

# Food Notes

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

Summer Issue, 2012



A fun time was had by all at the Summer Lunch Kick-Off held in Carson Park in Eureka celebrating the 16th year of this program. In photo at right, Ted Pecot adds to the festivities with a set of interactive children's music during the event followed by Summer Lunch and smoothies!

## From Donors To Vendors

By Jason Whitley  
Local Food Resources Coordinator

This year, Food for People is changing the way it approaches our local farmers. As coordinator of the Gleaning Program, I will often approach farmers for donations of produce at the end of their market day. Any donated fresh produce is then boxed up and taken to our Choice Pantry. Now, there is an additional task at farmers markets: the acquisition of local organic produce for our Mobile Produce Pantry.

Food for People has begun a partnership with the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide healthier food choices in rural areas of Humboldt County while also bringing DHHS services, such as CalFresh enrollment on the road. The DHHS Mobile Engagement Vehicle (MEV) and Food for People's Mobile Produce

Pantry travel together to provide healthy food and outreach to folks who are potentially eligible for CalFresh and other county services. We now operate a refrigerated truck as the Mobile Produce Pantry and have the funds to purchase produce, including an allotment for local, organic produce. In many outlying parts of the county, clients of our 16 pantries, in addition to those who can't reach pantries, rely on a limited amount of fruits and vegetables. With the Mobile Produce Pantry, we are able to make sure rural clients have a well-rounded amount of produce and access to county services.

On Wednesday July 18<sup>th</sup>, I had the opportunity to help out with a distribution of produce in Willow Creek. Tim Crosby, Warehouse Food Distribution Driver, and I arrived at the Willow Creek Resource Center at noon. There was al-

ready a line of people expecting the Mobile Produce Pantry. We quickly set up tables and displayed the produce offerings for the day. This particular day happened to coincide with our distribution of food to Willow Creek seniors. For this reason, we made sure to have on hand a bounty of nutrient dense local produce for the day. Carrots from Willow Creek Farm, summer squash from Green Fire Farm, broccoli and Swiss chard from Flora Organica, lettuce from Earthly Edibles, along with potatoes, oranges, and onions were on display and ready for our clients in minutes. After a very quick intake process clients began receiving large bags filled with some of the freshest food possible. I heard people saying things like, "This is better quality than the grocery store," and they began telling us what they were planning on doing with the

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## No More Hungry Kids this Summer!

By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director

Did you ever see a sandwich in the shape of a goldfish? If you were at Carson Park on June 27<sup>th</sup>, you would have seen them filled with cheese and eaten! On that day, we celebrated the community support and partnerships that make our Children's Summer Lunch Program possible, with music, balloons, healthy sack lunches and 50 active kids!

This summer marks our 16<sup>th</sup> year of serving free sack lunches to low-income children and youth across the county. Summer can be a challenging time for the many families in Humboldt County who rely on school meals for their kids. This program aims to provide healthy, nutritious sack lunches to

children during summer weekdays so they don't have to worry about getting enough to eat and can focus on summer fun.

A shout out of thanks to our sponsors who help make this program possible - Green Diamond Resource Company, Humboldt Area Foundation, Humboldt Transit Authority, Mel and Grace McLean Foundation, North Coast Co-op, Patricia and William Smullin Foundation, St. Joseph Health System Humboldt County and Union Labor Health Foundation.

For more information about this program and our 20 lunch sites, call Christine Parris at (707) 445-3166 extension 309 or visit our website at [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org).

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**In This Issue**  
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We feel it's important to keep you 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.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Work Experience

By Laura Hughes, Volunteer Coordinator

At Food for People, we are blessed to work with over 400 dedicated volunteers each year who help us in the fight against hunger in Humboldt County. These generous volunteers are instrumental in helping to keep the daily operations running for many of our programs at the food bank, performing 53% of our total labor hours as an organization. Our volunteers come from many different backgrounds and places in the community. Area residents, students, retirees and members of local organizations and businesses are just some of the wonderful people who work with us to serve others in our community.

Food for People also works with a number of Work Experience programs to find both paid and volunteer work placements for individuals to gain professional experience and learn valuable life skills so they are better able to support themselves and their families. Food for People's partnership with such programs therefore aligns with our broader mission and vision as an organization. Not only are we working to eliminate hunger, we are working to improve the overall health and wellbeing of our community. We believe that everyone has a role to play to make our vision a reality.

Work Experience program participants are usually placed with us for several months at a time, and have a consistent weekly schedule. As such, they serve to anchor our volunteer crew in the warehouse and pantry. We offer a supportive environment where participants have a chance to learn and understand our policies and procedures in more depth, helping to maintain consistency in the constant hustle and bustle. Our workers give back in kind, and we depend upon them to get the job done. As they gain more experience, they can also help newer volunteers learn the ropes, and support our program coordinators.

By providing people with work opportunities through these pro-

grams, we can have a profound impact in our community. Program participants have the chance to do meaningful work and gain real-world experience while helping others, often fostering a sense of ownership and community accountability. Simultaneously, folks who are placed with us learn more about the importance of food choices, health and nutrition through the work we do as an organization. Cooking lunches, sorting food donations and working with the wide variety of produce we distribute are just a few of the ways people are exposed to new food habits and ideas.

I asked some of our Work Experience program participants to share how the program is helping them, and what they've learned from working with us.



April joined our team in May of this year as one of our Front Desk Receptionists. The Front Desk is a fast-paced and vital position. In addition to fielding phone calls and scheduling Choice Pantry shopping appointments, April greets visitors, handles client files, assists folks with check-in and inputs information into our database. She also helps clients shop in our pantry and assists with the distribution of emergency boxes. April is a people-person who likes to stay busy and be productive. She always has a smile and a funny sto-

ry to tell. April chose to work here as her placement because she likes to help others and we are located close to her home.

When I asked her what she likes about working here, she said she enjoys coming to work everyday, likes the people she works with and enjoys having a sense of purpose outside of her role as a mother at home. She tells us she has learned a lot in the time she's worked here, honing her customer service and people skills, becoming familiar with community resources for people in need, and learning clerical skills such as filing systems and



computer programs. Her experience here as also improved her professionalism and maturity. We asked April how the skills gained here will serve her in the future. April

replied, "Tons of ways," noting that her organizational skills alone have improved during her time here.

April also describes a realization she had while working here. She might have a really bad day, yet still see that there are other folks who have it worse. When she stresses about what to make for dinner at home, she remembers that there are others who might not have a place to sleep or even know if they're going to be able to eat that day. She says the work we do is valuable, because we're giving help to people who really need it most and it helps her keep a good perspective. April knows many people who use the food bank, including elders and those with children, and it makes her happy to help them out.

In her free time, April watches movies with her family, cooks, walks and listens to music. When her placement here is completed, she will look for another job and plans to keep volunteering here. Eventually, she would like to go back to school and become a private investigator or Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) counselor.



