

Community Harvest

FALL 2020



A NEW NORMAL

Sitting in the morning shadow of Oakland Arena (née Oracle), Oakport Street had never seen so much traffic.

Oakport was once just a frontage road for commuters working near Oakland airport. But on a Monday in mid-April, cars stretched so far down the road the line nearly backed up the freeway exit.

It was only 8:30 a.m.

This has been the scene every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for five months: more than 1,000 cars — often multiple households per car — visiting our emergency drive-through food distribution.

Since March, pop-ups like this have sprouted county — and country-wide — while our agency partners serve growing lines; while demand increases for home delivery; while schools receive food to help families with children; while applications for CalFresh (food stamps) are at record high numbers, and so on.

This is our new normal.

“IT MEANS WE GET TO EAT”

“[It] helps a lot because it means we get to eat,” said Joe, a single father who hasn’t had work for weeks at a time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s been a struggle... and every little bit helps,” he added as volunteers in safety masks loaded food into the trunk of his car.

Joe — with his two teenagers in tow — is among thousands of us seeking help for the first time. With staggering unemployment just one of many challenges, need for our services has likely doubled since March.

A LONG ROAD AHEAD

We regularly prepare for and respond to emergencies, but never have we experienced a situation like this. One where the impact arrived like a natural disaster — swiftly and powerfully — but will persist like the worst of recessions. Many affected may never fully recover from the economic impact.

The crisis is evolving quickly, and there are many unknowns. But one certainty is that we will be here for as long as we are needed.

We’re here for you, just as you are here for us. If you or someone you know needs assistance, please see our Helpline information on page 5.

FROM THE DESK OF SUZAN BATESON

Flourishing of “Community” in a Pandemic



Suzan Bateson,
Executive Director

The Bay Area’s shelter-in-place order was still days away when the first signs of a community in crisis appeared.

A steady stream of families began dropping by our facility in search of food. If you are new to our community, you may not

know that we primarily provide groceries through partners like food pantries, so this occurrence previously happened once or twice a week.

By March 13, we had dozens of visitors a day.

It was then we realized we were entering an unprecedented time.

Looking back, I can tell you: We’re an entirely different organization than we were in March.

Frankly, we’re an entirely different *community*.

And, believe it or not, I’m hopeful about our future.

It’s been a challenging time — a pandemic, economic collapse, continued systemic racism — and I wish we were more certain of its resolution. We’re going to struggle together for a long time. However, we have accomplished a lot — again, *together* — during this time, and that’s where I find my daily dose of optimism.

We’ve innovated and overhauled the way we work. We move more rapidly. Inclusivity has become more of a practice. (I say “practice” because we’re always learning.)

And as a result: We know what we can accomplish together and have a much clearer view of what it takes to solve hunger.

Emergency relief is part of our DNA. We have plans in place and stay aligned with government agencies. We’re accustomed to helping our community through difficult stretches like the recession we are wading into.

While we never quite imagined a scenario where everything converged at once (who did?!), our neighbors called and we *had* to be ready.

“We’ve innovated and overhauled the way we work. We move more rapidly. Inclusivity has become more of a practice.”

This will not be the last challenge we face together. That’s why Alameda County Community Food Bank exists.

How we exist, though, is much bigger. We exist within and because of COMMUNITY. And it’s you — our community — that makes us hopeful. Not just your outpouring of support, but how you’ve joined us in committing to better understanding, learning, and growing.

We have a long way to go. We must work together.

I know we will.

THANK YOU TO OUR EARLY RESPONDERS

It might surprise you to know that city, county, and Food Bank employees are “early responders” and can be deployed to help during crises — like COVID-19.

Disaster service workers from Alameda County and the City of Oakland, along with California Conservation Corps, Civil Air Patrol, City of San Leandro, the California State Guard, Civicorps, and the Red Cross stepped up while our volunteers stayed safe at home.

Their commitment and hard work made our work possible and we’re so grateful.



FROM OUR RESEARCH TEAM

Addressing COVID's Impact on Communities of Color

Look closely at these two maps. One highlights food insecurity in the county; the other shows COVID-19 cases. As data on the virus emerges, there are striking — yet unsurprising — similarities.

