build healthy, self-sufficient, hunger-

free communities for ourselves, our friends, our neighbors and our children. Food for People is certainly blessed to be part of a caring community of involved organizations and individuals. Every donation is important, no matter the size.

If you would like to participate in this year's *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive*, please get in touch with us, we'd love to hear from you. We wish you and yours a happy, healthy holiday season.

Making a Difference: One Snack at a Time

By Nicole Gribi, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator

The beginning of the school year marks a change of seasons for our Child Nutrition Programs. We wrap up our Summer Lunch Program and roll out the After School Snack Program. This is our 8th year providing free snacks to an average of 300 children and youth across the county each day after school, for a total of over 50,000 snacks a year. A simple snack after school may not seem like a big deal to many of us, but for some children, the free snack may be the only food they get after school. No dinner; no snacks at home; just that one juice box and string cheese to see them through to the next day. Can you imagine? For those kids, that snack is a BIG deal. I'd like to share a couple of true stories of families who use this program. Names and details have been changed to protect their privacy.

At one of our sites, I met a young mother named Beth and her four children. As the kids enjoy a snack, we chat. I learn that Beth is working now, but that her mother is disabled and her father is struggling with cancer. He has been in the hospital for the past week. Beth and her kids have moved into her parents' house to help care for them. Her paycheck helps, but doesn't come close to covering all their expenses. Somehow she remains positive and determined to create a prosperous life for her children. Part of that is making sure they get enough to eat and stay healthy. She thanked me for bringing food to her community and said, "It

just helps take the edge off. Now they're not totally hungry when they get home."

At another site, I learn about a grandmother who is raising six of her grandchildren. I refer to this type of person as a "Superhero Grandma," and there are a surprising number of them these days. For various reasons, this Superhero Grandma has become responsible for her grandkids. She makes sure they have a way to get to school, clothes, school supplies, shoes, winter coats, enough to eat, a warm place to sleep, love, affection, and everything else a child needs to thrive. Two of the children have medical issues that require costly prescription medication as well. She is struggling to support them all on her monthly SSI check, and until very recently, the whole family was homeless. The kids eat snacks through this program every day and are grateful for them.

We are grateful to all our community partners that help make this program possible for children in need. They include: City of Arcata Parks and Recreation, City of Eureka Parks and Recreation, Dream Quest Youth Partnership, Boys and Girls Club of the Redwoods, Salvation Army, Bridgeville Community Center, Rio Dell Community Resource Center, Redwood Preparatory Charter School, and Willow Brook Learning Academy.

For information about a snack site near you, please contact Niki Gribi at (707) 445-3166 x309 or ngribi@foodforpeople.org.



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.*



Know Your Farmer: Ben and Kelsey Perone, Rain Frog Farm

By Laura Hughes, Local Food Programs Coordinator

Rain Frog Farm is a diverse, ten-acre vegetable farm situated on winding West End Road near the town of Blue Lake. Ben and Kelsey Perone started the farm together nine years ago and have been farming at this location for the last three seasons. They grow a wide variety of crops, including summer squash, lettuce, leeks, celery, winter squash and lots of different varieties of cucumbers. About 80% of their crops are dry farmed, which means they are grown without irrigation to reduce environmental impact and enhance flavor. In the last year, Rain Frog Farm has donated more than 2,500 pounds of produce to Food for People, in addition to 3,276 pounds we purchased for our Mobile Produce Pantry and other food distribution programs. Rain Frog Farm joined the ranks of farmers we contracted with this season thanks to support through our Locally Delicious Food Fund, providing more than 4,400 pounds of produce for our Senior and Homebound Delivery Programs. I had the chance to talk to Ben about the farm and their work with Food for People while picking up some cucumbers for our produce distribution programs.

Ben and Kelsey first started farming when another local farmer and food bank supporter, Blake Richard of Wild Rose Farm, rented them an acre to farm from his own parcel; which is just down the road from their current location. Kelsey had been working for Paul Giuntoli at Warren Creek Farms,

and Ben had been working for Blake at Wild Rose, who mentored him during his time working there. Blake helped Ben and Kelsey get started and begin to market their produce. They expanded the farm to three acres over the course of their four years at the original site, before moving to the current property where they now lease ten acres. Ben mostly works the land, while Kelsey handles orders, accounts and runs the nursery. They sell their produce at North Coast Growers Association (NCGA) Farmers' Markets, which accounts for about 50% of their revenue. The other 50% is met by their accounts with local grocery stores, markets and food producers including North Coast Co-op, Eureka Natural Foods, Wildberries Marketplace, Ray's Food Place, Murphy's Markets and Larrupin Cafe. If you're a Tofu Shop fan, you'll also be interested to

know that the Blue Lake dills use Rain Frog Farm cucumbers!

