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A Thanksgiving Tradition

FOOD AND CARING



Participants show off some of the farm-fresh produce they receive each week. 60% of the food we distribute is fresh produce.

DELIVERING HOLIDAY FAVORITES

How do you make Thanksgiving special for the people you care about? Here at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, preparation for the holiday season begins as early as July to bring much-needed health and comfort to participants and their families.

You see, we have a long-standing tradition of making sure that every participant takes home a whole chicken and a variety of holiday trimmings when they visit their neighborhood pantry the week of Thanksgiving. It takes a lot of planning, coordination, and support to make it all happen, but it's a commitment we take seriously.

Angela Wirch, Director of Food Sourcing and Allocation says, "Our biggest Thanksgiving items are the whole chickens. We've got 32,000 families we need to serve and source whole chickens to create a special holiday meal." Angela and her team get to work as early as July securing holiday favorites that are donated from local farms and manufacturers, and purchasing the rest with donations from supporters like you.

ALL HANDS ON DECK TO PROVIDE THANKSGIVING MEALS

Fulfilling this holiday commitment takes an entire community. Each November, volunteers pack and sort ingredients for thousands of holiday meals. Warehouse workers load and unload countless pallets and make sure the food is stored safely. Truck drivers carefully navigate tight city streets to

deliver the food on time. Agency partners coordinate efforts to distribute the food to people all over San Francisco and Marin. Many of our agency partners even cook large-scale Thanksgiving meals with turkeys and holiday favorites that they can buy at a discounted price from our shop floor.

This complex, coordinated effort makes all the difference for the thousands of participants whose lives are touched by your caring.

Vicky is a participant who lives in supportive housing in San Francisco. She loves getting a whole chicken from the Food Bank for Thanksgiving.

"Sometimes I roast it, but sometimes I make a curry or fry it," Vicky says. "I like the cranberries too, and I'll steam the sweet potatoes. My family gets together for a nice Thanksgiving lunch, and we talk about what we are grateful for."

YOU CAN DO TWICE AS MUCH WITH A MATCHING GIFT

Until midnight on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, BlackRock is generously matching all gifts, dollar-for-dollar, up to a total of \$100,000. That means any amount you can give today will go twice as far to provide neighbors with healthy food for Thanksgiving.



Participants enjoying a traditional Thanksgiving dinner at the Shih-Yu Lang Central YMCA pantry, made with ingredients from the Food Bank.



A Letter from Paul

Dear Friend,

Every time my family sits down to Thanksgiving dinner, we express our gratitude in the same way we've expressed it in years past, but each year it feels just as powerful. The same goes for expressing my thanks to you — your commitment to feeding hungry neighbors and your generosity of spirit helps fuel our operation, particularly at this time of year. Each November thousands of volunteers help pack and sort ingredients for more than 30,000 Thanksgiving meals. Your support helps us distribute them to our neighbors who are grateful to have a warm, healthy meal on their Thanksgiving plate.

Right now the country as a whole is feeling unsettled and uncertain about the future and for low-income people, that feeling is magnified. Government benefits are under attack in ways we've never seen before. Your support means we can continue to assure those in need will have enough food to eat, not only on this holiday, but throughout the year.

Thanks to you, we've been able to expand funds for our Food Pharmacy program where we partner with healthcare providers to connect patients with free groceries, nutrition education, and CalFresh (food stamps), all in one location. We see food as



“Your support means we can continue to assure those in need will have enough food to eat, not only on this holiday, but throughout the year.”

medicine, particularly when it comes to diet-related diseases. Making fresh, healthy food available at clinics where people are already going to receive medical care doubles the positive impact — at our Food Pharmacies patients can access health care services, and enhance their cooking skills through cooking demonstrations, receive nutrition and health tips, and leave the clinic with a bag full of fresh food from the onsite pantries.

Many people don't realize that two-thirds of what the Food Bank distributes to our clients is fresh produce and that there's more produce available to us than ever before. I'm thankful for the bounty of this past season's harvest across California that allowed us to provide asparagus, strawberries, nectarines, broccoli and peaches, to name a few.

So as we gear up for our busiest time of year I wanted to be certain to tell you how central you are to everything we do, and to thank you.

With gratitude,


Paul Ash, Executive Director,
San Francisco-Marín Food Bank

Double your gift

TO FEED HUNGRY NEIGHBORS

When you donate by 11/28 at midnight, BlackRock will match your gift dollar-for-dollar up to a total of \$100,000. Every \$1 is doubled to provide 4 meals.

Sfmfoodbank.org/winter19

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With your support this November, the Food Bank will distribute



32,000 CHICKENS

to over

400 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

and

1 MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD

to

141,000 INDIVIDUALS

Corporate Sponsors

The San Francisco-Marín Food Bank is grateful for the ongoing, generous support of our corporate sponsors. We appreciate their commitment to ending hunger in our communities through financial contributions, food and fund drives, and volunteering. For more information on corporate sponsorships, contact Janine Hurty at (415) 282-1907 ext. 298.

In the Midst of Tragedy, Food Offers Some Comfort



Donna is grateful for the healthy food she gets from her pantry each week. It provides one less worry as she is dealing with grief and her own medical issues.

