

Food Notes

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

February 2017



Right: Whitney, a Food for People volunteer, helps a client shop through our Choice Pantry in Eureka.



24th Annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

By Laura Hughes, Local Food Resources Coordinator

What a whirlwind holiday season we've had here at Food for People! The food bank was positively buzzing during our 24th Annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive, and our staff darted hither and thither just to keep up! In

addition to coordinating our usual spread of programs and services that operate year-round, we take on a number of additional tasks during the months of November and December to facilitate our largest and most comprehensive food and fund drive effort of the year. We increase the number of households we serve in our Choice Pantry to accommodate the extra community demand and provide additional bonus holiday food items to households. We distribute and collect food donation barrels throughout the county and recruit extra volunteers to help sort all incoming food. The Eureka warehouse bustled with activity, with volunteers and staff helping to sort the tens of thousands of pounds of food donations brought in from hundreds of businesses, organizations, schools, and individuals throughout our communities. The tremendous



Food for People's Operations Manager, Tim Crosby, shows off some holiday donations.

Through the Lens of Direct Service

By Deborah Waxman, Director of Programs

Food for People is always open to trying new ideas, whether it is adjusting our style of service delivery in one of our programs, adding innovative programs and projects, or self-reflecting on how we can continually be better. We work on a number of these things simultaneously at any given point in time, and have specifically brought focus in the last several months to the concept of customer service, in order to improve the food bank experience for our clients (and also our volunteers, donors, and staff). As a group, we have

incorporated customer service trainings into our monthly staff meetings. In part, this means continually looking at the Food for People experience through the eyes of our clients, volunteers, and donors, and making sure it is respectful, kind, and welcoming. These are just some of the values through which we fulfil our mission.

As an added component to customer service training at monthly staff meetings, staff who do not ordinarily work with clients and/or volunteers on a daily basis are encouraged

to sign up for a "direct service shift," and staff who do regularly work in direct service are welcomed to work a shift in a different program, to observe the client and/or volunteer experience through a different lens.

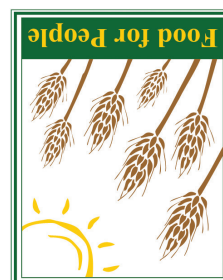
Some of my direct service shifts are performed in our on-site Choice Pantry, as a client intake interviewer. I learn a lot through direct service, and I meet incredibly kind people from many walks of

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We feel it's important to keep you updated on our programs, policy work, and the progress we are making at the food bank.

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE A NEWSLETTER, please don't hesitate to contact us and have your name removed from our newsletter mailing list.



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Direct Service *Continued from page 1*

life. To highlight just a few, this winter I met a grandmother on a fixed SSI income, who is not only raising her children (ranging from high school to adult) in her home, but also her grandchildren. To frame the struggles of SSI recipients; the current maximum award for an individual receiving SSI is \$895. When you take into account that the current fair market value for a one bedroom apartment in Humboldt County is \$748, very little is left after rent for essentials like utilities, transportation, or food. In the face of some devastating challenges and circumstances in her family's year, this grandmother still operates from a place of kindness and deep love for her family and the world around her.

I met a senior gentleman back in November who was so excited to be here for a Thanksgiving turkey and the accompanying holiday side dish ingredients. He lives alone, in a very remote community. He

has extended family in Eureka, who also live in poverty, and he was overjoyed about hosting Thanksgiving for them at his house this year. He shared that one of the things he was most excited about is that he has a safe space for his little nieces and nephews to ride their bicycles and tricycles, which they don't get to ride often in Eureka because the neighborhood where they live is not safe for it.

In a given day as an intake interviewer, we talk knee replacements, holidays, parent-teacher conferences, raising kids, high school graduation, and doctor appointments. I meet kind people who are facing unique personal challenges - one of which is food insecurity - in addition to regular life occurrences many of us can relate to, and sometimes ones that are incredibly difficult and heartbreaking. Our staff and volunteers are here to listen and be a kind, supportive place for any household that needs

us. I am so appreciative of our volunteers and staff who engage in direct service to our clients on a daily basis and continually exercise the art of listening and the gift of compassion.

As I was passing through the Choice Pantry recently, I froze watching one of our staff help a family shop through the pantry. Three young, elementary school-age children were leading the shopping trip for their father. Their father let them make all of the food choices in each nutritional section of the Choice Pantry, and they excitedly made choices between different types of canned and boxed food items on the shelves, donated by our loving community. To say it's heartbreaking that they do not have enough food at home is an understatement, and I'm sure what their father feels is unimaginable.

What many of us in food banking grapple with constantly is the simultaneous pain and

gratitude surrounding the work. We are grateful to be part of an organization that provides a safe space for all who need help putting food on the table. We are proud that our Choice Pantry does this in a familiar way that lets households make choices for themselves, like one would do in a grocery store, when there are likely so many other aspects of their lives that they don't get choice over. And simultaneously our hearts break, because no child should have to experience hunger. No adult or elder should either. I am grateful that our organization is able to exist in this community, as a knowing partner to the parents who just want to keep life as normal as possible for their children and a friend to all who need help filling their bellies. We carry out our mission every day through the lens of dignity for those we are here to help. Every life we touch has a personal story, and we make no judgments. Thank you for walking alongside us in our mission. 🍀

Backpacks for Kids Highlight: Pine Hill Elementary School

By Carrie Smith, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator



Volunteers Matt Cendejas, of Eureka's Lost Coast Rotaract Club, and his brother Noah pack bags full of kid-friendly food to be delivered to Pine Hill School through the Backpacks for Kids Program.

