

**** Inside: Meet our new Executive Director ****



Community Harvest

FALL 2021



A long climb to a better normal

The economy is open. We're eating in restaurants. Children are gathering in schools. Life, in some respects, is starting to resemble ... *normal*. Finally.

The thing is, "normal" has never been good enough — particularly when it comes to hunger.

Pre-pandemic, many of us worked two, even three jobs and still struggled to put food on the table. Just three months before Covid took hold, our research showed 1 in 5 county residents was experiencing some level of food insecurity. The pandemic set our community further behind with loss of employment, back rent, mounting bills — and little relief. Because of remote schooling, many parents — particularly women — left the workforce to care for their families, creating even greater financial stress.

By the time the large vaccine clinic at the Oakland Coliseum had packed up, at least 1 in 3 residents was still in need of food assistance.

"It's really hard right now with only one job," said Lucas, a community member who recently called our HelpReach team. "I am making up the difference in my

rent with my savings. I am really counting on CalFresh to help us."

Though the sharpness of the crisis has dissipated somewhat, the need for food remains at record highs. This summer was a time to reflect and be intentional about how we address this ongoing **need to create a new and better normal**.

"I am making up the difference in my rent with my savings."

We have been — and always will be — here. Like you, however, we are different.

If this year has taught us nothing else, it is that our lives are interconnected, and our health depends on the person next to us and the person next to them.

From dramatically expanded programming (including CalFresh assistance, which helped Lucas) and food distribution, to our most robust policy agenda ever, to weaving racial equity and justice more deeply into our mission — it's all part of serving our shared community.

We are beyond grateful that you are on this journey with us as part of an extended family of neighbors helping neighbors. **Thank you for your support.**

Editor's note: For more than a decade, Page 2 has been reserved for the perspectives of our Executive Director. For National Hunger Action Month, we're proud to instead present this critical perspective from our Director of Policy & Partnerships, Deen Hasaan.



To pull up by the root

September is Hunger Action Month (HAM), when food banks and their communities nationwide stand together to fight hunger. But is simply “fighting” hunger enough?

ACCFB addresses immediate community need by providing *tens of thousands* of nourishing meals every day. This effort has never been more important. Simultaneously we keep a laser-focused view toward a future when hunger is fully eradicated.

This HAM we must ask ourselves: “What will it take to truly eradicate hunger?”

“Eradicate,” derived from Latin, means “to pull up by the root” — i.e., *it’s never coming back*. Because it’s a systemic issue, eradicating hunger means first challenging ourselves, our partners, and our government institutions to examine who experiences hunger — and who doesn’t. This is why you’ll hear us use terms like **Food Apartheid** more frequently.

A “hunger-free” community requires dismantling the systems at hunger’s root — like **racism** and **poverty** — to reimagine a better normal. It’s lofty, but we have a plan — rooted in justice, equity, and community power — outlined in our farthest-reaching policy agenda ever. In addition to providing nearly 50 million meals of nourishing food this year, we are working to:

- **Promote the Justice for Black Farmers Act** to end discrimination within the USDA and protect Black farmers from losing their land.



Deen Hasaan,
Director of Policy & Partnerships



Michael Altfest,
Director of Community Engagement & Marketing

- Protect voting rights and expand access to the ballot box through the **For The People Act** and the **John Lewis Voter Rights Act**.
- Promote **universal basic income**, raise the **minimum wage**, support **affordable housing**, increase **CalFresh** access ... and so on.

And that’s all on top of already achieving a state budget this summer which effectively eradicated hunger from our public schools!

That list of legislative priorities looks remarkably different than it did just a couple years ago. That’s because we’ve been putting our mission to “passionately pursue a hunger-free community” under a microscope — and examining questions like why hunger exists, what it will take to eradicate it, and what role a food bank like ours plays in its eradication. The two of us might share different perspectives on these questions given our experience: Deen started during COVID and just celebrated his 1-year anniversary; Michael has been here a decade. But we agree this is aspirational *and* achievable with an aggressive effort to eradicate hunger ... while planting the seeds for a nourished community built on democratization, equity, and inclusion.

