

Community Harvest

SPRING 2023

It Takes a Community to End Hunger



Pastor Cesar Aranda (third from right) and other members of Oakland Catholic Worker join Food Bank staff on a visit to ACCFB's Community Market

"The lines keep growing every week," Pastor Cèsar Aranda of Oakland Catholic Worker told us on a recent visit to our Community Market.

Oakland Catholic Worker — which provides food and housing assistance to East Oakland residents — serves up to 150 community members every Thursday afternoon. On the morning that Pastor Aranda visited us, his distribution was still three hours away. Yet when he left to pick up food from our warehouse, the line already stretched around the block. Oakland Catholic Worker is just one of about 400 partner organizations we work with — and most are seeing their lines grow and the demographics of those who access their services broaden.

Although Spring is a time when we celebrate abundance, we are also facing a moment of deep concern. Many of us are feeling the impacts of massive layoffs across the Bay Area and increased costs of living. Basic needs are feeling farther out of reach than ever. Our food bank has not been immune to these challenges: food costs have drastically risen, affecting both our community and our ability to continually address the growing need. In fact, our food budget

**"The lines
keep growing
every week"**

has increased by millions of dollars year-over-year as we work to meet rising demand.

As more people navigate deeper levels of food insecurity, our community is further impacted by government cuts to safety net resources. February, for instance, marked the end of the CalFresh Emergency Allotment resulting in our community losing 3.1 million meals worth of benefits ... per month.

This is why your partnership is so critical.

Our work may be rooted in responding to crises and emergencies, but it is also deeply rooted in COMMUNITY. As we begin to enjoy the beauty of spring, we are acknowledging and celebrating the joyful times while preparing for the challenges ahead. There are many ways to help: sharing your time, resources, or voice. The newsletter you're holding right now highlights many of the tools we have to fight food insecurity together.

There are many ways to tap in. No matter how you connect with ACCFB, we are grateful you've joined our movement to end hunger in Alameda County and beyond.

Reflections and Ruminations

REGI YOUNG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Regi Young,
Executive Director

What would happen if we could share our collective knowledge and resources with one another?

The fabric of our Food Bank community is made up of nearly all 1.7 million people in Alameda County: clients, donors, advocates, volunteers, staff, corporate and government partners,

food distribution organizations, and so on. You — someone taking the time to read this newsletter — are an essential part of this work. Collectively, through our individual passions and relationships with each other, we have the power to build the future we want for ourselves and our community.

In February, our entire Food Bank — all 140 of us — took the opportunity to gather in person for the first time since COVID-19 began. For Food Bankers who started during the pandemic, including me, it was the first time meeting some of our colleagues. For Food Bankers who were here before March 2020, it was eye opening to see just how much we've grown!

For two days, we took the opportunity to connect and reimagine what it will take to uproot hunger.

One lesson stood out: If our goal is just to recover from crises like the pandemic as fast as possible, we go alone. But if we want to go far and make a lasting impact, we must go TOGETHER.

It takes all of us pushing through challenges to ensure our community stays nourished. Hearing the thunderous roars and seeing the high-fives during our time together illuminated how formidable the power of a bonded community is.

Many people in Alameda County are struggling and our network of about 400 community partners continues to see record food demand. Late this winter, the CalFresh (SNAP) Emergency Allotment ended, leaving a 3.1 million meal (per month!) gap to fill. Meanwhile, the cost of purchasing food has skyrocketed, all while fundraising has dramatically dropped off.

In times like these, it is more important than ever to care for one another and celebrate moments of joy. It's going to take an enormous effort to ensure we can all thrive together today and into the future. But it's an undertaking which I know will be successful because you are in our corner.

Let's pause, celebrate one another, and join together in community to uproot hunger in Alameda County and beyond.