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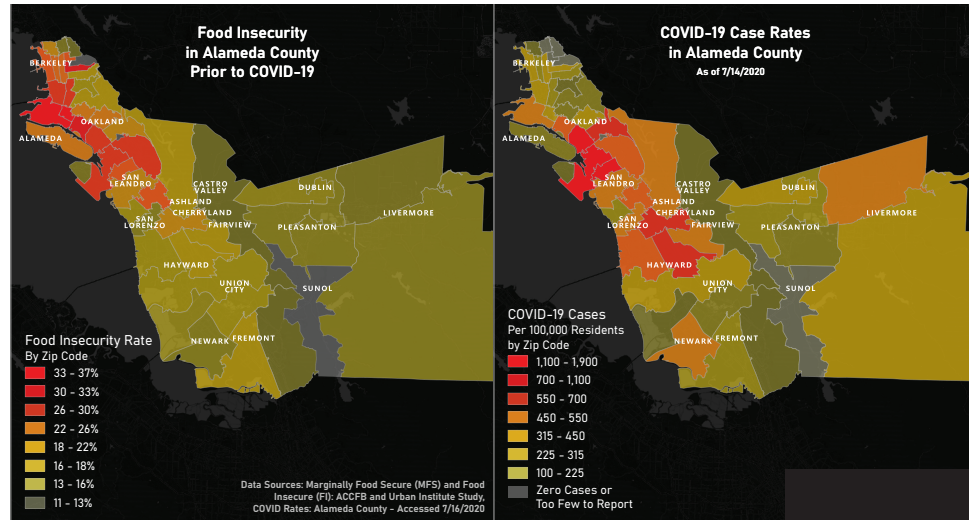
Notably, diverse, culturally rich areas that are home to the largest Communities of Color have significant overlap between food insecurity and COVID-19 rates.

The pandemic has caused a multitude of challenges and shines a light on something we already knew: the intersection of race, health, and food insecurity.

Before the coronavirus took hold, 1 in 5 county residents was already experiencing or at real risk of hunger. Communities depending on ACCCB, we knew, would be the most impacted by the spread of coronavirus.

In Alameda County, 7 in 10 community members who are living in poverty are People of Color.

Just as Communities of Color are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, they are also disproportionately affected and are at greater risk of being seriously impacted by COVID-19. This further underscores the importance of centering racial equity in response and recovery efforts, and in our ongoing



strategic initiatives.

By acknowledging these intersections, we can better prioritize and direct resources where they are needed most. From our first drive-through food distributions in East Oakland and Hayward (page 5), to home delivery for COVID-19 positive individuals, to the expansion of our CalFresh application assistance — we'll continue to be there for those of us who need support.

In this unprecedented crisis, the road feels very long. Our community must be inclusive of everyone and we regularly renew our commitment to ensuring a more equitable Alameda County.

HUNGER HEROES

Fighting Hunger While Fighting COVID-19

As if nurses weren't already heroes, in between busy shifts at Sutter's Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Oakland, Heidi Voellger also finds time to make a big impact in the community.

Heidi and the ER team have received an outpouring of support during the pandemic and wanted to pay it forward, so they organized a Virtual Food Drive to support our emergency response. Thirteen departments (in Oakland and Berkeley) raised over \$13,400 to help

provide much-needed food during this difficult time.

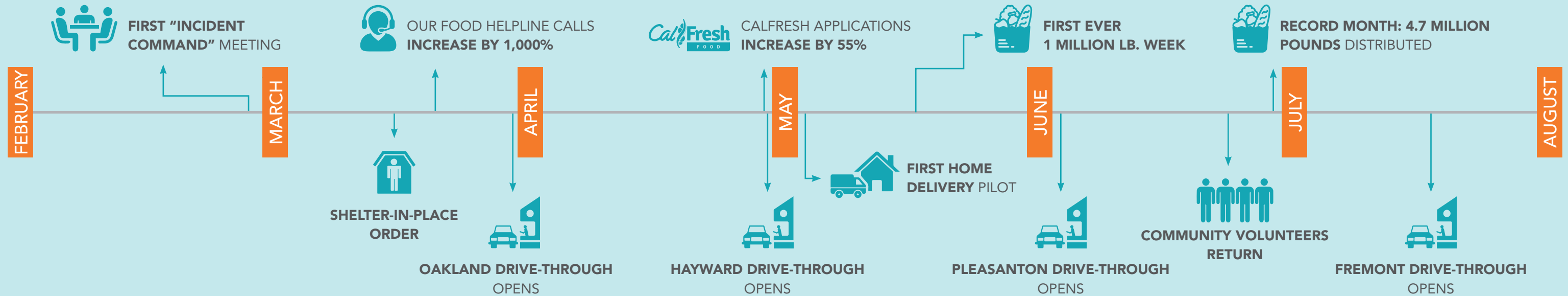
"We are fortunate enough to still be working," Heidi said. "I know the sense of community, family, and comfort that food can provide, and I believe that nourishing the body can also nourish the soul."

