

Food Notes | The Newsletter of Food for People

SPRING ISSUE 2020

The Food Bank for Humboldt County



Food for People partners with local business to cut down on food waste and generate support for our Gleaning Program. More on pg. 4-5.

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Food for People | The Food Bank for Humboldt County



We feel it's important to keep you updated on our programs, policy work, and the progress we are making at the food bank. If you do not wish to receive a newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us and have your name removed from our newsletter mailing list.

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Notes from the Director

With Gratitude ...

By Anne Holcomb, Executive Director

We've been in the habit of doing a "gratitude exercise" at the beginning of our monthly staff meetings over the last few years, taking time to acknowledge the big and little things that other staff, volunteers or community members have done that really helped us in a tight moment, brightened our day, or inspired us. It's an exercise I always enjoy because it shifts our thinking away from being overwhelmed by the challenges and problems that arise and helps us focus on how we work together to find solutions. As we look ahead to 2020, I thought it would be nice to reflect on 2019 from that perspective. We feel blessed that there are so many to thank for our collective achievements so please forgive me if I've overlooked any individual or group!

We'd like to extend our very warmest thanks to:

- All of the donors whose financial contributions help us keep our programs and services running smoothly so that we're able to help when needed most. This includes many individuals who donate regularly as Full Plate Partners, those who give when they can throughout the year, local businesses, foundations and grant funders. Thanks to your support, we are able to pay the utility and insurance bills; purchase fuel and maintain our vehicles; service our refrigeration equipment; purchase food; and so much more.
- The high school students who rallied their friends, families and communities as they participated in the Senator McGuire Humboldt Holiday Food Drive. We were so impressed with their leadership, creativity and commitment to helping those in their community who are dealing with hunger and poverty. We can all be proud that we have such inspired leaders to carry us into the future!
- Everyone who participated as part of a Hunger Fighter Challenge team over the holidays; the children who asked for donations of food for the food bank for their birthdays instead of presents; and all of the individuals, civic groups and families who collected food on our behalf throughout the year.
- The farmers, ranchers and backyard gardeners who grew or raised nutritious local foods to share with the people we serve. This includes our friends at Locally Delicious who created and continue to support the Locally Delicious Food Fund, which contracts with local farmers at the beginning of the season to grow crops specifically for the Food Bank.
- The community and civic groups and the many individuals who raised funds to support our Backpacks for Kids program, which has no dedicated funding source and receives no government support, making it possible for us to provide weekend food packages for children who might otherwise go hungry on the weekends when school meals aren't available.
- All of our AMAZING volunteers who share their time and talents with us, working shoulder to shoulder with our



Anne Holcomb, Executive Director.

staff to keep our programs strong. Some have been with us over the course of many, many years and others take time away from school, work and retirement whenever they can to lend a hand. Collectively, they donate the equivalent of 14 full time staff positions annually!

- Local food-based businesses who donate almost half a million pounds of food annually that helps supplement the USDA commodities and other donated and purchased foods so that we can provide food assistance to more than 12,000 people of all ages countywide each month.
- Media partners who help us get the word out about how to access our programs and how the community can help.
- Partners within the nonprofit community who share information and resources that helps us all avoid duplication of effort and reach as many people as possible. Our partnerships proved especially critical last fall during the power shutdowns, and will serve us well should a major disaster hit Humboldt County.

We know that each of you makes a conscious decision about where and how you spend your time and resources to create a community that we can all be proud of, and we are grateful when you choose Food for People. 2020 will surely bring its own unique set of challenges as each New Year does, and we appreciate the opportunity to partner with all of you to ensure that our friends and neighbors have the nutritious food they need to stay healthy and live their best lives. Thank you!

With gratitude,

Anne Holcomb, Executive Director
aholcomb@foodforpeople.org



Reaching Rural Hunger New Distribution Serves Klamath Area

By Carly Robbins, Development Director

Above: Food for People's Mobile Produce Pantry Coordinator Mike Seeber prepares for a remote produce distribution. Below: Food for People staff members Mike Seeber and Bertha de la Cruz distribute fresh produce with Del Norte's Pacific Pantry during a recent produce distribution in Klamath. Photo contributed by Pacific Pantry.