Ben and Kelsey first started donating to the food bank in order to deal with produce waste. Ben remarks that trying to have their produce in local stores when they first started farming caused a lot

produce especially locally grown. There is also the hope that by donating produce to the food bank, people will have the opportunity to develop different and sometimes healthier food habits. When people try foods they might not otherwise buy, but which are made

businesses contributes three-fold to the local economy. He reflects that it's neat to think about how their small amount of gross profit, that was created out of little more than dirt and seed, goes right back into the community through workers and people spending local dollars. It's a small amount, but it's still pretty neat to think how much can come from such a small operation.

When asked what he hopes to see for the farm in the near future, Ben talks about expanding the farm. He would like to own a little extra land but for now focuses on using the existing space more efficiently. He remarks that it's also important to nurture what you have instead of constantly expanding, which is the usual modus operandi. "Because you always want to expand and get bigger every year, but it could become just a more intense nurturing of the space and doing better with what you've got," Ben says. "That is what I'd like to see - more of an inner growth, with a little bit of outer growth." Ben has thought occasionally of running a 1920s living history farm, making it a place for children to come on field trips as an educational space. But that would have to happen in a different location, most likely closer to a city. In the meantime they continue to grow food for their community here.

When I asked Ben why he chose farming, he told me how much he enjoys working outdoors with the elements. He loves the windy and rainy days and the solitude of working outside. He describes watching the egrets and blue herons in winter as they follow the water during the rainy season. Ben comments that he feels really lucky to be working so close to the earth. "There's nothing closer to the earth than food. Food is our closest connection to the earth and to each other." Sitting down to dinner and eating with each other is an act of connection, and in this way growing food strengthens his connection to the earth and to community.

We send many thanks to Ben and Kelsey for their hard work and generosity of spirit. Food for People is blessed to work with those forging deeper bonds between our community and the earth.



Ben and Kelsey with their two sons, Jack and Eliot, at the Arcata Farmers' Market in photo on top right while two bottom photos show their delicious and beautifully displayed produce at their farm stand.

of waste because they couldn't always sell what was available at a given time. This led to a lot of field waste - food that was perfectly edible and marketable but for which there was no retail outlet, and would therefore be composted. So Ben contacted Food for People and asked us to come glean his fields. He also started donating extra produce at farmers' markets. Ben says he gives to the food bank because it's a great feeling to know that food isn't being wasted. It's a nice thing to know that you're not just growing food for profit and that people are also benefiting from it, even if they can't always afford it. And hopefully, people will become more accustomed to better quality

available to them, they might find out they like them, leading to new ways of thinking about food and feeding one's family.

In addition to donating produce, Rain Frog Farm works with Food for People to grow specific crops with funding from our Locally Delicious Food Fund, providing ultra-fresh summer squash and cucumbers for our Senior and Homebound Delivery Programs. The Locally Delicious relationship has been beneficial for Rain Frog Farm this year, providing funds early in the season that immediately allowed them to invest in their workers to transplant all the leeks. "That was a big boost for us as early spring is usually a hard time of year," says Ben.

Purchases for our Mobile Produce Pantry have also been beneficial for the farm, helping them to move larger quantities of produce. For example, Ben notes that it is harder to move the winter squash at the smaller markets, load and unload heavy squash from the truck, and take the rest of the market season to sell it all. Buying in quantity has been a boon, again ensuring that food won't be wasted. These purchases have been a boost to the farm's profitability while at the same time feeding the community. In addition, Ben makes the point that investing dollars in local

Holiday Turkey/Ham Challenge



During the coming season, Food for People provides special foods to help families create holiday meals. The cost of nutritious food has increased significantly, and your donations of holiday meats are a welcome relief to families, seniors and individuals struggling to put a modest holiday meal on the table. We are part way to our goal, and still need an additional 200 Turkeys (10-15 pounds each) and 200 Hams (3-5 pounds each). For more information, please contact Laura Hughes, Local Food Resources Coordinator, at lhughes@foodforpeople.org or (707) 445-3166 extension 312. You can also drop off your donation at our Eureka location at 307 West 14th Street. For many local families in need, this food also provides hope - thank you all for helping to make this happen!