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# Notes from the Director

## Growing a Healthier Community Together

By Anne Holcomb



Opportunities often manifest in unexpected ways. Earlier this year, Food for People was contacted by our local Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to see if we would be interested in partnering on a new outreach project for CalFresh, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. The idea of a partnership was not new, as we've been working together for several years to coordinate outreach for CalFresh and provide training on the application process for community based organizations working with low income individuals and households. The goal has always been to increase food security for low income residents by providing additional resources and benefits that make it possible for them to purchase nutritious, culturally appropriate foods that meet their personal dietary needs. Our efforts to date have been largely successful but have often been limited by staffing resources. But thanks to the new outreach project initiated by DHHS, we've been able to implement some new strategies that will reach a larger number of households via multiple access points.

As noted by DHHS Director Phillip Crandall in a recent Times Standard article, this effort is linked to health care reform with an emphasis on preventive services and the reduction of long term

health care costs by emphasizing the importance of a healthy diet and physical activity in preventing obesity and other food-related illnesses. This is especially important in Humboldt County, where many of our residents have limited access to affordable nutritious food.

Food for People's project is one of about 30 that DHHS is supporting, but we are by far one of the largest. The goal is still focused on increasing enrollment in CalFresh by connecting directly with those who are potentially eligible; the exciting part is that we have some new "tools" at our disposal to make it work. The project builds on the success of an ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funded project two years ago in which DHHS provided funding for us to assemble high quality, nutritious food boxes that were distributed to CalWorks eligible families through the food bank and the county's Mobile Engagement Vehicle (MEV). The food boxes were provided to those who were interested in being prescreened for a wide array of services that would benefit their families, helping them meet their immediate need for food while putting the pieces in place to connect them with ongoing services.

This round of funding takes that concept several steps further and helps us incorporate a stronger nutrition message in the process. Thanks to the additional funds, we are able to purchase six to eight nutritious, nonperishable food items each month that are assembled into emergency food bags. These bags are given out to individuals served through the MEV and the Street Outreach Services (SOS) vehicle who are accessing county services. The additional food is also being given out to the clients of Food for People's programs. The timing couldn't be better, as

federal funding for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which we have typically used to purchase supplemental foods for our Pantry Network and other programs, has been held up in Congress this year and is threatened with complete elimination. Lacking the funds to purchase these additional items, food boxes would be much smaller and would not last more than a couple of days at best, leaving our clients at increased risk for hunger. We are grateful that the clients served by the MEV and SOS vehicles, as well as those served by our programs, will be able to receive the food they need to maintain their health and well being.

The other even more exciting component of this project is the initiation of a Mobile Produce Pantry - something we've wanted to do for years to build on the success of the free, farmers' market style produce distributions that take place May through October in Redway, Garberville, Fortuna and Eureka. The markets are extremely popular but don't reach those living in the outlying areas in what are referred to as "food deserts," communities without access to fresh, affordable food.

The first step in setting up the Mobile Produce Pantries was to purchase a refrigerated truck that will traverse the county in conjunction with the MEV and SOS vehicles. The truck has been in service for several weeks now, visiting the communities of Rio Dell, Weitchpec, Orleans, Manila, Willow Creek, Orick and Bridgeville, and the turnout has been even better than expected. The regularly scheduled MEV and SOS site visits draw a steadily increasing number of households to access county services and select 15-20 lbs. of fresh produce for their households.

The produce we are distributing

comes from a variety of sources, including purchases from local farms. The fresh, and often organic produce, is combined with produce acquired through the statewide Farm to Family program, which last year provided 100 million pounds of low-cost produce to food banks located throughout California. This makes it possible for us to support local agriculture, while stretching the funding as far as possible to provide great variety and quality. So far, it's been a win-win for all concerned. Our Nutrition Education staff provides recipes and taste testing opportunities at each of the sites and our staff is always available to answer questions about the CalFresh program to help them get started.

The funding provided has also made it possible for us to continue the successful "Humboldt Market Match" pilot we initiated last year in partnership with the North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA). The Humboldt Market Match, which was funded last year with grants from Roots of Change and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), encourages CalFresh recipients to use their benefits at Farmers' Markets through utilization of an incentive model; individuals who swipe their EBT cards at the Market Managers' booth for \$10 in tokens receive an additional \$5 in "incentive" tokens to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables, once per market. The response was nothing short of phenomenal. Thanks to the Humboldt Market Match and extensive outreach efforts, EBT usage at the five NCGA markets increased by 319% in one year, which directly benefits our local farmers, while providing low income households with nutritious, high quality produce. This year, thanks to the DHHS funding and continued support from Roots of Change and CDFA, the Humboldt Market Match is being expanded to include WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Voucher recipients. The Humboldt Market Match program is also in place at the Fortuna and Garberville Farmers' Markets,

which just started accepting CalFresh this year thanks to technical assistance and support provided by the Community Alliance for Family Farmers (CAFF).

This project has obviously been an enormous undertaking for the staff and volunteers at Food for People that has required additional staff and a reorganization of some of our operations in recent months. The bottom line is that we are truly thrilled to be able to improve the health and well being of our low income friends and neighbors by providing additional quantities of high quality nonperishable foods and fresh produce for households countywide and providing them with the resources necessary to sustain these "healthy habits" into the future. That's why we'd like to applaud our partners at DHHS for taking innovative steps to help create a healthier Humboldt for all. Working together, we ARE making a difference.

## From Donors to Vendors

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food. Several families were very excited to be receiving carrots that were grown such a short distance from their home. Many people were extremely grateful, and you could tell that fresh fruits and vegetables in such abundance were a rarity in many of their kitchens. After three hours, almost 70 households served, and approximately 1,000 lbs. of free food distributed, we packed it up and went back to Eureka.

The truly heartening aspect of this new program is its broad scope and reach. With a large refrigerated truck, we are able to reach many rural sites per month. Thousands of pounds of produce will be purchased locally, strengthening the bond between Food for People and the local farming community. It is an honor to be able to share the wealth of delicious and nutritious food with our food bank community.



Photo by Ginny Dexter





Photo by Chris Wisner

## Creating a Future

By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director

The other day my phone rang and touched my heart. There was a donor on the other end letting me know they were naming Food for People in their will.

The more I work at Food for People, the more I see our greater mission as working towards the health and well-being of our community. Many of our programs stress nutrition and health while providing food. We have programs especially geared for seniors and nursing moms. We deliver food to those who are homebound while they are recovering from surgery or coping with terminal illness. We work in community to provide fresh produce to those who can't afford to buy fruits and vegetables. We are especially concerned with the children in Humboldt County who can be innocent victims of today's economy and need good food in order to grow up healthy.

We appreciate your support right now and will miss you and your gifts when you're no longer here. By including Food for People in your estate plans, you can play a role in the future of your community and create a legacy for your children and grandchildren.

Some of the ways we work to create a hunger-free community include:

- providing supplemental food for those in need
- teaching nutrition education and offering free cooking classes
- advocating for legislation that protects food & nutrition programs for those in need
- helping eligible households apply for assistance
- providing emergency assistance in the event of a disaster

The steps to taking action are simple. Contact your financial professional to figure out what works best for you and your family. Learn about the different ways you can name Food for People in your plans. Make sure your will or living trust is up to date. You can make a gift of any size. Let us know your plan to support us as we would like to know your wishes regarding any bequest, and we appreciate the opportunity to say thank you.