Food for People's Mobile Produce Pantry Coordinator, Mike Seeber, travels around Humboldt County in a large refrigerated box truck on a monthly schedule to distribute free produce to rural and remote areas while conducting CalFresh outreach. After hearing from partners and many of the community members served by our Mobile Produce Pantry in Hoopa, Orleans and Weitchpec that folks in the Klamath area were also in need of fresh fruits and vegetables, Mike decided to see if we could help. The Klamath area is designated as a food desert and residents there experience high rates of food insecurity.

Food deserts are areas where residents' access to affordable, healthy food—especially fresh fruits and vegetables—is restricted or nonexistent due to the lack of grocery stores within convenient traveling distance.

Though Klamath, which is located in Del Norte County, is technically out of our service area we wanted to see if we could try something similar. After some coordination with local community and tribal organizations, a special pop-up distribution took place in October. Food for People provided a mix of produce that we purchased thanks to funding provided through a St. Joseph Health's Care for the Poor grant. We were able to provide a variety of staples such as potatoes, onions, carrots, and cabbage and root vegetables like beets and turnips. In one day we saw more than 56 community members come through to access fresh healthy produce—a resounding success.

Due to the success of this distribution and the confirmed need in the Klamath area, Food for People began looking for partnerships in Del Norte County to help sustain these distributions into the future. We are excited to announce that as of January we have partnered with Pacific Pantry, a part of the Community Food Council for Del Norte and Tribal Lands, to establish these as regular distributions which will occur on the third Thursday of every month from 3 to 5 pm at the Klamath Boys & Girls Club, 168 Klamath Blvd. Food for People will provide the produce, delivered by Mike and purchased with Care for the Poor grant funds, and our friends from Pacific Pantry will handle the distribution. During the January distribution we saw 110 households in a few short hours –



nearly doubling the amount of people we were able to help since the pilot distribution in October!

Andrea Lanctot the Community Food Program Coordinator with Pacific Pantry shared " If there is one single project I work on this year, helping to support a produce distribution in Klamath and building relationships with Yurok Tribe is the most important to me. Having lived up river in Orleans and worked with the Federally Recognized Tribe Extension Program in Klamath, Pecwan, Weitchpec, Hoopa, and Orleans, I understand the difficulties of accessing food and resources in these remote areas, especially during the winter months on wet dangerous roads. Everyone should have the ability to access fresh, nutritious food for themselves and their family. Many people don't understand how far many families need to travel just to access food and supplies that are affordable. If this distribution can help ease the burden on these families, especially during the winter, then this is an absolute success."

We look forward to a successful partnership with the Pacific Pantry and the Community Food Council for Del Norte and Tribal Lands in bringing healthy produce to those in need in Klamath.



Local Food Resources Coordinator Allison Kenney arranged the partnership with Humboldt Cider Company to repurpose surplus apples.

Moving Toward Zero Waste

New Craft Cider Supports Gleaning Program

By Allison Kenney, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Humboldt County is home to thousands of apple trees, many of which have been here since the days of homesteading, long before the current day generation of cannabis cultivators and organic vegetable farmers. Our gleaning program works to recover fruit excess from local backyard fruit trees and orchards and turn it into viable food sources for our clients. Due to the high volume of local apple trees, and large amount of generous donors who donate to us every year, on good apple years, or years when the fruit trees are exceptionally productive due to favorable growing conditions, we often glean more apples than we can distribute through our different programs and partner meal sites. This growing season was an exceptionally productive one for apple trees in our region, and Food for People's gleaning program brought in over 16,000 pounds of apples!

