

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

FALL 2023



*"Our rent went up \$300, and it has made it much harder to get by. The price of gas, utilities and food have gone up so much. The food, diapers and period supplies we get from the Food Bank are helping us so much."*

*— Maria, Vista*



## "The Food Bank helps us so much during the holidays"

Hundreds of families and seniors visit the Food Bank's Client Choice Food Pantry to receive food assistance every week. The food pantry is set up like a small grocery store, and Food Bank clients can visit by appointment to self-select the foods that best meet their household's dietary needs.

The food pantry offers a variety of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, meats, dairy products, breads, nonperishable canned foods along with other resources such as diapers for infants and toddlers and period supplies.

Maria and her daughter Talia (pictured above left) visited the food pantry which is open daily throughout the week for those facing food insecurity to receive food assistance from the Food Bank.

"There are five of us in our family. My daughter Talia is four months old. My daughter Daniela is six years old and in the first grade, and my daughter Diana is thirteen years old and in the eighth grade. My husband works as a car mechanic in Vista. Before I had Talia, I worked cleaning houses, but I am staying home to look after my new baby, and we are now struggling to survive on one paycheck," says Maria.

"Getting by on one paycheck is hard. We are finding it more difficult to afford rent, gas and food. Food costs have gone up so much, and we have much more expenses now with our baby. One of the biggest things that helps is the diapers and period supplies that we get from the Food Bank because they are so expensive to buy at the store. The money we save from that helps us to pay for rent and gas."

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

### IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

***We Need Your Support This Holiday Season***

PAGE 4

***Support the 2023 Holiday Food Drive***

PAGE 5

***Dedicated Volunteer & Donor Supports Food Bank's Mission***



SanDiegoFoodBank.org  
NorthCountyFoodBank.org

## Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank

9850 Distribution Avenue, San Diego, CA 92121  
858-527-1419 [www.sandiegofoodbank.org](http://www.sandiegofoodbank.org)

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# We Need Your Support This Holiday Season



As the holiday season approaches, we extend our deepest gratitude for your dedicated support this year. Thanks to you, our neighbors in need continue to have access to nutritious food year-round.

Unfortunately, this has been another challenging year for our service population.

A study by San Diego State University, commissioned by the Food Bank, confirmed a poignant reality: a staggering 76% of households sought our services primarily due to escalating living costs, while 45%

shared that they simply do not earn enough to make ends meet due to our region's high cost of living. Many are seeking food assistance for the very first time!

Currently, the Food Bank is feeding an average of 400,000 people per month in communities throughout San Diego County. To meet this demand, we have set a goal to increase the amount of food distributed this year to 48 million pounds which is an increase of 3 million pounds of food from last year. Your generosity makes this possible.

As we enter this festive season, the Food Bank will experience more demand for our services, and we need your help. Below are ways you can help the Food Bank feed San Diegans facing food insecurity during our Holiday Food Drive:

- Organize a food drive at your school, workplace, civic group or religious organization.
- Donate securely online via the Food Bank's website. Every \$1 donated provides 2 meals to San Diegans facing food insecurity.
- Volunteer at the Food Bank's warehouses in Miramar or Vista by registering online.

This year, our Holiday Food Drive partners are making it even easier to donate. Visit any San Diego County Albertsons or Vons supermarket from now until Jan. 2 and donate at checkout, or donate nonperishable food items in our red food drive barrels at the front of the store. (Please see pg. 4 for more ways you can help.)

When you give to the Food Bank, you give the gift of nourishment. Yet, it is so much more than that. You bring joy to thousands of our neighbors! Thank you.

May your holidays be filled with gratitude and extraordinary moments of joy!

With gratitude,

Casey Castillo  
Chief Executive Officer



*PS – If you know someone who needs assistance this holiday season, please visit [sandiegofoodbank.org](http://sandiegofoodbank.org) to find the nearest food distribution site.*





“Last year, our rent went up \$300, and it has made it much harder to get by. I plan to return to work when the children are older, but right now we are relying on one paycheck for the family. Today I went to get gas, and it was the most expensive that it’s ever been,” explains Maria.

“The food, diapers and period supplies that we receive from the Food Bank are helping so much because they are making it possible for us to afford other expenses every

month like our rent, utilities and gas.”

“The fresh produce we get from the Food Bank helps so much. We couldn’t afford to buy it at the grocery store because it’s so expensive,” continues Maria.