In Community,
Regi Young, Executive Director

“...if we want to go far and make a lasting impact, we must go TOGETHER”

Marisol —
mother, client,
and volunteer
at Oakland's
Esperanza
Elementary
School

Help us nourish our community year-round

Become a monthly donor by April 15 and have your recurring gift **matched for a year**, up to \$50,000!

As a sustaining donor, you make it possible for us to quickly respond when the unexpected happens — like a global pandemic.

You can also sign up online at accfb.org/Monthly.

Protecting the “First Line of Defense Against Hunger”

Our Community lost 3.1 million meals in government benefits per month — and we need your help

Pop Quiz: What is the single most impactful hunger-relief program in the United States?

If you said “Food Banks,” we’re flattered by your guess. In many ways you’re correct — just not in the way you’re probably thinking.

Yes, Food Banks like ours work tirelessly year-round to distribute millions of meals worth of groceries. We also work to eradicate hunger’s root causes. But what if we told you that a family could walk into our Food Bank today, and in as little as 30 minutes we’d have helped them secure hundreds of dollars to purchase groceries on their own?

We’re talking about our nation’s first line of defense against hunger: the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP), formerly known as “food stamps.” SNAP — known as CalFresh in California — is a federally-funded program which provides eligible households with money (provided on an Electronic Benefits card) to purchase food at a grocery store.

Two-thirds of people who receive SNAP are children, seniors and people living with disabilities. Each month, our CalFresh Outreach team alone helps more than 340 households receive SNAP benefits. In total, Alameda County recipients that we assist receive \$1.4 million in benefits monthly

to spend on groceries, resulting in \$2.1 million in local economic activity! Most importantly, SNAP gives families the dignity to choose the food they want for their own cultural and dietary needs — or simply, their preferences.

It’s a vital program for hunger relief — and one we must fight to protect.

FROM OUR COMMUNITY:

Jerilynn is 69 years old. She suffers from a brain injury and an issue with her legs. She can buy healthy food with CalFresh Emergency Allotment benefit, but she’ll only receive \$89 per month in CalFresh benefits after the Emergency Allotment stops. With food prices increasing and her health issues, she is nervous about getting the food she needs.

A CONSEQUENTIAL 2023

The end of the SNAP “Emergency Allotment” (see cover story) means we’re ramping up our efforts to ensure this critical program keeps meeting the crucial needs of our community.

Have you heard of the **Farm Bill**? If you haven’t, you will probably hear a lot about it this year. The Farm Bill is a massive piece of legislation with major implications for our nation’s food system, including funding SNAP. The current Farm Bill expires this year, meaning Congress will soon be debating and voting on the future of these benefits — a major policy priority of our advocacy efforts.

We need your help. The movement to protect — and expand — SNAP is much stronger with you in it. Hear more about these efforts and how you can play a role from longtime hunger fighter Krista Lucchesi on page 4!

Food Bank 101

ACCFB was founded in 1985 by a small group of organizations fighting hunger in our community who knew that their collective buying power made them stronger. Nearly 40 years later ACCFB has grown to a network of about 400 partner organizations, one of the largest CalFresh Outreach teams in the state, and a 20-year legacy of addressing hunger at its root through policy change.

THE FOOD WE DISTRIBUTE IS ...



- Purchased from farmers and manufacturers
- Donated from distributors and producers
- Recovered from retailers
- Received from the government

SUPPORTERS



The Food Bank buys foods and pays for programming thanks to financial contributions from businesses, corporations, foundations, and individuals like YOU!



CLIENT SERVICES



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

Whether you need to find a food distribution today or want help signing up for CalFresh, our team is here to help! Scan the QR code or visit FoodNow.net.



VOLUNTEERS help sort, bag, pack, box, repack, and load food for distribution.



ADVOCACY



[ACCFB.org/Advocacy](https://www.accfb.org/advocacy)

Our advocacy team works year-round with every level of government to end poverty and inequity. Learn more about our advocacy work on the next page.



