



ALAMEDA COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK

Until everyone's fed

MEMBER OF
FEEDING
AMERICA

Community Harvest

SPRING 2020



Meeting our community's new needs

Between car troubles, health challenges, and being her son's caregiver, Linda was struggling to afford the basics, like a healthy meal.

According to a groundbreaking study by Alameda County Community Food Bank and Urban Institute, Linda is not alone. She's among the **1 in 5 Alameda County residents experiencing or at risk of hunger**.

That's nearly 200,000 county residents who are considered "food insecure," plus 130,000 more who are considered "marginally food insecure," meaning they had problems with or anxiety about accessing adequate nutrition at times.

It's an important point that's unprecedented: this is the deepest look at neighbors who show moderate vulnerability to food insecurity, which is critical to anticipating new or emerging areas of need.

In Alameda County, the cost of living makes it difficult for many of us to make ends meet. This research confirms that even though they're working, many families are one emergency away from making decisions about whether to pay for rent or healthy food.

"We're using this information to help us prioritize vulnerable communities, while also reaching households that food banks might not traditionally reach," says

Kate Cheyne, Associate Director of Research at ACCFB.

Another finding: nearly half of moderately food secure and 42 percent of food insecure neighbors have incomes too high to qualify for CalFresh (food stamps). In other words, **nearly half of the people struggling with hunger can't access the very benefits that would alleviate it.**

And, hunger is spreading. With emerging areas of need identified in the suburbs, it's a finding that changes how we approach traditional hunger relief. It's also the reason our 270+ agency partners are more important than ever, helping us reach neighbors in every pocket of our county.

That's how Linda was able to get the support she needed. The food she received from Open Heart Kitchen, one of our partners serving Pleasanton, Dublin, and Livermore, allowed her to remain nourished and healthy as she cared for her son and recovered.

Linda's story, and the thousands just like hers, underscores the need for this level of research and understanding so that we can learn not just about our clients, but who we're not yet serving. We can't bring an end to hunger without it.

To read more about the Urban Institute study, visit www.accfb.org/impact/research.

FROM THE DESK OF SUZAN BATESON

Building on our past for a hunger-free future



Suzan Bateson,
Executive Director

If you've been in our circle for even a short time, you've probably heard me say, "If hunger can be solved anywhere, it's Alameda County."

As I'm writing this piece, on the eve of our 35th anniversary, I've never felt more certain of that claim.

Anniversaries are funny things. Certainly, a 35th wedding anniversary is something to celebrate. A 35th high school reunion is a great chance to reminisce. The 35th anniversary of our founding is an opportunity to reflect on what we've gained and where we can improve.

If we had a choice, Alameda County Community Food Bank would have gone out of business years, if not decades, ago. Needing to ensure people have food means there are people who need our help. It's not something to "celebrate," really. But, that doesn't make me less proud of all we've accomplished. As *long as we're needed, we're striving to ensure we're exceeding the expectations of our community.*

UNTIL EVERYONE'S FED

The last time we commemorated a milestone anniversary, in 2015, we celebrated the organization we'd grown to be over 30 years. We were, I would still say, a leading Food Bank – yet still a year away from being acknowledged as the Feeding America national Food Bank of the Year.

As I look at the accomplishments that we lauded at the time – the first Food Bank to stop distributing soda, pioneers in food stamp outreach, our advocacy efforts – and then I look at what's happened since, one thing stands out to me. ***We were just beginning to hit our stride.***

We're now: leading national research studies on how hunger relief helps with chronic disease prevention; paving the way for others to play a critical role in anti-poverty legislation; working with like-minded organizations to fight racism, which in our area is a significant cause of hunger and poverty. And, we're now a Food Bank deeply committed to sustainability and reducing waste, having **the largest Food Recovery Program in Alameda County.**

Those are just a few achievements we've made in the last five years *with your support.*

When I say I've never felt more certain that if hunger is solvable anywhere, it's here – I mean something very specific.

Certainly, we have a passionate, progressive, and caring community. Thankfully, we operate in a well-resourced (and generous) region.

But, more than anything, *you* – our supporters, our partners, our clients – should, and do, expect a lot from us. You inspire us. You push us every day to be better and do better.