Pine Hill Elementary School is one of the 32 schools throughout Humboldt County that partner in Food for People's Backpacks for Kids Program. This is a hunger relief program that supplies weekend food bags to children facing food insecurity. Pine Hill currently has 26 students participating in the program. According to 2015-2016 data, Pine Hill has 265 kids enrolled in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Of those, 67.4% qualify for Free and Reduced Price School Meals. Pine Hill School is located on the south side of Eureka and is one of two schools in the South Bay Union School District.

A lot goes into getting these bags of food to the students at Pine Hill each week. Funding for the bags, which costs \$265 per student per year, is raised by Eureka and Old Town Rotary Clubs, Soroptimist of Humboldt Bay, generous support from the Times-Standard and community members and through funds provided by St. Joseph Health's Care for the Poor Grant. Each week the food for all 32 participating schools is purchased and apportioned by the Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator at Food for People. Members of Eureka's Lost Coast Rotaract Club and community volunteers take turns packing the bags for Pine Hill and deliver them directly to the school.

Director of the Pine Hill Family Resource Center, which provides on-site coordination of school based and school-linked services for children and families, oversees the Backpack for the Kids program for the students at both Pine Hill and South Bay Elementary schools. She tells us that the kids are very excited to receive their bags each Friday.

Once the bags are delivered to the school, Deanna and her staff deliver them to the classrooms before they are let out for the day, or take them to the after-school program where they can be picked up. It is truly a group effort, and to think that Food for People is currently serving 560 students with weekend food bags across Humboldt County is pretty incredible!

Anyone can sponsor a child in the Backpacks For Kids program for \$265 for the entire school year. Each sponsorship goes to support a student at one of our partner schools. This donation will make it possible for a child to have breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack each day of the weekend during the school year, ensuring they are well fed and ready to learn when they return to school each week. For more information, contact our Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator Carrie Smith at (707) 445-3166 extension 309 or csmith@foodforpeople.org. 🍀

Deanna Moran, the School Counselor and

Notes from the Director

So What's Next?

By Anne Holcomb, Executive Director

That seems to be the question of the day for so many of us. The major political shifts that have unfolded in just a matter of weeks have created feelings of fear and uncertainty, largely because we don't yet understand what the implications will be for the work that we do or what comes next. One of the toughest aspects of this for me personally has been how to deal with the tone of divisiveness reflected in the conversations about who we are, who we support and who we won't or don't want to support. The polarization that results doesn't appear to serve anyone well because it makes it harder for us to have the important conversations about the values we hold dear as individuals, as communities, and as a country. And as someone who has been through many political swings over the course of my lifetime, I know that polarizing rhetoric from either side rarely advances

helpful dialogue or leads to positive solutions.

When I put this into the context of the many people who are struggling financially, the people we see and work with every day, I think about what they need to hear from us that will be reassuring. What do I need to hear from my friends, neighbors, and community that reassures me that my life matters as a growing child, as a working family trying to juggle the costs of raising a family, as a person with a disability living on a meager fixed income, or as a senior hoping that my retirement income will be enough to survive? On a very basic level, I need to know that I will have a roof over my head, the food I need to maintain basic health, an affordable health care system that makes it possible for me to access the care I need, and a community in

which I feel safe. And I need to know that we care enough about each other to be willing to stand together and lift each other up in times of adversity.

We will be paying close attention to the changes proposed by the new administration and Congress in the coming months and we are committed to helping them understand what an important role our vital safety net services play in creating healthy, resilient communities. These services go beyond being the "right thing to do" - they also represent a financial investment with long term implications if we decide they are no longer important. We all pay the price when people go hungry or don't have adequate health insurance coverage to help them access needed medical care. We need a strong educational system, jobs that pay living wages and



opportunities to feel included and achieve personal success. If we want our leaders to prioritize wisely, we have to let them know what's important to us.

And that's what we plan to do in the coming months. Our commitment is to stay informed, listen to and learn from each other, stand ready to tell the stories of the people we serve, unite behind the issues that guide our values, and figure out how to address our differences respectfully. We invite you to join us in our efforts.

Anne Holcomb



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

Our Values

- **Integrity** We will demonstrate the highest ethical standards in all interactions.
- **Stewardship:** We will be accountable to all through the efficient and environmentally responsible use of resources.
- **Teamwork:** We will foster cooperation and a sense of empowerment amongst our diverse staff, volunteers, and community partners.
- **Respect:** We will treat all of our relationships with respect.
- **Innovation:** We will continually seek to provide excellent service through the development of new and improved methods to reduce hunger.
- **Empathy, Passion, Empowerment:** We encourage and support the best in ourselves and those we serve and provide opportunities for everyone to participate in fulfilling our mission.