“Also, the Food Bank helps us so much during the holidays. The food we received last year made it possible for us to have a nice holiday meal with my family.”



**Maria places groceries from the Food Bank in her car with her four-month-old daughter Talia.**

Charlotte (pictured top right on page 1) also visited the Food Bank to receive food assistance for her and her husband who are struggling to get by on a fixed income.

“My friends told me that I could get help from the Food Bank. I am 78 years old, and my husband George is 81 years old. We are retired and living on a fixed income now. We are both on Social Security, but it’s getting harder and harder to get by,” explains Charlotte.

“We retired a long time ago. Things were ok when we retired, but in the last eight years or so, things have gotten really tough. We just can’t make ends meet like we used to before when we first retired. The Food Bank helps us so much. The fresh produce is amazing. We can’t afford to buy produce at the store. I have congestive heart failure so there are a lot of things that I can’t eat, but all of the fresh produce we get from the Food Bank helps so much. If it wasn’t for the Food Bank, we wouldn’t be able to eat fresh fruits and vegetables. The fresh produce is amazing,” she continues.

“I visit the Food Bank when we need food. The Food Bank has helped us so much over the holidays. Last year, we got a turkey and groceries. There’s no way we could have afforded a turkey, but thanks to the Food Bank we had a nice holiday because of the turkey and the groceries. I just want to say thank you to the Food Bank’s donors for helping us and making this possible.”

## Donate to the Food Bank as a Holiday Gift

Looking for the perfect gift this holiday season?

The Food Bank is making gift-giving easy. Donate to the Food Bank as a holiday gift on behalf of a friend or loved one. Your gift will provide much-needed food assistance to local families in need. For every \$1 donated, the Food Bank can provide 2 meals. Both you and your honoree will receive a letter of thanks from the Food Bank.

**For more information, visit:**  
**[SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Honor](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Honor)**



## What is Estate Planning?

Estate planning is really what you want done with what you own. The good news is that you can provide for the people and causes important to you, such as the Food Bank, by taking simple steps now.

If you don’t know how to get started, visit [SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Legacy](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Legacy) for an overview of some of the most common estate planning vehicles, such as wills and trusts.

**For more information, visit [SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Legacy](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Legacy) or contact Maureen Polimadei at [MPolimadei@SanDiegoFoodBank.org](mailto:MPolimadei@SanDiegoFoodBank.org) or 858-863-5129**



**For more information about our programs, visit: [SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Programs](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Programs) and for volunteering opportunities visit: [SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Volunteer](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Volunteer)**

# Please Support Our 2023 Holiday Food Drive



Please support this year's Holiday Food Drive campaign happening throughout November and December!

There are many ways you can help provide food to individuals and families in need this holiday season:

- Donate securely online at [SanDiegoFoodBank.org](https://SanDiegoFoodBank.org). Every \$1 donated provides 2 meals to those in need.
- Visit your local Albertsons or Vons in November and donate to the "Nourishing Neighbors" campaign, which provides full holiday meals to local families in need.
- Visit your local Albertsons or Vons in December and donate a \$5 Hunger Bag at checkout. Food donated through the campaign supports the Food Bank's hunger-relief programs.

Special thanks to our Holiday Food Drive supporters: Albertsons, Vons, Aya Healthcare, Bank of America, Delta Dental, Toyota, the San Diego Union Tribune, iHeart Radio and FOX5.

**Thank you for helping us feed the hungry this holiday season.**

## Thank You to Our Supermarket Partners



## Thank You to Our Media Partners



## Thank You to Our Partners



DELTA DENTAL



## Host a "Virtual Food Drive" This Holiday Season

The Food Bank's Virtual Food Drive is an easy way to donate food to families in need this holiday season.

Simply visit the Food Bank's website to select and pay for food items with your credit card securely online using a smartphone, tablet or computer.

The Virtual Food Drive is great for businesses, civic groups, schools and faith-based groups to donate food over the holidays. We can customize the webpage with your organization's logo and set up internal competitions between departments, classes and groups while giving food drive leaders the ability to monitor your organization's progress.



**Check out the Virtual Food Drive online.  
Visit [SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Virtual](https://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Virtual)**



## Dedicated Volunteer & Donor Supports Food Bank's Mission

When Mary Ellen Ciafardini retired in 2021, she was ready to enjoy the fruits of a long, successful career. A workaholic who had little time for outside activities, she finally had time to share her blessings by giving back to the community she calls home.