We've learned, in 35 years of work, that our community truly wants to end hunger and will help us do what it takes to get there. Thank you.

Join us as we
celebrate the
Food Bank's 35th
Anniversary!
It will be a family-
friendly evening of
art, nourishment,
and advocacy.



Save the Date



THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 @ 6:00 PM
accfb.org/empty-bowls

HUNGER HEROES

Hunger Heroes are members of our community who go above and beyond for hunger-relief. Please share your story with us at media@accfb.org.

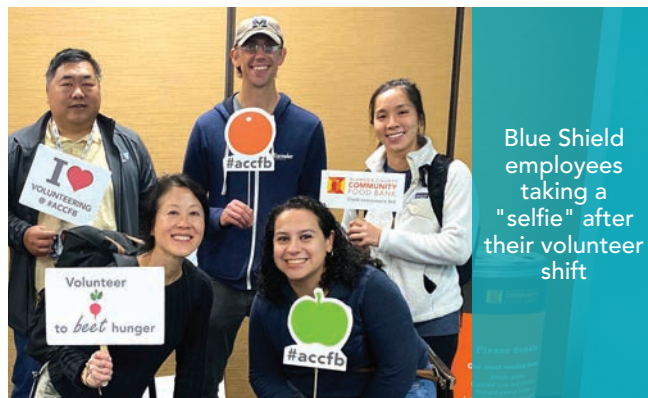
Prescription for a healthier community

Blue Shield of California is passionate about creating healthier communities. And they know nutritious food is the foundation of good health.

We share Blue Shield's values of making a positive impact on our neighbors. That's why we were thrilled when Blue Shield moved their headquarters to Oakland in November. To celebrate, they hosted a food drive as part of their commitment to the East Bay.

But our partnership with Blue Shield started well before that when they began volunteering here in 2015. Since then, their **employees have helped prepare more than 20,000 meals worth of food for our neighbors.**

"Volunteering is a great way for coworkers to connect with each other and the communities where they live and work," said Chantel Johnson, a Blue Shield



Blue Shield employees taking a "selfie" after their volunteer shift

employee and Food Bank volunteer. "It makes our communities a little brighter."

We're grateful to have healthcare partners and neighbors like Blue Shield who invest in the wellness of our community. Join us in thanking them for all they do.

Whoa oh oh oh oh! The Rice Stuff

13-year-old Lily stands next to 12,000 pounds of rice she donated to the Food Bank



If you've had the chance to visit our warehouse recently, you may have noticed the rice. It's hard to miss considering there's 12,000 pounds of it!

That's all thanks to our friend Lily. At 13 years old, her commitment to helping others is inspiring. When she was six, she started her own nonprofit, *Give with Lily*. It helps provide clothes and gifts for homeless youth and children in foster care, and food for hungry neighbors.

"I know I have a lot of privileges that others don't, so I want to help people and give back," she said.

Recently, she created a lot of work for our volunteers by donating **six tons of rice to our Food Bank – enough for 10,000 meals.**

Whether she's learning guitar, practicing capoeira (she's a blue belt!), or running her own charity, Lily's passion for working hard and giving back is evident.

"If you do something you love and you really care about it, it's even more impactful," she said.

Thank you, Lily, for everything you're doing to make Alameda County a brighter place for all of us.

Agency Spotlight

BERKELEY FOOD NETWORK



Neighbors pick up fresh fruits and vegetables at a Berkeley Food Network food distribution

Like so many of Berkeley's college students, Tania faces challenges as she works to earn her degree in Integrated Biology. Between paying for tuition, books, and rent, she doesn't have a lot left over for healthy food. And with a packed schedule, it's often a challenge to find a pantry that's open when she's free.

"If we're serious about ending hunger in Alameda County, we really need to understand who's hungry and where they are."

The issues clients face in accessing healthy food demand that we find creative and innovative solutions. Through our study with Urban Institute (see cover story), we learned that sometimes a pantry's schedule or location poses a barrier for neighbors who could use our help. Students are in school, parents are at work, and seniors don't always have reliable transportation.

That's why we're enthusiastic about our partnership with Berkeley Food Network (BFN), which is taking a fresh approach to serving our community.

