

# FOOD For THOUGHT



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021

## A Beacon of Hope

**At the height of the holiday season, news reports found “more Americans are going hungry now than at any point during the deadly coronavirus pandemic.” Our most vulnerable neighbors have been hit especially hard during COVID-19. The need for the services provided by FIND Food Bank has grown over 110% from the pandemic.**

Cherie, a single mom of three daughters with a baby on the way, is one of the many Desert residents who have turned to FIND for help. Her whole family was sick with COVID-19 in October, and she was forced to quit her job to support her daughter — who has a learning disability — with distance learning. Despite these challenges, Cherie was so grateful this past December for the

food she received from FIND. She shared that the food would help her family through Christmas. Cherie said, “My CalFresh food stamps have been lowered due to my unemployment, and I am getting ready to run out of my unemployment just like everyone else on the news. Every little tiny bit helps.”

FIND’s volunteers and donors have been a lifeline for so many during this past holiday season and year. But we do not anticipate the demand for our services to diminish any time soon. FIND has been a beacon of hope during COVID-19 and is committed to continuing to serve our neighbors through the pandemic — however long it takes.



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## Message From CEO Debbie Espinosa

As we look back on the most challenging year in FIND Food Bank's history, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who graciously supported FIND during 2020. Our crisis response transformed from a sprint into a marathon. We come together because no one wants to see people hungry in our community. Thank you for caring enough to help.

FIND Food Bank is the first line of defense against hunger during these difficult times, and it is only with your help that we can ensure every child, family, senior, and person has enough to eat. For us, anything helps, and we cherish any amount you give. Your generosity, especially during the holiday season, meant so much when families desperately needed hope.

**This year, along with our sister food banks across the country, we face an uncertain future for the more than 150,000 Coachella Valley neighbors we feed monthly.** FIND will be here to make sure no one goes hungry, and we'll have updates for you every step of the way. Thank you — it takes all of us together to make this happen.

Debbie Espinosa,  
President & CEO



## Serving Our Most Vulnerable Neighbors Through the Pandemic

Hunger does not discriminate — especially now. FIND Food Bank is seeing people who have never had to ask for help before. **We have served over 18 million meals during the COVID-19 crisis to an average of 150,000 people monthly.** FIND is a lifeline for some of our most vulnerable neighbors. We added services to increase our reach during the pandemic, including additional school sites and a home bound delivery program.

**Over 80% of children across the valley's school districts qualify for free or reduced-price lunches at school.** While children are distance learning, it can be a challenge for them to get food, and FIND helps ensure children have enough to eat. FIND visits nine Coachella Valley schools to serve the community through food distributions. Having a place where families can get a little boost is vital.



**Feeding America, the national food bank network, predicts a 65% increase in childhood food insecurity compared to those served in 2018 in Riverside County.** Food distributions at schools help to bridge the gap many of our neighbors are facing. Families are able to take home fresh and high-quality fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein items, and canned goods. The food distributions ensure that children can focus on school instead of worrying about being hungry.



# Volunteering to Ensure Everyone Has Enough to Eat

Due to the unemployment rate hovering at 25% in our Coachella Valley Desert Region, FIND Food Bank sees more working people waiting in line for food. To feed the growing need, volunteering and donating are essential. We appreciate all our supporters who have risen to the challenge in this unprecedented time. Still, our biggest struggle right now is having enough volunteers to keep up with the demand.

**But YOU can help! If you haven't volunteered already, join the hunger-fighting ranks with Tracey Starr and Darrell Doren. This power couple wears many hats to help FIND Food Bank feed the community. Read why Tracey and Darrell give back to the community in their own words:**

“Early in the pandemic, all of our normal work and activities were suspended. We're fortunate to have the time and physical strength to volunteer, so when FIND started allowing volunteers again, we attended an orientation and decided to start doing mobile distribution sites. Since then, we've done dozens of them, all across the Valley. We've also done a few shifts in the warehouse and delivered food to homebound seniors.

The people receiving help are grateful, and many ask how they can volunteer too. So many people have needed to ask for help for the first time this year, and we do our best to make them feel welcome and comfortable.



