

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WINTER 2024



"The only way we can keep food on the table is to come here to the Food Bank, and we have been rejoicing at the quality of the food."

— Nancy,
San Marcos



The Food Bank Helps Families and Seniors Facing Food Insecurity

On a cold and rainy day in late November, Nancy (pictured above left) and Cynthia, with her son Xavier (pictured above right), visited the Food Bank's Client Choice Food Pantry for food assistance. Nancy, a retired nurse, and her husband, Richard, are both disabled and living on social security. Cynthia is a stay-at-home mom with four children, and her family is struggling to get by on her husband's paycheck.

"I have been coming to the Food Bank for about eight months now, and it's a total blessing. I am a retired nurse. My husband and I are disabled, and we are living in an apartment community for seniors. Our rent has increased around 10% every year. You think they keep one rate when you move in, and it keeps going up, and we have been in shock about the whole thing. This has become part of our life now," explains Nancy.

"This past year, the price of everything went up about 25%. The only way we can keep food on the table is to come here to the Food Bank, and we have been rejoicing at the quality of the food. I think it's far better than what you can get at the market."

"The Food Bank was giving away turkeys for Thanksgiving, and we were so grateful because it was a wonderful turkey. Without the Food Bank, we wouldn't have had a turkey for the holiday because turkeys were so expensive," she continues.

Cynthia also visited the food pantry to get food assistance. "There are six of us in our family. I am staying at home to look after the kids. My son Xavier is one-and-a-half years old. My son Gino is ten years old and in the fifth grade. My daughter Giselle is seven years old and in the second grade, and my daughter Genesis is five years old and in pre-kindergarten," says Cynthia.

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Attend the 12th Annual San Diego Food Bank Gala!



SanDiegoFoodBank.org
NorthCountyFoodBank.org

Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank

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858-527-1419 www.sandiegofoodbank.org

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Thank you, San Diego, for your generous support!



Happy New Year!

I am truly humbled by and beyond appreciative of your compassion and commitment to our mission of providing nutritious food to people in need, advocating for the hungry and educating the public about hunger-related issues.

Our focus on creating a hunger-free community keeps us motivated and moving forward. But we can't do it alone. And we don't.

Thanks to your generous donations of time, talent and treasure, 2023 was filled with stories of resilience, impactful events, and most importantly, the distribution of tens of millions of pounds of food to our neighbors in need.

We begin this new year with a renewed commitment to being the regional food safety-net for any and all persons experiencing food insecurity. Our staff and board of directors remain focused on providing nutritious food and fresh produce to the more than 400,000 individuals who need our help each month. And we are resolved to always evaluate and improve our programs to meet the ever-changing needs of the community.

In the final quarter of the 2023 calendar year, we saw an increased need for our services not only at our direct distribution sites but also among our network of more than 540 nonprofit partners. We experienced record-breaking numbers at our Client-Choice Food Pantry in North County. Staff alongside a dedicated group of volunteers, served nearly 3,000 families, on average, in October, November and December! This could be a trend that rolls over into the new year as families continue needing our services to help put food on their tables. We have to be ready to meet that demand - and we will be with your continued support.

I hope you will join me in greeting the new year with hope and optimism while remaining inspired by the impact you are having on those we serve. Because together, we change lives.

Thank you for being part of the San Diego Food Bank family – you are a crucial part of our mission.

With gratitude,

Casey Castillo
Chief Executive Officer



PS – Interested in maximizing your impact in 2024? Join the Food Bank's Monthly Meals Club. Turn to page 4 for an inspiring story from one of our regular monthly donors who simply wants to "do his part."



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“My husband is working in maintenance for apartments, and we use his paycheck to pay for the car and the rent and for gas, but we just don’t have the income to afford everything on his paycheck. We only have one car, so I take him to work, and I use the car during the day. I was working before as a pre-school teacher, but I am staying home because my son is autistic, and specialized childcare for an autistic child is much more expensive,” explains Cynthia.

