

WINTER FOOD & FUNDS DRIVE WRAP-UP

An enormous THANK YOU goes out to the 400+ Food Drive hosts who helped collect food during the Winter Food and Funds Drive. Your commitment and generosity yielded 550,000 meals for hungry Sonoma County residents. Here are just a few of the Winter Food & Funds Drive top Hunger Fighters ...



Above: REFB Executive Director David Goodman and Food Drives & Events Coordinator Dalton Wiley thank Marmot Mountain for their support.



Below: A local resident drops a bag of purchased food into a barrel at Safeway during our Winter Food & Funds Drive.



- **September 19-22 – B.R. Cohn Charity Fall Music Festival** – 15000 Sonoma Highway, Glen Ellen: A blend of celebrity chefs with classic rock, golf and wine for three days of fun and fundraising. Last year, the B.R. Cohn Charity Fall Music Festival contributed \$35,000 to the REFB.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SUMMER LUNCH!

The REFB is gearing up for its 11th annual Every Child, Every Day Summer Lunch program, which offers Sonoma County low-income children a healthy lunch during the summer break – and we need your help! Volunteers are needed to deliver and serve nutritious meals to children ranging in age from tots to teens, as well as to supervise exercise and educational activities at the lunch site. Volunteers are encouraged to team up with friends or colleagues to share duties and must be at least 18 years old. This is a great way to enjoy the summer weather while helping to end hunger in our community. Contact Vanessa Wallace at vwallace@refb.org or 707/523.7902 x155 to volunteer.

NEW INFORMATION & REFERRAL CENTER EXPANDS OUR REACH

One of the most vital new spaces we created in the Brickway facility is the Information & Referral Center, where trained volunteers speak directly with incoming clients, providing them with the necessary information to enroll in any of the REFB's programs, or referring them to a partner agency in their neighborhood that can meet their needs. This group also assists walk-in clients in need of immediate food assistance with access to our Emergency Food Pantry.

This hard-working crew consists of Joyce Hall, Tony White and Nick Ojeda. Together, they work a combined total of 15 hours a week and handle more than 20 percent of our incoming call volume. This bilingual referral team has helped to make our system more efficient by offering immediate assistance and has given us the ability to respond respectfully and graciously to people in crisis.

Additionally, the referral team also helps to facilitate CalFresh sign-ups by scheduling appointments with a County representative that comes to the REFB to enroll participants. This one-stop-shop makes the distressing process of signing up for food assistance much easier.

We certainly could not meet the varied and growing needs of our community without the invaluable support from this distinguished group of Information & Referral Center volunteers. We offer our sincere thanks to Joyce, Tony and Nick and welcome others who might be interested in this type of volunteer activity.

Please contact Jen Oberti at joberti@refb.org or 707/523.7902 x123 to join this team.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Your input is welcomed and needed to help make the REFB the best it can be. Send your comments, suggestions and questions to info@refb.org or mail them directly to the REFB.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Host a Food & Funds Drive:**
 - Sign up online at www.refb.org
 - Call 707-523-7902 ext. 114
 - Email dwwiley@refb.org
- **Make a Financial Donation:**
 - Online at www.refb.org
 - Mail a check to the REFB
 - Return the envelope delivered with your Newsfeed
- **Volunteer:**
 - Individuals and groups can sort, pack, deliver and distribute food
 - Visit www.refb.org/volunteer
 - Send an email to joberti@refb.org
- Like us on Facebook!



LOCAL BOY SCOUT TROOPS "SCOUT FOR FOOD" TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

On a sunny Saturday in March, eight Cub Scout packs and eight Boy Scout troops – a total of over 500 scouts – descended upon the REFB to participate in the Boy Scouts of America annual Scouting for Food Drive. After going door to door in their neighborhoods distributing empty shopping bags and fliers, the scouts collected and delivered nearly 5,000 pounds of food.

"This is a terrific annual effort by the scouts and their adult leaders, and we hope residents will continue to support the effort by donating food for the increasing number of Sonoma County residents including families, the elderly and children who need help getting enough to eat," said David Goodman, Executive Director of the REFB. "A bag of canned and packaged food is a tremendous help to someone in need."

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most common products in the Agency Store. These new labels categorize our food items with stop light colors: red (use sparingly), yellow (use in moderation), or green (use often). This way, shoppers can make more informed decisions about the foods they are purchasing for their clients. Studies have shown that adding these kinds of simple red, yellow, and green markers to foods significantly changes consumers' behavior over time.