Remembering Food for People in your estate plans can be a meaningful opportunity to establish a legacy and work towards a healthier world for future generations. Imagine a world without hunger – we do!

## From Farm Bill to Table

By Heidi McHugh, Community Education and Outreach Coordinator

Approximately every five years, the United States Congress turns its attention to a large piece of legislation known as the Farm Bill. This comprehensive bill sets policy and establishes the budgets for programs under the umbrella of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Rural development, forestry, commodities, crop insurance, energy, and nutrition services are just a few of the broad areas covered under the current Farm Bill that was formally called the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.

Budgeting for nutrition services accounted for 68% of the 2008 Farm Bill, almost entirely for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, and currently known as CalFresh in California. At that time, the Great Recession had just begun to throw instability into U.S. and world markets. The looming crisis and political climate was generous to SNAP in the 2008 Farm Bill; an additional \$10 billion was granted to food assistance programs over the course of the next ten years, to help households in need. At that time, 29 million Americans were receiving SNAP benefits. SNAP alleviates food insecurity and malnutrition by helping households put healthy food on the table. Participants receive a debit card for purchasing food and food producing seeds and plants.

In addition to the increased funding, improvements that would increase access to SNAP were included in the 2008 bill. States were given the option to accept client signatures by phone and reduced reporting requirements for all households. Since that time, the state of California has also removed the finger-imaging requirement and asset test from the CalFresh application process. Telephone interviews are now a standard prac-

tice, whereas they used to be an exception. Some of these changes were implemented in response to the economic crisis. Many of the changes served as an acknowledgement of the importance of improving access to assistance.

Four years later, the economy still struggles to recover. The costs of fuel and food continue to rise, while wages remain stagnant and have not kept up with inflation. The need for SNAP has grown and so has the number of participants. 46 million people are receiving help from SNAP, and almost half of those are working households. According to Feeding America, 84% of SNAP benefits go to households that include a child, a disabled person or an elderly person. The USDA reports that the average gross monthly income for a SNAP household is \$731. Considering these numbers, the protection and strength of our safety net is of great importance in the formation of the next Farm Bill.

The 2008 Farm Bill is set to expire this September and drastic SNAP cuts have been proposed by many congressional lawmakers. The process of drafting a completed bill that is approved by both the House and the Senate is complex and can be lengthy.

It is unclear if a new Farm Bill will be ready by the September deadline. What is certain is that nutrition assistance for our neediest families is in danger of being reduced at a time when it is needed most. Food banks and church pantries throughout the country are already serving a client base that was unimaginable ten years ago. Any cut to SNAP will shift the burden onto these agencies that are already serving an increasing number of people in need with ever decreasing resources. Please contact your members of Congress and urge them to protect SNAP in the next Farm Bill.



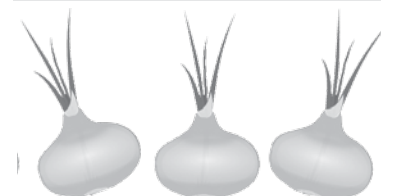
*The 800 Club is our regular giving program comprised of community members who donate monthly or quarterly. Why 800? Many, many years ago, 800 people donating \$5 a month is what it took to cover our yearly budget. Since that time we have greatly increased our services to children, seniors and working 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.*



Many thanks to all who helped us celebrate our donors and supporters and allowed us to say thank you with local food and drink and music!



### Please send me an 800 Club Packet

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Please charge my credit Visa or Master Card:

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## Volunteer Spotlight

Continued from page 2

struggle with getting enough food.

In addition to gaining clerical skills and professional experience, Shawna has remarked on her newfound ability to identify various and unusual fruits and vegetables, as well as learning all the different ways people eat. Shawna says she has also learned a lot about herself through working here. She has become more patient and can tolerate more stress, and has become more organized. She also realized that she is not the only one in need - everyone has a story and there is no need to judge others, because we are like them.

In her free time, Shawna loves to hang out with her family. She also enjoys sports, and in fact, plays on the Food Bank Beetniks softball team. After her time with us, Shawna hopes to work as a receptionist in a doctor's office, and plans to go back to school to work on her nursing degree.

**Heather** has been working with us since January of this year, starting out as a warehouse assistant and taking on a variety of other jobs over time. Heather prepares lunch for our volunteers most days at the food bank, experimenting with new healthy recipes and ideas she's picked up through her experiences here. She also works in the warehouse crating produce and pricing pantry items, packing

bread, and assisting our Pantry Network Coordinator with packing food pallets for Pantry Week. Heather works in the Choice Pantry by assisting shoppers with their appointments, filing and entering data. Heather is bubbly and exuberant, quick to laugh, and eager to help.



Heather likes that everyone at Food for People is nice and upbeat, and that we help people in times of crisis. She describes the positive atmosphere and says she enjoys the work even though it's hard, because it is consistent and the systems are easy to be-

come familiar with. She describes many of our services like the free People's Produce Markets and kids' Summer Lunch Program, noting how much worse off the community would be without our programs.

Though Heather was already familiar with warehouse work, she has learned a great deal during her time here. In addition to working on clerical skills and professionalism, Heather has also learned to cook complete meals for large groups of people, becoming familiar with various dietary preferences such as vegan or gluten-free. She remarks that she eats a little healthier now. Heather says she has also learned how to work under stress and keep a cool head, while becoming more reliable and, "a better person overall. That's what my daughter says anyway." Working here has made her not think about herself so much all the time, and has helped her learn to prioritize things in her life. She says her problems really aren't bad compared to others in our community

and it makes her grateful for what she has.

In her free time, Heather spends time with her family and walks their dogs. She also plays on the Food Bank Beetniks softball team. When her time here is completed, Heather says she will find a job, and continue to volunteer cooking lunches. Eventually she dreams of owning a vineyard with her family, which she says is a possibility in the not-too-distant future.

For these three women, working at Food for People has been more than just job experience. It has been an opportunity for them to learn about themselves and the world around them, changing the way they think about healthy communities and helping each other. In these ways, the effects of such Work Experience programs are clearly varied, synergistic and wide-reaching. Not only do Work Experience participants create opportunities for individual, personal and professional development, they can also be vehicles for community development and change. Thank you April, Shawna, Heather, and all our other work experience placements and volunteers for your hard work, willingness to learn, and desire to help others in our community. You are the heart of Food for People.



### 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.*

## Backpacks for Kids Interview, Susan Maschmeier

By Niki Gribi, Child Nutrition Program Coordinator

Susan Maschmeier is the Healthy Start and After School Director for South Bay Union School District, located just south of Eureka. Healthy Start provides family support services, like a Family Resource Center. 65% of the kids in this district are in the After School program, with nearly 300 children between three schools. What follows is an interview that shares some of the history of our relationship with the South Bay Backpacks for Kids site and how the program helps prevent weekend hunger.