Volunteer Spotlight: Willie Hohl

By Philip Anzada, Volunteer & Direct Services Manager



Willie Hohl

Willie Hohl is one of those guys that you can't help but love. He has donated almost 400 hours of his time to the Food for People warehouse since he started volunteering in July of 2015. Even with his full and part-time jobs, his bowling league, and his classes at College of the Redwoods, Willie somehow still finds time to volunteer with Food for People. Did I mention that he also played on our softball team last summer?

"Willie is an incredibly generous volunteer, who brings a positive attitude that never fails to lift the spirits of those around him," says Dillon Cranston-Cuebas, Warehouse Coordinator at Food for People. "His hard work is appreciated by everyone, and we count ourselves incredibly lucky to have Willie as a part of our Food for People family."

Originally from Nebraska, Willie fell in love with Humboldt County when visiting his family in 2013. He is now

happy to spend any free time that he has with his son, daughter, and three grandchildren. When volunteering at Food for People, Willie immediately demonstrated his strong work ethic and ability to take the lead on whatever is given to him. He regularly helps direct some of the weekend volunteer projects we have on the 2nd Saturday of every month, and he helps train new volunteers on regular warehouse activities. Willie's commitment to the Food for People mission stems from his own need for food resources in the past.

"I found out about Food for People when I came to get free produce at the produce market," said Willie. "It seemed like such a great place to be that I wanted to volunteer!" Well we are sure happy that you did, Willie!



Tributes, Memorials, & Gift Contributions

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

You can 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 and/or honor the memory of someone you love.

If you would like to make a donation in someone's name for a birthday, special event, or holiday, we can do that too! We will let them know a generous donation has been made in their name. Just be sure to include the address of the individual so we can send them a card to let them know about your gift. 🐾

Alice Grotke
Ann Marie Woolley
Anthony Sanger
Antonio Romanini
Betty Barton
Betty Hosterman
Bill Carsner
Bob Fasic
Carol Felter
Connie Hansen
Don Anderson

Alan & Rosalind Meisel
Anne Holcomb
Art of Giving - Rebecca Stauffer
Bailey Brown, KHUM DJ
Barack Obama
Berget Jelane
Beverly Ann Hood
Bruce & Shirley Miner
Carl Meyers
Carla & Paul Kraus
Carolyn
Catherine Cascade & John Mogyey
Chris & Leslie Gross
Doug Biggert
Dr. Boyd
Edith Stein

Dorothy Stringer
Dr. Jack Walsh.
Dr. R. Murray Thomas
Edward N. Pugh
Florence and Harold Mayer
Gerry Hamilton
Goh Hun Kwan & Chun Kim Lien
Helen Pierson
Ivan Veliova
Janis
Jessica Clark

In Memory Of 10/13/16 - 2/7/17

Jo Tyson
Joe Myers
Joseph Waters
Joyce M. Mulligan
Justin Keele
Laurie Wainwright
Lisa Bowes
Lois & Arne Leskinen
Lois Porter
Michael Gompertz
Mr & Mrs Thomas McGee

Norman Ingle
Patricia Loretta Kitt
Ralph Kraus
Ruth Wilson
Scotty Ray Turner
Shirley Burke
Tom Rowe
Weber Family Members
W.J. McFarland

In Honor Of 10/13/16 - 2/7/17

Erika Makino
Gary Falxa
Glenda Hesseltine
Greg Anderson
Heidi and Kevin O'Neil
Isobel & Lillianna Ensminger
Jason S. Hood
Jen & David Kuszmar
Jessica T. Quam
Jesus Christ
Joe Shizak
Joyce Schirmann
Judy Anderson
Karen Hartman
Katy & Mike Yanke
Ken & Troy Dean

Lenny Escarda
Linda & Joe Doody
Lura Winzler
Margaret Lewis
Marny Friedman
Maureen Saunders
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Renner
Nancy and David Mulford.
Nellie Thompson,
Parents Jean & Halford Maninger
Patricia Starr
Paul & Carla Kraus
Paul Kraus on his 56th Birthday
Peggy & Chas Dreyfus
Peggy Leviton
Robertta Nebergall

Rose Ellen Alexander
Sally
Sally Hewitt
Steve Railsback & Margaret Lang
Suellen Lowry
Tazuko Hirano
The Democratic Party
The Dilthey's
The Hastings Family
The Killian Family
The Quiggle Family; Stephen,
Melody & Maya.
The Sterk Family
The Tuck Family
Tim & Susan Needham
Tony & Holly Lucchesi
Willam Martey DMD. MD. 🐾

Senator McGuire's Drop-Off and Donate Event

By Heidi McHugh, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator



Senator McGuire and his team pose with volunteers and Food for People staff after loading up all of the donations from the Humboldt Holiday Food Drive Showdown.

Food for People's 24th Annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive received an extra boost this year thanks to our State Senator, Mike McGuire, and three local high schools. The Senator has been a passionate advocate for reducing poverty and increasing health since

his election in 2014. Food for People was thrilled when his staff contacted us about contributing to our annual effort to stock the shelves during the busy holiday season and into the winter months.

