

Community Harvest

FALL 2023

La Clinica staff members Deisy and Natalia stand alongside fresh produce for pilot program participants.



Food is Medicine

We've all heard it or said it: "You've got to eat better." Whether it came from a doctor, a concerned friend, or simply a note to self, we've all wanted to eat more thoughtfully for our health. But for many of us who cannot afford high quality, nutritious food, eating "better" is out of reach. And those of us struggling with food insecurity have higher rates of chronic disease.

Enter the next generation of food banking in which food is medicine, and we leverage public healthcare dollars to provide everyone with the nutrition we need for good health. ACCFB is pioneering a model providing **MediCal recipients managing chronic disease with medically tailored food boxes. It's part of CalAIM, California's statewide program to address the social determinants of health such as food, housing, and peer supports.**

The Food Bank partnered with La Clinica San Antonio to complete a successful pilot in which we provided prediabetic and diabetic participants with

two weekly boxes: one with 12 pounds of nutritious dried goods, and a second with 12-15 pounds of fresh produce plus one lean protein. The results so far are promising: Over the course of four months, the vast majority of participants lowered their blood sugar.

"Over the course of four months, the vast majority of participants lowered their blood sugar."

Now the Food Bank is poised to scale up and be a national model for the future of food banking. It's a win-win-win. People struggling with food insecurity get the nutrition they need and have improved health outcomes. Food banks can use MediCal dollars to sustainably finance food distribution. And MediCal can potentially lower its overall costs. It's a lot cheaper to stay healthy by eating healthy than it is to manage diseases caused in part or exacerbated by food insecurity.

ACCFB will be growing this exciting program in the coming months. Be on the lookout for more about this game changer for both food security and good health.

From the Desk of Regi Young



Regi Young,
Executive Director

At meetings, out at our pantries, and even when I'm wearing a Food Bank T-shirt at a store, people remark on our value to the community. They think our biggest value is our food. I believe it's our relationships and our ability to channel the good will of those

relationships into meaningful action.

ACCFB has nearly 400 community partners, thousands of volunteers, and countless supporters like you. And of course, we serve hundreds of thousands of our neighbors. I am guessing we hold more relationships than any other nonprofit in Alameda County.

If we leverage our network, we have the power to create enormous impact. If we focus solely on distributing food, it's a missed opportunity. It's like showing up to a basketball court to just dribble without taking a shot. Policy advocacy is that shot, and our work in that arena has led to several slam dunks.

The California Universal Meals Program for school children was a tremendous leap in our efforts to eradicate hunger. We championed that bill along with others, and now no child is hungry while at school. Done.

Our latest efforts have been to advocate for CalAIM, a program to leverage MediCal dollars to purchase medically-tailored food boxes (see cover). This is a pioneering area of food banking

to provide nutritious food to neighbors with limited resources to better prevent and manage chronic disease. Once we get to scale, we can knock out hunger for another huge segment of our community.

And this fall, we'll be advocating hard for an expansion of the federal Farm Bill, which gets reauthorized every five years (see page 4). This pays for part of the Food Bank's operations as well as the CalFresh Program (formerly food stamps).

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I know you agree that food should be a human right. The reality is that the best way to eradicate hunger is through policy action. It's a solvable issue, and we don't have to come up with mind-boggling solutions — the answers are within reach. And by leveraging the good will of all ACCFB's supporters like you, we harness the political will of our community and can eradicate hunger. I personally invite you to get involved!

JOIN US FOR A FESTIVE *afternoon* TO SUPPORT ACCFB



accfb.org/savor

Sunday, October 1, 2023

Noon - 3 p.m. (Silent auction preview 11 a.m. - Noon)

Wente Vineyards, 5050 Arroyo Road, Livermore

Hunger Heroes

RALEY'S FOOD FOR FAMILIES – HELPING OUR COMMUNITY THRIVE

Raley's — a family-owned grocer which also owns Nob Hill Foods — has been a longtime, vital partner in our Food Bank's mission to uproot hunger.

Founded more than 35 years ago, Raley's *Food For Families* began as a holiday food drive and has grown into a year-round effort that supports our Food Bank and many others in the region. Recently, Raley's has been instrumental in our efforts to secure nourishing



fresh produce from BIPOC-owned farms. And, this summer, Raley's partnered with the California Milk Advisory Board to provide fresh milk for our neighbors across Alameda County.

We're grateful for the strong and powerful relationships we have with partners like Raley's that empower us to provide the diverse, fresh, and nutritious food that helps us all thrive.



SPROUTING A GENERATION OF SPEAKERS AND MAKERS

Adarsh Murugesan was in fifth grade when he first volunteered at a meal program serving low-income children in his community. The experience stuck with him, and seven years later — now a senior in high school — Adarsh has taken his commitment to making an impact to impressive heights.

Adarsh is the founder of **Sprouting Youth**, a Fremont-based non-profit run by high school students whose mission involves offering high-quality, hands-on curriculum in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and public speaking to elementary and middle schoolers.