Even with the generous percentage of produce we provide for our Sonoma County member agencies, we wanted to ensure that the remaining food they obtain from us is also healthy by providing them the most accurate nutrition information available without significantly restricting the variety of food in the warehouse.

"This new label is a wonderful idea," said Kathy Von Haus, a frequent shopper from Harvest Christian Center in Santa Rosa. "I'm very impressed with the project because people need to be more aware of nutrition with all the junk food out there."

We have fine-tuned our own rating system for foods in the warehouse over the last two years with the help of Santa Rosa Junior College nutrition students. Most recently, Sara Cannon – an intern with the Golden Gate Dietetic Internship program – finished the project by designing the labels and placing them in the Agency Store. We hope the "Stop Light Label" project will help light the way toward better health for all those working to end hunger in our community.



TUMMY TALK

Roseland Elementary School students open up about hunger

"When I feel hungry my tummy talks to me," said one first-grader at Roseland Elementary School. When asked about being chronically hungry, another student chimed in: "I would feel grumpy and not do as well as I used to do because I would not concentrate. I would also wonder when my next meal would be and get sad."

Of the 78,000 individuals the Redwood Empire Food Bank feeds each month, 44 percent are children. Unfortunately many working families still struggle to make ends meet and cannot provide consistent, healthy meals for their kids. To provide this necessary nutrition for school-aged kids, the REFB has developed the Afterschool Meal Program (AMP), which includes snacks and supper. This year, AMP will serve 2,500 kids at 48 sites across Sonoma County. To get a better sense of how hunger affects these young children, the REFB teamed up with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Sonoma County, where 1,300 children participate in the Supper program each week.

"You feel scared and wondering if you will wake up in the morning with food in your refrigerator."

— Roseland Elementary School student

We worked with the students on an art and dialogue project that reflects their attitudes and experiences with hunger in their own lives. Not surprisingly, the students were incredibly thoughtful and profound. The kids were asked to describe in writing what it feels like to be hungry and to tell a story about hunger. They were also asked to draw one of three things: their favorite food, their family eating together, or their family cooking a special recipe. In the end, the kids produced dozens of impressive food-related drawings and an assortment of insightful responses.

Many confessed to knowing someone who was chronically hungry, or having seen someone in the community that experienced hunger. One student expressed an interest in helping out: "If I can make a change then I would give all the food I can give to them and I would be happy that I made a difference."

While we initiated the project to collate their drawings and responses into a booklet we can share with others in the community, we were reminded that our work is indeed making a difference.

GREEN MEANS GO!

The Agency Store introduces stop light nutrition labels



Just like the Redwood Empire Food Bank's direct service programs, half of the food that our non-profit and faith-based partner agencies distribute is fresh produce. In fact, our collective "menu" mirrors national recommendations for healthy eating. The food pyramid is now ancient history, and instead, the USDA's "My Plate" campaign recommends making half of your plate fruits and vegetables.

Recognizing that more information can help people make better choices, we have added "Stop Light Labels" to our

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THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK provides food in Sonoma County and for hunger relief organizations in Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. The REFB is an affiliate of Feeding America and a member of California Association of Food Banks.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Strengthening our support of the community

The Redwood Empire Food Bank's six-and-a-half year effort to raise funds, design, and construct a new facility is becoming a distant memory as we complete the first year in our new home.

Turning our attention to the coming year, we will continue to deepen and expand the ways in which we help people through our 14 different hunger relief programs. Of particular focus will be the success of our non-profit Value Market that serves income-qualified people struggling to make ends meet. The Value Market has presented the REFB with a new set of challenges, but when our customers leave saying, "thank you for being here," we know we're on the right path.



We are also excited to incorporate our Community Kitchen into our hunger relief work. Of great interest is the opportunity to take excess donated food and add value, such as turning surplus produce into soups and stews we can distribute to clients.

Another area of consideration is in preparing food for homeless people who lack cooking facilities. We will be exploring how we can use our kitchen to prepare nutritious food for those that find themselves in that difficult situation.

The REFB will remain forever grateful for being part of a community that values our work, and affords us the opportunity to bring such vital programs to people in need of help. With the first year in our new building behind us, we must now focus all of our attention on the future – the next chapter – and how we can use our new facility to improve the lives of everyone in our community.