After attending a gleaning symposium conference in Seattle, and learning about a partnership between Seattle Cider Company and a gleaning organization called City Fruit, I set out to initiate a similar partnership with our very own Humboldt Cider Company. Essentially all of our gleaned apples that are either undesirable for eating—if they have holes or bruises, or are too small—or those that are in excess of what we can distribute to our clients will go to Humboldt Cider Company. They will make a large batch of hard cider using the apples, and then the fermented cider (named "Cider for People") will be

sold in their taproom locations, and a portion of the profits will come back to Food for People as a financial donation. The funds will in turn be used to benefit our Gleaning and Local Food Resources programs.

Our Gleaning Program works with Humboldt County farmers, ranchers, and backyard gardeners to collect fresh fruit, vegetables, and meats that might otherwise not be utilized or have a market and distributes them to households served by the Food Bank. These efforts brought in nearly 57,000 pounds of excess produce and meat last year. In addition, Food for People's Local Food Recovery Program works with local grocery stores and food producers to pick-up food that would otherwise go to waste and distributes it to those in need. The program brings in between 336,000 and 500,000 pounds of food a year, saving local businesses up to \$40,000 in waste fees and diverting up to half a million pounds of waste each year from the landfill.

This partnership with Humboldt Cider Company is a creative approach to using fruit surplus and furthers our goal of achieving zero waste. It also provide us with an opportunity for further developing our programs. It repurposes the gleaned apples into a preserved, value-added food product by fermenting the fruit, and also helps to benefit a local business by providing them with free raw materials to create a cider with character—that gives back to the community.

Donate online | www.foodforpeople.org



Above: Food for People's new craft cider is made of locally gleaned apples including Gravenstein and Golden Delicious. Left: Tom Hart, Humboldt Cider Company Co-Owner, empties a bucket of apples. Below: Hart, Kenney, and Jamie Ashdon, Humboldt Cider Company Co-Owner, wash and press apples for a new cider that will support Food for People's Gleaning Program.



Humboldt Holiday Food Drive

Senator & Local High School Students Help for the Holidays!



Senator Mike McGuire challenges local students from St. Bernards Academy, Arcata, Eureka, McKinleyville, Fortuna, and Ferndale High Schools to help fight hunger.

Thanks to our amazing local high school students and Senator Mike McGuire and his team the 4th annual Humboldt Holiday Food Drive was a resounding success.

As part of a friendly competition, high school students from across the county worked hard this winter to collect the most canned and non-perishable food items. This year nearly 22,000 pounds of food and more than \$5,000 was donated to Food for People thanks to the thousands of Humboldt high school students who rallied over the holiday months and the time and hard work put in by the senator and his team to make the food drive possible. We are immensely grateful!



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The Food Bank for
Humboldt County

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Members of HSU's Brothers United help pack bags of food at our December Second Saturday Volunteer Day.

Volunteer with Us!

The rain didn't stop dozens of volunteers from spending the second Saturday of December at our Eureka warehouse, sorting and packing donated holiday food drive items during our monthly Second Saturday Volunteer Day.

After a brief welcome, volunteers got to work unloading boxes and packing food bags for our programs.

Volunteers at the December event included families, high school students and HSU's Brothers United, a cultural club for Black men. Thank you to everyone who braved the rain and helped support our programs — our work wouldn't be possible without you!

Volunteering is a family-friendly way to give back, meet like-minded people and learn more about the work we do at Food for People.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities at Food for People, please contact Volunteer & Direct Services Manager Paloma Herrera at volunteer@foodforpeople.org or (707) 445-3166 ext. 310.



Dozens of volunteers braved the rain to help unload and sort boxes of donated holiday food items.



Volunteer Senior Delivery Driver Mike helps unpack a food delivery with long-time program participant and friend Mary.

Power Shut-Offs in Humboldt

The Impact on Local Seniors

By Heidi McHugh, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

The mad rush for ice, gasoline, batteries, and shelf-stable food began around 3 p.m. on Oct. 8, 2019. Residents of Humboldt County had received official word that Pacific Gas and Electric would be shutting off the power before midnight as a safety precaution in the face of predicted high winds that could pose a fire danger. That evening lines for gas spilled out for blocks and finding a store with ice was less likely than spotting Bigfoot. The generators that were in stock had sold out before sunset. Some community members were lucky enough to already be prepared for the event and did not have to venture out into the chaos. But others, like some of the older adults served through Food for People's Senior Programs, could not because they are homebound or did not have the resources to purchase emergency supplies.