If running his own non-profit wasn't impressive enough, Adarsh has been committed to philanthropy as a core tenant since Sprouting Youth's founding. The funds that Sprouting Youth collects from small tuition fees are used to

ensure low-income students can access classes for free, and are also granted to other non-profits. This summer — inspired by that experience as a fifth grader — Adarsh and his team visited ACCFB and donated \$5,000, enough to provide 10,000 meals back to the community! Thank you to the entire Sprouting Youth team for building a vibrant and healthy Alameda County!

Learn more at www.sproutingyouth.org.



Lasting Change Through Advocacy

“WITHOUT US, NOTHING HAPPENS”

When it comes to ending hunger, one thing is for certain: **Our voices are stronger together.**



Janny Castillo,
St. Mary's
Center, Oakland

While our Food Bank works every day to meet the immediate needs of our community, we are also working toward long-term solutions to end hunger... for good.

Janny Castillo knows both efforts very well. By day, Janny directs community outreach at St. Mary's Center, one of ACCFB's partner agencies. And when she's not directly serving seniors in Oakland, she's a passionate and vocal advocate for legislation that works toward a hunger-free community.

Janny has been directly involved in some of our biggest policy wins over the years, including a landmark expansion of CalFresh benefits to low-income seniors and people living with disabilities in California — but she'd be

the first to tell you it takes a community to create such significant change.

“We're all part of a team,” says Janny. “Without us, nothing happens.” And this is where YOU come in.

You may be a food bank donor, client, volunteer, or simply a fan. Regardless, we can all be part of meaningful change. Taking just two minutes to email your state assemblymember or member of Congress will make an enormous and lasting impact. And best of all — whether you know it or not — you're an expert!

“You don't have to know everything,” says Janny. “But what you do know matters. We need your story to be a part of the movement.”

Visit www.accfb.org/advocate to join us in ending hunger for good.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE “FARM BILL”?

You probably hear those words gathering steam every five or so years (by design) — and we don't blame you if you've never stopped to think about what they meant. But you should!

Even if you don't recognize the name, you're impacted by this important federal legislation (you eat food after all). **Importantly, the Farm Bill also funds multiple large anti-hunger programs**, including CalFresh (known nationwide as SNAP; formerly as “food stamps”) and the food that Food Banks like ours receive from the government.

Today, your voice is *urgently* needed to support this critical legislation. The Farm Bill is only reauthorized every five years, and is being debated in Congress at this very moment.

Hunger is a policy choice, and you — yes, YOU — have the power to strengthen access to anti-hunger programs. This opportunity only comes once every five years.

Seize this moment by visiting www.accfb.org/advocate to make a difference.



We're hiring a Director of Policy & Partnerships!
Visit www.accfb.org/careers to learn more.





Community Engagement Update

YEAR-ROUND PRIDE: CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR COMMUNITY



Equity is a core Food Bank value, and our Community Engagement Center has always been a safe and welcoming place for everyone to contribute to our vital mission of uprooting hunger. As part of our annual June Pride celebration, 80 LGBTQ+ community members and allies joined us for a special day of service.

Volunteer Logistics Coordinator Ren Almanzor is one of the first people to greet volunteers every day. As an LGBTQ+ community member, he emphasized the importance of coming together to create a safe space. "In a society where rights aren't always guaranteed, we have to fight for so much each day," said Ren. "Here in the Community Engagement Center, we realize a space, community, and world where we all belong and can thrive together."

Those sentiments permeate everything we do at the Food Bank, as it's going to take all of us coming together — every identity, race, age, and faith — to end hunger.

WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO

Check out what we've been jamming out to in the Community Engagement Center! Here are our top tunes that kept volunteers moving and grooving while sorting and packing all the fresh produce flowing through our warehouse.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER

▶ Break My Soul - Beyoncé

▶ It's Plenty - Burna Boy

▶ September - Earth, Wind & Fire

▶ Dirt On My Boots - Jon Pardi

▶ Calm Down - Rema

▶ Boy With Luv - BTS

▶ Enchanted - Taylor Swift

▶ Snooze - SZA

▶ Respect - Aretha Franklin

▶ We Are Family - Sister Sledge



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS! BRING YOUR GROUP FOR THE HOLIDAY RUSH!



The Food Bank pulls out all the stops during the holiday season, and we depend on volunteers to make it happen. There's no better gift to our neighbors than volunteering in our Community Engagement Center. We host thousands of volunteers during the holiday months when we distribute the most food.

We invite you to gather your coworkers, classmates, friends, families, and neighbors to join us for a fun, festive, and impactful shift sorting produce, listening to music, and working together in community. Nothing the Food Bank does would be possible without the dedication of volunteers. Holiday shifts fill up fast! Sign up today at www.accfb.org/volunteer.

ACCFB Community Market: More Than a Distribution Center



Food is love, and that love binds our community together. That's why when food pantry and meal program partners pick up healthy food from our warehouse Community Market the Food Bank creates an experience that is welcoming, supportive, and full of love.

More than a food distribution center, our Community Market is a bustling hub that brings the community together.

