REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK

2021 Media Talking Points:

In 2020, the Redwood Empire Food Bank served more than double the number of individuals compared to 2019.

- The average number of people we planned to serve per month in 2020 was roughly 23,000 households per month; however, the pandemic hit and **in April alone, we served over 47,000 households**.
- **In 2020 we distributed over $65 million worth of groceries** which consisted of enough food for **26.8 million meals** (a 79% increase over 2019) and included **8.4 million pounds of fresh produce**.
    - *What does that look like? Well, if you were to feed a sellout crowd at Oracle Park (where the Giants play baseball) breakfast lunch and dinner every day of the year during baseball season, plus the playoffs and World Series—that's what 26 million meals would look like.*

Individuals seeking information for food assistance, many for the first time, increased 70% in 2020.

- Our Food Connections Office (where people go to learn about food assistance) went from 1,000 referrals per month to **1,700 referrals per month** since the start of the pandemic.
- Emergency food box distribution (where they come to the food bank to get food boxes) **increased by 53%** since the start of the pandemic.

What we do is simple, but how we do it is surprisingly complicated. Here's how we got through 2020:

- **Implemented 42 Station 3990 distribution sites** (Station 3990 is the Redwood Empire Food Bank's response to disasters, be it natural, economic, political, human-made, or public health. These emergency food distribution sites are activated when and where the need arises.)
- Implemented **contactless drive-through** distributions at over **300 locations**.

And with all that we've done, we didn't do any of it alone. It involved:

- **9,000** dedicated **volunteers**
- **1,100 food boxes prepared** daily **by the California National Guard**
- **83** passionate **staff** members
- **21,515 monetary donors** (10,850 of which were new donors)
- **812 corporate, foundation and organization donors**

- **72 awarded grants**
- **153 major food donors**
- **$29.4 million** retail value **of donated food**
- **$5.2 million** retail value of **purchased food**
- **$30.7 million** retail value **of USDA acquired food**

What can you do to help the Redwood Empire Food Bank continue on its mission of ending hunger in our community?

- **We are in dire need of food, funds, and volunteers**. It's not one or the other — we need all of it. Every dollar, every minute, and every food donation makes a difference.
    - **We need volunteers.** Throughout the year, the Redwood Empire Food Bank relies on 9,000 volunteers. With the shelter in place order, the number of people volunteering has drastically reduced.
        - We are taking all necessary precautions to help make sure that staff, volunteers, food, and participants remain safe so our distributions can continue.
        - We have turned the majority of our distribution sites into drive-thrus to accommodate safe social distancing practices. As a result, we are having volunteers distribute food boxes for participants to grab and go.
    - **We need food.** Food donations help keep our warehouse shelves stocked with non-perishable staple groceries for distribution through Redwood Empire Food Bank programs and partner organizations.
        - Our most needed items include Tuna and Canned Meat, Peanut Butter, Canned Soups, Stews, and Chili, Rice and Dry Beans, Cereal ,Canned Fruits and Vegetables, High Protein Granola Bars, Trail Mix or Nut.
    - **We need money.** When you donate to the Redwood Empire Food Bank, your money helps us purchase food, pay our staff, fuel our trucks and keep our lights on. Without money, we wouldn't be able to operate and distribute food to those in need. **For every $1 received, we're able to provide $4 worth of healthy food.**

Please visit refb.org for more information.

To stay current on where and when to get food: please click here.

To stay current on volunteer opportunities: please click here.

To make a donation: please click here.

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