"We had an intuitive feeling there was a deep need in Berkeley," said Sara Webber, co-founder of BFN. "The traditional model of food pantries has challenges because they can be inaccessible for some people."

BFN saw an opportunity to evolve the model to better address neighbors' needs. They've become a Food Bank hub for Berkeley. By opening their own warehouse in September, a kitchen to create ready-to-eat meals, and providing on-site food distribution, BFN is able to reach about 6,500 neighbors every month.

Through our partnership with BFN, we're able to deepen our impact in Berkeley and meet the emerging need. It's a model we hope to recreate so we can reach even more people experiencing hunger - and improve people's lives.

"If we're serious about ending hunger in Alameda County, we really need to understand who's hungry and where they are," Sara said. "We can ensure the people who need it are getting food."

Volunteer Spotlight

TURNING PASSION INTO ACTION



Bobby bagging apples at the Food Bank's Community Engagement Center

With seemingly endless energy, volunteer Bobby Yearby sorts apples in our warehouse on a Saturday morning.

"What we're able to do here in a short period of time is very impactful," he said.

Bobby is no stranger to ACCFB. He's been a donor for more than 15 years after learning about our work through a friend. And after visiting the Food Bank several years ago, he says he was blown away.

Turning his longtime passion for the Food Bank into action, he started bringing his fraternity for volunteer shifts. It was fitting work for Bobby, who has worked with food pantries in Oakland and other nonprofits in the Bay Area.

"The scale of what's happening here was not what I had expected. When you think about the amount of fruits and vegetables you're able to pack, bag,

and distribute within days, that's really impressive," he said.

Wanting to get more involved, Bobby organized a Virtual Food Drive last year. He says he read about the increased need during the summer because children are out of school, and wanted to make an impact. With a goal of \$300, he sent emails to his fraternity brothers and posted the link on Facebook. In just two weeks, they blew through their goal and raised enough to help provide 4,000 meals!

For Bobby, the most rewarding part is knowing he's making a difference in our community.

"We're all trying to survive in the Bay Area. The cost of living is really high," he said. "But thinking in the back of your mind that there's somebody who's going to get that gift of food, it really is special."



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WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

If you or someone you know needs food, please call us or share our Food Helpline cards.





Your gift will be doubled!

Join the Growing Healthy Families Challenge

Donate by March 31 and **your gift will be matched** up to \$50,000 to help provide nutritious food to families in our community.

Be sure to check the Growing Healthy Families Challenge box on the enclosed remittance and place it in the return envelope, or donate online at accfb.org/families.

Impacting Neighbors' Health - and Lives

The results are in: Food banks *can* make an impact in preventing chronic illness. That's what the findings show from our Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), which were recently published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Preventing Disease Journal*.

The study found participants had higher food security, ate more fruits and vegetables, increased their physical activity, and saw an improvement in their mental health - just ask Maria.

A good day for her children involves quinoa. "It's their favorite food," she said. "My kids like it a lot."

So much, in fact, that Maria often replaces rice with quinoa. It's a substitute she learned through DPP.

In 2017, we were the **only food bank in the country selected by Feeding America to participate in a pilot project** to help prevent diabetes in people at risk of developing the disease - like Maria.

Throughout the program, **our team screened more than 450 clients and enrolled 244 people at high risk**

for prediabetes. Participants received diabetes-friendly food packages, health care referrals, and nutrition and fitness education.

"This study demonstrates food banks can be effective partners in reducing risk factors for diabetes in high risk populations," said Kate Cheyne, Associate Director of Research at ACCFB and co-author of this study.

Considering at least 70 percent of the clients we screened were at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes, it is imperative that we continue this work - and we are. Through funding from the City of Oakland Soda Tax, we're organizing several cohorts through our Oakland partner agencies.

As for Maria, she says since enrolling in DPP her life has changed a lot.

"I now have more energy and exercise on a regular basis," she said. "I wanted to be healthier for my kids."

See our diabetes-friendly recipe on the back cover.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

If you or someone you know needs food, please call us or share our Food Helpline cards.