Without phone or internet, Food for People's staff was limited in our ability to operate on Oct. 9th. We set up distribution in the Eureka Choice Pantry and dealt with the food that was not going to survive the loss of refrigeration. When power and phone service was restored we wanted to check in on our senior and homebound clients to see how they were doing. What we heard was distressing. We heard repeatedly about the cold because furnaces are ignited electrically for many. People with electrical medical equipment were concerned about their health conditions. One woman with a CPAP machine for sleep apnea told me how she had to attempt to sleep upright in her easy chair. The ordeal made her extremely anxious and triggered her Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. One woman told me of her neighbor who was taken to the emergency room because his diabetes medication got too warm. Some were hungry. These are folks whose budget does not allow for them to keep a large supply of food at all times and they were running out

because what they had was spoiled.

Food for People's Homebound Delivery program depends on volunteer drivers. Mike Vitiello has volunteered to deliver food to homebound people for nearly ten years. He knew one of his clients, who is blind and lives alone, would need help during the blackout. He took the initiative and went to check in on her. His instincts were good; her perishable foods were dwindling. He managed to find ice and brought her a cooler. He repacked what was salvageable from her refrigerator and helped her get oriented to the new placement of her food. It took more time than Mike had available, but if he didn't help her then who would?

"Legitimately, for someone like her with disabilities this is a really big deal, both physically and mentally," Mike said. "Some homebound seniors just need some reassurance, someone who's got their back. Just having someone to offer some comfort is an amazing thing in this world." He explained that persons with disabilities should have what they need before the power goes out. "If someone like her had a generator it would have been so simple. I've had people who relied on machines on my homebound delivery route in the past, but not now. What happens to them? There should be funding to supply them with generators."

Mike's concerns are shared by people throughout the state. In response to the impact of the planned power outages on low-income, disabled, and elderly people, advocates from the Western Center on Law and Poverty and the California Association of Food Banks are educating state lawmakers about the needs of those who cannot respond to an emergency because of limited resources, transportation, or ability. Food for People will be advocating for bills and budget actions in 2020 to address these needs and will continue to make sure we are ready to help when emergencies arise—power shut-offs or otherwise.

Tribute & Memorial Contributions

Honor a friend or family member by making a donation to Food for People. Simply add a memo to your gift. If you include an address, we'll send a card to let them know about the donation. It is a great way to celebrate and/or honor the memory of someone you love.

In Honor Of

Amanda & Staff at CVS
Ann Anderson & Susan Hoffman
Anthony Lucchesi
Ashley Skiles' Birthday
Berget Jelane
Betty Chin & Edie Jenson
Beverly Ann Hood's Birthday
Bill Carsner
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Roz Sheehy & Rob Roversi
Ruth & Salvatore Mylie
Simon Hellyer
The Sterk Family
Todd Tregenza
Tom Davies
Troy & Ken Dean
Trudy Keltz
All the amazing Farmers who participated in the 2019 Grow Off!
All the staff & volunteers at Food for People" doing the hard work every day"

In Memory Of

Alice Hackett
April Conant
Arnold Souza
Barbara Williams
Celeste
Dale Birdsall
Dave Etz
Don Kohl
Edward Pugh
Helen Person
Jacque Kessinger
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Sam Gregerson
Scotty Turner
Sydney Schwartz
Tony Sedito



Last year, our Backpacks for Kids Program served nearly 600 children.

Backpacks for Kids Sponsor a Backpack, Feed a Child

By Carrie Smith, Child & Senior Programs Coordinator

As Food for People's Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator for the past six years, it has been a privilege to supply food to children who are dealing with food insecurity in our community. It's an unfortunate reality that there are children who depend on school meals to supply most of their daily food intake. The Backpacks for Kids program, which supplies weekend food bags to kids in need, is designed to feed children during the times when they are out of school and may not get enough to eat to carry them through.

