

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

SPRING 2014



"I am grateful that I am able to help give back to the community through this incredible organization."



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"The Food Bank was there when we needed help"

Veronica Callahan of Lakeside relied on the Food Bank when she and her family needed help. "Ronnie," as she prefers to be called, visited a Food Bank distribution site near her home in Lakeside "on and off" for a number of years, and now she volunteers at the same site helping families in need.

After Ronnie retired from the Navy, she decided to make San Diego her home. And she has lived in San Diego County for more than 20 years now. She moved to Lakeside with her twin boys and husband after she got out of the Navy, but he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure so she became the sole breadwinner for the family because he was unable to work.

"I was the only one working and we were trying to survive on my paycheck. I worked jobs as a cashier at the local gas stations nearby, but my paycheck wasn't

enough so I decided we needed help and I went to the Food Bank," she explains.

Ronnie visited the Food Bank's distribution in Lakeside at the Lakeside Christian Help Center for many years until her husband passed away after he latterly developed prostate cancer.

As Ronnie recounts her experiences trying to feed her children and support her husband, she begins to cry. "It was just so hard. I couldn't face seeing my children go without food. The Food Bank helped us so much during our time of need. The Food Bank was a godsend for us."

"I was able to get food to feed my boys," she recalls with a look of relief. "It was such a blessing. The Food Bank always came through for us. What you needed, you got from the Food Bank."

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www.sandiegofoodbank.org



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Thank you to San Diego!



I joined the Food Bank as CEO last year, and I still like to tell folks that I'm the "new guy" because I'm still learning the complex issues surrounding hunger and poverty in our community.

As a career nonprofit guy, I've worked in the San Diego nonprofit community for more than 30 years and have a pretty good grasp on our community's social services. But I never truly grasped the scale of the problem of hunger in our community until I joined the Food Bank.

During my first week on the job, there was one issue that blew me away – the fact that we provide food assistance to our heroes in uniform and their families.

Frankly, I couldn't believe the statistics until I saw our military food distributions firsthand. The Food Bank serves 28,000 active-duty military personnel and their dependents and veterans every month! Yes, every month.

I was so stunned that our active-duty military personnel and their families needed our services that I established the Food Bank's new Military Initiative this year. The primary objective of the Military Initiative is to ensure that we are supporting ALL of the military families who need our help – so that no one gets left behind. With such a HUGE military population in San Diego, that's no small task.

The reason why we serve so many military families and veterans is partly due to San Diego's high cost of living. Think of the sticker shock a family has when they move from a military base in low-cost-of-living Mississippi to San Diego with our high rent, high gas prices, high water bills and high food prices.

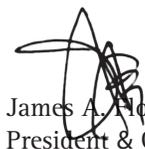
In addition to this, a recent report cited an unemployment rate of 30% for military spouses. Yes, 30%. Due to frequent relocation in the military, employers may be reluctant to hire a military spouse. And coupled with that is our region's high unemployment rate, which makes it tough for anyone to get a job.

The same report stated that military families spent \$103.6 million in Food Stamps last year at commissaries. The same report explains that base pay for a new soldier with a family is roughly \$20,000, excluding housing and food allowances.

A high spousal unemployment rate, low pay in the lower ranks, and the region's high cost of living provide the perfect storm for military families, and it forces them to rely on our services.

Thankfully, we are here to help. Last year the Food Bank provided 470,447 pounds of food to nonprofits that serve military families, including Brother Benno's, the Navy Wives Food Locker, the USO, the Armed Services YMCA and Military Outreach Ministries.

Through these military nonprofits and our own direct distributions, the Food Bank is helping our military heroes feed their families. Thanks to you, our donors, the Food Bank is proud to support the brave men and women who serve our country every day.


James A. Floros,
President & CEO



“The Food Bank was there when we needed help”

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“You don’t want to admit you need the help, but you gratefully accept it, and you are thankful for it because you can’t pull food from the air to feed your kids. When I got the food I was so relieved. I didn’t have to worry about where the next meal would come from to feed my family,” she says.

Ronnie now works at the church site where she previously received food for her family. She works there part time three days a week and volunteers on her days off.



“It was just so hard. I couldn’t face seeing my children go without food. The Food Bank helped us so much during our time of need. The Food Bank was a godsend for us.”

food on the table for my family,” she says. “Now I work for that organization and I volunteer. I love helping others.”

“I had children earlier in life after I got out of the military, and I didn’t want to ask for help, but we needed the help. And I was fortunate that the Food Bank distribution was in my neighborhood and they were able to provide us with food to put

Ronnie helps put food packages together for local families in need. “It’s nice giving back to the community, and being able to understand the situations that the families are in because I was there before. We treat our clients like family. We use first names and make them feel welcome when they are picking up food.”

“We pre-package the food that we get from the Food Bank at the church and put it in groups for households. It’s a lot of the staples that families just can’t afford. This means that they are able to afford other important things like gas which is so helpful for the families,” she explains.

Now Ronnie enjoys giving back and helping others at the same distribution she visited years ago. “Times are tough. People really do appreciate the help they get from the Food Bank, and I am grateful that I am able to help give back to the community through this incredible organization.”

Ronnie’s twin boys are now 17 years old and seniors in high school. Ronnie beams when she talks about her boys who have bright futures and a mom who loves to give back to the community that helped her in her time of need.

4-year-old Honored at Food Drive Recognition Ceremony

In February, the Food Bank hosted our annual Food Drive Recognition Ceremony to recognize the individuals and organizations that hosted food drives on behalf of the Food Bank last year.

Schools, civic groups, businesses, newspapers, radio stations and TV stations were all recognized for their contribution to the Food Bank and its mission to fight hunger.