Night Out at the Roller Derby!

Partnerships rock or in this case “roll” when Food for People teamed up with the Humboldt Roller Derby to host the beer concession for their September 14th bout. It was a fun evening made possible thanks to the Humboldt Roller Derby folks, Humboldt Beer Distributors, Mad River Brewery, Six Rivers Brewery and Reddy Ice for their donations and support in making the evening a success. The Humboldt Roller Derby shares our mission for a stronger and healthier community and we are honored to team up with them. Thank you all who helped make the evening a good time and a fun way to raise funds for both organizations and work for the common good of our community.



Food for People staff, board members and husbands helped out during the Roller Derby bout at the beer concession. Yes, we are supporters of the Roller Derby especially since our own Operation Manager, also known as Rust E. Machete, plays in the Humboldt Roller Derby League!



People's Produce Market

Continued from page 1

and more. We work closely with our nearby pantries in Loleta, Ferndale, Fortuna and Rio Dell/Scotia to refer their clients to the market and ensure that low-income families in the Eel River Valley community are aware of this site.

Our other market locations in Eureka, Garberville and Redway continue to be big events. Garberville and Redway's markets combined have reached more than 1,200 people. Our Eureka People's Produce Market has served more than 3,800 people and distributed 40,000 pounds of fresh produce. During the Eureka market, clients have the opportunity to learn about CalFresh and other local services. We also host live music from generous local musicians who donate their time and talent, and we've been fortunate enough to have unique offerings such as cooking demonstrations to inspire clients to try new recipes using foods available at the market and local pantries.

As with all Food for People programming, we are grateful to the many supporters that make these markets possible. Local donors, be they gardeners or farmers, regularly supply pristine and organic items for our programs. Funders, such as St. Joseph's Health System Humboldt County, Care for the Poor Grant, allow us to purchase low-cost bulk produce from California packers and growers. Private donors (like you!) keep our warehouse and refrigerators running so produce can be stored and distributed. And a big shout of thanks goes to our volunteers who make the People's Produce Markets a success every season!



Market Photos clockwise: Desiree Hill and Rebecca Hamanaki with eggplants, Thomas Rohn with plums, Lisa Sharry lends her musical talents, Carolyn Ayres and Megan Neubauer prepare yams and other produce for distribution.



A Place at the Table Deborah Waxman, Director of Programs

September was Hunger Action Month, a time when our food bank joins the Feeding America nationwide network of food banks in educating our local communities about hunger and identifying ways each one of us can help at the local level. Locally, we released our “30 Ways in 30 Days” campaign, which highlighted many different ways a person can take action against hunger in Humboldt County during Hunger Action Month, and really, any time of the year. One of the many suggestions was to join us at one of our two free community screenings of the critically acclaimed documentary film *A Place at the Table*.

A Place at the Table, nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, and featuring Oscar award-winning actor and End Hunger Network founder Jeff Bridges, looks at the problem of food insecurity, hunger, obesity and food access in America and the policies that allow the problem to continue. Through the eyes and voices of several adults and children experiencing hunger, the film showed how difficult and frustrating it can be to work full-time and still not have enough money to put food on the table for one’s family. It also clearly demonstrates why we have what to many seems like the hunger-obesity paradox: When a household only has a few dollars a day to buy enough calories to not let household members go to bed hungry, they are often doomed to the cheap, empty calories that allow them to feel somewhat satiated, but have detrimental health effects such as obesity, diabetes and other diet-related diseases. The film explains some of the farm subsidies to commodity farmers that have created a reality where the cheapest, unhealthiest foods are subsidized, highly processed, stripped of nutrition and available cheaply at the store, while healthy, whole foods, including fruits and vegetables, become increasingly expensive and out of reach for most low-income households. What does this say about our policy priorities as a nation?

In the film (and uncomfortably familiar to us locally) we see how far non-profits and the faith-based

community continually stretch their resources to serve a growing number of neighbors in poverty, and how they simply can not meet all of the need. We see that our federal government has the power to set funding levels for programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California, and school meal programs that fight hunger, help children and adults to be their best selves, but it depends on the priorities of our leaders. At the point we are at with hunger in our nation, where, according to the U.S. Census, a staggering 1 in 7 Americans (46.5 million people) live at or below the poverty line, and 22% of all American children live in poverty, we need the political will to invest in programs that bring nutrition, health and economic stability to those who need it.