HOME-DELIVERED GROCERIES PROGRAM

We can now deliver groceries to anyone not able to leave home to get critical nourishment, including seniors, new parents, folks who are quarantining, and people with disabilities.



PARTNER FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS

Food is distributed through a network of about 400 partner organizations in Alameda County, including:

- Schools, colleges, and libraries
- Housing complexes and shelters
- Faith based organizations
- Health clinics
- Community and senior centers
- Other nonprofit organizations



Dear Aspiring World Changer



A LETTER FROM KRISTA LUCCHESI FORMER DIRECTOR, MERCY BROWN BAG PROGRAM

Krista is a former member of ACCFB's Board of Directors and the former director of Mercy Brown Bag, one of ACCFB's partner agencies, which serves the residents at the Mercy Retirement & Care Center in Oakland. Alongside ensuring that residents had access to nutritious food, Krista was a key food bank advocacy leader for over 15 years, especially around addressing hunger and poverty among older adults and people living with disabilities.

Dear Aspiring-World-Changer,

With the recent loss of my parents, I have gained the acute awareness we each only get a limited number of days to make a difference. I urgently implore each of us to throw our pebbles, to make our ripples, *now*.

Each day as director of Mercy Brown Bag Program and on the ACCFB Board of Directors I was pained by stories of hunger. In response, the miraculous, essential, safety-net act of providing good nutrition takes place daily at ACCFB and the partner agencies. Faced with this vital need, and these stories, a resounding question reverberates in my head, "WHY are people hungry?"

If you, like me, are haunted by this question, ponder South African human rights activist Desmond Tutu's expressed hope that hunger is human-made, so it can also be undone through the work of humans.

This is where you can work your magic. **The power IS in your hands to create a better world.** Providing good nutrition is an essential first step to peace. Then, calling on the powers that can change the suffering of millions is the equally critical next step. And We. Need. YOU. **Your uniqueness means you will communicate a life-changing message your neighbor can't.**

This work takes a diverse community. Advocacy is central to the movement to end hunger and a powerful way to change lives throughout Alameda County, California, and the nation.

In my 15 years advocating alongside ACCFB we celebrated many wins, each a result of small steps. The most impactful for the seniors I worked alongside came in summer 2019 when, after over a decade of tireless advocacy, SSI/SSP recipients became eligible for CalFresh so they could finally shop for the food they needed. The call, postcard, email, or visit you make today is our hope for future positive change, then no one has to live or hear those stories anymore. This year, ACCFB will continue advocating for older adults and people living with disabilities by asking our legislators to raise SSI/SSP grant levels and guarantee cost of living adjustments. Your voice is essential to this effort. Visit accfb.org/advocacy to sign up for Advocacy Action Alerts for this and many more anti-hunger campaigns.

SAVE THE DATE

May 15th – 19th

Join us for Hunger Action Week!



TAX TIME REMINDER!

Did you know your tax return can help families in Alameda County? Check the **Emergency Food for Families Fund** on your California income taxes.

Celebrating Women's History

It's no secret that women have long been at the forefront of the fight to end hunger. From Dolores Huerta to Shirley Chisolm, female leaders across the country have consistently organized with and advocated for communities impacted by food insecurity. Alameda County itself has a storied history of women like the late Ortencia Hooppie, a volunteer advocate from St. Mary's Center who was a fierce champion for older adults, and Ruth Beckford-Smith, who helped launch the first Black Panther Party Free Breakfast Program for kids in Oakland. This March we celebrated Women's History Month with some of the women in our community who carry on this important work.

Nancy Skinner, California State Senator



"Far more women live in poverty in our state and nation than men. And as a result, more women are also food insecure. So, it's not surprising that women are leading the fight to end hunger.

Growing up in a large family in California, there were times each week when there just wasn't enough food to go around in our household. It's a situation many of us continue to experience, which is why the work of the Alameda County Community Food Bank and the many other efforts to fight food insecurity are so important.