**How did you come to be in this position?**

"I had a long history working with this school district because this is where my children went to school. I originally worked in the school as a parent helper and in-

structional aide. I had experience writing grants and ended up writing the first Healthy Start grant. We were awarded the grant and that's how I became the director. When we received grants for the After School program, I took that on as well. My background is in business, which ties in well with what I'm doing now."

**How long have you been in this position?**

"I have been here for 12 years."

**How do you partner with Food for People?**

"Currently, we work together to provide the Backpacks for Kids program. In the past, and hopefully again in the future, we also partnered to provide nutrition education for the kids in the After School Program."

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

"I do outreach to all the families, I write grants to provide matching funding, and I oversee the staff here that receive the bags and distribute them. That includes tagging the bags for the different After School Program rooms, sending others to the classrooms for students who aren't in After School, making sure they have their bags when they check out from After School, and sending letters to all the parents explaining how the program works."

**How do you identify families for the program?**

"We work with our awesome secretaries who are really on the front lines with the families. They interact with the kids and parents every day. Our district is very personalized, so the secretaries know the families really well and know the ones who need a little extra

help. I also know a lot from working with them on other family services."

The program has been running here for about six years, so it is really well known by the families, teachers and staff. All of them will contact me directly if they know someone who should be getting the food or want to receive the Backpacks food.

The program is also very well appreciated by the kids themselves. They love it! They love taking their bags home and I think they get a self-esteem boost from bringing something for their families. We also have a lot of students participating here, so rather than it being a stigma, it's a desirable thing. If one kid sees the others getting their bags, they will come to me and ask, "When can I get a bag too? I want one of those bags!"

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## Ingredients for a Successful Event

Start with some fabulous service groups, in this case the Rotary Clubs of Eureka, Southwest and Old Town and the Soroptimist Club of Humboldt Bay; an excellent location such as Cher-ae Heights Casino in Trinidad; and a worthy cause, Backpacks for Kids, Food for People's weekend nutrition program for local school children. Spice it up with live music by Kathy Lee and Jeffrey Smoller from Magnolia. Have Rex Bohn host both silent and live auctions. Add in a competitive sculpture contest with Backpack food! Voila, we end up with weekly backpacks full of nutritious groceries for local school children during the school year. Thanks to all who participated in cooking up this year's Backpack Buddy Night.



## Cultivating Food and Communities By Debbie Perticara, Redwood Community Action Agency Planning Specialist

Few things give me such delight as eating a strawberry or tomato freshly picked from the garden. Gardening is a great way to get your hands on healthy, fresh and affordable foods. With the high price of food, growing your own meals makes more sense (and cents!). A family can save up to \$600 a year on groceries by eating the harvest of an eight by eight foot garden, according to a report by the University of California Los Angeles. Using CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) to buy seeds and starts makes gardening even more economical. Growing food means you get to choose what to grow and how to grow it. You know exactly what goes into your food. And it's probably the freshest food you'll ever eat.

In addition to increasing access to affordable and fresh foods, gardening improves health in numerous ways. Physical health is enhanced by endless opportunities for exercise in the garden. Many of us, despite good intentions, do not get enough physical activity. From

shoveling and digging to hauling and bending, there are multiple ways to burn calories and get your heart pumping while growing food.

While gardening gets your blood pumping, it also has a soothing effect on nerves. Many people report gardening to be calming, saying it helps reduce stress and improve mental health. Gardening is also a great activity for the whole family.

Community gardens offer all these benefits, and more. Community gardens are generally pieces of land gardened by a group of community members, allowing them to grow their own food or donate what they have grown. In Humboldt County alone, there are over 30 community gardens, and that's not even counting school gardens. Community gardens come in all shapes and sizes. Some rent plots while others are tended communally. Some are on private land and others are on public land. All provide a place for people to garden together, learn from each other and share knowledge, seeds, tools and harvests. Many of the gardens do-

nate a portion of their crops to food distribution programs, and several are even designated as "food pantry gardens," growing fresh veggies and fruits exclusively for community members with the fewest resources.

Garden users and recipients of garden produce are not the only ones who reap the bountiful benefits of community gardens — their values extend to the broader community. Community gardens beautify neighborhoods, often providing lush greenery and splashes of color. They build a sense of "community" by encouraging interactions between neighbors and allowing people of all ages and backgrounds to share skills, world views and cultural traditions. Property values have even been shown to increase in neighborhoods with community gardens.

To nurture and sustain these valuable community resources, a group of gardens got together in 2009 to form the North Coast Community Garden Collaborative (NCCGC). The NCCGC is a support network of and for community gardens and their partners, working

together to increase access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for all residents on California's North Coast. NCCGC aims to connect gardens to each other, so they may share seeds, tools, ideas, experiences and "people power." They envision a thriving network of interconnected autonomous gardens actively supported by their North Coast communities. To this end they offer a tool-share program, secure and distribute donations of garden materials, maintain a website ([www.northcoastgardens.org](http://www.northcoastgardens.org)), produce a monthly newsletter, help coordinate workshops and volunteer work days, connect gardens with resources in the community, and meet regularly with gardeners to discuss successes and challenges and offer planning assistance.

The NCCGC is overseen by a volunteer steering committee, with representatives from community gardens, Food For People, Redwood Community Action Agency, St. Joseph Health System, and the City of Eureka. Redwood Community Action Agency serves as the fis-

cal agent and provides two part-time staff funded by a grant from Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services. The steering committee generally meets in Eureka monthly, and meetings are rotated to other cities quarterly to be more accessible to a wider range of people. Meetings are open to the public and anyone may attend.

The NCCGC is always looking for more people to get involved. If you are interested in joining or starting a community garden, or learning more about one, please visit [www.northcoastgardens.org](http://www.northcoastgardens.org), call (707) 269-2071 or email [DebbieP@nrsrc.org](mailto:DebbieP@nrsrc.org). There are many ways to support community gardens, including through volunteering, donations of resources or money, hosting an educational workshop, helping with outreach, and more. Together, we can grow a healthier Humboldt community — where everyone can enjoy freshly picked strawberries and tomatoes.

## Golf Tournament coming on September 13th & 14th

The Humboldt Association of Realtors has designated Food for People's Backpacks for Kids Program as the recipient of their 18th Annual Golf Tournament.



Beginning Thursday evening, September 13th at 5:30 p.m., there will be a "cook your own steak" dinner at the Elk's Lodge in Eureka along with live, silent and Dutch auctions. Friday, September 14th, the golf tournament will be held at the Beau Pre Golf Course in McKinleyville. There are still many ways to participate in this event! Sign up to play golf or invite some friends and sign up as a team, have your business sponsor one of the holes or just join us for a delicious dinner and fun evening the night before the tournament. For more information, contact Kristen Zeck at the Humboldt Association of Realtors at (707) 442-2978 or email her at [kristen@harealtors.com](mailto:kristen@harealtors.com). This is a great way to have a fabulous community-filled time and support an excellent program helping local school children.