With almost 48 million Americans meeting their households’ nutrition needs through SNAP, it struck many of us as absurd, and felt utterly devastating, that the U.S. House of Representatives voted in September to cut SNAP by \$40 billion, which translates to at least 3.8 million people losing their SNAP benefits according to the Congressional Budget Office and roughly 850,000 households losing

an average of \$90 per month. At least 210,000 children would lose free school meals according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Is this how we reduce hunger in America in a time of unprecedented need? The House and Senate will enter negotiations on a finalized amount for these cuts, but many of us have trouble getting past the disappointment and disregard for those who are suffering. Each of the 48 million Americans utilizing SNAP has a story, and some are dangerously close to our own lives—and then a sudden emergency, job loss, medical issue or family member’s death changes everything. 48 million people are too many to paint with a broad brush of what it means to be hungry or in poverty.

Why the dramatic numbers in SNAP participation in the last few years? For one, the Great Recession of 2007-2009 has been the worst since the Great Depression, and while it may be considered “over,” recovery has been very weak, especially and specifically amongst low-income households. It is no wonder that SNAP usage has not decreased. Many economic studies show the link between the recession and increased use of SNAP. SNAP has helped to alleviate a great deal of hunger in our nation and community, helping

to keep many households out of poverty and indirectly saving hundreds of thousands of jobs. In the words of economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman, “SNAP, in short, is public policy at its best...It has done yeoman work in the economic crisis, mitigating suffering and protecting jobs at a time when



all too many policy makers seem determined to do the opposite.”

Following each film screening event, audience members were invited to dialogue with one another and discussion panelists to share reactions to the film and ask questions. A panel discussion gave local experts and leaders an opportunity to share facts, stories and information about hunger and programs locally, including a call to action to do something about hunger in Humboldt County and also nationally through legislative advocacy. Panelists from either or both of the screenings included Anne Holcomb (Executive Director of Food for People), Heidi

McHugh (Community Education & Outreach Coordinator at Food for People), Jimmy Barnett (HSU student and Service Learning Intern who helped conduct a campus food security survey), Corey Lewis (HSU professor), Linda Prescott, RD (Dietician at the Humboldt County Office of Education), and Suzanne O’Dea, Ph.D. (Calvary Lutheran Church Council Member, participating in and advocating for an array of activities that help alleviate hunger and improve access to fresh produce on Eureka’s south side).

According to the California Center for Rural Policy, the

Continued on page 11

Photos clockwise: Board member Ali Aldridge serves up delicious soup at the HSU screening for a Place at the Table; Brett Shuler donates some of his culinary magic for the event; Panelist host a post screening discussion.



We thank everyone who helped make our *A Place at the Table* film screenings a reality.

This includes our sponsors: Wildberries Marketplace, University of California Cooperative Extension, North Coast Co-op, Locally Delicious, the Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs at Humboldt State University, and Calvary Lutheran Church;

Donors and volunteers who made it possible for us to provide a light meal to event guests prior to the screenings: Brett Shuler Fine Catering (who volunteered to cater both events), Lauren Cohn-Sarabia of Comfort of Home Catering for her contributions, Beck's Bakery and Loleta Bakery, a number of local farms who donated fresh produce for preparation of the meal and volunteers from Locally Delicious and Food for People's Board of Directors;

Supporters who made a number of logistics possible include: the Humboldt-Del Norte Film Commission and Humboldt State University Service Learning;

Panelists from the community including: Jimmy Barnett, Dr. Corey Lewis, Linda Prescott, RD, and Suzanne O'Dea, Ph.D.;

The event planning committee, including Food for People's Board Advocacy, Communications and Education Committee, which includes event moderator and Food for People Board member Melanie Williams, Food for People staff, University of California Cooperative Extension, Locally Delicious, California Center for Rural Policy, and a variety of community partners and friends who helped and gave advice along the way.

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 with 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 (featuring a beautiful photo of Humboldt County) by letting people know you made a donation in their name. Include the address of the person and we will send them the holiday card with your dedication.

We are always happy to know more about the folks for whom you are dedicating your donations. 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 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: _____

IN HONOR

THE HART &
BUCKLEY FAMILIES
THE HUNGRY
SIDNEY K. SWARTZ
ROSH HASHANAH
JIM AND MARY JO
RENNER
BARBARA O'NEAL
WEDDING OF
SHELLY RUHL &
THORIN LYNN

IN MEMORY

DIANE L. SANTIAGO
ELLA GRACE
BEN MILLER
LESLIE TANERI
HELEN STEFFEN
ROXANNE WILES
DAN O'GARA
LORRAINE GILLMAN
ANTONIA LAMB

Create Your Own Lasting Legacy

By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director

Have you ever thought about making a far-reaching difference for the good of your community? You can establish a lasting legacy by including Food for People in your estate plans and helping to create a healthier Humboldt County for future generations. By leaving a legacy gift of any size, ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary acts of generosity.



