



# Food Notes

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

Spring Issue, 2012



## How Many Calories in a Veggie Mandala?

Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director

The creative process is a curious thing. It starts out with an idea which is then shared by others and before you know it, you've scheduled two art shows.

Well, at least that is what happened in this instance. Holly Krebs, local artist and co-owner of Flood Plain Produce, designed a Veggie Mandala which she has printed on canvases and invited local artists to complete. This project will be a fundraising benefit for Food for People. The completed works will make a first time appearance this June at the Ink Annex, the Ink People's new studio in Old Town Eureka, located at 47B West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Join us for the June Arts Alive! or swing by the Ink Annex during the month of June. Some of the artists participating include April Sproule, Textile Artist; Elaine Gredassoff, Watercolor Artist; Jennifer Mackey, Textile Artist and Painter; Patty Demant, Fiber Artist; and Carolyn Furman, Mixed Media

Artist, all of whom were present at a recent meeting for this project, where works in progress were displayed.

An important and fun part of this creative project is the participation of local school children, who will be completing versions of the design printed on paper. Scotia Elementary School was awarded a nutrition grant earlier this year and part of the grant will be used for working on the mandalas. Children at some of the partnering schools for our After School Snack Program are also completing their individual works of veggie art. The final shows will include the works of local artists side by side with the completed works of local school children.

**Local artists and assorted creative souls are invited to join in the fun using their medium of choice to complete their own Veggie Mandala!** There will be a final show in January 2013 at the Eureka Los Bagels, where all

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Hunger doesn't take a summer vacation! Our Children's Summer Lunch Program provides a sack of healthy, nutritious food for local children. Above photo shows children enjoying their lunch last summer at Camp Carson.



## Children's Summer Lunch Coming Soon

Niki Gribi, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator

Summer is right around the corner! With just one month left in the school year, we are once again gearing up for our Children's Summer Lunch program. This summer will mark our 16<sup>th</sup> year providing free lunches to kids across the county, all summer long.

In Humboldt County, nearly 6,000 children eat free or reduced-cost lunches at school every day. Kids rely on those meals for nourishment, and their families count on them, particularly during difficult economic times. The last few years have not been kind to working families. Layoffs, foreclo-

tures, high gas prices and fewer job availabilities mean more people in our community struggling to make ends meet. Even for those lucky enough to have steady work, rising food prices make it difficult to provide enough on a tight budget. At the food bank, we see the results of this economic downturn every day: more and more hungry people asking for help. In fact, just last summer we distributed more than 16,000 lunches - more than ever in the history of the program.

For families with children, the summer can be a particularly tough time. For one thing, young children must be cared for during the day, adding daycare or

summer camp costs to the family budget. For another, school meals are not provided during summer. Parents have to come up with the money and time to provide at least 5 extra meals a week for each of their children. And, often that extra money simply isn't there. After paying rent, utilities, and gas to get to work, there may not be much left over. And how about the family that finds itself living in a car? Imagine preparing three square meals a day for your children without a kitchen! These are the heart-breaking realities of life for some people in our community.

Our Summer Lunch program reaches out a helping hand to

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**Food For People, Inc.**  
The Food Bank for Humboldt County  
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### In This Issue

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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.

## Inside View of our Senior Programs

Christopher Smiley, Community Foods Program Coordinator



Humboldt County can be a very isolated place at times. Geographically and culturally, our little part of Northern California maintains a unique kind of independence from the outside world. Generally, people here take care of themselves and those around them, but there are those who do not have the support they need to make ends meet. Some do not have a family to look out for them or a network of friends to help when social safety net programs aren't enough. Senior citizens make up a large portion of this group. The same independence and isolation that gives much of Humboldt County its character and strength makes challenges and obstacles for much of our elderly population.

Lack of mobility and public transportation, coupled with a meager Social Security income, makes everyday life for most senior citizens a

constant struggle and every helping hand, no matter how small, can make a world of difference. How some in our communities are able to get by on so little is nothing short of a miracle. And for most, every little bit of assistance they get, no matter how small, can seem like a miracle too. Yet in the face of so much poverty and isolation, you'd be surprised how many times a volunteer or employee at the food bank hears, "You should save this food for someone else that needs it more than I do."

Many of our seniors are widows and widowers without close family and friends. Too often, people work hard their whole lives to make a living and raise their families, only to find themselves in positions where just supporting themselves is almost impossible. A long, hard-working lifestyle makes it difficult for some to reach out for help and many suffer, silently unaware of the assistance available to them. This is when community members most need to reach out to fellow Humboldt County citizens. No

amount of outreach from the food bank can compare to information from those in the community who have a neighbor or relative suffering from hunger. These are our parents and grandparents, our teachers and mill workers, our fishermen and health workers who created the Humboldt County that we live in today. They don't ask for rewards, and in addition to this, it is our duty to help care for our elders who made our lives possible. We have the resources to help - we just need to make the connection with those that need it.

We currently serve 750 elderly and homebound clients every month on top of the 2,500 that come through our Choice Pantry. In addition, food is shipped to remote locations all over the county reaching more than 6,000 people each month. Dozens of delivery drivers bring food to hundreds of homebound clients spanning from Orick to Redway every month. Local community members and businesses donate a large amount of the food that goes into our Homebound and Senior Brown Bags. Food for People exists to provide as much as possible for all those in our community that need help to make ends meet, including senior and homebound citizens. Like many non-profits, Food for People exists because of local donations and volunteers from the same communities we serve. Together, we can provide for those that provided for us and make our community better for everyone.



Conrad Weingold and Mary Rist ham it up by the Food for People van in the photos above. Edith Blake poses with Jorge Hidalgo (one of our seniors featured in our previous newsletter) in photo on the right. Edith and Conrad participate in our Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Mary picks up CSFP food for her mother and volunteers in the McKinleyville pantry.

## Children's Summer Lunch Coming Soon

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those children in need. With the help of all of our partners, we provide nutritious meals, every day of the summer, all across the county, for free. We will, once again, partner with the Humboldt Senior Resource Center staff and volunteers who prepare hundreds of healthy, delicious sack lunches for the program every day. We will also continue to partner with our many

sites including Boys and Girls Clubs, Parks and Recreation programs and Family and Community Resource Centers. Last summer, we sponsored 21 sites from McKinleyville to Willow Creek and down to Redway, and we hope to do the same this summer. Humboldt Transit Authority and UPS have been long-time partners, generously helping to transport

lunches all over the county. All these folks, and all of you who give to support Summer Lunch, make it possible for us to feed hungry children during the summer months.

So as we prepare for a fast-paced 10 weeks of packing coolers and handing out sack lunches, we'll be thinking grateful thoughts for all of our collaborators. The Children's Summer Lunch pro-

gram will run from June 18<sup>th</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup> this year. Please look for fliers in your community and visit our website in early June for a list of sites at [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org). If you have questions, would like to volunteer, or would like to give to the program, please contact Niki Gribi at 445-3166 x309 or [ngribi@foodforpeople.org](mailto:ngribi@foodforpeople.org). Thank you!