For those looking to support FIND, if you have the physical ability, we recommend joining a mobile distribution event right now! The need is great, the environment is safe, the work is rewarding, and the camaraderie is welcoming and fun. Whether you volunteer or make a financial donation, you can rest assured that the organization is putting your contribution to good use. They work efficiently and effectively, and every staff member we've worked with has been professional, kind, and eager to do the right thing for our community.”

**You can volunteer for FIND Food Bank safely and at a distance to protect your health and help slow the spread. To learn more and to register for a volunteer orientation, visit [www.findfoodbank.org/volunteer](http://www.findfoodbank.org/volunteer).**

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## Senior Homebound Deliveries

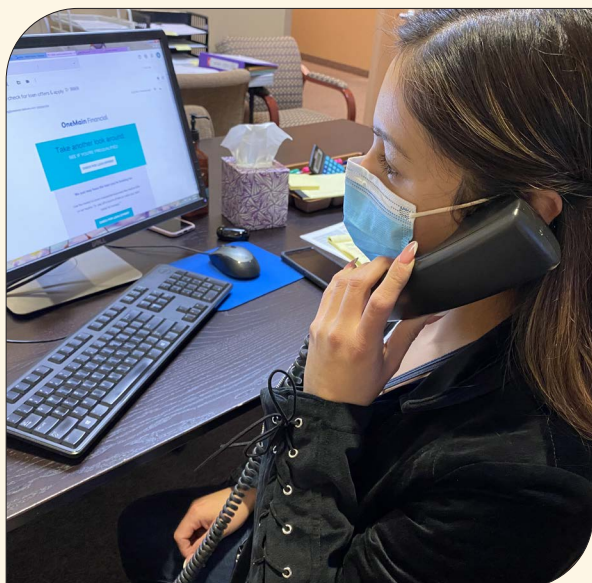
There are many isolated individuals and people over 65 years old who have trouble accessing food during the pandemic. **FIND Food Bank now delivers over 100 meals to homebound seniors a month. Our staff screens and identifies those in need of this service.** Every other week, volunteers deliver food right to their doorstep, so the process remains contactless.

When volunteers deliver the food boxes, they can see why some seniors cannot pick up their food: some do not have cars, while others are disabled. Much needed nutritious items like fresh produce, proteins, and other shelf-stable items are included in these boxes. Many seniors say they don't worry so much thanks to FIND and the volunteers.

**During these difficult times, we are thankful for the continued community support that allows us to add and expand programs like these to meet the growing need. Together, we can recover from this pandemic.**







## Calling All Donors to FIND's 2021 Telethon

Join us for the live television broadcast of FIND Food Bank's 11th Annual Telethon sponsored by KESQ News Channel 3, The Desert's News Leader, on Friday, April 9, 2021.

This is your opportunity to support FIND as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by growing our programs for the neediest of our neighbors — children and seniors.

During the event, you can donate by calling FIND Food Bank or visiting the TELETHON link on our website's homepage: [FindFoodBank.org](https://FindFoodBank.org). Be sure to follow us on our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages and tell your friends.

## Palm Springs Eats Virtual Fundraiser

Do you remember Ricky Nelson's classic song "Garden Party"? Well, FIND Food Bank has been the beneficiary of the Palm Springs Eats Garden Parties since 2014. There are two parties every year. People make special dishes to share, and there is an emporium of food and drinks. They gather, eat, and chat about their favorite dishes. Every party is a fundraiser for FIND. We loved to attend these extraordinary events.

Then the pandemic hit. This year, the Garden Party went virtual. There was no gathering or sharing of food, but there was a fundraiser for FIND. Dennis, Vic, and Colin had a silent auction and a raffle. The more you donated to FIND, the more raffle tickets you got. The donations totaled over \$9,000 and will provide 45,000 meals to our neighbors in need.

**Thank you, Palm Springs Eats, for a very special Garden Party. We are very grateful for your support! We look forward to the day we can all gather together again.**



Support FIND Food Bank and you too can help the 175,000 adults, children, and seniors we provide food assistance to across the Coachella Valley every month.

Join us on:   

**FINDFoodBank.org**

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