Alicia and David Abell called recently to let us know they had made an investment in the future of Food for People by leaving a bequest in our name. In their words, "It is important to us to support this important organization in our community." They understand the significance of providing food assistance to those in need. Alicia and David hope others will join them in including Food for People in their legacy planning, so there will be a financial base on which to continue our vital mission to our community for many years to come.

Over the years, Food for People has matured from a simple home-spun pantry to a thriving hunger-relief organization with 14 food assistance programs. We currently provide food assistance to more than 12,000 people in our community each month, which equals 10% of the population. Some of the ways we work to create a hunger-free community include:

- providing the good food children need to grow, prosper and learn (like the kids in the above photo from the Dream Quest Youth Partnership's After School Snack Program in Willow Creek)
- acting as a lifeline to seniors living on low, fixed monthly incomes so they don't have to choose between filling their prescriptions and filling the grocery bag
- educating community members about cooking healthy meals on a tight budget via our nutrition education program and free cooking classes
- advocating for legislation that protects nutrition programs for those in need
- providing emergency food assistance in the event of a disaster

Your planned gifts will help support the continued operation of all of our programs so that our elders, disabled residents, struggling families and school children in Humboldt County can have access to the food and nutrition they need in order to maintain their health, their independence and their dignity.

The steps to taking action are simple. Contact your financial professional to figure out what works best for you and your family. Learn about the different ways you can name Food for People in your plans. Planned Giving can be as simple as changing the beneficiary on an IRA or annuity. A gift through your will, trust, retirement plan or life insurance plan will help create the possibility of a hunger-free world for future generations. Make the decision, share your plan with your family and friends and transform lives with your generosity!

Mobile Produce Pantry

By Tim Crosby, Mobile Produce Pantry Coordinator

Fresh produce is an important element for maintaining ones' health and helping to treat diet-related diseases, including obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure. Leafy green vegetables are a rich source of minerals, B vitamins, and even small amounts of Omega-3 fats. With 28% of children (two to 11) obese for their age, 77% of teens (age 12 to 17) obese for their age and 26.5% of adults obese in Humboldt County, easy access to fruits and vegetables is very important in maintaining healthy lifestyles (per Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services Community Health Assessment 2013).

Food for People's newest outreach program, the Mobile Produce Pantry, provides scheduled distributions in communities where many residents struggle to access fresh fruits and vegetables. Northern Humboldt County, with its often rural and geographically diverse environments, can be a very isolated place at times. Due to a variety of social and spatial barriers, this can result in "food deserts" where residents commonly resort to purchasing meals at fast food restaurants and convenience stores with less than optimal selections of fresh produce.

On our last visit to Willow Creek, Lisa White told us, "It's really been a blessing. I've found a lot of people sharing recipes here and a lot of different ways to make things. And with my diabetes, it really helps to prepare better meals. I'm just thrilled that you guys are out here."

With the Mobile Produce Pantry's free, farm-stand style model, residents can "shop" our diverse selections, picking what interests both them and their families. Delicious and nutritious recipes, provided by our Nutrition Education staff, help introduce ways of preparing unfamiliar items, and even offer new twists on some old stand-bys. "You gave me a recipe for zucchini coleslaw which we made several times and even got our neighbors turned on to it," enthused Mary Jane Hemphill of Willow Creek.

Many of our clients report that they eat less fresh produce than they would like, due to high cost and limited availability. This is especially ironic for a state that has the largest agricultural economy in the United States and produces large amounts of high quality fruits and vegetables for much of the nation and the world. In our last fiscal quarter, the Mobile Produce Pantry distributed over three tons of fresh fruits and vegetables to eleven communities throughout the county, helping more than 1,000 family members in nearly 400 households.

Erin and Luann Johnson of Orick told us, "We were walking by one day, saw your canopy and thought - Oh cool, we now have a farmers' market! Then we found out that you offer free produce for the community. That is awesome and we really appreciate all the fresh fruit and seasonal veggies. We love how the selections change with the changing of the seasons."