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# Notes from the Director

## The Real Hunger Games

By Anne Holcomb



The Hunger Games struck a chord for me. Following the suggestion of my two older grandchildren, I went to see the Hunger Games recently after first reading the three book series. The storyline is about a futuristic dystopian society struggling to feed itself. According to Wikipedia's description, "It is written in the voice of a 16-year-old who lives in a post-apocalyptic world in the country of Panem where the countries of North America once existed. The Capital, a highly advanced metropolis, holds hegemony over the rest of the nation. The Hunger Games are an annual event in which one boy and one girl aged 12 to 18 from each of the 12 districts surrounding the Capitol are selected by lottery to compete in a televised battle until only one person is left." The subject matter obviously captured my interest as I wanted to learn more about how this story, which was written for young adult readers, would tackle the subject of hunger within the context of a technologically advanced, futuristic culture. What I came to understand was that the plight of the characters portrayed in the book was not necessarily all that futuristic.

The book provides a picture of a community in which hunger is commonplace. People are forced to ration what little bit of food they have and live in fear that they will not be able to feed their families. The hunger pangs and the resulting physical weakness, which makes it hard for them to work, are part of daily life and the loss of dignity and diminished sense of self worth make it hard for them to imagine a brighter future. Unfortunately, this

"story" is all too familiar.

Access to food is absolutely essential to support life and health. When we don't have enough to eat, it can trigger a wide range of physical and emotional reactions. Physically, we feel lethargic, weak and dizzy and in extreme cases, as reported by children who regularly experience hunger, there is often stomach pain. Mentally it can trigger apathy, disorientation and severe depression. The book in particular got that part right. It showed quite accurately the sense of desperation that long term hunger can have on a family and a community; it is hard to imagine a better tomorrow when the troubles of today are so overwhelming. The book also made reference to the problems that arise when environmental factors influence agricultural productivity, which in turn influence cost and access to food. As I said earlier, this is not necessarily a very futuristic concept. Food prices are rising, making it difficult for low income individuals and households to afford the food they need to stay healthy. And recent experiences with extreme weather events both nationwide and globally have everyone worried about the impact on this year's crops. If they result in scarcity, prices will surely continue to rise, putting more and more children, families, people with disabilities and seniors at risk for hunger.

So given the current state of affairs, I find it almost impossible to understand how Congress can consider cutting \$33 billion - that's billions with a "b" - from the Food Stamp Program. The program is now called SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at the federal level and in California it is referred to as CalFresh, to reflect our state's major role in agriculture and our emphasis on the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Just about every policy wonk imaginable has said that the SNAP program has been the single biggest factor in preventing a further growth of poverty during the recession. It has worked just the way it was intended to work. It has provided families who are struggling

to keep a roof over their heads with the food they need to maintain health. One in four children in our country, the richest nation on earth, is fed by SNAP/CalFresh every single day. How can we possibly consider taking away such a critical resource with so many households still struggling? We can't. And we have to make sure members of Congress understand that.

Some members of Congress have sought to justify the drastic cuts to SNAP/CalFresh by saying that people who are at risk for hunger already have a network of nonprofits they can turn to for assistance. But food banks and other hunger relief programs nationwide, whose resources have already been stretched thin by the extended recession, need less demand not more. We need to keep SNAP/CalFresh benefits in place at current levels until our economy, including food prices, stabilizes. The House just last week passed a version of the Farm Bill that cuts \$33 billion from SNAP and the Senate appears poised to do the same. Hunger is not a game. It's a reality for approximately 49.1 million children, families and seniors living in poverty every single day. Let's make sure our elected officials get that message loud and clear. Nobody wins when we're forced to play the hunger game.



Pantry coordinators and volunteers spent time networking and learning how to enhance their services during the Pantry Summit held recently in April. Speakers, small group discussions, training sessions and good food were all elements contributing to a successful event.

## 2012 Pantry Summit

By Jason Herwin, Pantry Network Coordinator

Our annual Pantry Summit shaped up to be another great event. Each year we bring lead volunteers from our county-wide food pantries together for a day of networking, sharing successes as well as challenges and receiving training on a variety of topics to help enhance services at each individual pantry. We work to identify key areas that can further build the level of service each pantry provides and then develop training at the Pantry Summit to address these areas.

In the morning we reviewed data from a client survey that we conducted in August and September 2011. The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP), our partners on this project, helped facilitate this topic which included a small group breakout session. During this session, participants networked with other pantries to identify ways they can use this data to enhance services at their pantry. We also had quality presentations on community organizing, team building and a "train the trainer" on CalFresh outreach and nutrition education. Look for a follow-up article in our next Food Notes Newsletter detailing more about this day of bringing our pantries together for networking, sharing of experiences and training.



### 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.*





The 800 Club is our regular giving program comprised of community members who donate monthly or quarterly. Why 800? 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 over 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](mailto:harriet@foodforpeople.org).

## Falling in Love By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director

Since I have started working at Food for People, my commitment to the health of our community and our mission has grown in surprising ways. I find myself inspired by the many different scenarios of local people working together to provide healthy food for everyone.

One example involves the Locally Delicious authors who challenged the community to match their donation of \$3,000, and ended up raising over \$8,000. Part of this money was a \$3,000 grant from St. Joseph's Health System Humboldt County and the rest was donated by individuals. The money will purchase locally

raised organic produce and most of it will be included in the food we send out to our seniors on fixed incomes and in need of assistance.

I'm also inspired by the folks who line up hours ahead of time for the produce markets we host in the summer to get quality fresh fruits and vegetables. We hear a lot in the news these days about obesity and the consumption of over-processed, fast food. Given the opportunity, I see lots of people opting for healthy, nutritious food.

Another example comes from one of our Choice Pantry volunteers who has told me stories about people reluctantly taking home one of our recipe cards for

a healthy dish, and then coming back the next month excited to share their success!

I love watching my co-workers (many of whom are much younger than myself) go the extra mile in their work commitment and maintain an attitude of problem solving in their efforts to help others.

Sometimes a donation or a food drive makes a big splash. What most people don't see are the daily donations of funds and food such as the money we received yesterday from a child's lemonade stand or the extra produce someone drops off from their garden or the 800 Club donation we receive from the same people every month. The

giving in our community takes endless forms and there are many of us working together to provide access to healthy, nutritious food.

I am proud to be part of the work we do at Food for People and helping to provide something as basic as healthy food. I am inspired by all the healthy efforts around me and have fallen in love - with our mission, our organization and our community. Hunger is a solvable problem and you are invited to join us at Food for People — find out what you can do to work towards a healthier community and be part of the solution. Together we can accomplish so much!

## Food for People's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Canstruction

By Jason Whitley, Local Foods Resources Coordinator

For the third year in a row, Food for People hosted Canstruction, a one of a kind event that encourages teams to build creative sculptures out of cans of food. This year's teams went above and beyond by collecting more than 2,000 pounds of food for the food bank. Three teams constructed sculptures at Roy's Deli on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at Arts Alive! in Eureka.

Arcata High School's Arcata Arts Institute created an impressive lighthouse and wave complete with a blinking SOS light. The North Coast Co-op created a mosaic reading "Co-ops Rock" from colorful food items. The Lafayette After School Program created a sculpture of their school mascot, a lion, set in a safari scene.