Among all of the honorees, one award recipient stood out because, well, he’s only 4 years old. Over the holiday season a local kindergartner, Ishaan Raj, collected 528 pounds of food from neighbors and friends by taking his red wagon door to door throughout his neighborhood, and he raised \$320 through the Food Bank’s online Virtual Food Drive.

Ishaan’s mom explained that he wanted to help children less fortunate than himself, and he decided to collect food and money for the Food Bank. It’s the second year he’s run a food drive, and he plans to do more.

When receiving the award, Ishaan gave Food Bank CEO Jim Floros a high five in front of a standing ovation of nearly 100 assembled guests. Thank you, Ishaan, for being a shining example that one person can make a difference!



Ishaan receives a plaque from CEO Jim Floros.



Ishaan Raj collects food from neighbors in his red wagon.



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Come to the Fourth Annual AimLoan.com San Diego Blues Festival Benefiting the Food Bank, Sept. 6 & 7

The Food Bank's fourth annual San Diego Blues Festival is expanding to two days this year! The event will be held on Saturday, Sept. 6 and Sunday, Sept. 7 from noon to 8 p.m. at the Embarcadero Marina Park North on the downtown San Diego waterfront, next to Seaport Village.

The family-friendly event will feature 18 national and local blues acts on two stages. Headline acts include Eric Burdon & The Animals, Elvin Bishop, and Tommy Castro & The Painkillers. Other performers include swamp bluesman Lazy Lester & The Bayou Brothers, Chicago guitarist John Primer, local favorite Candye Kane, Rick Estrin & The Nightcats, Earl Thomas & The Rhumboogies, Kevin Selfe & The Tornados, Sugaray Rayford and a nine-piece gospel band, and Bishop John W. Haynes & Change.

The event will feature specialist food vendors, local craft beer and wine, along with arts and crafts booths. Advance tickets for the event are now on sale. One day advance tickets are \$15, and \$20 after July 31. Two day advance tickets are \$25, and \$30 after July 31. One day VIP tickets are \$100, and two day VIP tickets are \$150. Children 12 and under are admitted free of charge. All proceeds from the event will help the Food Bank fight hunger in San Diego County.

Bring your family and friends for a fun-filled weekend of music by the scenic San Diego downtown waterfront, and help the Food Bank give hunger the blues.

The Food Bank is encouraging all event-goers to bring two cans of food. For more information and to purchase tickets online, visit: www.sdbluesfest.com

Visit the San Diego County Fair and Support the Food Bank

Visit the San Diego County Fair this summer at the Del Mar Fairgrounds and support the Food Bank. The dates of the 2014 Fair are Saturday, June 7 through Sunday, July 6.

This year's theme is Fab Fair, and the Fair will be kicking off this summer as a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the British Invasion, an era when musical acts and other aspects of British culture changed America.

Visit the Food Bank's booth on the main concourse, and look out for Food Bank volunteers at select concerts and special event days.

For more information about the fair visit: www.sdfair.com



Please Support the School's Out, Hunger's Not Summer Food Drive

When school is out for summer vacation, more than 230,000 low-income school children in San Diego County stop receiving free school lunches and breakfasts, and face hunger at home.

Often their parents work in low-wage jobs or they are unemployed, and over the summer months these families are forced to turn to the Food Bank for help.

At the same time, donations to the Food Bank drop dramatically during the summer when need from the community is greatest.

Throughout July, Sycuan, Cox Communications, FOX5, 102.1 KPRI and the Union Tribune are supporting the *School's Out, Hunger's Not Summer Food Drive*.

Visit Sycuan and any Cox Communications store in July and donate food in our famous red food drive barrels.

Or visit your local Vons supermarket and purchase a pre-filled \$5 bag containing our most-needed food items, and place the bag in the red barrel at the front of the store.

Thank you for helping us feed hungry children this summer!

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Food Bank CEO Visits Washington D.C.

In March, Food Bank CEO Jim Floros attended the annual National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in Washington D. C., hosted by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Floros' visit included legislative meetings with the San Diego congressional delegation to discuss anti-hunger legislation and federal funding for USDA commodity programs administered by the Food Bank.

During Floros' visit to Washington D.C., he met with Rep. Susan Davis, Rep. Duncan Hunter, Rep. Scott Peters and Rep. Juan Vargas. Floros also met with policy officials from the offices of Rep. Darrell Issa and Senator Dianne Feinstein.



Rep. Susan Davis



Rep. Duncan Hunter



Rep. Scott Peters



Rep. Juan Vargas

Your Gift Can Help the Food Bank

The Food Bank relies on the generous contributions of our donors to support our mission, and below are a few ways you can support our work with a monetary donation. For more information on ways to donate, visit our website.

www.sandiegofoodbank.org



Join the Food Bank's Monthly Meals Club

You can fight hunger every day of the year through our Monthly Meals Club.

It costs so little to fill a hungry tummy. A monthly gift of \$10 will guarantee a hungry individual at least one healthy meal every day, every month, for the entire year. **And a monthly gift of \$30 will provide three meals a day, every month, for the entire year.**

To join the Monthly Meals Club, please contact Kaye de Lancey at 858-863-5129.

Leave a Legacy Gift and Feed San Diegans in Need

We all want to make a difference and leave the world a better place. You can leave a legacy gift by including the Food Bank in your estate plan. Leaving a legacy gift in your will is an incredibly meaningful way to help us preserve our mission to serve families in need in our community.

When you name the Food Bank as a beneficiary, include us in your will or trust or make another form of planned or deferred gift, you are creating a legacy that will help thousands for generations to come.

We can help you plan your legacy gift and assure that your intentions are fulfilled. Please contact Kaye de Lancey, Director of Development at 858-863-5129.



Special Thanks

The Food Bank would like to thank the following corporations and foundations for their generous contributions. The list reflects donations received December through February 2014.

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