Our prioritizing of fresh produce helps to ensure families in need do not go without this important part of the diet. In order to provide fresh and often organic produce, we source from local Humboldt County farms and also through the statewide Farm to Family program. Last year, over 100 million pounds of low-cost, high-quality produce was obtained through Farm to Family by food banks throughout California. This makes it possible for us to support our local farmers, stretching funding as far as possible, while still providing great variety and quality.

With the help of "Izzy" (our 10-ton refrigerated Isuzu truck), we can provide healthier food choices where there is a high need, but limited resources and access. As we travel to some of Humboldt's less accessible communities, we are able to ensure rural clients have a well-rounded amount of fresh produce and access to much needed county services.

"I don't have to try and find a car ride to get to town and then haul everything back," Orick's Mary Wilde relates. "The produce is always very high quality and very fresh. It's the kind you would find in expensive food co-ops."

Our Food for People's outreach staff provides on-site information and assistance with applying for CalFresh, a nutrition assistance program that helps income-eligible households stretch food budgets. The hope is that with help from CalFresh, these households can afford to purchase healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables from local stores and farmer's markets throughout the rest of the month. We also partner with the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and their Mobile Engagement Vehicle (MEV) at the various distribution sites. Together, both the MEV and the Mobile Produce Pantry collaborate to visit sites together on a monthly schedule, so that residents can easily access both groups' services in one convenient location. The two vehicles visit community and family resource centers throughout the county You can go to <http://foodforpeople.org/programs/>

mobileproduce-pantry for schedules and locations.

"You guys are doing an awesome job with this. It's one of the greatest things to happen in this town in a long time. It helps everybody out, it helps me out. It's all the good, healthy stuff - all the fresh produce we can't even get our hands on. This is really awesome, really awesome," Thanks, Raven Celeri of Orleans, we couldn't have said it better ourselves.



In above photo, Lisa White accesses the mobile produce delivery in Willow Creek while in photo at bottom left, Luanne and Erin Johnson fill their bags with fresh produce in Orick at the Mobile Produce Pantry stop.



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.*

## A Place at the Table

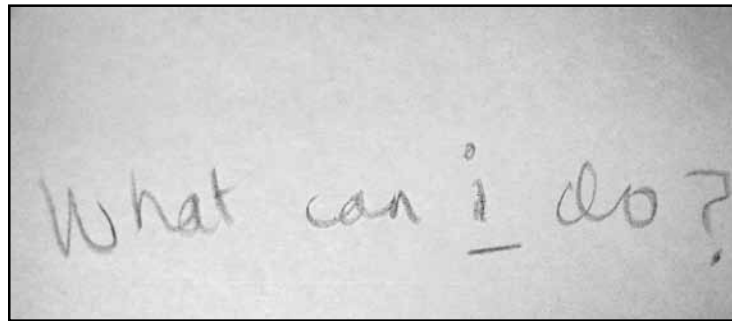
Continued from page 8

prevalence of food insecurity in the Redwood Coast Region is more than twice that of the rest of California, and this severe level of food insecurity results in “reduced food intake, disrupted eating patterns or hunger,” and is “associated with numerous poor health outcomes including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and poor cognitive, academic and psychological outcomes.” Respondents in this study with children living in their home were 1.6 times more likely to report very low food security than respondents who did not have children living in the home.

While on the one hand, I wanted to celebrate the success of our second film screening event and the incredible amount of work the planning committee, volunteers and panel members put into it, I arrived at the food bank the next morning with such a mix of emotions. It was inspiring to have spent another evening with a room full of 100 engaged, interested community members who wanted to learn more about hunger and engage in dialogue. I had this newsletter article all planned out, to reflect on the film screenings and the conversations it generated. And then I drove up to the food bank to the longest line of hungry folks I have ever seen outside our door before business hours, hoping to get a shot at an appointment before the weekend. It was the last distribution day of the month, when most household budgets are long past exhausted and hunger swells community-

wide. The line included seniors, parents, small children and a number of folks who each have a personal story. Our Choice Pantry has been so over-extended this year, accommodating more appointments than our staffing and space can realistically continue to do, and there are still more clients hoping to have one last early morning chance so they don't go hungry over the weekend. All of us are stretched to our limits.

We have reached a point, as a food bank, where it has become even more critical than before to educate the community about the faces behind hunger and the root causes and solutions. One thing is for sure: we need help and truly can not do it alone. As the film *A Place at the Table* demonstrated, we need help at the non-profit level right on up to county, state and federal levels. As one of the wealthiest nations on earth, we need federal policies and budgets that invest in our children, our elders, and all people, and to address the roots of poverty.