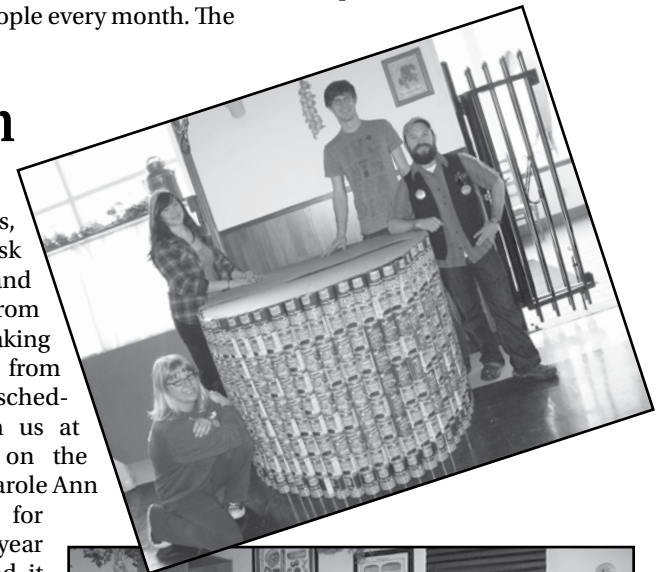
This is the third year in a row that both the Co-op and Lafayette After School have participated in Canstruction. The North Coast Co-op has been a big supporter of the event from the beginning and has sponsored a sculpture each year made of quality organic foods. This year they acquired a sponsorship from Amy's Kitchen, including cases of organic soup and beans. The Co-op goes the extra mile to make sure the food is healthy and nu-

tritious, and for that reason, they won the nutrition award this year. Thanks to Pauli, Nate and Anna for creating art that feeds!

The Lafayette After School Program has also been a supporter of Canstruction from the very beginning. The event has become so popular at Lafayette that even kids who no longer attend the After School Program ask to return to be a part of the build team. These students are involved in a service learning curriculum and regularly contribute to worthy causes beyond Canstruction. This year they went above and beyond, building a sculpture that exceeded one thousand cans and being awarded both the Jurors' Favorite and the People's Choice. After School Coordinator, Catrina Scheffle, worked diligently to acquire sponsorships from Coast Central Credit Union, the Toy Barn, State Farm Insurance and many more. A very special thank you to Catrina and all the children on the Lafayette team!

New to Canstruction this year is the Arcata Arts Institute. A school for advanced arts study within Arcata High School, these students created an impressive lighthouse and seascape sculpture. Led by instructor Anne Bown-Crawford, AAI was sponsored by Pan Dulce Steel Orchestra, Grocery Outlet and Ray's Food Place. This sculpture was voted to have the best structural ingenuity by the judges. Special thanks to our lo-

cal judges, Larry Trask of KHUM and Carole Ann from KWPT, for taking time away from their busy schedules to join us at Arts Alive! on the build day. Carole Ann stepped in for the second year in a row and it meant a lot to have her participation. Larry Trask is a friend and ally of the food bank, and a pleasure to have as a judge. Thank you to our friends at Eureka Main Street for being such fabulous hosts, connecting us with Roy's and helping to organize music for the event. If you would like to learn more about how you could get involved with next year's Canstruction, please contact Jason Whitley at (707) 445-3166 extension 312 or [JWhitley@foodforpeople.org](mailto:JWhitley@foodforpeople.org).



DONATE ONLINE BY GOING TO: [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org)

CLICK ON THE LINK:



Network for Good™



Anne Holcomb, Executive Director of Food for People, receives a check from Suzanne Simpson, one of the Locally Delicious authors, on Live at Five with Betsy Lambert, news director for KIEM Channel 3. The Locally Delicious Fund raised \$8,000, which is being used to contract with nine local farmers to raise organic produce for Food for People's programs.

## Mind, Body, Spirit

By Alison Aldridge, Food for People Board Member

As evidenced by our 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. We envision a community where no one is hungry and everyone in Humboldt County has access to good quality, nutritious food - where everyone in the community understands the consequences of hunger and poor nutrition and each one of us has a role to play in creating a strong, healthy community.

As a relatively new member of our Board of Directors, I am in awe of the amazing work that Food for People does on a daily basis. The range of services provided for individuals and families throughout Humboldt County is astounding, and the drive with which it is provided inspires me to do the work that I do with the same energy and passion.

The only thing more impressive than the tireless ways in which Food for People contributes to the fight against hunger in our community is how much the organization contributes given the limited

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United Indian Health Services' Community Nutrition program supports Food For People in their mission for a healthy Humboldt County.

### Donor Celebration!

Food for People invites you to join us  
Thursday, June 21st from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
307 W. 14th Street in Eureka (2 blocks up from Broadway)

Live music, local cuisine, local wines and fabulous company!  
Come break bread with us, meet the people  
behind the scenes and learn about your donations at work!

RSVP@foodforpeople.org  
if you are planning to join us  
or call Harriet Pecot at 707.445.3166 X 306

*Together we are making a difference in Humboldt County!*

## Food Access and Pantry Services Survey

By Jason Hervin, Pantry Network Coordinator

Over the past year we have been in the exciting process of implementing a client survey throughout our Pantry Network. Our vision for the client survey was to better understand our clients in terms of their household makeup, food access, security and health, and to gain their perspectives on pantry customer service and how well our pantries are meeting their needs. We partnered with the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP), which was interested in researching food insecurity among single mother households in Humboldt County. This has been an exciting opportunity for Food for People and our partner agencies to glean wisdom and feedback from our clients that can help improve services for low-income households in Humboldt County.

The survey was conducted at each of our county-wide pantries from August through September 2011, with a staggering 1,123 surveys received. CCRP has been diligently plugging away analyzing the data, and has recently given us a preliminary report of the data for each pantry. The survey collected basic demographic information, in addition to information on levels of food access and security, perceptions of quality of food received at the pantry, customer service and

health. The survey included a mix of quantitative as well as qualitative questions that allowed respondents to write down their thoughts and answers to the questions. Some of the feedback the clients wrote in the qualitative sections included:

"The pantry is a wonderful help. I live on \$800 monthly and without the pantry I would go without veggies and bread - many thanks to all who are making the pantry possible for so many of us!"

"Thank you very much - my kids won't be hungry tonight. With heart-filled tears we appreciate your help."

"I just got a real job, and would like to thank you all for all your help! I can only say thank you but hope you know how much you helped my family in those tough times."

We are now in the process of reviewing the data for each of

our pantries and looking at the strengths of each pantry, growth areas and opportunities to build the quality of service we offer our clients. One finding is that many communities have clients who are very happy with the customer service they receive at the pantry, but they indicated having a lack of social connections and high incidents of depression in response to other questions. This illustrates an opportunity for our pantries to play a vital role in building relationships and working to enhance clients' mental health. We continue to further evaluate the data and look for other ways our clients' perspectives can be used to strengthen our pantries. Our recent Pantry Summit included a session on reviewing this data as well as a breakout session where pantries developed plans to use this information to improve their individual pantry operations.