The Backpacks for Kids Program works in partnership with school personnel to identify children who are at risk of going hungry over the weekend. Each Friday during the school year, participating students receive a bag filled with kid-friendly meals and snacks including milk, whole wheat bread, fruit, peanut butter, tuna, soup, macaroni & cheese, granola bars and 100% fruit juice. The foods included are determined by availability, USDA nutritional guidelines, and parents' and children's expressed preferences.

Last year, we served nearly 600 children throughout the school year, and plan to reach that amount this year as well. We serve children at sites including McKinleyville, Blue Lake, Ferndale, Hoopa, Samoa, Arcata, Eureka, Loleta, Fortuna, Hydesville, Carlotta, Rio Dell, and Willow Creek. Children who participated in last year's program shared the following thoughts: "I like the [food bag] because we don't have to buy food and we never know when my dad is going to get paid," and "Sometimes we're out of food, so it's nice to have food on the weekends."

Children are our future and it is vital they get the nutrition they need to learn and grow. These children, in turn, will grow to be productive adults who carry a sense of understanding and appreciation that there was a safety net in place during tough times.

If you have any questions regarding these programs, or you would like donate, please contact **Carrie Smith at (707) 445-3166 extension 309** or csmith@foodforpeople.org.

Advocacy Corner

SNAP Changes Affect the Poorest Americans

By Heidi McHugh, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

On December 4, 2019 the federal government issued a rule in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or CalFresh) that will cut off food assistance for nearly 700,000 of the nation's poorest adults. Those affected are referred to as able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD). An ABAWD is a SNAP participant age 18 through 49 with no minor children in the household. These adults are among the poorest in the nation, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data. Their average income is just 18% of the federal poverty line. Their average monthly SNAP benefits are about \$165 per month. Most working-age adults on SNAP who can work, do so. Unfortunately, low-paying jobs with unreliable hours and little to no benefits are all too common. At the time of the announcement, the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services estimated that 3,606 Humboldt County residents who receive benefits through the program may be impacted by the change.

A longstanding provision of SNAP limits an ABAWD to just three months of benefits over the course of three years, if they are not employed for at least 20 hours a week. A provision of the law also allows states to seek waivers of this three-month cut-off for areas where insufficient jobs are available. From the rule's enactment in 1996 until now, both Democratic and Republican presidents alike have operated under a common set of criteria in granting these waivers. This provision allows states to respond to high unemployment and economic uncertainty caused by recessions, events such as natural disasters, and regional shifts in employment opportunities.

Thirty-six states currently have waivers for parts of their states where unemployment is highest. All of California was under waiver until September 1, 2018. The rule issued on December 4th will dramatically reduce states' ability to be eligible for these waivers.

The enforcement of the ABAWD rule does not improve the circumstances of the impacted individuals. Research has shown that work requirements have resulted in little or no long-term increase in earnings and employment and have caused many families to lose assistance, leaving them in deep poverty.

Andrew Cheyne, director of government affairs for the California Association of Food Banks says of the rule, "It's grounded in the myth that people receiving food assistance are 'lazy' and don't want to work. Nothing could be further from the truth: the people impacted by this rule have been systematically disenfranchised and face real barriers to maintaining and documenting full-time employment. Taking away basic food assistance only makes people hungry, and does not help anyone find a job."

More than half of SNAP households with at least one working-age, non-disabled adult work while receiving SNAP. Because people often participate in SNAP when they are

between jobs, work rates are higher over a longer time frame; more than 80% of SNAP households work in the year before or the year after receiving SNAP (USDA).

The mandate to work 20 hours or more per week to be SNAP eligible does not take into account that low-income workers often juggle irregular work schedules that may cause them to become ineligible. Seventy-one (71%) percent of respondents to Food for People's Humboldt Food Access & Pantry Services Survey 2018 reported having some form of part-time, seasonal, or occasional jobs. Transportation barriers in rural communities like Humboldt County can make employment challenging. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents reported having sporadic or rare transportation to work. Similarly, 28% of respondents reported having sporadic or rare transportation to health care services. This is important because on paper someone may appear to be an ABAWD, but they may have an undiagnosed medical condition or disability that may prevent them from working.