Senator McGuire's Humboldt Holiday Food Drive Showdown encouraged students at Eureka, Arcata, and McKinleyville high schools to compete to see which school could collect the most food. The winner, Eureka High School, received the Golden Can Award Senator McGuire made especially for this event and will receive \$750 towards its next school dance.

The schools brought their donations to the Drop-Off and Donate Event that was held on December 14th, 2016 at the Eureka Safeway. Community members were also encouraged to drive by and donate non-perishable food and financial donations during the evening's event. Despite the rainy, cold weather, the community came out in force to show support for our efforts to reduce food insecurity in Humboldt County. Local radio station KSLG broadcasted live from the event with great music and promotion of the food drive. KHUM and the Point also provided coverage to help promote the event.

Combined the schools and the community donated 3,154 pounds of food and \$778 to Food for People. Safeway generously donated an additional \$1,000. The high spirits and positive energy of the students, Senator and his staff, and all who joined us was a reminder of the amazing community we are blessed to be part of. We look forward to this new annual tradition! 🐾

The North Coast Co-op's Share the Spirit camping raises \$17,273.51 for Food for People!



Food for People would like to thank all our friends at the North Coast Co-op and all the wonderful community members who contributed to make this year's Share the Spirit Campaign a success!

24th Annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive *Continued from page 1*

outpouring of support from so many groups was extraordinary, bringing in over 85,000 pounds of food – a new record! – to help feed our friends and neighbors in need, not just during the holidays, but through the winter months as well. We can't do it alone, and we are truly grateful for all the folks like you who share our vision and have pitched in to help throughout the county.

Once again, the Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California officially kicked off our holiday season with their annual Cowboy Canned Food Convoy in mid-November. Horses and their riders trekked through Old Town Eureka with saddlebags full of nonperishable food to be donated to the food bank, exciting on-lookers and passers-by, who enjoyed feeding apples to the horses while the food was unloaded at Food for People's Old Town warehouse.

The Backcountry Horsemen were one of 50 Hunger Fighter teams participating in this year's Challenge to raise the most food and funds possible, making up a critical component of our Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive efforts each season. Most previous Hunger Fighter teams returned again this season, and we also welcomed some new teams this year, adding energy and enthusiasm. More information about our annual Hunger Fighter Challenge including a list of participating teams and Challenge

winners can be found on pages 6 and 7 in this newsletter.

In addition to our Hunger Fighter teams, a plethora of business and organizations hosted their own community food drives and food collection barrels through November and December. Some new donors got involved, and many faithful supporters returned. Some put on one-time events; others hosted a food collection barrel over a period of time. The Bayside Grange once again collected nonperishable food items as the price of admission to their annual Holiday Handmade Makers Fair. Redwood Community Action Agency held a mini competition between internal departments to see who among their employees could raise the most food and funds for the food bank. Sushi Spot in Arcata collected nonperishable food donations during their staff holiday party, and even canvassed local neighborhoods to collect additional donations. Northern California Community Blood Bank encouraged food donations by raffling off a prize basket to staff who collected the most food. Eureka Brake & Automotive hosted their own impressive food drive once again this season, as did the Adorni Center, Eureka Women's Club, Humboldt Light Opera Company, State Compensation Insurance Fund, Garfield School, Jambalaya and many others. These are just a few of the ways in which generous people in our community stepped up to get

involved this holiday season.

A particularly fun and unique food drive and fundraising event was put on by The Shop, a local surf shop located in Arcata. Owner Chris Johnson and his staff host an annual surfing competition to benefit various local nonprofits, and this season they decided to support Food for People by collecting nonperishable food and funds to be donated to the food bank.

On top of these community-based efforts, a fleet of Food for People's food collection barrels and boxes were placed at our regular slew of holiday drop-sites throughout the county, including grocery stores, banks and other local organizations. These annual drop site locations were listed on our holiday food donation bags that were distributed with the Times-Standard during the week of Thanksgiving, making it easy for people to donate nonperishable items wherever and whenever it was convenient for them. Thanks to all the wonderful business and organizations that hosted our drop site collection efforts. We would also like to express immense gratitude to our wonderful event sponsors who make the Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive possible year after year. A full list for our drop sites and event sponsors can be found on pages 10 and 11 in this newsletter.

And what would Food for People's Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive be without the ever-delightful and highly anticipated KHUM on-air food and fund drive week? Each year, Food for People staff join the enthusiastic and fun-loving KHUM DJ's for live broadcasts at various grocery stores throughout the county to highlight our food and fund drive and discuss how



Top: The Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen parades through the streets of Old Town Eureka for the Cowboy Canned Food Convoy. **Below:** Food for People staff members talk live on air with KHUM DJ Amy Berkowitz and Carpathian during KHUM's week long On-Air Holiday Food Drive.

our work addresses needs in our community. Like other efforts this season, the KHUM drive was a success, bringing in thousands of dollars and pounds to support Food for People's work. Some store managers helped encourage donations themselves during the drive, donating additional food products to beat earlier goals, donating register round-up totals to the cause, and matching donations made by other generous community members. Thanks to the Northcoast Co-op, Wildberries Marketplace, Fortuna Grocery Outlet, and Eureka Natural Foods in McKinleyville and Eureka for hosting the broadcasts and encouraging donations. Thanks also to KHUM DJs Cliff, Amy, Bayley and Larry - not only for motivating listeners - but for their ongoing dedication and support of Food for People.