### Please send me an 800 Club Packet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit Visa or Master Card:

Monthly  Quarterly  Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Volunteer Appreciation Event

By Laura Hughes, Volunteer Coordinator

On Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, Food for People hosted our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party, at the beautiful Christ Episcopal Church in Eureka. Each year, Food for People puts on this event to honor the efforts of our dedicated volunteers in the fight against hunger in Humboldt County. This year's celebration was a huge success, with more than 150 volunteers from all over the county.

A delicious dinner was prepared by chefs Nicholas Kohl of Oberon Grill and Brett Shuler of Brett Shuler Fine Catering. The evening's festivities also included live music by the Joe Garceau Trio, a Dutch Raffle with numerous prizes donated by local businesses, and the presentation of award certificates to our dedicated volunteers. Flowers and plant starts were donated by local growers Flying Blue Dog Nursery and Sun Valley Floral Farms. A beautiful cake was provided by Ramone's

Bakery and Café. Special thanks to the Very Reverend Ron Griffin and Parish Administrator Cindy Brown at Christ Episcopal Church for the generous use of their space.

We heard over and over how much our volunteers and their families enjoyed the event this year, by far the best yet! We couldn't have made it happen without the support of all the exceptional organizations and businesses who generously donated to show their appreciation for those who go above and beyond to serve their community. Food for People relies on more than 400 volunteers who collectively donate almost 35,000 hours of service each year to keep our programs running. That's the equivalent of 18 full-time staff positions! We would not be able to reach the number of folks we do—12,000 to 15,000 per month—without the efforts and support of these generous volunteers.



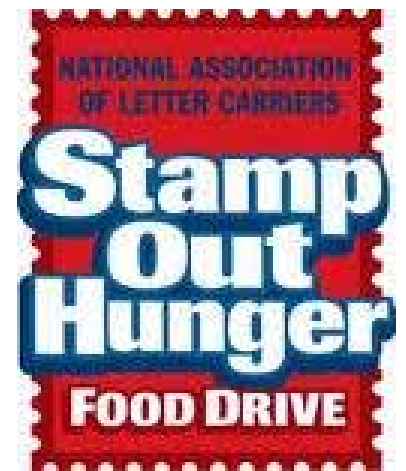
## Thank you to all the 2012 Volunteer Appreciation Donors

Arise Bakery, Reah Roberts  
 Belle Starr  
 Bev's Real Kids  
 Booklegger  
 Brick & Fire Bistro  
 Cypress Grove Chevre  
 Deep Seeded Community Farm  
 E. Christian Wisner Photography  
 Essence of Humboldt  
 Finnish Country Sauna and Tubs  
 Flying Blue Dog Farm and  
 Nursery  
 Glow Skincare and Body Boutique  
 Go-Go Bistro  
 Green Fire Farm  
 Harbor Lanes, Eureka  
 Henderson Center Bikes  
 Hot Knots  
 Humboldt Herbals  
 KB's DiscWagon  
 Kyoto Japanese Restaurant  
 La Dolce Video  
 Little Shop of Hers  
 Loleta Bakery  
 Mad River Nursery  
 Mantova's Two Street Music  
 Mike Olmstead Fine  
 Woodworking  
 Mycality Mushrooms, Michael  
 Egan  
 Natural Selection  
 North Coast Growers Association  
 Old Town Coffee and Chocolates  
 Origins Design Lab  
 Pacific Paradise  
 Pierson's Building Center  
 Ramone's Bakery and Cafe  
 Ray's Food Place, Arcata  
 Safeway, McKinleyville  
 Shakefork Community Farm  
 Shipwreck  
 Spotlight Video  
 Starbucks, Eureka and Fortuna  
 Stuff N Things  
 Sun Valley Floral Farms  
 Talisman Beads  
 Tara Murfin  
 The WORKS  
 Tin Can Mailman  
 Tofu Shop  
 Vellutini Baking Company  
 Virginia Dexter  
 Wayne Peace  
 Willow and Rags

## The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Letter Carriers Food Drive

By: Jason Whitley, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup> was the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive. Here in Eureka and throughout the county residents pitched in to help out their neighbors in need. The food that was received helps replenish the shelves of local food pantries that rely on this food drive to carry them through the summer months. We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all volunteers and postal employees who put in their time and labor to deliver, unload, and sort the tens of thousands of pounds of food. The donations yielded numerous pallets stacked high with non-perishable foods. Thanks to the generosity of all donors and volunteers, many low income individuals, families and seniors will have access to a wider diversity of foods in the months to come. This food drive is the nation's largest single day effort to end hunger and provides a large part of the food to be collected and distributed during the year here in Humboldt County.



The Letter Carriers' Food Drive is a real community affair with people of all ages volunteering to help unload and sort the incoming donations during the drive day.



## Humboldt Dutch Brothers

Thanks to Humboldt Dutch Brothers Coffee for their Valentine for Food for People! They gave away free 16 oz. drinks to anyone who brought in three cans of food this past Valentine's Day. A total of 1,000 pounds of nonperishable canned food was donated locally thanks to Dutch Luv Day. We appreciate Humboldt Dutch Brothers for their community spirit (and their coffee!). Thank you for supporting Food for People and helping to keep our shelves stocked, especially during the winter months.

## Veggie Mandala

*continued from page 1*

works of art will be on display and for sale. We are hoping more artists will participate in completing their own Veggie Mandalas for the January show. Holly is currently silk screening two different size designs on canvas but will also print on fabric of someone's choice. This creative endeavor is a benefit and all proceeds will go to Food for People, to provide food for local children, seniors on fixed incomes and working families in need.

Please contact Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director at (707) 445-3166 extension 306 or [harriet@foodforpeople.org](mailto:harriet@foodforpeople.org) for more information. We hope to see many of you at the upcoming June Arts Alive! where Holly and several of the artists will be present at the Ink Annex that evening.

*Photo on top right is Holly Kreb, artist and co-owner of Flood Plain Produce, designer of the Veggie Mandala and organizer of this creative fundraiser. On the right, several artists display their works in progress which can be viewed at the Ink Annex during June.*



## Par Infinity Disc Golf Club does it Again!

The Par Infinity Disc Golf Club hosted the Humboldt Ice Bowl 2012 at Mad River Beach and the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Big Foot Tournament along the Mad River in Arcata this past winter. The weather cooperated for both events and turnouts were excellent, resulting in two great competitions. Par Infinity Disc Golf Club donated proceeds from both events to Food for People totaling \$2,376 and 438 pounds of food. Par Infinity Disc Golf Club is a locally based club that gives back to and supports our community. Their mission includes disc golf education, course development and maintenance and cultivation of broad-based support for the sport.

## Humboldt Market Match Returns

Heidi McHugh, Community Educator and Outreach Coordinator

This season, the North Coast Grower's Association (NCGA) Farmers' Markets will once again offer the Humboldt Market Match. With this program, low-income families can access more of the locally grown foods sold at NCGA Farmers' Markets, thanks to a matching benefit of up to \$5 when they spend \$10 with their CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. This benefit is available once per market.