Thank you, Heidi and team, for ALL you are doing!



TIMELINE: COVID-19 crisis response

Much about us and our community has changed in five months. Here is a timeline of our swift crisis response efforts to date — made possible by your support.



Partners Step Up to Nourish Children

Of all the questions that arose from COVID-19 and the shelter-in-place, few had as big an impact on our work as this one: “What will school closures mean for our children?”

Thanks to an outpouring of generosity — and compassionate partners — we’ve made enormous strides in ensuring children have access to nutrition while school is out.

In early March — with schools on the cusp of closing — Stephen and Ayesha Curry, through their Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation, reached out to help us provide 1 million meals through a partnership with Oakland Unified School District. The Oakland A’s also joined in to boost our emergency response efforts.

The first deliveries of food to Oakland schools happened the week of March 16 and we’ve been growing ever since.

We are now working with 12 school districts county-wide to distribute emergency food bags for children and their families. Each bag contains nutritious staples, including whole grains and canned protein, and comes with bags of fresh fruits and vegetables. Since schools closed — and into the summer — we have provided more than 1.5 million meals through school partnerships.

With schools starting remotely this year, these partnerships — and the strong community support — will play as critical a role as ever.



Stephen and Ayesha Curry paid a surprise socially-distanced visit to the Food Bank

Meeting the Growing Need

With COVID-related need spiking overnight to near untenable levels — and safety concerns creating distribution challenges — we quickly set up our first contactless drive-through with the help of Alameda County.

People pull up their cars, pop their trunks, and volunteers place groceries inside. While the line is long, it moves fast — we can distribute food to three cars a minute.

Like many of us, Emanuel was impacted by COVID-19 in ways he never imagined. “I waited as long as I could,” he said. “But I needed to come get food today.”

We met Emanuel — a rideshare driver who’d been sidelined for weeks — at our drive-through distribution in Oakland.

The first distribution in March served 28 cars. That quickly grew to 1,000 cars a day. Then Hayward, Pleasanton, and Fremont followed as additional locations for drive-through distributions. By July, the four were collectively serving more than 20,000 of our neighbors a week — families like Emanuel’s.

“It means a lot getting good food to eat,” he said.



WE’RE HERE TO HELP.

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



NEED FOOD?
1-800-870-3663
1-510-635-3663

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¿Necesita comida?
需要食物嗎?
Nhu cần thực phẩm?

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[FoodNow.net](https://www.foodnow.net)

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HUNGER HEROES

Can-structing an End to Hunger

We're always amazed at the creativity and generosity behind the County of Alameda's yearly Stone Soup Food Drive. The County's 7th annual was no exception.

Departments — from the Assessor's Office to the Fire Department — create structures out of packaged food as part of their friendly competition to benefit ACCFB.

This year's theme was 'Have a Heart.' A record 21 departments created imaginative displays ranging from the Tin Man to an Olympic village using 19,000 pounds of food that were eventually donated. They also raised more than \$23,000 — which was matched by Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation.

We're grateful to the County for proving you can't quarantine generosity.



Agency Partners Going Above and Beyond

Candi Thornton has been running **Arsola's House** — one of our agency partners — for nine years, but she's never faced a challenge like COVID-19.

"The need has been growing," she said. "We had to put something in place for people falling on hard times."

Candi and her volunteers quickly made creative adjustments to stay open, stay safe, and serve increasing need. In addition to their regular distribution in East Oakland, Arsola's added drive-through distributions and quickly

saw the number of cars increase each week. With additional food from the Food Bank, as well as government support, Arsola's has tripled the amount of food it distributes and is still seeing demand grow.