Sincerely,
David Goodman
Executive Director

Fortunately in Sonoma County, we have legislators who understand the urgency of hunger. In March, we hosted a "Super Pack Night," where local elected officials joined us to pack food boxes for our senior programs. In between loading boxes onto pallets, our elected officials were asked to make hunger a priority.

Through our advocacy work, we hope to speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves.
[Learn more at www.refb.org/advocacy](http://www.refb.org/advocacy)



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SPEAKING OUT AGAINST HUNGER



Above: REFB Program Manager Itzul Gutierrez and Sean Hamlin, Field Representative for Congressman Mike Thompson, pose with handmade Valentine's Day cards as part of the REFB's "Have a Heart" advocacy action.

Recognizing that food banks are only one part of the hunger relief solution, the Redwood Empire Food Bank advocates for state and federal policies and programs that will offer further assistance to our clients beyond what we can provide. For us, advocacy means speaking out against hunger, sharing stories and studies, and urging elected officials to find solutions to end hunger. With a generous grant from MAZON: A Jewish Response To Hunger, the REFB has been able to ramp up our advocacy efforts, and here is a quick snapshot of what we've been doing.

Recently, REFB Director of Programs Gail Atkins worked with the county and several other agencies to produce the "Hunger Index," a report calculating the unmet need for food assistance in our region. The report recognized all the government and non-governmental organizations working together to end hunger, then calculated the number of meals that are still missing despite these efforts. It was determined that 47 million meals are still missing in Sonoma County.

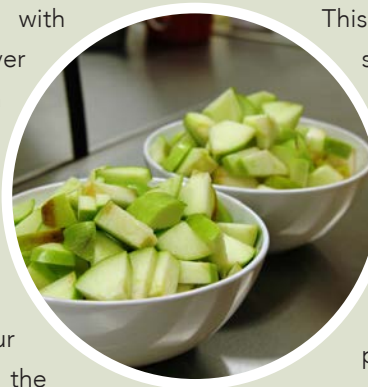
To advocate for statewide hunger relief policies, the REFB works with the California Association of Food Banks, the California Hunger Action Coalition, and California Food Policy Advocates to understand state hunger relief issues. National policies such as the Farm Bill or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are de-coded with help from the Food Research and Action Council, and our parent organization Feeding America.

HEALTHY COOKING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

Diabetes Wellness Project & VA Clinic team up to offer nutrition classes

Garden vegetable frittata, salmon burgers with roasted vegetables, turkey Bolognese over whole wheat pasta, black bean and chickpea hummus, and yogurt parfaits – these are just some of the items prepared in the Redwood Empire Food Bank's inaugural cooking class this past winter. Making use of our state-of-the-art, commercial-grade Community Kitchen, the first class was a joint venture between our neighboring Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic and the REFB's own Diabetes Wellness Project (DWP).

The aptly named *Diabetes and Nutrition: Cooking for Health* program included a series of four educational sessions combined with cooking classes that focused on general diabetic meal planning principles including an explanation of the "Carbohydrate Counting" method for maintaining blood glucose control. Each session included an hour of classroom instruction with topics ranging from counting carbs to the role of protein, fiber and fat in diabetes management to healthy grocery shopping on a budget – all followed by an hour of meal preparation in the kitchen. The meals prepared focused on recipes including brown rice, whole wheat pasta, dried beans, canned fish, and fresh produce – goods commonly found in the monthly food boxes provided to DWP participants.



This collaborative program took food assistance one step further by teaching the participants how to shop for healthy and economical foods using our Value Market as an example. Ultimately, the goal was to enable adults living with diabetes to successfully manage their disease through healthy cooking and nutrition strategies.

Upon completion of the program, the participants received the recipes prepared in each session, along with a complete nutrient breakdown of each menu item. They were also given measuring cups and spoons and a copy of *Calorie King*, a booklet designed to help them track their nutrient intake.

All in all, the adults enrolled in the course found it very useful. "The class was very informative," said one class member; "I liked that it was hands-on and had interaction with others who have similar problems and situations." Another agreed, adding: "I liked eating the nutritious foods we cooked."

The REFB plans to offer this course quarterly, with the next session beginning in the spring. Eventually, we hope to offer the class to participants in other REFB programs such as the Harvest Pantry and Farm to Family School Pantries.