The premier of Humboldt Market Match in 2011 was a smashing success. EBT usage at NCGA Farmers' Markets increased by 313% compared to 2010. NCGA Farmers' Markets began accepting CalFresh in 2005 and the concept caught on slowly. Only \$5,493 in EBT benefits were redeemed during the entire 2008 market season. By 2010, it almost doubled to \$10,973. After introducing the Humboldt Market Match in 2011, redemption more than tripled to \$34,363! Humboldt Market Match was made possible in 2011 thanks to a California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Specialty Crop grant and funding from Roots of Change and their Farmers' Market Consortium. The consortium aims to increase the competitiveness of California's specialty crop farmers and improve public health.

Accessing CalFresh benefits at farmers' market is easy. The EBT card is swiped at the NCGA market manager's table for the amount of the cardholder's choosing. Then the market manager provides wooden tokens that can be used like cash at the farmers' stalls to purchase



fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry, meat, nuts and starts for food producing plants. The bonus tokens provided by the Humboldt Market Match can only be used to purchase fruits, vegetables, seeds and food producing seedlings.

Shopping at farmers' markets with CalFresh enables low income families and individuals to purchase the freshest fruits and vegetables while stimulating our local economy and supporting our farmers. It aims to increase the sales of specialty crops while addressing food insecurity and access to healthy foods as well as encouraging recipients to consume a greater variety of fresh local produce. This year, additional funding beyond the California Department of Food and Agriculture and Roots of Change grants will enable NCGA to offer matching benefits throughout the entire season. Matching funds will also be provided for WIC and Senior Farmers' Market coupons.

For more information on the Humboldt Market Match, please contact Heidi McHugh at Food for People at (707)445-3166 ext. 308 or hmchugh@foodforpeople.org.

### I'd like to be a Regular Donor!

Please send an 800 Club Packet to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit Visa or Master Card:

Monthly  Quarterly  Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Clip and mail to:

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

## NCGA Farmers' Markets Schedule Locations 2012

### Saturday Market Arcata open April - November:

Our Saturday market opens April 14th and goes through November 17th, from 9 - 2pm on the Arcata Plaza. Live music starts at 10am.

### Weekday Markets open June - October:

#### Eureka

Tuesdays in Old Town 10 - 1pm

Thursdays at Henderson Center 10 - 1pm

#### Arcata

Tuesdays at Wildberries Marketplace, 3:30 - 6:30pm.

#### McKinleyville

Thursdays in the McKinleyville Shopping Center at the totem pole 3:30 - 6:30pm

CalFresh accepted at all  
NCGA markets



## 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 people (and more) we feed each month, including children, seniors and working families in need.

Would you like to honor a friend or family member by making a charitable 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 and we will send them a card to let them know about your donation.

We are always happy to know a bit more about the folks for whom you are making donations in honor or memory. Let us know if you would like to include a 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.

### IN HONOR

THE HART FAMILY  
THE BUCKLEY FAMILY  
BETTI MOGNI  
MADELINE HAPGOOD  
JASON HOOD  
MERLE GRACE  
ROLIN MITCHELL  
GORDON LEPPIG  
STEPHEN HARTRIDGE

### IN MEMORIAL

CATHERINE SHARP  
JIM BORDMAN  
JAMES VINSON  
JOHN & JASON DIAMOND  
DOUGLAS PONCI  
LINDA LU PONCI  
LIZ FREEMAN  
BILLIE LEARN  
WES OLSEN  
JOY NIEMANN  
SALLY PURCELL  
MITZI MARCHI  
ROBERT ANDERSON  
LAURA MYERS  
BARNEY HUGHES  
CHARLES ROSSINI  
SHAWNTE MARIE WILLIS  
CAROL MYERS  
FREDERICK O BOTT

## Girl Scout's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party

By Megan Westersund, Nutrition Education Coordinator

The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Girl Scouts was celebrated on Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at Redwood Acres Fairgrounds in Eureka. Many community organizations participated along with hundreds of Girl Scouts. The festivities included a Trashion Show (with fashion made of trash), sing-a-longs and games. Heidi McHugh, Food for People's Community Education and Outreach Coordinator, and I represented Food for People with a healthy exhibit that included seeds, plant starts, cookbooks, snacks and an interactive MyPlate

display. Kids came by and chose healthy foods to add to the magnetic dinner plate to learn about planning healthy meals. There were good opportunities to talk to families about gardening. Many people were excited to take the growing guides and seeds home for their own gardens.

The healthy snacks we provided were another big draw. It must have been tasty, because some people even came by for second and third servings. The word spread quickly throughout the building and people excitedly came by to taste the Green Pea

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## A Day in the Life of our Choice Pantry

Ivy Matheny, Food Distribution Coordinator

Every food distribution day is a journey through unique client experiences, volunteer perspectives, inventory accommodations, and of course, pantry maintenance and upkeep. Even after 2 ½ years as the coordinator for the Choice Pantry, I find that each day continues to be just as exceptional as the last. While the need for food assistance steadily increases, our food supply and nutritional variety continues to fluctuate daily. In recent months, staying the course with so many unpredictable elements has been quite the challenge. With great admiration and many thanks, I value the community volunteers that contribute more than just their time to the Choice Pantry. They give us inspiration, ingenuity, commitment and drive. With each new daily challenge, I watch our volunteer crew meet and often exceed that challenge with a fresh dose of positive thinking, always with client needs in mind.

More than 1,200 households visit the Choice Pantry each month, and at least a hundred of them find themselves needing to return a week or two later for an additional emergency box. We assist community members in need from all walks of life, ranging from single individuals living alone to complicated and diverse family units of all constructions and arrangements. Many of our clients receive SSI, and thus do not qualify for CalFresh (food stamps). Many clients care for relatives and neighbors in need, many are living with disabilities, many are recently unemployed and new to reaching out for food assistance, and many of our clients have been in search of work for months on end with only limited success. Similarly, our volunteer team represents a wide diversity of individuals. Our crew

is made up of Work Experience program participants, people completing community service hours and community volunteers. Many of these team members are clients themselves or have had personal experience with unmet nutritional need in the past. They are highly motivated and contribute more than 1,600 hours of work each month because they believe that all community members should have access to nutritious foods to bring home to their families.

One day in April, in between supervising the crew and completing required paperwork, I carved out just enough time in my day to document what can serve as a “day in the life” record.

8:59 a.m. I arrive at work, parking in the alley to allow spaces in our main lot for clients. Several volunteers have already jumped into the day’s work. The Volunteer Coordinator, Laura, has been here for a half-hour already. Pallets of produce and other items are now being pulled out of the walk-in refrigerators. The pallets include thousands of pounds of fresh milk that were recently donated from Humboldt Creamery! I increase the point allocation in the Dairy category so that all shoppers may receive generous amounts before it reaches expiration. The shelves in the pantry begin to get stocked fresh for the new distribution day. Several warehouse crew members have called in sick, and the remaining crew steps up the tempo to fill in the gaps.

9:30 a.m. Our lead warehouse volunteer needs to go home. A diversely trained long-time volunteer offers to step up and takes over the job. Thanks Carolyn! She heads straight for our newest warehouse member who is waiting to be assigned a task. The receptionist today is also a newer volunteer. She

has a background in social work leadership, and she is quickly picking up on the routine.

10 a.m. The lobby has filled, and we are ready for the food distribution to start. Our veteran interviewers invite the first set of shoppers in to be interviewed. The pantry will be filled with shoppers in no time.

