



# Food Notes

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

Special Holiday Issue 2013

## Working Towards a Healthier Community

Over the years, Food for People has grown from a simple home-spun pantry, meeting a basic need in our community, to the largest hunger-relief organization and the official food bank for Humboldt County. We have expanded way beyond our food pantry days. Our 14 food assistance programs act as a safety net so that our elders, disabled residents, struggling families and school children in Humboldt County can access the food and nutrition they need in order to maintain their health, their independence and their dignity. These programs include a network of emergency food pantries across



Fresh fruits and vegetables are made available through our 14 hunger-relief programs in photo on left while Heidi McHugh, Community Education & Outreach Coordinator, and Ciel Hoyt, Nutrition Education Coordinator, prepare fruit smoothies for our Children's Summer Lunch kick-off on right.



the county, food distribution programs for children and seniors, nutrition education and outreach activities, food drives and gleaning efforts, as well as many valued partnerships throughout the community. Together we are working to end local hunger by increasing access to healthy and nutritious foods while promoting community education and food policy advocacy.

## Hidden Hunger

Driving up to the cute Victorian, I arrived at the home of one of our seniors to deliver his monthly Senior Brown Bag filled with nutritious food. "Take the path on the left" were the directions given. I easily found the entrance but what I found inside was a completely different reality. The front door opened to

a very small, dark space filled with the clutter and confusion of illness and isolation. Although our visits are only monthly, we are welcomed both for our company and the healthy food so important to his health. This senior is typical of many of our elders who do not have the support of extended family and remain hidden within our community.

Thousands of people struggle with hunger locally. We cannot

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## Hidden Hunger

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continue to act as if we do not see the big elephant in the room. The people impacted by hunger are often hard-working adults dealing with life's challenges, school children from families with limited resources and seniors on fixed incomes who simply do not have enough access to good food.

## Honoring our Elders

Food insecurity among seniors has been on the rise, especially in California. The majority of these seniors are living on fixed incomes such as social security which must cover housing, utilities, food, transportation and more and many are also dealing with medication and health care costs associated with at least one chronic ailment.

Providing healthy food to our seniors makes a huge difference by helping them maintain their health and their ability to live independently. Our senior programs represent a real lifeline to local seniors who are living on low, fixed monthly incomes.

Last year our Senior Brown Bag program provided 2,704 grocery bags filled with nutritious

foods, including whole grain breads and up to 10 lbs of fresh, local and mostly organic produce. Our Commodity Supplemental Food Program provided 3,703 food boxes of healthy food to seniors and also included bread and fresh produce. Thanks to our volunteers drivers, our Homebound Delivery Service transported 842 grocery bags filled with nutritious foods last year to seniors and others who are homebound due to disability. The availability of home delivery to seniors who do not drive and have no caregivers or family members available to provide assistance is another important aspect of our services.

All three programs were able to distribute quality produce grown locally for our seniors thanks to the Locally Delicious Food Fund which is supported by the authors of the *Locally Delicious Cookbook*, St. Joseph Health System Humboldt County and individual donors.



Above photos show Randy and Mary Jane Hemp Hill of Willow Creek and Tim Liskam of Orick happy to receive the fresh produce delivered by our Mobile Produce Pantry while our Children's Summer Lunch Program provides healthy sack lunches for local children at Cooper Gulch Park this past summer in photo at right.



## Feeding our Future

Decades of research has shown that low-income children who receive food assistance grow up, on average, to be healthier and more productive adults who are less likely to turn to the safety net for help. When food assistance is not available, the long term implications for their growth and development can be costly, compromising a once bright future.

Recently we met a local family in which both parents had lost their jobs, unexpectedly, in the same week. Then, the very next week, their landlord of many years gave them notice that they had to move from their home as



he was putting the property on the market. They asked to enroll their elementary school age children in Backpacks for Kids and are currently waiting for an opening in the program. Sometimes people are one (or more) crises away from needing help.