As the directors behind our policy and community engagement work, respectively, we just have one ask of you: **Join us**.

Read our entire policy agenda and get involved at accfb.org/advocacy.

Q&A WITH OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our “responsibility to the community we serve”

ACCFB is excited to welcome our new Executive Director, Regi Young! Regi joins us from our friends at Houston Food Bank, where he was Chief Strategy Officer. We took some time to learn more about Regi to share with you. Please join us in welcoming Regi to our community. (Note: This interview has been edited for space. Regi had a lot more to share which we hope you'll read at accfb.org.)

Welcome, Regi! Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born in Inglewood, Ca. and grew up in Houston. My family is all over the country, including the East Bay. I'm a foodie that loves movies, playing sports and digging for vinyl when traveling. My wife and I have a four-year-old daughter that aspires to be a gymnast.

What attracted you to ACCFB?

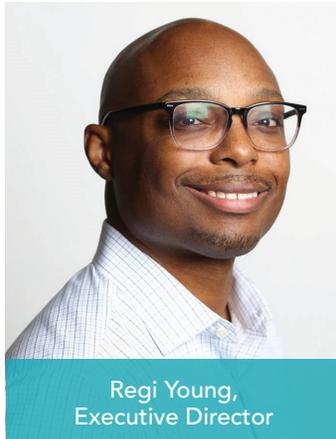
I've been in the Feeding America network for 11 years. ACCFB is known nationally to be creative, innovative, and community-centric, which are all attributes that I value. ACCFB is in a unique position to demonstrate the impact food banks can have on addressing the root causes of poverty.

How would you compare Houston and ACCFB?

Both organizations are well respected, and in culturally and ethnically diverse regions. Both are rethinking what it means to be a food bank and its responsibility to the community they serve. And both are supported by phenomenal communities that truly align with their missions and values. The main difference is service areas: HFB's is spread over 18 counties!

What have you taken away from the experience of the pandemic response?

This has been a consistent reminder of the endemic inequities in our society and their negative impact on the most vulnerable populations. These inequities must remain in



plain sight so that they can no longer be ignored.

Can you share your vision for this work?

This is a pivotal moment. For too long, food banks approached food insecurity in isolation of community stakeholders. Today, those lines are being blurred by organizations like ACCFB that understand food alone will never resolve the issue.

Families often have many other unmet needs such as housing, healthcare, and employment that if not addressed, makes it unlikely that they will become food secure. We must focus on addressing the root causes of food insecurity, and strengthen relationships with our community, partners, and other sectors to leverage our collective resources, expertise, and influence to support the goals of the people we work with and for.

Last question: what's a favorite food-related memory?

My grandmother made the best biscuits in the South. During college, two of my classmates came with me to visit my grandparents and within the hour my entire family arrived because they knew she would be making biscuits. Today, my classmates are still telling the story of that weekend!

Thank you, Regi! Welcome to Alameda County — we all look forward to getting to know you more!

Investing in a Strong

Did you know that the Food Bank's warehouse is just the start of a complex network providing 48 million meals worth of food annually? This incredible effort involves 420+ other community and nonprofit organizations — we call them “partner agencies” — working tirelessly in nearly every neighborhood county-wide.

Mighty at heart, many of these partners are small in size and mostly volunteer run — and have always looked for ways to better serve their neighborhoods. When the pandemic hit, the number of neighbors being served rose quickly. We knew then we needed to invest in more than just food — we needed to invest in our partners' ability to provide that food.

Enter the Food Bank's extended family of supporters (you!) who fueled the biggest emergency operation in our history — including investments in the long-term capacity of many partners.

Since the pandemic began in March 2020, we've reinvested \$2 million back into the community for improvements from additional food storage, to new trucks, to full-scale renovations of entire buildings. In each case, the improvements will help these partners beyond the pandemic response, and well into the future. Please meet some of the amazing organizations the community has helped:



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS AT SHILOH MERCY HOUSE IN OAKLAND

“At Oakland’s Shiloh Mercy House, we wanted to give the community the dignity of food choice. Before the pandemic, we only gave out boxed and canned food that people picked up in our foyer. But with the Food Bank’s grant, we were able to renovate a two-floor community welcome center, add refrigeration, and offer fresh, healthy food.