Participants at the screening wrote some of their reactions to the movie and the discussion with paper and markers left for the audience to use.

## CalFresh in Congress *Continued from page 2*

of Representatives voted to cut SNAP by \$40 billion dollars over ten years. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the impact of such cuts would result in an immediate loss of benefits for 3.8 million people, and loss of access to free and reduced price meals at school for at least 210,000 children who currently receive these meals, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, as part of categorical eligibility rules that are in place for SNAP.

The next step in the process is for the House and the Senate to appoint a committee that will reconcile the vast differences between the two bills (\$4.1 billion in cuts to SNAP versus \$40 billion). It is very unlikely that cuts approaching \$40 billion will come to fruition, but nonetheless disappointing that it would even be on the table. Every argument made against the program is refutable with data and facts. Let us review some of the more common arguments:

*People who use SNAP don't want to work:* 40% of SNAP

recipients are in working families. Two thirds of SNAP recipients are children, elderly, and disabled. (Center for Budget Policies and Priorities(CBPP))

*SNAP encourages dependency upon the government:* The average participant uses SNAP for 6 to 9 months.(USDA)

*Fraud and abuse are out of control:* Illegal trafficking of benefits has declined from 4% in the 1990s to just 1% currently. (USDA)

*SNAP spending needs to be cut to reduce the deficit:* Spending on nutrition programs represents only 0.086% of the entire federal budget. The Congressional Budget Office projects that the number of people receiving SNAP in a typical month will begin to fall in 2014 (from 47.7 million in fiscal year 2013 to 47.6 million in 2014, 46.5 million in 2015, and 34.3 million by 2023.) By 2019, SNAP spending will return to 1995 recession levels as a share of GDP. (CBPP)

*The recession is over. This many people shouldn't be using SNAP:* As was mentioned before, since

the recovery began in 2009 the incomes of the bottom 40% of wage earners have fallen by 6% (while the top1% saw an increase of 31%). Before the recession, median income in the U.S. had been stagnant since 2000 in the face of rising prices for housing, healthcare, transportation, and food. (Data from the University of California Berkeley Department of Economics.)

The above numbers successfully dispute some of the myths that have surfaced about SNAP. But this is also a moral issue. Close to 50 million people in our country cannot afford enough nutritious food to be healthy and productive. SNAP has proven time and time again to be our best defense against hunger and it plays a vital role in reducing poverty. Poverty is the reason people are food insecure, and the causes of poverty are vast and systematic. Cutting SNAP will only worsen conditions for food insecure Americans and increase the level and severity of poverty.



## Backpacks for Kids: Taking Care of Our Neighbors

By Nicole Gribi, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator

*The following is based on a true story from one of our local schools. Names and details have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.*

There was a smell in the classroom that was pungent and persistent, and seemed to be coming from the backpack of one of the children called Nadia. Mrs. Brandt, the teacher, knew the time had come to take action. She thought about how to address the issue without bringing shame to the child and decided to wait until

the end of the school day when most of the other children would have left the room.

Nadia was initially resistant to opening her backpack, but finally agreed with some gentle persuasion from Mrs. Brandt. Before they looked, Nadia blurted, “Please don't be mad!” Mrs. Brandt found a stash of fruit in Nadia's bag which included apples, oranges and several bananas way down at the bottom of her backpack. That was the source of the smell alright. Nadia was trying to save up some snacks for the weekend when she wasn't at school and was using her

backpack to store her supply.

Nadia is just one of thousands of children in Humboldt County who rely on free or low-cost meals at school for the bulk of their daily nutrition. School meals are not served on the weekends, so children like Nadia face those long days with very little or even nothing to eat, desperately scrambling to find something, anything, to hold hunger at bay. Many times, these kids come to school on Monday having eaten very little over the weekend. Hungry kids are not able to concentrate on their school work and all they can think about

is food.

At Food for People, we work to help kids get the food they need to succeed in school and in life. Our Backpacks for Kids program sends a bag of food home with participating children on Fridays at the end of the school day. The bag contains enough food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for two days, to see them through the weekend. We are proud to partner with 20 schools county-wide to reach children who need this program the most. Members of many local service clubs and businesses also contribute their

time and elbow grease each week to pack and deliver the food. And, of course, none of this would be possible without the generous contributions from all corners of our community. This program is evidence that a crucial “social safety net” is the one we build together, each of us linking hands with one another, lifting up and protecting our neighbors.