THE LITTLE STORE WITH A BIG HEART

Introducing New Value Market Manager Nathan Boone



The "little store with the big heart" is how the Value Market's new manager, Nathan Boone, describes the REFB's grocery store. And Nathan knows a lot about following his heart to connect people with good food. He spent over 10 years in organic farming, founding his own farm – First Light Farm – in Sebastopol in 2007. One of his goals for the farm was to help those without access to healthy food, so he began planting extra rows to donate to the REFB and other hunger relief organizations. Recently, when he learned about the Value Market, he realized that his own values and those of the store aligned perfectly.

He was drawn to the concept of providing a welcoming shopping experience, superior customer service and high quality healthy choices to lower income households. His goal for the Value Market is to build it into a meaningful shopping destination where customers can get nutritious food that they need and want at prices they can afford.

"We have awesome deals on a variety of products like fresh produce, Clover milk and an expanding line of Hispanic brands," he said. Nathan works every day to get the word out and reach more people who can benefit from the market. He, like the rest of the REFB, believes healthy food is life sustaining and that we must ensure everyone in our community has the food they need to not only live, but to thrive. To find out more about the Value Market, visit www.refb.org/valuemarket.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Supper program strong and growing – Originally rolled out at seven sites in Santa Rosa, the Supper Pilot program ended the 2012-2013 school year at 14 sites across Sonoma County and provided 81,400 meals to children. Now in its second year, the program is more than doubling its reach to 31 sites across the county.



BackPack Project expands to two more sites – Thanks to the generosity of rotary club sponsors, we are able to offer the Backpack program to two new schools this year. Sebastopol's Sunrise Rotary and Noon Time Rotary have sponsored the program at Park Side School in Sebastopol, serving 48 families each week. At Dunbar Elementary School in Glen Ellen, the Rotary Club of Glen Ellen-Kenwood sponsors the program, packs the bags and distributes them to needy families each week.



Sonoma hub distribution up and running – Thanks to a \$15,000 grant from Impact 100 Sonoma, the REFB has set up a Hub model of distributions where Sonoma Valley organizations can order food via computer or fax and have it delivered to the Valley twice a month. The goal is to assist local Sonoma Valley agencies in their work to end hunger by increasing access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food to meet the needs of the people they serve.



CORPORATE GIVING: HOW CAN YOUR BUSINESS SUPPORT THE REFB?

Local businesses make a significant impact towards achieving our mission to end hunger in our community. Through volunteer team-building activities, financial support, hosting food drives, and corporate matching gift programs, local businesses provide help to feed 78,000 people each month.

Several businesses also support the ongoing efforts of the REFB through grant funding. Last year **Morgan Stanley** provided a \$50,000 grant to help the REFB open two new Farm to Family School Pantry sites. This year they have provided additional funding to help sustain those sites. Additionally, **Medtronic** has supplied funding to support our Harvest Pantry program. Companies like these make our work possible through their generous donations and by hosting Food and Funds Drives, volunteering, and offering a corporate matching gift program.

Contact Billy Bartz at wbartz@refb.org to discuss more ways your business or employer can support the REFB.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS BRING DEDICATION AND EXPERTISE

The Redwood Empire Food Bank's dynamic Board of Directors is an ever-changing force. The constant evolution of the board helps to ensure that the REFB is finding the most innovative ways to meet the challenging needs of our community. This year, we are excited to welcome three new members to the REFB Board of Directors – Brendan Kunkle, Steve Maass and Marie Scherf.



Mr. Kunkle is the managing partner at Abbey, Weitzenberg, Warren & Emery and a longtime resident of Santa Rosa. Active in various organizations for many years, he has "always looked for tangible ways to give back and improve our community" and says "I can't think of a more direct and vital way to positively affect the community than to support the raising of awareness and funds to support the most basic of human needs, and moving towards ending hunger in our community."

Mr. Maass, CEO of Oliver's Markets, joins the board after several years of supporting the REFB. Over the years he has demonstrated his concern for those facing hunger in Sonoma County and we are excited to welcome him to the team. With his vast knowledge of running grocery stores, we are confident his expertise will help guide the REFB.



Ms. Scherf, a CPA for Burr Pilger and Mayer, Inc. has lived in Santa Rosa since 1986. Now that her children are off to college, she looks forward to getting more involved with the organizations she supports. Marie says, "I strongly believe that ending hunger would solve so many problems that currently plague our world, and that it is tragic that anyone should go hungry in Sonoma County."