Dana Jones of the Open Heart Quilters presents Anne Holcomb, Executive Director of Food for People, with a check for \$1,151 in the photo on left. The quilters themselves raised the money by selling raffle tickets for this gorgeous quilt, which had also been locally crafted by the Open Heart Quilters. This group has been meeting for more than 16 years, during which they have given away more than 60 quilts to different local non-profits in order to raise money for the organizations. Thanks to all who participated and gave of their talent, time and hearts!



## Grilling and Thrilling!

By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director



Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup> the North Coast Co-op, in partnership with Food for People, hosted the Seventh Annual Thrill of the Grill. Thank you North Coast Co-op for preparing a fabulous BBQ with the help of donations from your distributors, which include Humboldt Grassfed Beef, Tofu Shop, Niman Ranch, Oroweat, Loleta Cheese, Mike Hudson Distributing and Earl's Organic Produce. Special thanks to Nate Weisman and Toby Massey of the Co-op for making this a successful and fun event. And a big shout of thanks to Dogbone for jazzing

up this years BBQ with fabulous music! Even the weather cooperated and we were treated to sunshine along with rocking sounds and delicious food. Thanks to everyone who showed their support by attending this event and having lunch with us. All proceeds from the day go to Food for People's Child Nutrition Programs, including Children's Summer Lunch, currently at 20 sites throughout Humboldt County, Backpacks for Kids and After School Snack. We appreciate your support in helping us make sure that every child, every day has enough to eat in Humboldt County.



Two photos on left show John King and Tim, John and Eliot Classen of Dogbone jamming for the Thrill of the Grill. Middle top photo shows Kelli Reese, Toby Massey and Nate Weisman from the North Coast Co-op grilling Humboldt Grassfed Beef Hamburgers, Tofu Shop Tofu Burgers and Niman Ranch links. Bottom middle photo with Toby grilling. Bottom right photo shows Lauren Fawcett from the North Coast Co-op and Jerry Simone, Board Member of Food for People, hamming it up while greeting people having lunch with us that day.



## The Green Road Less Taken

By Megan Westersund, Nutrition Education Coordinator

As we get further into summer, we receive a variety of vegetables in our pantries. From artichokes to zucchini, there are many options for cooking healthy and creative meals. We provide recipes for the produce clients are receiving, as well as samples of dishes that can be made with the produce. It is especially challenging and fun when we receive vegetables that are not as well known.

The latest vegetable that has people stymied is fennel. Most people are not familiar with the licorice scented vegetable, with its bulbous root and fluffy fronds. It is a versatile vegetable, an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of fiber. It can be cooked or eaten raw and has a satisfying crunch. I roasted the bulbs one day and gave samples to clients while they waited for their appointment. A few people excitedly walked out of the pantry with fennel, just a few minutes after they discovered what it was. Giving out samples in the pantry is one of my favorite activities, because nothing is more

satisfying to me than seeing people excited about new vegetables.

I also receive client's recipes for using produce, which is really motivating. Lately I have been chatting with folks about their favorite greens recipes, as greens have been abundant at the monthly free People's Produce Market. One person makes pesto with the greens and then freezes the extra in ice cube trays to use for quick meals. Another client has a great recipe for kale soup that has chicken and rice in it, which makes a complete nutritious meal for her family. She makes a large pot and then freezes the rest into serving sizes for future meals. A young mother told me that she makes kale chips for her kids, and they can't get enough.

These are only a few of the ways that our food bank community has been getting creative to extend the life of the food that they receive. As we continue to have abundance of summer vegetables, I look forward to hearing more about how clients are cooking creatively.

## Watermelon Salsa

As we are in the peak of summer and melon season, here is a recipe for watermelon salsa. It makes a colorful chunky salsa that is great for dipping, adding some brightness to fish tacos or as a great side dish for a summer barbeque. You could also substitute honeydew or cantaloupe instead of watermelon for this recipe.

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups melon (watermelon, honeydew or cantaloupe)
- 1 cup cucumber (peeled, seeded and chopped)
- 1/4 cup onion, red or white (chopped)
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro or mint, chopped (optional)
- 1 jalapeño (seeded and finely chopped and/or hot sauce to taste)
- 1/4 cup lime juice or lemon juice

### Instructions:

In a medium size bowl, stir together all ingredients. Taste mixture and season with more lemon or lime juice as needed. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes.

## Backpacks for Kids Continued from page 5

**Can you tell me about some of the families you work with? What are their lives like?**

"One story that always comes to mind for me is one mother who would come to get her son by bicycle every day. One day, it was pouring rain, I mean just pouring. And here she comes on her bike with a bunch of garbage bags. She wrapped up her son's books and the food package in those bags to protect them, balanced them all on the bike and took them home grateful as can be. She never complained, she was so happy to have that food, and there was no way she was going to miss picking it up because of the rain. That proved to me that this was not a frivolous thing for her. She needed that bag. It was that important.

We have a lot of families who take in other family members who have fallen on hard times. They want to be generous and give whatever they can, but now they are trying to support more people on the same tight food budget. I remember one little boy from a situation like this who showed up to school with two different shoes on. They looked similar, but when I really looked, I saw they were both right feet. He said he couldn't find the right match. I learned that his family, which was six people living in a mobile home, had taken in another relative with kids, and now there were a dozen people living in that little mobile home! The family was usually very organized in their small space, but now things were in temporary chaos. That little boy was determined to come to school, so he just did his best to find two shoes and get to school. To him, this was just one big happy family living together and he wasn't whining about it at all.

We have so many families trying to make ends meet. A lot of them I call the "new poor." These are people who have lost their homes to foreclosure or their primary breadwinner has been laid off. They are not familiar with the networks for support or with asking for help. They are shell-shocked. They really need the help of their community, and at our school, there's no stigma around getting that help. Families feel welcome here and are not embarrassed.

Another thing we're seeing more of is couch surfing. Whole families are couch surfing, staying with friends or family or other people for a night or two and mov-

ing on. I have kids here who don't know their address, not because they are too young to remember it, but because they don't know where they're staying tonight. One of these couch surfing moms has no car, but she wants her child to come to school here consistently. So she brings him to school every day, and picks him up, on the city bus. She has to ride with him because he's too young to ride alone. These are the realities of life for some people.

What I'm hearing from families is that in the last ten years, as house prices went up, rents went up to match. Now we have the foreclosure situation and house prices are falling, but rents have not dropped. High rents put a huge strain on the family budget. And now, we have the situation in which the owner of the property might be losing the home to foreclosure, so even if these families have rented for a long time and been good renters, they are out.

We have a lot of people living in crisis, whether it be losing their home, losing their job, a medical situation, or other things. People living in crisis can't think straight. They are reeling. They can't plan healthy meals, they can't shop for food, they can't cook. Many of these things are just out of the question. That's the way a lot of people are living. They don't know if there's a roof over their head! And a lot of us are just one crisis away from poverty. One medical emergency, one car accident, and we could be in the same boat."

**Do most of them have jobs or not?**

"A lot of parents are working multiple jobs, or one is working nights and the other days. They are piecing life together, doing the best they can. A lot of them are working, but not full time. There are many families where both parents were working, but now one has lost their job or been cut back on hours. This is a big change, and we're seeing more and more of that."