Beyond these events and larger coordinated efforts, hundreds of generous families and individuals donated food and stopped by our facilities to drop off holiday turkeys and hams, produce, nonperishable items, and more.

Finally, it would not have been possible to collect, sort and distribute the tens of thousands of pounds of food donated throughout the county during this year's holiday season without the help of our very dedicated

volunteers and county-wide network of pantry coordinators. From helping with weekly barrel pick ups from over a hundred drop site locations, to tracking, sorting, packing and stocking food donations, Food for People relies on volunteers and our network of pantries to get the job done. All donations collected in each community went to pantries located in that community.

In the end, Food for People's 24th annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive was wonderfully successful and helped bring in the vital resources necessary for us to serve our communities and work to achieve our mission. Reflecting on the enormous scope of what we set out to accomplish each holiday season is humbling. It inspires deep gratitude for the people and communities whose compassion and generosity make our work possible. We cannot pull it off without the support of thousands of donors, volunteers, advocates, allies, and supporters like you. By donating a can, a dollar, or an hour, community members like you have made a real difference in the lives of Humboldt County's most vulnerable residents this holiday season. Thank you for being part of the solution, and may you have a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2017! 🍀





This year's Hunger Fighter teams were truly champions, bringing in 10,021 pounds and \$4,988.60 during Food for People's 24th annual Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive. Many of our previous teams returned this season, and a few new teams joined as well. In all, 50 different teams participated in this annual effort to raise the most food and funds possible during the holidays to help our friends and neighbors in need.

Our Hunger Fighter teams were enthusiastic about the cause and had lots of creative ideas and ways to collect food and monetary donations throughout the community this season. Some groups hosted special events and offered incentives for teammates to donate. Other groups distributed food drive information, donations bags, and donation envelopes to their employees or other community members. Team leaders regularly communicated with

Thank you all for a successful

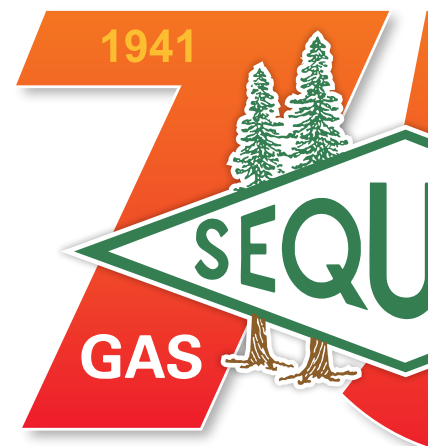
their teammates, sending out shopping guides of most needed foods, progress updates on donations, and tips to keep everyone motivated.

For example, Six Rivers Charter High School put in another tremendous effort this season to raise food and funds through the Hunger Fighter Challenge. Each grade competed to bring in the most donations, and teachers even got into the fun, pledging to provide a pizza party if their class made the goal. Dell'Arte International collected nonperishable food donations during their annual holiday show tour, as they do every year, bringing in over 1,300 pounds from multiple communities throughout the county and beyond!

The YES House at Humboldt State University put together a creative and comprehensive effort this year to collect food donations from the residential



Gold Star Hunger



"MAINLY BEYOND"



SIX RIVERS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL



al Hunger Fighter Challenge!

community surrounding HSU. With guidance from YES House coordinator Melea Smith, students spearheaded efforts to distribute food donation bags to residences and returned later to collect filled bags.

That's not all! Union Street Charter School conducted a food drive during the last week of school before the holiday break, and has been doing so for years, tying in lessons about food insecurity and hunger with the act of collecting food to help those in need. The wonderful folks at St. Joseph Health collected lots of donations with participation from five different sites this season. Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center added additional sites to the challenge as well, increasing their totals. And we can always count on our partners at various Department of Health & Human Services departments to pitch in enthusiastically and help out.

Two newcomers to the Challenge made a big splash this year. Hunter, Hunter & Hunt, LLP invited Food for People staff to come speak about our work at a company meeting, and they generously donated food and funds to support the cause when they heard about our commitment to dignity and respect for all the people we serve. The North Coast Regional Department of Child Support Services was likewise supportive, requiring several pickup trips just to collect all the donations! These are just some of the fun and creative ways the amazing folks in our communities stepped up to support our work and help our friends and neighbors this holiday season. Thank you to all of our teams and to everyone who participated this season to help make our Hunger Fighter Challenge so successful! ~

Heindon Road Federal Building



er Fighter Teams



Small Acts: Aiding Seniors & Homebound Individuals in Our Community

By Nick Gauger, Community Food Programs Coordinator



Food for People's Community Food Programs Coordinator, Nick Gauger, signs in clients during a senior day distribution in our Eureka warehouse.