“The new building allows us to build a multi-generational community that goes beyond just a meal. It’s about volunteers from the community taking ownership of the market — neighbors helping neighbors — and creating a large extended family.”

— Jason Bautista, Shiloh Mercy House
Event Manager

Greater Alameda County

OAKLAND'S GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH: THE SOUL OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

Food Bank's Marcos Trujillo with Lola Hardy of Grace Baptist Church, Oakland.



"Grace Baptist Church is the heart and soul of our neighborhood, and when the pandemic hit, people lined up down the block for food. The Food Bank's grant allowed us to renovate an old church building from top to bottom. Now we can store and refrigerate more food, we're not on top of each other getting it out the door, and we can run our pantry four times a week.

"I would hate to think if we weren't there. People would have nowhere to go, especially at the end of the month when paychecks and aid run out. Our neighborhood would be devastated. But now we can really step up and make a difference."

— Lola Hardy, Grace Baptist Executive Director

NEWARK'S TRI-CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER IS "MAKING IT HAPPEN"

"When the pandemic hit, Tri-Cities never closed. Our pantries were serving 850 families. We scrambled to keep things going and managed to not only survive, but expand. Thanks to the Food Bank's grant, we purchased a large van and an industrial freezer. This has allowed us to pick up food donations from a variety of grocers and serve 1,200 families.

"Our pantries are Wednesday nights and Saturdays. So many people who need food are working. This way we're capturing that crowd when they get off work and on the weekends. It's a hard-to-reach population, and we're making it happen thanks to the Food Bank."

— Ed Wright, Tri-Cities Community Development Center



Ed Wright of Tri-Cities Community Development Center next to the agency's brand new van.

Our Values, Coming to Life

When the pandemic hit, the Food Bank's warehouse crew and drivers were all given the choice, for their health and safety, whether to stay at work given the high Covid risk.

Not one member of the team stayed home.

In fact, this crew doubled down and began moving nearly twice as much food into the community — a pace that continues to this day. For their heroic efforts serving the community, we're proud to recognize ACCFB's Warehouse and Drivers which were collectively awarded the **Living Our Values award from Feeding America.**

Richard Pittman is an Inventory Specialist, and every week is responsible for keeping tabs on each and every item in our warehouse. "The pandemic is something you never imagined happening," he said. "It was overwhelming finding ways to store and move all that additional food. But we stuck together, put in a lot of overtime, and worked through it."

Steve Vantley is a driver who knew the risks to make deliveries, but remained undeterred. "Over the years you get to know the community, and they are like friends," he said. "We just did what we had to do to get them food."



Kudos to our entire Operations Team!

The pandemic has been a challenging time for everyone in our Food Bank family, and it's our warehouse and driver team that has been on the front lines, boots to the ground, day in and day out, to ensure the community stays nourished — and has one less thing to worry about. The award recognizes their deep values.

"As someone who grew up in poverty where food was not a promise, I'm grateful that I can work here, see all the food moving out," said Richard. "The hard work has been worth it knowing that we're helping people who are struggling."

Hats off to this entire team. Thank you for your passion, work, and dedication to our community.

PUTTING OAKLAND ON THE MAP

Tom Hanks. Ricky Henderson. The Mai Tai.

Oakland might be known internationally for all of those. However, it was our COVID-19 relief efforts for which the Oakland Chamber of Commerce recognized ACCFB with its "Oakland on the Map" award.

The award recognizes a local organization that has championed Oakland both locally and outside of the community. With U.S. Senator Alex Padilla in

attendance,
Schnitzer
Steel's Tasion

OAKLAND
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Kwamilele presented the award to Suzan Bateson, the Food Bank's Executive Director for 20 years, at the Chamber's 116th Annual meeting. In her acceptance speech, Suzan credited the "persistence, passion, and pluck" of the Food Bank team, agency network, Board, and program participants. Thank you to the Chamber — and community — for this recognition.