10:30 a.m. Oh no! It looks like one of our shopping carts has gone missing! A volunteer informs us that she recently saw it about 5 blocks south of us. A co-worker and I cruise the neighborhood in separate vehicles, looking for it with no luck. Fortunately, our volunteer Genia was able to solicit a donation of two used carts from a local grocery store. As soon as we find a volunteer to perform the welding repairs necessary, we can add them to our small but critical fleet.

11:50 a.m. The flow of client shoppers moving through the pantry is smooth, but space is tight. Our Shopper’s Helpers are doing great with assisting shoppers though the process of selecting food items.

12:00 p.m. on the dot. The intercom says “its lunch time”, but we are right at the peak time for appointments and walk-in accommodations, and I need to delegate lunch breaks for the crew while also keeping the operation running smoothly. By the way, the volunteer-prepared lunch looks amazing.

12:30 p.m. I step into my office to find four messages waiting for me on voicemail: a new food donor, a farmer interested in our compostable produce and bread waste, and two special client appointment inquiries. One call was from a single father who works during all of our pre-scheduled distribution hours, so I schedule an after-hours appointment with him for early next week.

2:00 p.m. New varieties of produce and grains come in from a local grocery store.

“What is this?” someone shouts at me.

“It’s jicama. You can chop it up and put it in your salads. It kind of tastes like apple,” I reply.

“What’s this?” another volunteer asks, this time directed at

Laura.

“That’s quinoa. You can cook it just like rice. It has lots of protein,” she replies.

1:30 p.m. The pantry is stocked all day, but a major push is sometimes needed to get the shelves completely full again. Desiree, the Warehouse Assistant, gathers the crew together to delegate the most efficient stocking plan.

4:00 p.m. Distribution ends, and the crew starts on the daily clean up list. The front desk crew completes the day’s distribution report to determine that more than 100 households were served today. A sign of accomplishment is felt across the pantry and warehouse.

5:00 p.m. Produce is tightly secured back in the walk-in refrigerator for the weekend. The volunteers begin clocking out and talking about sharing rides or walks home.

We aim to serve all of our friends and neighbors with the nutritional assistance that they need to stay or become healthy. We had just enough volunteer assistance and food supply to get us through one more day. It appears that somehow, we always find a way to wrap up each distribution day neatly enough to start once again with the next. The puzzle always looks different, but the vision for the outcome is always the same. At this point in time, the assistance we provide helps our most vulnerable community members to get a bit closer to filling that gap of unmet need but we are still far from closing it completely. Our clients are very grateful and appreciate everything that we do, but as our relationships build and we get to know each client individually, it is clear that some of their kids are still going to bed hungry and decisions between necessary medications and healthy food purchases remain a difficult daily consideration. Just as we can stand back and see what great work has been done and how much our contributions are appreciated, it is apparent that we can always do more.

## Mind, Body, Spirit

Continued from page 5

resources available to them. We make the most of every dollar donated, every hour volunteered and every can of food collected. As remarkable as the food bank’s efforts are, seeing the good that is being done makes the issues that the organization is up against that much more visible. It has become clear that hunger is an issue that affects us all, regardless of how food-secure we are as individuals. Again, we all play a role in the health of a community, and it will take the contribution of many for the vision to become reality.

Working at United Indian Health Services (UIHS) and connecting with the local American Indian community has been a blessing in so many ways. Its ideology that the health of an entire community begins with the health of the mind, body, and spirit of each individual within, relates to my own personal values. These values drew me to become involved with Food for People as well. Collectively, the organization understands it is not enough to provide commodity foods, and that education and advocacy are of equal importance. Community Nutrition staff at UIHS understand this as well and work hard to contribute in any way possible. Providing fresh, healthy produce for the UIHS community, organizing educational opportunities centered on nutrition and home gardening, accepting CalFresh benefits at the produce stand, and encouraging clients to participate in local programs that can help are all ways that we can be of assistance in the movement.

I am honored to join Food for People in its mission directly as a member of its Board of Directors and indirectly in my own line of work as Community Nutrition Manager of United Indian Health Services. I look forward to partnering with all involved for a common goal - the health and well-being of Humboldt County.

### I want to become a Volunteer at Food for People!

Call 707-445-3166 or email:

[Volunteer@foodforpeople.org](mailto:Volunteer@foodforpeople.org). Or fill out and send in:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please have someone contact me:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Volunteer Spotlight: Tim Crosby

By Laura Hughes, Volunteer Coordinator

You might see Tim Crosby flash you a smile early on a Tuesday morning as he begins work in our warehouse, assisting Jason Hervin, Pantry Network Coordinator, with preparations for our Arcata pantry distributions or pantry delivery week. Or you might have a friendly conversation with him in the kitchen over morning coffee, discussing the latest developments in small-batch coffee roasting, one of his many hobbies. Tim's warmth, humor and laid-back demeanor make everyone at the food bank feel comfortable. When I asked other coordinators who they'd like to find out more about for this issue's "Volunteer Spotlight," the general consensus was that Tim had some interesting stories to share. He does have an impish twinkle in his eye, after all.

Tim has been volunteering with Food for People since last spring, after he moved with his wife to Humboldt County from the Bay Area two years ago. During his time with us, he has become a relied-upon member of our warehouse team. Tim helps keep the warehouse organized by loading, tracking and stocking incoming food donations. He works with Desiree Hill, Warehouse Assistant, to help guide our volunteer warehouse crew and supports Jason Hervin with Pantry Network related warehouse tasks. From time to time, Tim also assists shoppers with their monthly shopping appointments in our Choice Pantry.

When asked what he enjoys most about his experience at Food for People, Tim cites the people he works with, noting the remarkable cross-section of folks we have here including staff, volunteers and shoppers, all of whom seem happy to be here. People open up once they've spent some time at Food for People and see how we work. He describes how rewarding it is to help shoppers who may be down on their luck and might not have



*Tim Crosby volunteers his smile along with his time and energy at Food for People every week and has become a valuable member of our team.*

seen a smiling face that day. They appreciate having someone to talk to who can help brighten their day and send them home with a box of food. Tim comments that a hard day at the food bank is better than the best day at other jobs he's had. No matter how tired he feels at the end of the day and how hard he's worked, he feels good about what he's done. And of course, the lunches are a high point as well, he says with a chuckle.

Tim originally grew up in the Bay Area, and went to high school in Los Angeles. He hitchhiked and motorcycled around the country for several years before eventually running a brewery, having honed his homebrew skills in his garage for fifteen years prior. After the brewery took off, he went into sales with a major distributor and ended up in charge of their craft brews. Tim and his wife finally decided to move to Humboldt County after continually visiting here for years. Tim came to Food for People by the desire to give back to the community after having spent so much time in the commercial sector.

In his spare time, Tim likes to roast coffee beans. He sources beans from a small mom-and-pop

shop in Oakland, who in turn travel to farms and coffee bean plantations in different locations, offering fair wages for coffee farmers and their families. This concept is similar to Fair Trade but on a much smaller scale and is called Farm Gate. Tim also enjoys reading at the library and teaching himself to make bread in the farmstead and sourdough style. He dabbles in organic gardening and computers. He says his life is always full and busy but he still has time to share with us.