The cold and wet had taken its toll - perhaps the lack of sleep as well. His face looked different; it was puffy and the eyes had lost some sparkle. A resolve that was once there has faded. He stood stoic as the man in front told a tale about boats, past presidents, and conspiracies too grand for comment. I just said, "Hmm.... I did not know that." The stocky man stepped forward and I noticed his large hands were swollen as well, fire red, not cooled by the rain that continued to fall. He signed the paper as his eyes flitted from side to side. The ink ran down the paper as he spoke. "I am sick of this all. I am just done with it." The despair in his voice touched me, and I looked through what I had with me for anything of comfort I could give him. Then the woman behind him reached into her bag and produced a pair of wool socks. He was happy for this and thanked her. It would help.

The rain continues to pelt today as I write, and the wind blows. I hope that kindness continues to be important to us, that we are able to share what we have with those who have less, and that we are able to feel and comprehend our commonality. Sometimes something as simple as food or a pair of socks can be a bright spot in an overwhelming world.

Food for People's Community Food Programs strive to provide support and nutrition to seniors and those with disabilities or debilitating illnesses in Humboldt County, ensuring that some of the most vulnerable members of our community have access to healthy foods to help them make it from month to month.

Last year, 8,316 food boxes were distributed to seniors and individuals who are homebound due to disability through our Senior and Homebound Programs. This would not be possible without our team of dedicated volunteers who help pack bags of food or deliver them to seniors and homebound individuals each month in Bridgeville, Eureka, Fortuna, Loleta, Manila, Arcata, McKinleyville, Rio Dell and Trinidad. We are currently in need of volunteers to help support these vital programs. If you would be interested in volunteering, please contact our Volunteer & Direct Services Manager, Philip Anzada, at volunteer@foodforpeople.org or (707) 445-3166 extension 310. ♡

We All Stand to Lose When the Safety Net is Threatened

By Heidi McHugh, Community Outreach and Education Coordinator

This past summer I helped a young mother, Sara, navigate our Eureka Choice Pantry. She had her hands full with her four children, ages two to seven. Sara's husband works locally to support the family. His paycheck and their housing are provided though his work, leaving her to stay at home with the kids, as the cost of childcare for their two toddlers (and all four when school is out) would exceed the income she would bring home if she worked. Even with the burden of housing costs removed, when all of her family's bills are paid, they find they are short of money needed for food. So they come to the food bank. I was able to help her successfully apply for CalFresh that day, and this young family now has an extra \$250 to spend on food each month.

Thanks to Medi-Cal (California's name for Medicaid), the whole family has access to preventative health care and knows that they would be covered in case there is ever a more catastrophic health need. I felt good knowing the difference the CalFresh money would make for this family. I was reassured that this family doesn't have to avoid regular health check-ups that can identify potential health problems before they become difficult to manage. But now I fear this family may lose the reassurance that nutrition assistance and medical coverage provides them and millions of other Americans. Even though my family does not qualify for these means-tested programs, I know that we will also face uncertainties if our new Congress makes good on its threats to Safety Net programs like the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, CalFresh in California). The benefits of the Safety Net don't end with Sara's family. They benefit all of us, by reducing the effects of poverty in our communities and bringing money and jobs to our local economy.

As the 115th Congress works at a breakneck pace to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), **there are legitimate concerns about the potential economic impacts of repeal without a concrete replacement plan.** A joint

report from the Commonwealth Fund and George Washington University's Milken Institute of Public Health estimates that **repeal of the ACA will result in the loss of 3 million jobs by 2021 and a loss of \$48 billion in tax revenues.** According to U.C. Berkeley, California would lose 209,000 jobs and \$20 billion in lost production of goods and services. The bipartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates the cost of repealing the provisions, taxes, and Medicaid expansion alone will cost \$350 billion; this estimate does not include the cost of a replacement plan. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently released estimates that the ACA repeal will result in the loss of insurance for 18 million Americans in the first year, increasing to 32 million by 2026.

The ACA's Medicaid expansion has insured more than 18,000 adults in Humboldt County. More than 5,000 adults are receiving subsidies. The number of insured Humboldt County residents increased by 54% between 2013 and 2015 (UCLA/UC Berkely). The mandate to be insured, which creates a pool of healthy participants whose premiums help cover the cost of those who are ill and keeps premiums down for everyone, may also be repealed. As a result, the CBO estimates that premiums for those with individual policies will increase by 20% to 25% in the first year, and up to 50% by 2026.

While the economic consequences of repealing the ACA concern me greatly, the potential setbacks it brings to the fight against food insecurity, on top of threats to federal nutrition assistance programs, **has food banks and health care providers bracing for an avalanche of need that we cannot possibly dig out from under.** Bread for the World's 2016 Hunger Report says the **United States spends \$160 billion annually in healthcare costs resulting from food insecurity.** One in seven Americans are food insecure, meaning they do not have reliable access to nutritious foods and adequate caloric intake. This can cause and exacerbate hypertension,

obesity, and diabetes in adults and children. Food insecure children are at increased risk for asthma, anemia, and mental or behavioral disorders. According to the report food insecurity increases the chance of being a "high cost user of health care" by 50% after five years. The ACA mandates that nonprofit hospitals conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan every three years. This mandate is helping communities document the connection between hunger, health outcomes, and the costs of care. This information is then used at the local level to determine the areas of greatest need and the best means of addressing the root of the problem of food insecurity, while improving health outcomes and reducing the costs of care.

