

## Savoring the Standouts.

*The U.S. Post Office, the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Chronicle's Season of Sharing made huge contributions to the Food Bank in the midst of a brutal economy. The individuals who will be honored with Hope Not Hunger Awards at the Food Bank's annual celebration – Savor The Season at Wente Vineyards on Sept. 20 – were at the forefront of their organizations' campaign against hunger.*

### Letter Carriers Drive

Despite his post office's longstanding status as Alameda County's top producer in the National Association of Letter Carriers' Drive, Pleasanton Postmaster **Gurjant Khosa** was taking no chances with the 17th annual version of the drive on May 9.

Battening the hatches against a battered economy, Khosa went to pains to promote the drive through local media and introduced a program in which each of his 65 letter carriers supplied biodegradable bags to their postal customers to fill with non-perishable food. He even convinced a local auto mall to promote the drive by flashing a message to passersby on I-580.

But it wasn't until a few days after the drive that Khosa fully realized what his efforts had wrought. "They called me after they transferred everything to the food bank truck and asked me if I wanted to have a

look," Khosa said. "When they opened the door, I couldn't believe my eyes."


Spilling out of the tractor-trailer was 25,770 pounds of food – virtually double the amount collected by Khosa's carriers the year before.



So it went throughout the Bay Area, where 8,700 postal carriers from 145 post offices reaped a record haul of 909,812 pounds of food from postal patrons – 40.3 percent more than the 2008 drive. In Alameda County, a 24 percent increase – to 172,671 pounds – dramatically reversed the trend of a drive that had been trending downward for three years.



San Lorenzo's Dennis Stecz, daughter Sara and son Michael have been involved in the Letter Carriers Drive since its inception in 1983

"Because CBS5 agreed to sponsor the drive, we were all optimistic that we'd stop the slide," said San Lorenzo letter carrier **Dennis Stecz**, who has worked on the Letter Carriers drive since its inception in 1983 and, for the last 13 years, served as the Alameda County Coordinator. "But we superseded all expectations. There was a feeling of urgency among the carriers this year because of the economy. We really needed to nail it this year – and we did." 

### Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund

**Jennifer Kirschenbaum** had been a regular visitor to the Bay Area since her brother Josh enrolled at grad school at UC-Berkeley in 1991. She had been spurning his invitations to move to California for nearly as long.

Her job in Tallahassee, Fla., where she designed programs for a non-profit that distributed funds for over a hundred social service programs, kept Kirschenbaum anchored to her home state.

But in 2006, when she saw an opening for the Executive Director for the Chronicle's Season of Sharing Fund – which dominates the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle from Thanksgiving through New Year's – Kirschenbaum didn't hesitate.

"I had a degree (from Tulane) in psychology and I had been working in the clinical field for 15 years, working with the kind of families the Season of Sharing Fund helps," she said. "It was sort of a perfect fit."

No county has benefitted from the food bank allotment of the Season of Sharing Fund more than Alameda, which has reaped \$1.9 million since 1990, including donations topping \$150,000 in each of the past two years.

"I've always been aware that I've had a fortunate life," said Kirschenbaum, who oversees a fund that also provides housing assistance grants to thousands of individual recipients each year. "I felt like I should be working with others who were less fortunate and trying to make their lives better. With the Season of Sharing Fund, I get to stay connected to the families that we help – and that's what I love about social work."



Jennifer Kirschenbaum