“I couldn’t work right now because sometimes I need to go to the school two or three times a week because something happened to him, and it would be hard for me to find a job where it’s ok for me to leave every time there is a situation at school. For example, today I have an intervention meeting for my son this afternoon at school,” she continues.

“Our rent has gone up by \$500 over the last couple of years, and the cost of food has gone up, and gas has gone up. Bread, milk and eggs have all gone up. And with three kids the milk goes really fast. The Food Bank helps so much. The food that I get here helps me save that money, and I can use that to buy meat, medicine, gas and pay the extra rent that we have to pay now.”

At the food pantry, Cynthia receives a range of nutritious foods including a loaf of bread, frozen meats, canned vegetables, oatmeal, tortillas, milk, fresh produce, canned tomatoes, canned beans, canned fruits, a bag of pecans, spaghetti sauce, dry pasta, canned tomatoes and diapers for her youngest son.

As Nancy loads the food into her car, she smiles and says, “The Food Bank is making a huge difference in so many people’s lives. The Food Bank gets six stars because you are not only making a huge difference in our lives, you are helping many people. I’d like to say ‘thank you’ to all of the donors of the Food Bank. They are angels.”

For more information about our programs, visit: SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Programs
For volunteer opportunities, visit: SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Volunteer



Nancy loads food from the Food Bank into her car for her and her husband.

Community Steps Up to Support Holiday Food Drive!

The Food Bank’s holiday season is always filled with cheer and hope — all possible thanks to those who donated food or funds during our largest year-end campaign the Holiday Food Drive!

With more than 700 registered food drives, our red collection barrels could be found throughout the county in grocery stores, gyms, businesses, apartment complexes, schools, libraries and more. It was a tremendous effort with widespread participation resulting in hundreds of thousands of pounds of food donated.

One of the big ways the community supported our campaign was at their local Albertsons and Vons store locations. From Nov. 1 through Jan. 2, shoppers were able to donate at checkout in support of the Food Bank’s programs to provide holiday meals and nutritious shelf-stable foods to families in need.

Special thanks to our Holiday Food Drive sponsors who were instrumental in the success of this major campaign: Aya Healthcare, Bank of America, Delta Dental, First 5 San Diego, San Diego County Toyota Dealers, Albertsons, Vons, FOX 5, KUSI, iHeartRadio and The San Diego Union-Tribune.

The success of our 2023 Holiday Food Drive stands as a testament to this community’s unwavering commitment to serving others. Thank you again!

Volunteers Needed at Senior Food Distributions

Calling all volunteers! The San Diego Food Bank needs volunteers to assist at our Senior Food Program distribution sites located throughout San Diego County.

The Food Bank’s Senior Food Program serves more than 15,000 seniors facing food insecurity who are living at or near the poverty line. Seniors enrolled in the program receive a monthly 40-pound box of food filled with a variety of food items including shelf-stable milk, cereal, peanut butter, canned meats, canned fruits, canned vegetables, pasta, juice and other nutritious food items.

Volunteers help with a range of activities including set-up, registration, traffic flow and assistance loading vehicles.

Sign up to volunteer today at: SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Volunteer

Pandemic-Inspired Giving Turns into a Monthly Commitment

It wasn't until the COVID-19 pandemic that Charlie, a longtime resident of Clairemont, realized how prevalent food insecurity was in San Diego County — and how quickly a family's circumstances could change.

Ongoing media coverage in the early weeks of the shutdown showing scenes of San Diegans waiting in line for food assistance surprised and inspired Charlie to get involved and “do his part.”

“People who were used to giving were now on the receiving end,” he recalled. “The government sent out assistance checks, and I didn't need mine — I was doing ok. I wanted the money to go to people who were in need, so I gave that money to the Food Bank. I trusted the Food Bank to use my money efficiently and get food to the people who needed it.”