**How do they get enough food?**

"Some families are on assistance, like welfare or Food Stamps. Some visit the food pantry. About 500 kids in our district are eating free or reduced price lunch at school every day. We also have a breakfast-for-all program, so any child who wants to can have breakfast here in the morning. And this year, we started serving after-

school meals, what we call "super snack," to all the kids in our After School Program. There is still a lot of food insecurity, and a lot of families face tough decisions between paying their bills or buying food."

**Can you tell me about the kids? How does the stress in their parents' or caretakers' lives affect them?**

"I see it in many ways. There are behavior issues. Often, for these kids, their coping mechanisms aren't as strong as they could be. They will react out of proportion to the situation at hand. Kids seem to be more aware of household stresses than they used to be. They talk about it more, which says to me that this is a hot topic at home and their parents aren't able to shelter their kids from the tough realities."

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

"Everyone loves it. The kids love it. There is no stigma or embarrassment, and maybe that's because we've had the program going for many years now. I think it also has to do with the way we've promoted the program as a way for kids to take a leadership role in their families. They have a real sense of importance, bringing that food home. Kids are always asking about it, even if they don't necessarily need food. Everybody wants it."

**Have you seen any changes or impacts for the participating children?**

"I do see an impact. For one, it lowers the parental stress level. Parents feel supported and they are more comfortable. That helps the kids feel more comfortable. For another, the kids feel better on Mondays. We used to have a lot of stress and tiredness on Mondays. The kids were sluggish and falling asleep in class. I even used to have a Monday Meal here in my office for some of the kids who really needed it. We're not seeing as much of that at all anymore."

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

"I work with and talk to other family services and after school people all over the state, and partnering is the big conversation these days. How can we better stretch our funds? How can we work together more efficiently? This Backpacks program is the best model of partnership I have ever seen. Just for South Bay and Pine Hill schools, the school district is partnering with Food for People, *Continued on page 11*

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

Call 707-445-3166 or email:

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

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

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

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

Please have someone contact me:

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

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



## Passages...

### Argelia Muñoz



We are very happy to welcome Argelia Muñoz as our new Community Food Programs Coordinator and a great addition to our staff. A California native, Argelia attended Humboldt State University and graduated with a degree in Environmental Science and an emphasis in Advocacy. She stayed in Humboldt due to a growing appreciation and love of our area and community. Argelia oversees our Homebound Delivery Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Senior Brown Bag Program, ensuring that more than 700 senior and homebound clients receive nutritious foods each month. When she is not working at Food for People, she enjoys gardening and cooking up vegan fare.

### Christine Parris



We welcome Christine Parris as our Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator during the coming summer and fall. Nicole Gribo has

recently taken maternity leave and left the programs in Christine's very capable hands for this time period. Christine recently graduated from Chico States' Nutrition and Food Science program with an emphasis in child nutrition. Learning the atmosphere of Humboldt County's nutrition programs has been right up her alley, as well as very rewarding. Christine tells us, "Helping provide lunches for children so far has been a blessing. There are a lot of kids in need in our community and I'm glad I can contribute to Food for People's goal to end childhood hunger." In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and traveling to unique and interesting places. She is excited to become a part of Food for People and contribute to our community.

### Edgard Vega



We welcome Edgard Vega as our Summer Lunch Delivery Driver. Originally from Nicaragua, Ed grew up in Orange County. He wanted to get away from Southern California and decided to transfer to Humboldt State University in order to study Social Work. He started volunteering at Food for People in the middle of his second semester and loved working here. When he heard there was a summer position available, he jumped at the opportunity. He enjoys his job, even if it does require him to get up at the crack of dawn! We welcome Edgard with his boundless good energy and hard work ethic, even in the early morning.

### Tim Crosby



Tim Crosby has recently joined us as the Warehouse Food Distribution Driver. He has been volunteering with Food for People for the last year, before entering this newly created staff position. His evolving responsibilities include the selection and distribution of fresh, local produce throughout Humboldt County on our new refrigerated truck, the Mobile Produce Pantry. He also confers and coordinates with the DHHS Mobile Engagement Vehicle (MEV), as well as CalFresh Outreach staff, in order to supplement the food needs of some of our more remote communities.

Tim and his wife decided to move to Humboldt County three years ago, having visited here continually over the years. Tim came to Food for People by his desire to give back to the community, after spending so many years 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 throughout the world, 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 sour-dough style. He dabbles in organic gardening, computers, and overall gadget tinkering.

### Chris Smiley



We were very sad to see Chris Smiley, our former Community Foods Coordinator, leave the area, as well as Food for People, to find a sunnier and warmer climate in the Southwest. Chris was well-named in that he brought light and smiles into a room with him. His passion for helping the people in his programs was obvious to all. He was truly inspired by the food needs of local seniors and homebound folks in our community and made sure they received healthy, nutritious foods via our programs. Chris also brought his kitchen talents to the job, as he had been a chef and kitchen manager in Humboldt County restaurants for more than ten years. He participated yearly in a Mendocino County nonprofit benefit putting his culinary talents to work. We appreciated his passion and hard work, as well as having his upbeat and playful energy to bounce off of at the end of the day. We miss you, Chris!

## Tributes, Memorials & Gift Contributions

### IN HONOR

BETTE DOBKIN  
HART & BUCKLEY FAMILIES  
NANCY DELANEY  
JOHN E EULEY  
OZZIE & BETTY POMEROY  
HOMELESS VETERANS  
DENNIS RENFRO  
GAIL COONEN  
SARAH & KATE MANINGER  
THEA GAST  
FRANK & JUDY WHITE  
DIANE SANDIGO

### IN MEMORIAL

MARYLOU POWERS  
BOBY HAMPTON  
JAMES EACKER  
DOLORES PARKER  
SUSIE WILLIAMS  
REBECCA EDWARDS  
ROBERT & CORRINE SMITH  
GRANDMA CAROLYN BONNIE TRAUT  
KEV DAVLIN  
DIANE L SANDIA  
JEAN KIDDER  
NAT & ELANA GARIBALDI  
RUTH WHITE  
LIZ ANDER  
LAURA