"It's grounded in the myth that people receiving food assistance are 'lazy' and don't want to work. Nothing could be further from the truth."



The shortage of healthcare in rural communities like Humboldt County contributes to this mislabeling. Some ABAWDs are limited in their ability to work because they are caregivers for ill family members or young non-dependent children.

This new amplification of the ABAWD rule will create administrative burdens and raise costs for the taxpayer-funded state and county agencies who manage SNAP cases. Furthermore, these new changes will take away the ability for the SNAP program to respond to future recessions or natural disasters. Most of the country was under ABAWD waivers during and after the Great Recession. Data shows that SNAP participants who can work, do work. For every meal provided by a charitable food organization, SNAP provides 12 meals (Feeding America).

Organizations like Food for People do not have the resources to fill this meal gap. Taking food away from those who are in between jobs, caring for family members, or living with undiagnosed disabilities will not increase their chances of employment, but it will increase their chances of hunger and diet-related illness.

A Culinary Trip To Italy

Nutrition Education

By Kayla Watkins



Recently our clients had the opportunity to experience the food culture of Italy via volunteer Chef Anne Harris and her husband Mark Harris in Food for People's Cooking with Commodities class. This dynamic duo recently traveled to Italy to expand their culinary skills as well as enrich their food culture. They were excited to share the experience of homemade traditional pasta making with our class.

This enriching tradition has intrigued and changed the way our clients view and eat pasta. We completed the meal with a beautiful array of vegetables for pasta primavera and accompanied it with a rainbow of fruits jazzed up with a caramelized orange sauce (recipe below).

Look for upcoming cooking classes on our Facebook page at facebook.com/FoodforPeopleInc.



Anne and Mark Harris demonstrate how to make homemade pasta in a recent Cooking with Commodities class.

CARMELIZED ORANGE SAUCE

Directions:

1. Zest the oranges into thin, long strips.
2. Boil the water, add the zest and continue to boil for 3 minutes. Drain the zest in a strainer, rinse with cold water and set aside.
3. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Using a wooden spatula, stir in about 1/3 of the orange juice and the sugar. Continue to cook over medium heat adding a small amount of juice to prevent crystallization.
4. Once the sugar is dissolved, turn the heat to medium high, and stir occasionally until the mixture turns golden amber.
5. When the sugar mixture is golden amber, add the zest and continue cooking for a few seconds. Add the remaining orange juice. Drizzle over fruit, cakes or dessert pasta.

Ingredients:

3 large oranges zested,
with juice reserved

1/4 stick butter

1/3 cup sugar

2-3 cups water

2019 Hunger Fighter Champions



2019 Hunger Fighter Teams

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**Thank you to everyone who joined us to fight local hunger and helped make our
2019 Holiday Food & Fund Drive a success!**

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- Bridgeville Elementary School
- Eureka Natural Foods
- Ferndale Community Church
- Grocery Outlet
- Hoopa Senior Nutrition Center
- Hupa Family Resource Center
- Les Schwab Tire Center
- McKinleyville Family Resource Center
- Murphy's Markets
- North Coast Co-op

- Safeway
- Ray's Food Place
- Redwood Capital Bank
- Root 101 Nursery
- Swain's Flat Outpost
- Tri Counties Bank
- Trinidad Elementary School
- US Postal Service Offices: Blue Lake - Bridgeville
Ferndale - Hoopa - Rio Dell - Scotia - Willow Creek
- Umpqua Bank
- Wildberries Marketplace

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- Smullin Foundation
- St. Joseph Health Foundation

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY

- FOOD DRIVES**
- Bayside Makers Fair
- Eureka Christ Episcopal Church
- Northtown Coffee Spoken word

And all the individuals in our community who gave food, funds, or time to help others during the holiday season!