"I love shopping at the Community Market because ACCFB staff are some of the best," said **Mauricio Salmon from Oakland's Homies Empowerment**. "We deliver love packages to homebound community members, and we love being able to provide so much fresh produce."

The Food Bank welcomed more than 100 new partners to help distribute food in response to the sustained need for food since the pandemic — and, thanks to supporters like you, invested in a massive warehouse expansion (including a huge walk-in fridge and freezer!) to better serve those partners and community.

Each day, up to 40 partner agencies pick up fresh produce and shelf-stable foods to

distribute at their respective sites. There is always a wide selection on hand, and on average **30,000 meals worth of food** leave the Community Market each day — nearly 10,000 more meals a day than before the pandemic.

"The Community Market is set up so nicely and conveniently," said **Murlyne Palmer from Phillips Temple CME Church in Berkeley**. "There's always a great selection of fresh fruits and vegetables that our community members love receiving."

It's called the Community Market for a reason: Organizations pick their own food to best suit the needs of the people they serve.

"I love being able to do our own shopping and pick items that serve our community the best," said **Daniela Gonzalez from the Multicultural Institute in Berkeley**. "Our favorite items are pinto beans, eggs, and lots of fresh produce."

To see the Food Bank's Community Market in action, we hope you'll stop by for a volunteer shift. You are part of the Food Bank family, and you're an essential ingredient in creating that welcoming environment for the greater community.



FALL RECIPE Spicy Baked Squash

Fall is approaching, and our Nutrition Team is excited to share a delicious recipe highlighting acorn squash — a seasonal and nutritious root vegetable we've been distributing from our warehouse into the community. This simple side dish is perfect for a fall meal!

Ingredients:

- 1 acorn squash
- Vegetable cooking spray
- 1 dash salt
- 2 tablespoons margarine or butter
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ginger

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
- Coat the baking sheet with vegetable cooking spray.
- Wash the squash. Cut in half lengthwise. Remove the seeds and cut it into ½ inch slices.
- Place the squash on the baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt.
- In a saucepan, melt the margarine or butter on low heat. Add the brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger to the saucepan.
- Spread the mix on the squash.
- Bake for 20-25 minutes or until tender.

FOOD BANK HAPPENINGS

A Beautiful Mobile Pantry To Welcome Community



Creating a warm, welcoming environment is an important part of our work to de-stigmatize hunger for community members. Our redesigned **Mobile Pantry truck** — which looks more like a mural than a food distribution van — is a big part of this effort!

Designed by renowned Bay Area artists **The Illuminaries**, in collaboration with **Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play.**, the Mobile Pantry is part of a fleet bringing fresh fruits and vegetables directly to communities. When the doors are closed, you can spot Bay Area landmarks woven throughout the bright avocados, berries, and apples. And when it is open, the truck transforms into a grocery store on wheels.

"We are grateful for our continued partnership with ACCFB and admire their work to serve the community," said Chris Helfrich, CEO of Eat. Learn. Play. "We hold a tremendous amount of pride in being able to collaborate with them to bring resources to kids and families in our community in fun, dignified ways."

Together, we're reimagining and creating welcoming spaces for community members to access the nutritious food they need to be healthy and thrive. Stay tuned for updates on our Mobile Pantry!

Fun & Food at the Fair

Annually, one of our most exciting — and busiest — days of the year is **Alameda County Fair's food drive** to support our Food Bank. We had an amazing time being in community with thousands of fairgoers on June 21 who collectively donated **17,000 meals worth of food** (and got into the fair free of charge thanks to their generosity!). And a special thank you to the 70 volunteers — many from **Patelco Credit Union** — who helped with collection throughout the day.

We're about to get a lot more food drive donations! Please consider **signing up for a volunteer shift** to help us sort and distribute food this holiday season. (See page 5.)





Gear Up for Your Own Holiday Food Drive!

Friends, neighbors, co-workers — you name it! When you bring your community together this holiday season, you will make an impact towards ending hunger in our community.

If you are considering **hosting or donating to a food drive**, the Food Bank offers two fun and impactful ways to stock our shelves for the busy months to come:

- **Virtual Food Drives:** Where technology and convenience meet to make a big impact! It's easier than ever to set up your own or donate to a virtual food drive and "shop" for much-needed items such as milk, fresh eggs, and fresh produce — foods that can't go into a food barrel. Thanks to the Food Bank's bulk purchasing power, your virtual food drive gift goes much further than it would at the grocery store.
- **Traditional Barrel Drives:** We know that many of you also like to pick up non-perishable food at the grocery store to donate. We're thrilled to partner again with **1st United Credit Union** as the official ACCFB food drive host. You can drop off your donations at any of their nine convenient locations throughout Alameda County.



To explore all your food drive options (holiday or year-round!) visit www.accfb.org/food-drive.



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, or I have entered my credit card information below).

I authorize Alameda County Community Food Bank to charge the amount indicated above to my account 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

Credit Card Information:

(Please fill below. All major credit cards accepted)

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Sec. # _____

Signature _____

Donate online at donate.accfb.org

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