Thanksgivings have always meant big family gatherings and a huge feast for 73-year-old retiree Donna and her extended family who fill her Visitacion Valley home every November. But this year a celebratory Thanksgiving will be difficult to come by. A string of tragedies has left her isolated and with very little income.

Last winter Donna's eldest son died in a tragic accident, followed four months later by the death of her husband of 53 years, after a long illness. Donna, who is fighting a rare lung disease herself, spends much of her time caring for her youngest son Maurice, who suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car crash in 2018 and is on permanent disability.

"It's been a difficult year, for sure," she says, fighting back tears.

Donna is able to draw on her husband's pension, but San Francisco's rising cost of living and a disabled son to look after means money is tight and she has to spend wisely.

Her visit to the pantry at the Visitacion Valley Family Center on Raymond Street every Friday is a highlight of the week. Not only are fresh fruits and vegetables available to her as part of a week's worth of healthy groceries, but she

also gets to chat with the volunteers and leaves feeling acknowledged and supported.

"I really can do a lot with the carrots, potatoes, and onions... sometimes I'll stir fry them, sometimes I bake them," she says. "The nice part is knowing that the veggies and fruits help keep me and Maurice happy while we deal with our medical issues."

Donna is looking forward to a quiet Thanksgiving with her son and, despite the upheaval in her life, says she is very thankful for the food on her table.



"One of the things getting me by is the food from the Food Bank I get every week... without it, my son and I wouldn't be eating so well."

- Donna

Thank you for caring.

The food you help provide is always met with sincere gratitude. Here are just a few words of thanks for the meals you make possible.



"Thank you very much. You know, I can't really live without this food."

- Susan, who is blind and suffers from diabetes



"This is something really good that the Food Bank is doing. You are helping a lot of people. We can get lots of vegetables here, and we need those to be healthy."

- Yesenia, mom of two

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Health Innovations

FOOD PHARMACIES



Linda, who has diabetes, has lost over 30 pounds since participating in her local Food Pharmacy program. The Food Pharmacy uses healthy food from the Food Bank as a critical part of treatment.

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

Having healthy food to share with our community doesn't mean much if people can't get to it. That's the idea behind many of the Food Bank's recent innovations. We work hard to find the best ways to safely transport nutritious foods to people in convenient locations where they don't have to go out of their way. Food Pharmacies are one of the newest innovations to get healthy food to people where they are.

In 2016, the San Francisco-Marín Food Bank collaborated with local physicians and health clinics to launch our first Food Pharmacies. These programs help connect patients — who already go to the clinics to see their doctors — with free groceries, nutrition education, and CalFresh enrollment (food stamps), as well as classes on healthy food preparation.

Alicia Hobbs, who organizes the program at our Silver Avenue site, emphasizes the fact that food can be medicine. The new regimen is particularly aimed at patients with health challenges, such as diabetes and hypertension. "We're not just introducing patients to healthy food... we're teaching them how to cook this food in the healthiest way possible. Perhaps most importantly, we're trying to create a community where these patients feel supported every step of the way."

GIVING LINDA A HEALTHIER LIFE

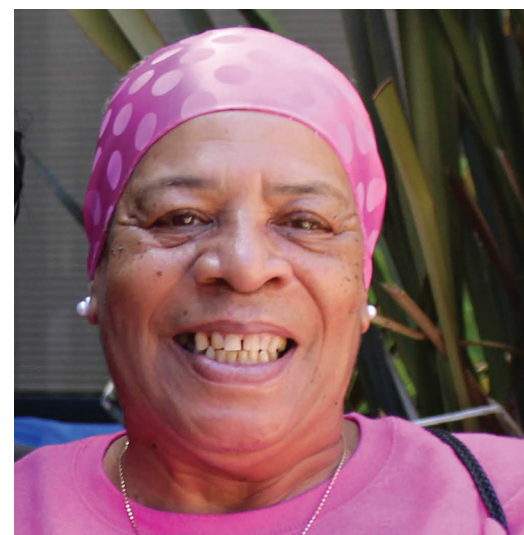
Linda is one patient whose health improved significantly since she linked up with a San Francisco-Marín Food Pharmacy. Fifteen years ago a car crash changed Linda's life forever when both of her ankles were shattered, and her wrist fractured. Even after months of physical therapy, she was forced to retire early from her job at a local bank. The damage to her ankles

meant she could no longer walk long distances or stand on her feet for even a few minutes at a time. Without income from her job Linda has had to eke out an existence on only a few hundred dollars in SSI funds every month.

Since Linda's doctor suggested she get involved in the Food Bank's Food Pharmacy program at SouthEast Health Clinic in the Bayview neighborhood, she's had free access to healthy fruits and vegetables as well as health education.

Now 65, Linda is battling diabetes and hypertension. Participating in the program has not only resulted in weight loss and a drop in blood pressure, it's also taught her new ways to prepare certain foods — such as steaming carrots and broccoli to keep more of the vitamins intact.

"My health hasn't been this good in years," she says, and I owe it to those at SouthEast, and the good people at the Food Bank."



"My health hasn't been this good in years. I owe it to those at SouthEast, and the good people at the Food Bank."

- Linda

Food Matters is a publication of San Francisco-Marín Food Bank.

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