If we were spending \$160 billion annually to treat health issues stemming from hunger under the ACA, what happens to that price tag when 18 million people lose their insurance and access to preventative care in the first year of the ACA repeal? The outrageous \$160 billion healthcare price tag and the unacceptably high rate of food insecurity in Americans is also occurring while other important Safety Net programs like SNAP are still able to respond to the large number of American households, like Sara's, who struggle to put food on the table. Currently, health care costs account for 24% of federal spending while food assistance accounts for 3% (Bread for the World). While the 115th Congress has yet to move on to changes the SNAP program, plans that propose cutting SNAP and Medicaid by \$10 trillion have anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocates feeling anxious. One of the proposals for making the cuts is to convert these programs to block grants.

As a program that guarantees benefits to anyone who qualifies, SNAP was able to respond appropriately to the need created by the Great Recession. If it was block granted, states would have had the same amount of funding for SNAP during the recession as they had before the recession, meaning there would have been

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Know Your Farmer - Kevin & Melanie Cunningham, Shakefork Community Farm

By Liz Nagle, Local Food Resources Intern



Kevin and Melanie Cunningham with their son at Shakefork Community Farm. Photo by Shane Earnest.

“Over, Fork Over,” are the family’s words that led to the name “Shakefork,” derived from the Cunninghams’ rich Scottish heritage. The shakefork, an ancient agrarian pitchfork, was used for moving hay, hence the motto “over, fork over.” Now the shakefork, a proud symbol of Cunningham lineage, is not only a representation of family. It depicts the commitment

and fortitude of the Cunninghams that has given shape to Shakefork Community Farm.

Shakefork Community Farm resides in beautiful Carlotta and so do the farmers and owners, Kevin and Melanie Cunningham. It is apparent upon first glance that this farm is so much more than a farm. It is a homestead, drawing its roots

from years of hard work coupled with building a family. Now, a nearly indiscernible boundary exists between the two. As I walk along with Melanie at her farm, on a breezy September morning, she fills in the gaps in my knowledge of farm life and explains how Shakefork Community Farm came to be.

The parcel of land that Shakefork Community Farm sits on appears deceptively fertile. “We don’t have the rich organic valley soil that other farms do,” claims Melanie, which has resulted in a “trial by fire” approach at farming in Carlotta. When the Cunninghams relocated their farm from leased land in Arcata back in 2008, they saw the prospect of farming in Carlotta as promising. At that time, Shakefork was primarily a grain-producing farm and the wide-open areas of flat land looked attractive for cultivation. Fast-forward seven years to present day Shakefork operations, and the farm has diversified immensely. The rocky quality of the soil in Carlotta has been a primary driving factor in shifting production and passions at Shakefork Community Farm. Of the 85 acres of Shakefork Community Farm, 45 are currently being farmed. “It has been a steep learning curve, in struggling to do what’s good for the land,” says Melanie, but the Cunninghams are making it work.

Over the years the couple has been working hard on transforming the rocky sediment and building soil through the use of composting, cover cropping and rotation (all entirely organic methods). And it’s paying off. Since the farm’s settlement at its current location, its CSA distribution has increased from 15 families to 120. And get this—they’ve done it on less land. Kevin and Melanie Cunningham have halved the size of their organic produce garden from 12 acres to only six. The couple admits that they wouldn’t be able to do this if they weren’t flexible in not only changing what they wanted to farm but also how they farmed. Over the first couple of years at the farm’s new home, it became obvious to the Cunninghams that grain was not the most practical crop to farm in the land’s natural floodplain. The feasibility and desire to grow grains began to fade out, but in its place sprouted new avenues of interest including Shakefork Community Farm’s emerging livestock.

30 acres of Shakefork Community Farm are dedicated to impermanent grazing by the farm’s poultry, sheep and cattle. When I visited

I had the pleasure of being able to see the turkeys that the Cunninghams provide fresh for Thanksgiving dinner. In addition to the turkeys, 100% organic-fed and pasture-raised meat chickens are another product that Shakefork Community Farm offers year-round. The farm also aims to fulfill an egg demand that it simply cannot keep up with. Perhaps the most fascinating element of the Cunninghams’ farm is the cattle and oxen. These animals have been a huge part in transforming the landscape and developing it into something more productive.

Overseeing the dairy cows and oxen has been the job and affinity of Kevin Cunningham. The oxen and dairy cows play an indispensable role at the farm. Their manure provides the foundation of building fertile soils. The dairy cows provide milk products (including ghee) for the family’s personal use as well as a small amount that goes to retail. Both provide meat for personal consumption which the Cunninghams hope to be able to bring to market one day. The oxen provide much of the labor for amending the soil, as well as the harvesting and planting needs for the farms crops. The importance that the cattle have at Shakefork Community Farm has evolved the way that the Cunninghams farm. Eventually—Melanie thinks in about five years—the farm will have a 10-head beef herd. Until then, the Cunninghams are comfortably content with the direction that their farm is growing.