As time went on, Charlie realized the issue of food insecurity was an ongoing problem, not just a COVID-related issue. As a veteran, he was also shocked to see

how many low-income military families relied on the Food Bank. “It doesn't make sense to me — you're in the military but you can't feed your family.”

And so Charlie became a monthly donor by providing ongoing funds the Food Bank can count on. For Charlie, giving every month fits his budget rather than making one larger gift. And it is an easy way to support his neighbors in need. “I'd feel guilty if I didn't give. As a society, I think we need to take care of those who can't take care of themselves,” says Charlie.



Charlie became a Food Bank donor during the pandemic and is now a member of the Monthly Meals Club giving program.

Joining our Monthly Meals Club is one of the easiest ways to make a commitment to end hunger. Your gift is debited automatically and securely from your bank account or credit card. Visit: SanDiegoFoodBank.org/MonthlyMeals

Join the Food Bank's Monthly Meals Club



You can become a Monthly Meals Club member like Charlie (in the story above) and help the Food Bank feed families in our community.

As a member of the Monthly Meals Club, your automatic monthly donations will provide food to our neighbors in need every day, all year long.

A monthly gift of \$15 will provide a hungry individual enough food for at least one healthy meal every day, every month, for the entire year. A monthly gift of \$45 will provide enough food for three meals a day, every day, for the entire year.

Joining our Monthly Meals Club is one of the easiest ways to make a commitment to end hunger. Your gift is debited automatically from your bank account or credit card. To sign up, visit: SanDiegoFoodBank.org/MonthlyMeals

As a Four-Star Charity, You Can Count On Us



Did you know? The Food Bank is one of the highest-rated charities in the country receiving four out of four stars from Charity Navigator, the nation's leading independent charity evaluator.

Charity Navigator evaluates nonprofits based on financial health, accountability and transparency. A four-star rating indicates:

- The organization manages its finances responsibly.
- The organization has strong practices in place.
- The organization is successful in making a significant impact in its area of work.

For every dollar you donate to the Food Bank, 93 cents goes directly to our food programs and services.

Thanks to our streamlined efficiency, your donation goes a long way toward feeding hungry families and individuals in San Diego County!



SAN DIEGO FOOD BANK *gala*

SATURDAY
APRIL 27, 2024



Join us for the 12th Annual San Diego Food Bank Gala!

This year's gala will raise critical funds for the Food Bank's hunger-relief programs, including the Food 4 Kids Backpack Program.

The Food 4 Kids Backpack Program currently provides weekend backpacks of food to 3,500 schoolchildren at 60 elementary schools in 14 school districts throughout San Diego County. Last year's gala raised enough funding to add hundreds of children to the program who were on waiting lists.



This year's gala will once again be held outside, under the stars, on the grounds of the Food Bank's facility in Miramar.

Guests will enjoy fabulous musical entertainment, specialty hors d'oeuvres, a savory multi-course dinner and the opportunity to bid on amazing silent and live auction items.

If you are interested in tickets or sponsorship opportunities for the event or have other questions, please contact **Alexis Hernandez** at **AHernandez@SanDiegoFoodBank.org** or 858-863-5113

WHAT: The 12th Annual San Diego Food Bank Gala

WHERE: Outside, under the stars, on the grounds of the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank's facility in Miramar

WHEN: 6 p.m., Saturday, April 27, 2024

CO-CHAIRS: Amy Jacobs and Jeannie Johnson Bolinger

TICKETS: \$650; Concierge tickets: \$1,000; Table of 10: \$6,500; Concierge Table of 10: \$10,000

To purchase tickets or to become a gala sponsor, visit
SanDiegoFoodBank.org/Gala

Special Thanks

Our gratitude to the following corporations, foundations and organizations for their generous support received between September and December 2023.

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Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman Foundation
True Vine Foundation Inc.
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Bronze (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

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

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The Wilson Sexton Foundation
The Wilson-Banham Family Fund

For more information, contact
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or 858-863-5224

