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Alameda County Community Food Bank Welcomes Regi Young as Executive Director

Veteran food bank strategist joining ACCFB from Houston Food Bank on September 7, succeeding Suzan Bateson who has led the Food Bank for 20 years

OAKLAND, Calif. – August 13, 2021 – Alameda County Community Food Bank today announced that the Board of Directors has named Regi Young as the Food Bank’s new Executive Director, beginning on September 7, 2021. Young joins ACCFB from Houston Food Bank – the country’s largest Feeding America-affiliated food bank– where he has served for 11 years, most recently as Chief Strategy Officer.

Young succeeds Suzan Bateson who has served as Alameda County Community Food Bank’s executive director since 2001. Bateson announced her intent to step down in February 2021.

In taking the helm of Alameda County Community Food Bank, Young assumes leadership of an organization which has increased its food distribution by more than 70 percent since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, to 58 million pounds in FY21.

“We’re thrilled to have found a leader in Regi whose personal and professional experience, and commitment to food security, are the ideal match to guide Alameda County Community Food Bank into its next chapter,” says Beth Strachan, chair of ACCFB’s Board of Directors. “In Regi, ACCFB – and our community – gains an enthusiastic visionary and community champion. Regi has a deep commitment to innovative programming, equity and inclusion, and addressing the root causes of food insecurity. On behalf of the Food Bank and board of directors, we’re grateful he has chosen to bring his passion for this work to Alameda County.”

Young joined Houston Food Bank full-time in 2012 and has served in multiple capacities prior to being named Chief Strategy Officer. In his current role, Young leads five functional food bank areas, including many programs and the Food Bank’s 128,000 sq. ft. North Branch operations. He directs strategic community partnerships with a network of 1,500 organizations to provide the equivalent of 207 million meals across 18 counties, annually. He also supervises much of Houston Food Bank’s disaster preparedness and response efforts, for which the organization is recognized as a national leader.

Young oversees Houston Food Bank’s diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. He has also spent much of his tenure leading the organization’s critical Food for Change strategy to study the outcomes of hunger-relief efforts on health and economic opportunity. Under Young’s strategic leadership, Houston Food Bank has increasingly leveraged data to investigate gaps and ensure the equitable access of food and other resources – a key strategic focus for ACCFB, as well.

“This is a pivotal moment in food banking,” notes Young. “For too long, food banks approached the issue of food insecurity in isolation of other community stakeholders. Today, those lines are being blurred by forward thinking organizations like ACCFB that understand that food alone will never resolve the issue of food insecurity. We must focus on addressing the root causes of food insecurity – including racism and poverty – and strengthen relationships with community members, our partner network, and organizations



from various sectors to leverage our collective resources, expertise, and influence to support the goals of the people we work with and for.”

“The past 18 months have been a consistent reminder of the endemic inequities that exist within our society, and how they negatively impact the most vulnerable populations,” adds Young. “For me the current challenge is to ensure that these inequities remain in plain sight so that they can no longer be ignored or dismissed.”

Young is a founding member of the Houston Food System’s Collaborative, a group of individuals and organizations which facilitates the growth and accessibility of a sustainable local food system. Prior to joining Houston Food Bank as a full-time employee, Young was a member of Feeding America’s Child Hunger Corp, where he worked with HFB to develop childhood nutrition programs.

“It is with great pride that we share the news that Regi Young, our chief strategy officer, will be taking a new role as the Executive Director of Alameda County Community Food Bank in Oakland, California,” says Brian Greene, president/CEO of Houston Food Bank. “Regi began his food bank journey 11 years ago as a Feeding America Child Hunger Corps member at the Houston Food Bank and since has advanced through different positions and responsibilities to become a well-rounded, valuable team member and leader within our organization. His journey is a dream of mine to witness, and all of us here at the Houston Food Bank are honored to be both a part of Regi’s success story and a beneficiary of it. We know that he is going to continue to do more amazing things in his new role.”

Suzan Bateson to transition during fall

Bateson, who has been ACCFB’s executive director since 2001, will remain with the organization through September to ensure a smooth handoff of the position.

During Bateson’s tenure, the Food Bank grew its annual budget from \$14M to more than \$113M (inclusive of donated food); established a permanent headquarters site in Oakland; quadrupled its roster of employees; and quintupled its annual food distribution.

Bateson was honored in 2020 with Feeding America’s prestigious John van Hengel Fellowship, which recognizes excellence in leadership, local impact and national influence, and entrepreneurial spirit in hunger relief. Among her countless accomplishments, she leaves a legacy as the first Food Bank leader in the nation to stop distribution of sugar-sweetened beverages, and for implementing one of the nation’s first food bank-based CalFresh (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) outreach and application assistance programs. The organization’s success, bold approach and innovation in areas like food as medicine and diabetes research earned it Feeding America’s national food bank of the year in 2016, and numerous other recognitions during Bateson’s tenure.

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About Alameda County Community Food Bank

Alameda County Community Food Bank — Feeding America’s 2016-2017 Food Bank of the Year — has been at the forefront of hunger relief efforts in the Bay Area since 1985. While in COVID-19 emergency response, the Food Bank serves 1 in 4 Alameda County residents by distributing food through a network of 420 food pantries, soup kitchens, and other community organizations, as well as direct distribution and COVID-relief programs including school programs, home delivery and contactless drive-through distributions. This year, the Food Bank will distribute the equivalent of 48 million meals. For 14 consecutive years, Alameda County Community Food Bank has received Charity Navigator’s top rating — Four Stars — ranking the organization among the top 1 percent of charities nationwide. Learn more at www.accfb.org.