I asked Tim why volunteering is important to him. He responded that without participation, there is no community - it's just a bunch of people. He says it's important to have a place where people are focused on the same goals, and it's his time to pay it forward. In Humboldt County, Tim has seen that people care for their fellow people, and even though there is a lot of need, we really can make a difference with our actions.

Thank you Tim, for all your hard work and dedication to helping others. We are honored to have you as part of the Food for People family.



## Girl Scout's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party

Continued from page 8

Spread and the Bruschetta.

It was inspiring to hear about the different ways the Girl Scouts are helping our community. There

were many stories of Girl Scouts being actively aware of the needs of the people around them. One young girl came to the table and

wanted to take seeds and plants so she could give free vegetables to people who are hungry. There were also displays showing examples of

## Bring a Million to Humboldt County: Fresh Options for Good Nutrition

By Heidi McHugh, Community Education and Outreach Coordinator

Three years ago Food for People launched the "Bring a Million to Humboldt County" campaign. The purpose was to educate the community about the benefits of what was then known as the Food Stamp Program and to help eligible households apply for benefits. In 2010, the name of the Food Stamp Program in California changed to CalFresh, to emphasize that the program promotes healthy living, supports California agriculture and no longer uses "stamps."

Currently, 15,000 Humboldt County residents participate in CalFresh, which is about half of the total who are eligible. These residents spend more than \$2 million CalFresh dollars monthly in our local economy. According to California Food Policy Advocates, Humboldt County misses out on an additional \$2 million CalFresh dollars each month that are available to households not currently enrolled. The Bring a Million to Humboldt County campaign hopes to bring those funds to the community by helping additional low-income households purchase nutritious food.

In addition, CalFresh dollars ripple throughout the local economy at a rate of \$1.79 for every CalFresh dollar spent, improving business for local stores, farms, workers and beyond. Based on this rate of economic impact, the \$28.5 million in CalFresh that Humboldt County leaves on the table for the year translates to a loss of \$51 million in local economic impact due to low enrollment.

Food for People works hard to educate the community about the health and economic benefits of spending CalFresh dollars at local farmers' markets, which includes the purchase of plants and seeds for growing one's own food. Since introducing the "Bring a Million" campaign in 2009, CalFresh redemption at all five North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) farmers' markets has grown from

\$5,493 in 2008 to \$34,363 in 2011.

Changes in eligibility and requirements for the application process have also made it easier for many more people to access CalFresh. The value of one's home, vehicle, and the amount of money in bank or retirement accounts are no longer factored into CalFresh eligibility. It is now possible to apply for CalFresh online or at a number of locations around the county, and to complete the rest of the process via phone and mail. Another change is that finger-imaging is no longer required.

Thanks to changes in the application process and the efforts of community organizations in conjunction with the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), local participation has increased from 11,000 participants in March 2009 to 15,000 Humboldt County residents currently utilizing CalFresh to better feed themselves and their families. Food for People will continue to coordinate its outreach efforts locally with the Humboldt County DHHS and other community partners.

While usage has increased, California continues to have the second lowest participation rate in the nation, with less than half of those eligible utilizing CalFresh. Throughout the next several months, the outreach team at Food for People will be traveling around the county visiting food pantries, family resource centers, grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other community locations to answer questions and help people apply for CalFresh. Visit [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org) for our CalFresh Outreach Calendar.

For more information on Bring a Million to Humboldt County or to apply for CalFresh, contact Heidi McHugh at Food for People at (707) 445-3166 extension 308. People can also apply through the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services at (707) 269-3590.

the hard work the Girl Scouts have done in our community.

It was a great day and a good time to be part of this community

celebration - the perfect time to talk about spring gardening and healthy eating.

## Behind the Scenes with the Operations Manager

By Deborah Waxman, Director of Programs

The following interview is with Food for People's Operations Manager, Andy Nieto. What she shares sheds light on some of the behind-the-scenes details that it takes to keep Food for People running smoothly.

### What does the Operations Manager do?

"The Food for People Operations Manager makes sure everything related to the movement and storage of food runs smoothly. When the Operations Manager does her job well, other staff members have less to worry about. I provide food that helps other staff coordinate the logistics of their programs. Having one person who knows when all the various foods are coming in or going out makes for a highly organized system. I know the inventory when it comes in or goes out, can project how much food we need to keep on hand to get through the month or coming months, and can estimate the rate at which we can release it from the warehouse. I also do menu planning for the USDA commodity foods we distribute monthly, to make sure we have a balanced monthly menu with foods from all nutritional food groups. We have to plan six months in advance for those monthly commodity menus and balance them with other locally donated foods we may have on hand. The array of commodity foods a client receives in a given month is not random. It is thought out very carefully to make sure everyone receives food from all nutritional food groups and that the menu consists of items that can be combined to make meals."

### What are some of the Operations Manager's main day-to-day duties?

"I place large food orders for various food bank programs to use on a regular basis, including produce and other program foods like CSFP food boxes that must be trucked in to the food bank. I process various food bank programs' USDA commodity food orders to make the foods available to the programs from our warehouse. I provide direct service to nonprofits in our Nonprofit Network program, who shop in our warehouse at a very low cost for food needed to supply their programs. Their pro-

grams benefit low-income families and youth, and many of the nonprofit partners utilizing this program get anywhere from 20% to 80% of their program food from us. In addition to coordinating the movement of all of this food, I perform inventory counts and develop inventory practices to make sure our warehouse operates efficiently and professionally."

### What are some of your favorite parts of the job?

"Trying to serve clients in the best way—not just logistics, but matching our mission to the foods we receive. It means taking the time and care to move food out in a certain way, with a healthy menu, keeping in mind how a family will prepare this food. I create a nutrition inventory based on food categories (fruit, vegetable, grain, protein, dairy), and from this I can see the breakdown of how much of each type of food we have in our warehouse. This allows me to send out a monthly combination of foods that helps families make a good array of healthy meals. I can also plan for the months ahead, for instance saving certain commodity items for summertime when families have to provide extra meals for children when school is out. When it's limited, I save the peanut butter and milk for the summer, when parents struggle to put child-friendly foods on the table. This kind of planning takes a lot of time."

### What is a day in the life of the Operations Manager like during your busiest week of the month?

"The busiest week in the warehouse is pantry week, when our Pantry Network Coordinator and his volunteers organize all of the USDA commodity food orders we deliver to our 16 partner pantries all over the county. We do an inventory check, to make sure the right amounts go to all pantries, and I reconcile inventory to make sure pantries get everything they are supposed to and that Food for People's inventory stays accurate and current. After the daily orders are loaded onto the truck and delivered, I clean the warehouse and pallet spaces and rearrange pallets of food in the warehouse to easily and efficiently bring in new product.

Then the delivery truck comes in. I unload pallets of food from

the truck with the forklift, bring it into the warehouse, label each pallet to identify the food, source, and weight, and move it to its warehouse storage location. 'Receiving' the food into our inventory system means recording all information about the food product, including the number of units per case and weight. Then I clean the warehouse again. In between I'm usually serving other nonprofits with their Nonprofit Network shopping appointments and handling general inventory work."