“Time, talent and treasure has always resonated with me. My kids are grown and I’m at a time in my life where I can now contribute to causes I feel strongly about,” says Mary Ellen.

A regular volunteer at the Food Bank’s North County warehouse in Vista, Mary Ellen is a firm believer in providing basic needs, especially food, to those facing food insecurity.

“I feel like I’m making an impact. You know the work you are doing is ultimately benefiting people who really need to be supported,” she adds.

In her early days of volunteering, Mary Ellen did not know much about the Food Bank’s operation or mission, but she fondly remembers the warmth and dedication of the employees. “You can tell the people who work here, live the mission; they are passionate about what they do. I grew up in Corporate America where the focus was always on business efficiencies. The Food Bank has figured it out. The fact that 93 cents of the dollar goes toward programs is amazing!”



*Mary Ellen Ciafardini has been volunteering at the Food Bank's Vista facility since 2021.*

It’s that efficiency that also inspires Mary Ellen to donate financially to the Food Bank. “I’m blessed to have the ability to give and so I do. It is important to me. I’m not sure if people are aware that when you give to the Food Bank, you’re mostly supporting working families who just can’t make ends meet,” she continues.

For those interested in getting involved and supporting the Food Bank’s mission, Mary Ellen suggests signing up for a volunteer shift and talking to other volunteers to understand what the experience is about. She also recommends taking a behind-the-scenes tour of the Food Bank’s facility to understand the scale and impact that the Food Bank, its volunteers and donors have in our local community.

**To sign up to volunteer, visit [SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Volunteer](https://SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Volunteer). To schedule a behind-the-scenes tour of the Food Bank, contact Maureen Polimadei at [MPolimadei@SanDiegoFoodBank.org](mailto:MPolimadei@SanDiegoFoodBank.org) or 858-863-5129**

## Karen Williams Awarded 2023 Volunteer of the Year



*Food Bank CEO Casey Castillo presented the 2023 Volunteer of the Year Award to Karen Williams.*

The Food Bank hosted our annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony & Luncheon to honor our 2023 awardees.

The ceremony culminated with this year’s Volunteer of the Year Award which was awarded to Karen Williams who has volunteered nearly 2,000 hours!

Volunteer Coordinator, Ian McHenry, said, “Karen is dedicated, dependable, and her service transcends

expectations whatever the task is. Karen is phenomenal at setting others up for success, especially as a volunteer lead in our sorting room, and she always ensures that our outdoor micro-pantry stays stocked. She’s also been known to bring cards and balloons to both staff and volunteers alike to help celebrate their birthdays.”

Commenting on why she volunteers Karen said, “It’s really everything. It’s the Food Bank’s mission because food shouldn’t be the hardest thing for people who need help. The Food Bank staff and volunteers are wonderful and have kept me coming back for a long time, and the volunteer experience at the Food Bank is amazing.”

The Food Bank congratulates Karen for her dedicated support of the Food Bank’s critical mission in the community!



# Special Thanks

Our gratitude goes to the following corporations, foundations and organizations for their generous support received between June and August 2023.

## Businesses

### Platinum (\$25,000 to \$49,999)

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Masco Corporation  
Scoop San Diego  
Wells Fargo Bank

### Gold (\$10,000 to \$24,999)

Baker Home Energy  
CAF America  
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Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling Company  
Summit On-Site Solutions  
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### Bronze (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

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## Foundations & Organizations

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Albertsons Companies Foundation  
SDG&E Community Investment Fund

### Platinum (\$25,000 to \$49,999)

Coregiving

### Gold (\$10,000 to \$24,999)

California Foundation for  
Stronger Communities

### Silver (\$5,000 to \$9,999)

Kitchell Foundation  
Mesa View Baptist Church  
San Diego Tourism Authority  
Umpqua Bank Charitable Foundation  
United Way

### Bronze (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

Enterprise Holdings Foundation  
Insurance Brokers & Agents of San Diego  
The MDBSD Foundation  
The San Diego Foundation  
Sempra Energy Foundation

### Copper (\$1,000 to \$2,499)

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Giving University  
Hologic Charitable Fund  
Starbucks Foundation

For more information, contact  
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