HUNGER HEROES

Safeway: Nourishing Neighbors

A Safeway truck delivers groceries to the Food Bank



Safeway has long been one of ACCFB's most committed partners — including (but far from limited to!) annual food and fund drives during the summer and holidays. During the pandemic response, Safeway has stood by our side to further ensure the community has nourishing food — including multiple food donations to help our Oakport drive-through distribution. Overall, Safeway Foundation's Nourishing Neighbors program has provided food for 38 million meals to support local hunger relief organizations in Northern California. Wendy Gutshall of Safeway said, "We are committed to help feed our neighbors in need. Our goal is to ensure that everyone in our community that is facing food insecurity issues has enough to eat."

Volunteer Spotlight: Celebrating Pride!

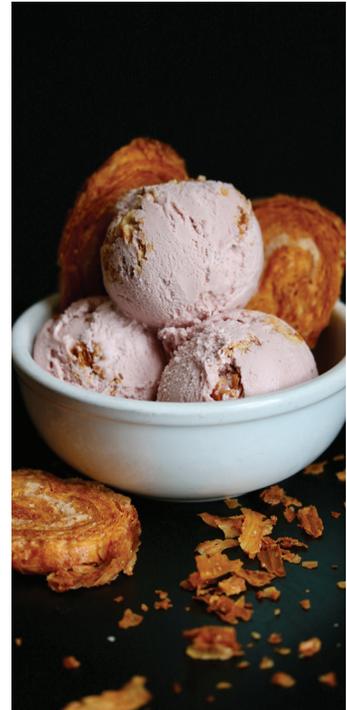


Members of Oakland LGBTQ Community Center volunteer at the Food Bank's CEC

June 29th was an exciting day in our Community Engagement Center. We celebrated Pride Day and the return of volunteer groups with folks from Target, Nuna, and the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center, one of the most recent additions to our partner agency network. Hunger disproportionately impacts the queer community and we are thankful to have passionate partners like the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center working on the front lines of this important intersection.

We can't wait to welcome more groups back into our Community Engagement Center. Visit accfb.org/volunteer for more info and to sign up today!

Ice Cream with Impact



Starter Bakery and Humphry Slocombe ice cream joined forces this summer to create a flavor of ice cream that *gives back*. The new Berry Kouign-Amann ice cream was a perfect combo of Starter Bakery pastries and Humphry Slocombe ice cream that raised enough to provide 7,000 meals to the community. According to Brian Wood, owner of Starter Bakery, "the opportunity to highlight efforts to address local food insecurity and support ACCFB was very meaningful for everyone at Starter."

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GET AND GIVE SUPPORT!



GET FOOD

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

If you or someone you know needs food, please call us at **1-800-870-FOOD (3663)** or visit www.foodnow.net



VOLUNTEER

As an essential business, the Food Bank remains open to volunteering. Our greatest need is for weekday volunteers (age 18+) who can commit to joining us weekly for full days for at least a month.

Register for a shift at accfb.org/volunteer



ADVOCATE

Our advocacy team works year-round with every level of government to end poverty and inequity.

Get involved as an advocate. The movement is stronger with you in it.

Learn more at accfb.org/advocacy

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



SEARCH: *Alameda County Community Food Bank*

COVID-19 RENT RELIEF IS HERE!

Qualifying renters and landlords are now eligible for 100% of rent and utilities owed. Learn more at accfb.org/ERAP

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

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

I commit to a monthly gift of \$ _____ (*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: ____/____/____

You can sign up at accfb.org/monthly

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please make check payable to:

Alameda County Community Food Bank (or "ACCFB")
P.O. Box 30757
Oakland, CA 94604-6857

Please charge my gift to my:

Visa MasterCard AmEx Discover

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Sec. # _____

Signature _____

Donate online at www.accfb.org

NLFAL21

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