### 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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

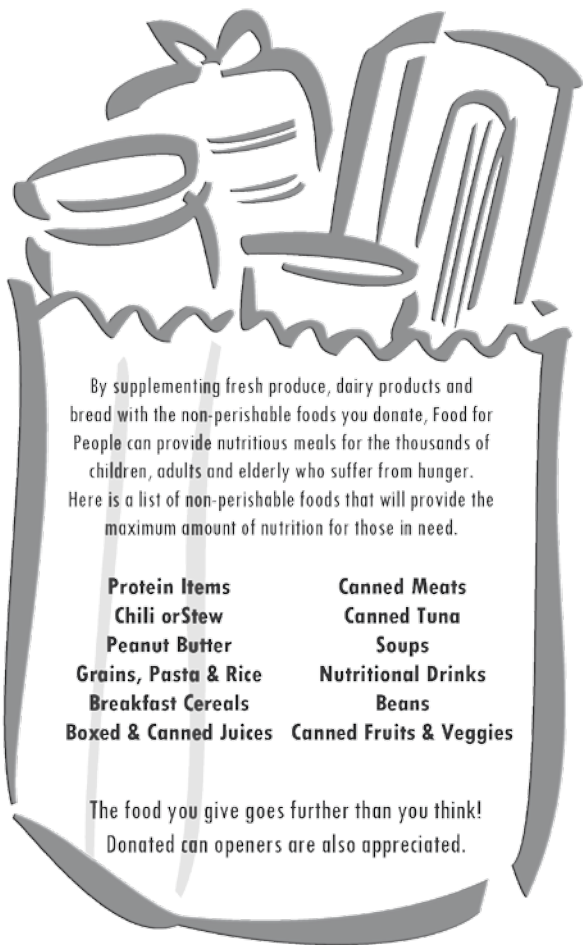
Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Clip and mail to:

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





## Stretching Dollars in the Choice Pantry

By Deborah Waxman, Director of Programs

I was recently giving a Food for People donor a guided tour in our Choice Pantry. One of the most interesting things about the way we give Choice Pantry tours is that a donor can see what it is like to “shop” in the pantry. We use the same shopping guide that is used on our regular distribution days to select foods from every food group, and the feedback is similar to that of our Choice Pantry shoppers: the shopping experience is familiar and comfortable, like it would be at a grocery store. At the end of my donor tour, we stood with our grocery cart full of fresh fruits and vegetables and other fresh and nonperishable foods, and we talked about how far a donation stretches. Specifically, we talked about what this particular full grocery cart of groceries costs the food bank, compared to what it would cost someone to buy at grocery store retail prices. She was amazed at how efficiently we feed our community with her financial donation.

After shopping in the Choice Pantry, a family of 3 to 5 people leaves with a grocery cart full of food, which if bought at a low-cost grocery store, would cost \$85. Not everyone lives in convenient proximity to a low-cost grocery store, so it is likely to cost far more - probably \$100 or more. However, through the Choice Pantry, that grocery cart of food is provided to that family at a cost of \$25 to Food for People, some of which is covered by contracts and grants within several of our programs, but much of which depends on financial donations from the community. The good news is that we continue to provide an array of healthy groceries to households in need at a low cost to the organization, and we do it by stretching a dollar to approximately four times what it would buy at a grocery store.

Back in the spring of 2009, as a side trip on vacation, I first visited what we affectionately refer to as our “sister choice pantry”

in New York City, the West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH). They provided us with much of the technical support that helped get our gears turning to customize the choice pantry concept into a unique and place-based model in Eureka.

WSCAH's Executive Director graciously toured me through the pantry's operations, philosophies, clients intake process and the food acquisition network that gleans and delivers food to pantries throughout New York City. In the pantry itself, it made an enormous impression on me to be able to walk in the shoes of a person going through the process of visiting the pantry, from start to finish. I loved how dignified and down-to-earth the model felt. It really did feel like shopping in a small neighborhood corner store - not too differently from how our Choice Pantry is set up in Eureka. And it was easy to slip right into volunteering and helping people navigate through the food selection process using their shopping guide. At the end of the tour of WSCAH, the Executive Director explained to me that the typical grocery cart a shopper fills with pantry food would cost at least \$150 at the grocery store next door. The cost to WSCAH was \$35. The math alone amazed me. A financial donation really does go a long way, and after having a chance to walk through a shopping experience, I felt inspired to be part of it.

My most vivid memory of that trip is of the first gentleman I helped shop in WSCAH's pantry, who began his day feeling so frustrated with his life and health



circumstances that he couldn't be around or talk to anyone. But a minute or two after we started the Choice Pantry shopping process, there was an instant transformation in his demeanor. He calmed a lot and our interaction became much more comfortable and friendly. I could see that it was because this was the first time (that day or maybe in a while) that he was able to participate in a process that was familiar and gave him choices that he could make all on his own. It is empowering and grounding for shoppers who do not have or are not given the opportunity to make their own personal choices in other areas of their lives. Transitioning to a Choice Pantry model of distribution is about more than changing the physical layout and food selection process - it also represents a shift in philosophy for staff, volunteers and shoppers alike.

As we approach our third anniversary of Food for People's Choice Pantry this fall, I see the same qualities of dignity and respect shine through. Together, our staff, volunteers and shoppers provide feedback that helps us to continually make improvements to the shopping experience. We take seriously our responsibility to provide good service, and we're grateful to be able to stretch the dollars that allow us to continue our work.

### 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.

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CLICK ON THE LINK:



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## Food For People Responds After Disasters

By Corey Tipton, Bookkeeper Plus and Jason Hervin, Pantry Network Coordinator

Humboldt County is susceptible to experiencing numerous types of natural disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and fires. As first responders, state, county and city emergency personnel and resources are poised to respond all over the county to such events, but their supplies, equipment and man-power may be severely limited to respond to all emergency situations based on the scope, nature and location of the disaster. That's where VOAD, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster, comes into play.

Founded in 1970, National VOAD was formed in response to the many challenges volunteer and relief organizations experienced following a devastating hurricane that hit the Gulf Coast of the United States. Over the course of the next twenty years, VOAD became an essential organization on the state and county levels nationwide as well as a support network of second responders in disaster relief operations. In response to the severe damage caused by several earthquakes in central Humboldt County in April 1992, Humboldt County VOAD was born.

Prior to establishing VOAD, many volunteer and nonprofit organizations aided disaster victims independently, oftentimes duplicating efforts, while also leaving some victims' needs unmet. Dissemination of vital information to disaster victims was often inadequate, communication among disaster agencies was limited and volunteers that wanted to help victims were left poorly trained. The main goals of VOAD are communication and sharing of information among governmental agencies and volunteer organizations (as well

as providing unified messages to the media), coordination of efforts to work together, collaboration to achieve specific goals without redundancy and duplication of efforts, and cooperation with other VOAD members as partners that could assist one another by sharing resources and personnel. VOAD members provide a forum where organizations can share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle, from preparation to response to overall recovery of their communities.

As an active member of HCVOAD since its inception in 1992, Food For People has committed to take a leading role in the procurement, storage and distribution of perishable and non-perishable food for distribution at critical staging sites in affected areas around Humboldt County after a disaster. Through partnership with other local nonprofit organizations, and with the assistance of the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (HCOES), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), American Red Cross and Feeding America, the organization that governs food banks nationwide, the Food Bank for Humboldt County will be responsible for obtaining and directing food resources countywide. In addition, Food For People will provide a facility where donations of food and funds can be collected, sorted and disseminated appropriately.

The resources of HCOES and other first responding government agencies are severely limited during and just after a disaster, as they respond to the most critically affected areas to restore and maintain basic infrastructure and

services. They are not fully prepared to manage and assign tasks to volunteers or track and distribute truckloads of food and water or other vital emergency activities. VOAD member agencies are called upon to coordinate efforts and resources to provide these services to areas around the county that are in the greatest need.