In fact, more than 290 of our community partners are still operating, the vast majority serving a huge spike in demand. Partners like **Mercy Brown Bag**, which spearheaded the **Oakland at Risk** initiative to pair volunteers with high-risk households in need of home delivery, and **Tri-City Volunteers**, which is running a distribution with Wells Fargo in addition to increasing their weekday distributions, are among the partners going above and beyond to serve the community.

Our partners have done extraordinary work to meet the rising need for food assistance.

During an ongoing crisis — and year-round — their commitment, compassion, and hard work is inspiring.

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9 AM – 4 PM
Monday – Friday
Lunes – viernes
星期一-星期五
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VOLUNTEER(S) SPOTLIGHT

Dedication During a Crisis

No matter what's happening in the world, one thing's for certain: Volunteers are at the heart of our work — 365 days a year.

It was a difficult decision to press "pause" on warehouse volunteer shifts at the beginning of the pandemic for safety reasons — but we've been so inspired by the ways our community has still played an important role in our emergency response.

For instance, with the increased need and our agency partners serving more people than ever, we are grateful for more than 200 of you who signed on to help nearly 30 partners across the county ensure they could continue their critical work.

When we began to welcome back volunteers in June — we were thrilled (though not surprised) by the enthusiasm and outpouring of support.

Longtime volunteer Michael was one of the first to help. He signed up for one day a week — using vacation time from his job at Chevron — to help us make sure we were bringing back volunteers as safely as possible.

"I saw this as an opportunity to help meet the huge demand," said Michael. "ACCFB is a fun place to be with a lot of other volunteers with the same generous purpose."

To all our volunteers: Your enthusiasm and compassion strengthen our work each and every day. Thank you.



STAYING APART... TOGETHER



For Doris Vaughn and a regular group of seven other volunteers, Monday afternoons have long been a time they spent catching up and sorting food.

They weren't about to let a pandemic (and no volunteer shifts) stop them from staying connected. Like most of us, they just transitioned from our warehouse to computer screens.

Dubbed the "Zoom Ringleader," another Monday

volunteer Susan Hunt organized weekly Zoom calls and kept the Monday ritual going.

"Everyone's enjoying keeping in touch and seeing that everyone's healthy and happy," Doris said.

MAKING AN IMPACT FROM HOME

The Census and the funding it enables is crucial to our mission. 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).

With volunteers looking for new ways to help, nearly 100 of you trained with the Alameda Complete Count Committee and, together, have made 1,000 calls to historically undercounted and under-represented communities — reminding neighbors to complete the Census and offering help in several languages. Thank you!

DON'T FORGET: Complete the Census by Oct. 31, and ensure your friends and family are counted as well.

Be Heard: September is Hunger Action Month

The 2020 election is pivotal for our country and Alameda County. As we work to end hunger, there is no better tool than our collective power.

September is Hunger Action Month and you'll continue to hear from us about the importance of voting and staying civically engaged — because you can be involved without ever stepping foot in a voting booth.

In the meantime, here are a few ways you can take action now:

REGISTER — AND VOTE! Ending hunger starts at the polls. When you vote, you send lawmakers a message: that policies made today are vital to ending hunger tomorrow. From registration to learning about the issues — we have you covered at accfb.org/vote.

TAKE ACTION — Regardless of your voting eligibility, you can make your voice heard. Call your elected officials, become a poll worker, or even share our social media posts. It's quick, easy, and amplifies our efforts.



SIGN UP FOR ALERTS — Between and after elections, there's always more work to do. Our advocacy team works with all levels of government to identify and support policies that address hunger, poverty, and racism. Our grassroots work demands government accountability, and every election offers choices that either better or worsen the issues we are facing as a community.

Ready to advocate for a hunger-free community? Learn more at accfb.org/advocacy.

TOGETHER, WE'LL ENSURE *everyone* HAS A PLACE AT THE TABLE



Join us for a virtual Savor The Season

Sunday, September 13, 2020

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. (Auction preview begins at 5 p.m.)

Register at accfb.org/savor

Yes, I want to help our community recover

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

I want to become a monthly donor. Make this my first gift: \$ _____ (my first gift is enclosed). I authorize Alameda County Community Food Bank to charge the amount indicated above to my account on the 1st OR 15th of each month.

I am signing and dating to confirm my monthly commitment to ACCFB. Signature: _____ Date: ___/___/___

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

NLFAL20

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