Shakefork Community Farm not only contracts with Food for People through the Locally Delicious Fund, they donate too. Melanie says that she gives to Food for People because she hates to see food go to waste and wants to “broaden the reach of organic food.” She also recognizes the food bank as “a great way to be able to get Shakefork Community Farm’s produce out into a wider community of people that could benefit from it.” At Food for People, we thank Kevin and Melanie Cunningham for their continued generosity in giving to the food bank their commitment to supply the local community with fresh, nutritious and organic products. 🍌

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no relief in the form of nutrition assistance for the tens of millions of people who suddenly found themselves with reduced or no income. Even with the expansion of SNAP during the recession, food banks were overwhelmed by the increase in requests for assistance. And we remain so, despite the post-recession drop in unemployment, because the high-quality jobs that were lost were largely replaced by jobs that don’t offer as much pay or full-time hours. The Congressional Budget Office has noted that there is historically a “substantial lag” between improvements in economic conditions and a drop in SNAP participation after those conditions improve. Bread for the World reported that “federal nutrition programs delivered 20 times the amount of food as private charities in 2013.” Close to 40% of Food for People’s clients are currently utilizing SNAP, and they still need to visit

the food bank. We can’t possibly absorb more cuts to SNAP.

Just like the ACA repeal, a massive cut to SNAP will also have consequences for our economy. Humboldt County currently receives roughly \$36 million in federal dollars from the SNAP program annually, to help low-income families put food on the table. These federal benefits carry an associated multiplier effect as they generate economic activity when spent at local retailers and drive the need for the retailers to hire staff. **Every federal dollar generates \$1.79 in economic activity. That \$36 million Humboldt County receives becomes \$61 million.** The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities states that SNAP brought \$7.5 billion into California’s economy in 2015 and generated 14,000 jobs.

We have so much to lose when the Safety Net is threatened.

There is a direct impact on health when taking food and health care away from those who struggle to lift themselves out of poverty. These programs are an important piece of our economy and the well-being of our communities. We also stand to lose jobs. Hunger can have lifelong consequences, and federal programs play a vital role in combating this. Food for People will keep a close eye on Congress as this session unfolds, and we will not be silent about the threats to our clients and our community. Please join us in this effort by contacting your state and federal representatives about these issues. You can find information at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>. Share these facts with your friends and neighbors so that they understand just how much is at stake. 🍌

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You Can't Chiffonade a Carrot: Life and Kitchen Lessons Start Young

By Heather King, CalFresh Nutrition Education Coordinator

"After your mise en place, please chiffonade the basil."

It was the third week of the pilot nutrition program in Fortuna, a collaboration among Food For People's Nutrition Education Program, a local middle school aftercare program and one of Food for People's star volunteers, Anne Harris. Anne - an experienced culinary instructor and gourmet chef - had already taught the group of 10-to-12-year-olds how to portion out all the ingredients before cooking (mise en place) and make a particular cut by rolling and slicing leaves (chiffonade). Most of the students looked up, nodded and went to work with purpose. I just had to shake my head and smile. The master at work. Anne has a special passion for making quality food accessible and teaching others life enriching culinary skills. "You may not choose to be a chef," she told the middle schoolers on the first day, "but I can guarantee learning how to cook will improve your life and give you job opportunities later."

Over the last several months, I have had many conversations with Anne, local social workers, after school program instructors, and other professionals involved in

nutrition education. We all agreed that nutrition education is more than just informing the public about healthy foods and what's in them. It's also about encouraging clients to interact with food and build the skills necessary to prepare it. A beautiful, garden-fresh bunch of basil only does so much good if the person getting it isn't sure what to do with it.

Anne was not only teaching culinary skills to youth via a thoughtfully crafted, tiered curriculum, but she was building a quality essential to surviving adolescence: confidence in oneself. The students' backs stood a little straighter and their heads nodded just a little more confidently than they had a few weeks prior. They knew what 'mise en place' and 'chiffonade' meant. They knew how to properly hold a knife and follow a recipe from beginning to end. They knew the safety and health rules that must be followed **without exception**. They knew that, at the end of the day, they were going to produce something delicious. And for some of these children - particularly, perhaps, for those who had not yet discovered what they were really good at - Anne was giving them a chance to learn something



Anne Harris teaches cooking techniques in the North Coast Co-op Community Kitchen in Eureka.

on a level they may not otherwise have the opportunity to do for several more years. She treated her class like young, emerging pre-professionals with all the ability in the world to take on a kitchen

down the road. The students felt that and rose to the occasion.

"You can't chiffonade a carrot! Oh my gosh, you're so silly," said one girl, laughing hysterically. An

eruption of giggles burst from the far corner of the room, where one group of students was finishing basil preparations. I had to smile again. How silly indeed. 🐾

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