For more information about Backpacks for Kids, please contact Niki Gribi at (707) 445-3166 x309 or [ngribi@foodforpeople.org](mailto:ngribi@foodforpeople.org).

# Have you heard ?

...that Food for People collected approximately 500,000 lbs of "rescued" food from Eureka's grocery stores and businesses this past year?

Our dedicated Warehouse Driver, Art Brown, takes our grey van out every day and picks up bread, fruit, vegetables, milk, cheese, pasta, rice, flour, butter, spices, pies, nuts and other nutritious foods from the many local stores who donate to us. Much of the food we receive is blemished or near its expiration date, and every item is carefully inspected by a staff member before being stocked in our Choice Pantry.

With nearly 50,000 lbs of these donations coming through our warehouse each month, we utilize a lot of human power to sort, repackage and redistribute the food each day. The majority of this food would truly be waste, ending up in the landfill, if not for our "food rescue" program.

What we are not able to give directly to people in need, we dispose of through Humboldt Waste Management Authority's Food Waste to Watts program, which converts composting food into energy. As always, we are only able to perform this service with the generous support of our partners and donors. Collectively, we are preventing half a million pounds of food from going to waste each year in Eureka. Impressive!



## KHSU Wildberries Food Challenge

Early morning on October 1st, our community rose to meet the KHSU Wildberries Food Challenge. Coinciding with the KHSU Fall Fundraising Drive, listeners called in their pledges to our local public radio station which were then matched by up to \$2,500 worth of donations from Wildberries Marketplace with help from two of their distributors, UNFI (United Natural Foods Incorporated) and Nature's Best. The



donations from all three will be in the form of top quality, nutritious food and will benefit Food for People's Backpacks for Kids and Senior Programs.

The response to this challenge was amazing and shows the generosity and caring of Humboldt County. Thanks to all who participated in this event by calling in their pledges to KHSU during the Wildberries Food Challenge. Thanks to KHSU's General Manager, Ed Subkis, and Wildberries Marketplace's founder and CEO Phil Ricord, for spearheading this creative fundraising event and for all the volunteers who showed up bright and early to answer the phones.

*Photo on left shows volunteers answering phones while in above photo, Anne Holcomb, Executive Director at Food for People, David Reed, Development Director at KHSU and Phil Ricord, CEO of Wildberries are on air during the successful challenge.*



## Farmers' Market Outreach

By Heidi McHugh, Community Educator and Outreach Coordinator

This summer marked the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of a remarkable program that expands access to locally grown fruits and vegetables to low-income community members, while stimulating our local economy - Market Match! This program is a farmers' market incentive program for CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) participants. Market Match provides a free bonus of \$5 in wooden tokens when \$10 worth are purchased with a CalFresh EBT card once per market, all of which are redeemable at the individual farmers' stalls.

For the second consecutive season, Market Match incentives were extended to recipients of Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers. Food for People, North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) and Community Alliance with Family Farmers teamed up to create special Market Match vouchers for those program participants in an effort to reach out to additional low-income households who may not participate in CalFresh currently, but might if they knew they could improve their nutrition by shopping at farmers' markets with CalFresh. All Market Match voucher recipients received a packet containing information about applying for CalFresh, using benefits at farmer's markets and the Market Match Program. The packet had a list of dates and locations for special CalFresh Clinics, hosted by Food for People, where voucher recipients could be screened and apply for CalFresh. Other CalFresh

clinic attendees also received Market Match vouchers to spend during the 2013 season.

The CalFresh clinics were successful at encouraging people to apply for CalFresh and use these dollars at our local farmers' markets. It puts a smile on someone's face to know they can buy the freshest and most nutritious produce available anywhere while supporting local farms with their vouchers and CalFresh benefits. Food for People outreach staff really enjoyed being able to provide the Market Match bonuses while assisting in CalFresh applications.

In addition to NCGA farmers' markets in Eureka, Arcata and McKinleyville, the Fortuna and Garberville farmers' markets now accept CalFresh EBT cards and are also offering Market Match. The matching benefits are provided in part by the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services, to encourage CalFresh enrollment and shopping for fresh, nutritious foods that are important to good health.

The North Coast Growers' Association is part of the California Farmers' Market Consortium (CFMC), a statewide partnership of organizations offering Market Match. The CFMC is managed by Roots of Change, a non-profit organization whose mission is establishing a sustainable food system.

You can find more information about CalFresh and Market Match at [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org). The schedule for the NCGA farmers' markets can be found at <http://www.humfarm.org>.



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