### Why are the forms, data entry and inventory important?

"We need to be as organized and transparent as possible. It is what keeps the food bank operating efficiently and what is required of us by our contracts. In part, it is preventative. Consider the consequences of not having a good inventory system. If there is a food recall, we need to know immediately if we have the product in our inventory, where we can find it, and if any of it was delivered to another site. Or let's say we want to send out tuna and need to know that we have enough of it in stock. It comes down to serving clients in the best way possible. We also use inventory as a way to do nutrition inventory, so we know what we're lacking in the warehouse and need to bring in to balance out the menu of foods available."

### What has changed in the world of the Operations Manager in the last two years?

"Everything. The way we do inventory is different. Every day I know exactly what is in the warehouse before I leave. Through the inventory system I have a better grasp of client needs, what foods are most and least popular, and I can make ordering choices based on that information."

### What fun fact would someone not know about you as Operations Manager?

"My forklift driving skills. Maybe not a lot of women drive forklifts, because people literally stop in the street and watch me unload trucks—sometimes watching with their children—and then clap when I am done."



Andy Nieto, Operations Manager at Food for People, is shown above on the forklift and can be found daily at our Eureka warehouse keeping everything on the move!

DONATE ONLINE BY GOING TO: [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org)  
 CLICK ON THE LINK: Network for Good™

## 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.

## Site Partner Spotlight: Backpacks for Kids in Loleta

By Niki Gribi, Child Nutrition Program Coordinator

I recently sat down with Marina Cortez-Hash, the Loleta Community Resource Coordinator for St. Joseph's Health System, to talk about Backpacks for Kids. Marina runs the Community Resource Center at Loleta Elementary School, and has been providing this valuable service for the past three years. Prior to working for St. Joseph's, Marina worked with Healthy Kids Humboldt. She told me she wanted a bigger scope of work with the families, and had her eye on the St. Joseph's job for a while before it opened up. Marina partners with the food bank in a variety of ways, and we are so grateful to have such a dynamic woman as our ally in Loleta.

### What are all the ways you partner with Food for People?

"I coordinate the Backpacks program. I also work with the Boys and Girls Club After School program. We provide them with activities through the Healthy for Life program, and I help with snacks if needed. I work with the food pantry at the church, too. I provide information to families, put information in our newsletter and handle any donations that come in for the pantry. I also let clients know about the free produce markets in the summer."

### What is your role in the Backpacks for Kids program?

"I help families sign up, keep track of who's enrolled, pick up the food, pack the bags and make sure the kids get them every week."

### How do you identify families for the Backpacks program?

"That can be tough because we only have funding to enroll a small number of kids. Most of the families at the school, I would say 70-80%, would benefit from getting this food. I work with the school

secretary because she sees which kids have a harder time getting to school and has a good sense of the families that need help. The secretary often knows families that I don't work with because they don't come to the Resource Center. We try to address those with the greatest need first. We also get requests. Parents see other kids getting food or hear about the program and ask about getting involved too. Sometimes teachers come to us and say, 'Can this kid get on that program? Because I think they need food.' Loleta is a small community, so we know most of the kids and their situations."

### Can you tell me about the families you work with? What are their lives like?

"One family with a greater need that comes to mind is a single grandmother, raising five of her grandchildren alone. The kids are from two of her children, so they come from different families. The grandmother is recently clean and sober and trying really hard to make a better life for herself and these kids. She's noticed that there seems to be less food in the bags this year as compared to last year, and wonders about that because they need as much food as they can get. But they are grateful. The food helps a lot."

Another family has four children; their father was recently deported, so it's a single mom taking care of them. She was staying home with the baby, but he's in preschool now so she's been able to work. One of the kids receives SSI, which is what they've been living on, and it's only about \$700 a month. One nice thing about the community is that their landlord has been really generous. When the dad was there and working, they were paying a certain amount

in rent and now that he's gone and things have gotten really tight, she asks for much less. Some months she doesn't take anything, or the mother will pay and the landlord will give half of it back and tell her to buy gas instead. The Backpacks are a really important source of nutritious food for this family.

There's another single mom with two kids. She has no job, and has been trying to make ends meet by selling things. She receives minimal aid, and she has a vehicle but it's in bad shape. She doesn't have money to fix the car, so it's been really hard for her to look for work or go to a job. The Backpacks make a huge difference for them, too.

There's also an education piece for many families. A surprising amount of folks don't know how to cook. They don't know how to use the food they get at the pantry. They may not know how to cook a pot of beans or boil rice. And this is a generational thing. If these parents grew up in families where their parents didn't cook, or just provided junk food, how were they going to learn how to cook for their children? This is a big hurdle."

### Can you tell me about the kids?

"We often think and talk about the kids getting free breakfast and lunch at school and how great that is, but the reality can be that the kids get to school and sometimes are so traumatized by what's happened at home the night before, they can't eat. They have no appetite. And that can continue on into lunch time, too. It may not be physical or verbal abuse that has traumatized them, though that does happen, but just the stress of being poor. The stress their parents are under can be very difficult for the children. And then there's the kids who are overweight or obese



Marina Cortez-Hash, Loleta Community Resource Coordinator for St. Joseph's Health System, stops by our warehouse to pick up the current week's food for Backpacks for Kids.

and get to school and just gorge because that's how they are coping. Both are unhealthy for the kids."

### Do the families on Backpacks also visit the food pantry?

"Some do, but not as much as I would like. One thing is that a lot of families don't have reliable transportation to get to town. Another thing is that people forget what time the pantry is open. If they need food on Tuesday, they are thinking about that immediate need and doing everything they can to fix things on Tuesday. They may not be thinking that the pantry will be open on Thursday afternoon. We are doing more outreach about this and will be putting the pantry times on the school calendar."

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

"I think the kids are grateful, but they are also embarrassed because kids don't want to be seen as different. They're kids, they're in

school with other kids, and taking this bag of food home makes them stick out. But the kids do love the games that get sent home. And for some of them, there are treats in the bag like peanut butter that are not on the radar for their parents. They love that. The parents are very appreciative, and more parents are asking for it this year, seeing it as a valuable resource."

### What impacts do you see?

"With Backpacks, the food is needed and gets eaten. It is a great relief for the parents, which leads to the kids being less stressed too. It's providing security. They know that food will be there on Friday. The snack program also has a big impact for the kids in Loleta. Those snacks are a meal before the kids go home, and who knows what's going on at home, or if there will be food. It makes a huge difference for them to get something to eat in the afternoon."



## Join us on Backpack Buddy Night!

Sunday, May 20th at Cher-Ae Heights Casino in Trinidad from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., the Rotary Clubs of Eureka, Southwest and Old Town and the Soroptimist Club of Humboldt Bay are co-sponsoring Backpack Buddy Night to help raise funds for Backpacks for Kids, our weekend nutrition program for local school children.

This benefit will feature prime rib dinner with all the trimmings, live music with Kathy Lee and Jeffrey Smoller from Magnolia and both silent and live auctions hosted by Rex Bohn. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased at Old Town Coffee & Chocolates and SHN Consulting Engineers or call (707) 269-4335 for more information.

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