When a large scale disaster strikes, HCOES would activate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) where representatives from the various "first responder agencies" (i.e. fire departments, police departments, Coast Guard, etc.) would convene. VOAD would then have a representative that would receive and coordinate the various requests for materials, personnel and logistics for the VOAD partner agencies. This helps HCOES focus on the emergency response and recovery while overseeing the overall disaster management. The VOAD agencies would have an outlet to coordinate their efforts to assist in a disaster response and recover situation.

HCVOAD meets bi-monthly to discuss current events, conduct preparedness and safety trainings, discuss hazard mitigation and maintain and continue the flow of communication among government agencies and volunteer organizations. Knowing how a disaster will affect an organization and community, assessing the many hazards and threats a disaster may bring, and setting priorities for disaster planning and response, are all key components to creating disaster resilient organizations and agencies that will be able to respond effectively when a disaster strikes, and assist in the speedy recovery of all affected areas of Humboldt County.

### Food For People Wish List

*Our goal of giving everything back to the community can be challenging and sometimes we go without. We would like to update the tools we use for general building and vehicle maintenance. We could use the following unused items:*

*Sockets, Wrenches, Screwdrivers,  
Hand Saw, Hammer, Rubber Mallet,  
Allen Wrenches & Pliers  
Ham Radio for Emergencies*

*So we can show our appreciation to volunteers:  
Special Discounts or Gift Certificates*

## New Pantry Location in Arcata

Jason Hervin, Pantry Network Coordinator

At the beginning of this year, Food for People opened a temporary food pantry at the Arcata First Presbyterian Church. This followed the closure of the North Coast Resource Center (NCRC) last December, where the Arcata food pantry was previously located. We wanted to ensure that low-income households in Arcata would continue to be served during this time of transition.

The First Presbyterian Church stepped up by providing one of their rooms to use as a temporary food pantry. Every Tuesday afternoon, we hosted our Arcata pantry distribution at their church. However, the lack of storage and refrigeration were big challenges, so every week required an extensive set up as well as break down of the pantry, plus the weekly transportation of the food back and forth from our warehouse. In the meantime, we searched for a more permanent location for a food pantry in Arcata. We are very grateful for the help of the First

Presbyterian Church for stepping in and helping us to maintain continuity during this time.

Early in our search we came across the Campbell Creek Connexion (Nazarene) Church, located near Humboldt State University on the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Union Streets. The church was interested in becoming involved and addressing the need. July was the first month at the new pantry site, which is open every Saturday from 10:00 am to 12 noon. The pantry has been running smoothly. To provide proper storage for the pantry, the site was awarded funding through the DHHS CalFresh Program to purchase a refrigerator and freezer for food storage and food carts to help clients move through the pantry. The equipment is due to arrive in August. We are excited to partner with this church, and feel fortunate to have such great partners within the faith-based community to ensure that food assistance is available to low-income families in Arcata.

## Backpacks for Kids *Continued from page 8*

three Rotary Clubs, the Rotaract, the Blood Bank and St. Joseph's Health System to make it happen. And it is very time and cost efficient! That makes it realistic for the school district to be involved. Each person on the staff gives just a little extra time and it all falls into place so smoothly. Also, the delivery people are so kind and generous.

They always arrive with a smile, asking what more they can do, acting as though we're doing them a favor providing this volunteer opportunity. It's lovely.

I love how flexible the program is. There aren't many rules and the paperwork is very minimal. A lot of families wouldn't participate if the application form was 12 pages long

and confusing. The requirements are so simple. That allows all of us to focus on getting food to kids who need it. That's the point and it's great to work with an organization that gets that.

Everyone believes in this program because everyone has found that it works."



## Locally Delicious

By Jason Whitley, Local Food Resource Coordinator

This summer marks the third year that Food for People is able to purchase thousands of pounds of high quality, organic produce from local farmers. This is made possible thanks to the efforts of the authors of *Locally Delicious: Recipes and Resources for Eating on the North Coast*, who challenged our community to meet their donation of \$3,000. St Joseph Health System responded with a matching gift of \$3,000 and additional individual donors contributed to the fund -collectively raising an additional \$1,000 and equalling a total of \$7,000. As a result, we are able to purchase even more local, organic produce than anticipated.

We contracted with nine local farms to grow specific types of produce that will be distributed to food bank clients, in particular our Senior and Homebound programs. This year, we are coordinating purchases from Luna Farm, Green Fire Farm, Flora Organica, New Moon Organics, Trident Lightning

Farm, Organic Matters Ranch, Home Plate Farm, Valley Flower Vegetable and Neukom Family Farm.

Many farmers are also frequent donors to our Gleaning Program, so we're grateful for the opportunity to better serve our clients and also support the family farms that are so generous to us throughout the year.

We at Food for People would like to thank the authors of *Locally Delicious*, St Joseph Health System, and the many community donors who contributed to the fund to make this possible.



## Locally Supportive

By Argelia Muñoz, Community Food Programs Coordinator

With the summer months upon us, Food for People has the pleasure to partner for the third consecutive year with the *Locally Delicious* authors in providing fresh local produce for our Senior Programs.

As the new Community Food Programs Coordinator, overseeing the Senior and Homebound Programs, the difference between the spring and summer months are quite apparent. Our first distribution which included the local produce, came with a variety of "oohs and aahhs."

"Oh wow, this looks like it came right out of the garden," exclaimed one of the McKinleyville clients upon picking up one of the heads of cabbage. All of the seniors are very pleased with the local fresh variety and are eager to share their homemade recipes while they wait in line. Cabbage stew, marinated grilled zucchini and sautéed green beans are only a few examples of the dishes Humboldt County seniors prepare with their Locally

Delicious produce. There has not been a distribution since its arrival that I have had to bring back any leftover produce to the food bank.

The services provided for seniors by Food for People consist of two separate programs: The federally funded Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) box program and the Food for People Senior Brown Bag program. We add approximately ten pounds of fresh produce a month for each of the program clients. In addition to providing local produce, Food for People has also partnered with the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services to provide extra non-perishable foods for seniors in the Senior Brown Bag and Homebound Delivery Programs. The additional canned and dry goods have bulked up our bags by almost double the previous amount of food. With the extra help and local partnering, Food for People continues to strive to provide our senior clients with healthy, nutritious food.

Photos by Chris Wisner (clockwise) include tomatoes from Neukom Family Farm, yellow squash from Green Fire Farm, garlic scapes from Home Plate Farm, Armenian cucumbers from New Moon Organics and eggplants from Green Fire Farm.

## Free People's Produce Market



We offer free market-style produce distributions to ensure that low-income families throughout Humboldt County have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables necessary to support a healthy diet. Distributions will run throughout the summer and conclude in October. Upcoming markets will be held on Tuesday, August 14th at the Garberville Presbyterian Church and the Redway Baptist Church, Wednesday, August 15th at the Fortuna Community Services and Thursday, August 16th at Food for People in Eureka. Anyone who meets the income eligibility requirements is invited to attend these produce distributions. Please bring your own bags if possible!

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