Our three Child Nutrition Programs help bridge the hunger gap between home and school

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## Feeding our Future

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by providing the nutritious food children need to grow, prosper and learn. Last year, thanks to the support of our community, our Backpacks for Kids program provided local school children with 10,500 backpacks filled with healthy kid-friendly food while our After School Snack Program distributed 60,000 nutritious after school snacks and our Children's Summer Lunch served 12,500 wholesome summer lunches.



Above kids enjoy a sack lunch from our Children's Summer Lunch program during the City of Eureka's Recreation program at Cooper Gulch Park while photos at top right and below show volunteers getting ready for one of our People's Produce Markets at our Eureka location.

## Keeping it Healthy

If you look at the fact that the cost of produce went up 40% while the cost of highly processed foods went down 40% over the past 20 years, it's easy to see why the households we serve are clamoring for produce. And we have delivered! Last year, one third of the food we provided through our People's Produce Markets, Mobile Produce Pantry and other programs was fresh produce.

Meet Darla Craig, who would arrive five hours early (many times) to get in line for last season's People's Produce Market because it was the only time she

could get a ride. Darla knows the cost of fresh produce has increased significantly in recent years and values the opportunity to receive our offerings of fresh fruits and vegetables. Food for People sponsors four locations of

free farmers' market-style produce distributions throughout Humboldt County from May through October.

Our new Mobile Produce Pantry has taken it on the road. This mobile pantry is a refrigerated truck full of fresh produce that drives to specific locations throughout the county, stopping in communities large and small to set up free farm stand-style distributions where low-income residents struggle to access fresh produce.



## Food on the go!

Last year we distributed more than two million pounds of food across Humboldt County – less than 4% went to waste – or better yet, 96% made it to its destination so that local kids can grow into their better selves, our seniors can have better food choices and there exists a safety net for struggling families and our vulnerable neighbors who are experiencing hard times

We work to provide the healthiest options as cost effectively as possible and always seek to maintain the highest standards of professionalism in the operation of our programs.



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Argelia Muñoz, our Community Food Programs Coordinator, packs up a Food for People van for one of her senior distributions (above left photo). Look for our red and white custom-printed grocery bags and food barrels (above right photo) and help us fill them with nonperishable foods this holiday season!

## Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

Cowboys, quilters, Ladies of Second Street and live radio broadcasts are only a few of the ways our community will fight hunger from now through the end of December. Our *Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive* will collect food and financial donations through a variety of methods, with donations going to support Food for People's anti-hunger operations throughout Humboldt County. This is your opportunity to participate in one of the biggest food drives of the year.

Look for the red and white,

custom-printed grocery bags you received in your local newspaper. Fill them with nonperishable foods and drop them off at your nearest pantry or one of the drop-off locations listed on the bag. All food stays in the community where it was donated to help meet local needs. Some most needed items:

- Peanut butter
- Canned meat and fish
- Beans and hearty stews
- Canned fruits in 100% juice
- Whole grains (including pasta, rice, cold and hot cereals)

Another way to participate this year is by organizing your local business or community group to compete in our *Hunger Fighter Challenge*. This

friendly competition challenges participating teams to bring in the greatest amount of food and funds possible. To take the *Hunger Fighter Challenge* or for more information about our Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive, please contact Laura Hughes at (707) 445-3166 ext. 312 or find us online at [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org) or stop by at 307 W 14th Street in Eureka. Your donation will help our most vulnerable population have a holiday season free from hunger and provide stores of food for the winter months.

## ► Donate Funds Donate Food ◀ ► Volunteer

Your help makes it possible for us to sustain vital program services while building a foundation of support for the future. Together we can make a real difference in the lives of many and improve the health and well being of Humboldt County.

Donations can be sent to 307 W 14th Street, Eureka, CA 95501. For more info or to donate online — [www.foodforpeople.org](http://www.foodforpeople.org).



*For a suggested donation of \$30, we'll send this holiday greeting card to a friend or loved one of your choice and let them know you made a donation to Food for People in their name!*