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FOOD BANK HAPPENINGS

Half His Life Spent Fighting Hunger



Erick with his daughter Madeline (left) and son Sawyer (right) during his 25th anniversary celebration

Sometimes, life and career come full circle. As our Director of Operations, Erick Lovdahl leads a remarkable operations team at the heart of our work to provide millions of meals for families in need.

But before Erick became a Food Bank staff member, he was a client.

As a child, he remembers waiting in line with his mother to get food. "It has always been important to me to help others. Once I was introduced to the Food Bank, it was the perfect opportunity to do that," he said.

This year, Erick is celebrating his 25th anniversary at the Food Bank - nearly half his life spent helping families in need. Please join us in thanking Erick for his dedication to our community and our Food Bank's mission to ensure everyone has the food they need to thrive.

A Record-Breaking Day of Service

"I'm out here today to give back to our community as a little service to folks who are in need," said Mark from Alameda Health System Foundation.

Mark was one of 200 people who volunteered in our warehouse during our Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. day of service – our highest attended yet. Hundreds spent their day off sorting enough food to provide 35,000 meals!

Like Dr. King, we're working alongside our wonderful volunteers to honor his legacy and create a more equitable and just society.



Volunteers sort apples during our Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Down for the Count: Why the 2020 Census Matters

2020 is a critical year for many reasons. One of the biggest for us: **it's time for the U.S. Census.**

The Census is how the government counts the number of people living in our diverse communities.

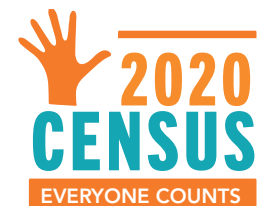
But... why does it matter? In Alameda County, where 1 in 5 residents is experiencing hunger, the Census – and the funding it enables – is crucial to our ability to carry out our mission.

It only happens once every 10 years, meaning we *only have one shot to get it right*. If our county is undercounted by even 6 percent, we face a \$1 billion loss over the next decade, affecting funding for schools, roads, and programs like CalFresh (food stamps).

That's why we're partnering with the County of Alameda to support a full, fair, and accurate count. We're working with community partners to help reach *everyone* in our county, especially neighbors who are hard-to-count.

Look out for your Census postcard by April 1, and reach out to our policy team at census@accfb.org if you're interested in getting involved.

Together, we can channel our collective voices and let our legislators know *everyone counts*.



Vegetable Brunch Pie

To help our Diabetes Prevention Program participants, the Food Bank provides **diabetes-friendly recipes** with their food boxes. This healthy brunch dish is one of the recipes our staff shares with our clients.



Ingredients (8 servings)

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2¼ cups chopped cauliflower florets
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (8-ounce) package mushrooms, sliced
- 4½ cups (about 6 ounces) of beet, mustard, or collard greens, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- ¾ cup shredded lowfat Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup lowfat milk
- 3 eggs (or ¾ cup egg substitute)

Directions:

1. Place an oven rack in the middle of the oven. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Spray a 10-inch pie dish with nonstick cooking spray and set aside.
3. In a microwave safe bowl, microwave cauliflower on high for 3 minutes, or steam it on the stovetop.
4. Pour vegetable oil into a 12-inch skillet and heat over medium heat.
5. Sauté onion and mushrooms until tender, about 5 minutes.
6. Add greens, garlic powder, onion powder, brown sugar, salt, and cayenne pepper. Sauté for another 3 minutes until greens are wilted.
7. Stir the cooked cauliflower into the greens mixture and place in the pie dish. Sprinkle with cheese.
8. In a medium bowl, combine the milk and eggs. Whisk until well blended and pour over vegetable mixture.
9. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until golden brown. Serve while hot.

Source: Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOPB)



I want to provide food—and hope—for families in Alameda County.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of: ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other: \$ _____

☐ Please match my gift, dollar-for-dollar, through the Growing Healthy Families Challenge

☐ I commit to a monthly gift of \$ _____ (my first gift is enclosed)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please charge my gift to my:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Sec. # _____

Signature _____

Please make check payable to:

Alameda County Community Food Bank (or "ACCFB")

P.O. Box 30757

Oakland, CA 94604-6857

Donate online at www.accfb.org

Your donation is tax-deductible as permitted by law. The Food Bank will send you a receipt.

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