As chair of the California Senate Budget Committee, I'm particularly proud that last year we became the first state to offer two free meals to every student, K-12, that attends our public schools. I'm also proud to have partners like the Alameda County Community Food Bank as we continue the work to eradicate hunger in our state, not only for women and families, but for all Californians."

Patty Figueroa, Outreach Supervisor



"I believe that many women are drawn to fighting hunger in our communities because they serve as meal providers. I was in charge of preparing meals for my brothers and myself and ensuring that we all ate.

That's why I've always worked in jobs that provided some kind of food relief in my community, because I learned about hunger and not having enough at a young age. I take pride in working for the Food Bank and knowing that at the end of each day, I help my community to end hunger."

Anjali England, Leadership Gifts Manager



"The responsibility of family and community food security has historically been assigned along gender roles to women. Women know the amount of emotional and physical labor involved in producing and preparing food. Women also know

that food is a source of celebration, and that feeding people is an expression of care and love. For better or worse, traditional gender norms have socialized women to understand the burden and joy of feeding others. As a woman and a mother, I understand this on a deeply personal level, so it's easy to understand the urgency of fighting hunger in our community."



Joelynn Alioto, Director of Procurement and Supply Chain, Operations

"Nurturers of life, women are organically developed with the deep sense of empathy. We as humans are empowered by our inherent calling to ensure we are all fighting in the efforts to extinguish food insecurity in our community."

VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE

The best deal on food virtually anywhere!

You may see our iconic food barrels throughout the community — but did you know we have an option for folks to host a **VIRTUAL** Food Drive (VFD)?

Our VFD allows users to “shop” for our most needed items such as milk, fresh eggs, and fruits and veggies — foods that can’t go into a food barrel. Thanks to our bulk purchasing power, your gift to the Food Bank goes much further than it would at the grocery store. That means more peace of mind for those of us facing food insecurity. Our longtime friends at Crocker Five & Dime Cycling Club, popularly known as C510, knocked it out of the park in 2022 raising nearly \$86,000 in their VFD with over **300 individual donations**. That equates

to 172,000 meals for our neighbors across Alameda County! **WOW** is an understatement!

Alex Peterson from C510 says:

“It’s so easy to set up the drive and ... people are so happy to donate to ACCFB when they realize how much good you do for the community,

how much our community needs your support, and how effectively you are able stretch monetary donations to purchase large volumes of high-quality food.”

Our friends at C510 had a LOT of fun and so can YOU! Don’t miss out on all the cool, new features on our platform that make it easy to set up a page and start fundraising in seconds!



Sign up to host a VFD today at accfb.org/VFD.



Through the Virtual Food Drive, C510 has helped us buy some of our most needed items, including those we can't collect in barrels like seasonal produce. Can you find them?

- Asparagus
- Beans
- Bok Choy
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Chicken
- Eggs
- Garlic
- Grapefruit
- Milk
- Oats
- Onions
- Oranges
- Peas
- Strawberries
- Tuna



T	U	N	A	G	M	G	T	G	E	G	S	I	L	Y	K	M	W
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A	B	H	O	A	G	B	R	O	C	C	O	L	I	X	X	L	K
B	E	O	R	P	A	S	A	S	P	A	R	A	G	U	S	K	U
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K	F	K	C	H	P	P	A	J	I	V	O	E	C	A	W	T	Y

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

Volunteers are urgently needed to help sort produce, distribute food, and support partner organizations across Alameda County.

Learn about our safety protocols and sign up 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!



VISIT: accfb.org/social



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 want to become a monthly donor, and have my commitment matched!

Become a *Monthly Helper* by April 15th and have your commitment **matched for 12 months, up to \$50,000!**

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 each month. You can also sign up at accfb.org/Monthly.

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Card #: _____

Security #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Please make check payable to:
Alameda County Community Food Bank (or "ACCFB")
P.O. Box 30757
Oakland, CA 94604-6857

Donate online at accfb.org/Monthly

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



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