

# Meet the Robinsons: FIND's Founding Family

Wearing their light-blue t-shirts and still full of holiday spirit, FIND's "Family Robinson" joined us for a special volunteer event Dec. 28. They were here to honor the life's work of their patriarch, Wayne Robinson, who would have celebrated his 100th birthday in 2017.

Exactly who is Wayne Robinson, you may be asking? In addition to being a dedicated family man and long-time Coachella Valley resident, Mr. Robinson and his family established "Food In Need of Distribution" (FIND) in Cathedral City in March 1983. That means 2018 marks 35 years of serving the community for FIND Food Bank.

The time the Robinson Family spends with FIND is always special. While we are proud to be members of the national Feeding America network, we are also blessed with our very own grassroots story, and the extended family of Wayne & Helen Robinson helps FIND stay connected to that history.

"Our grandfather would be so incredibly proud of all that FIND has grown into," says grandson Sean Robinson of San Diego. He brought his wife and children to both this and last year's Robinson Family



Members of Wayne & Helen Robinson's extended family gathered to celebrate what would have been Mr. Robinson's 100th birthday — they volunteered, of course!

Volunteer Day and looks forward to staying involved with FIND. "He had the vision and he knew the need was there. It just means so much to see this work continue," he says.

And on that note, we wish our dear departed founder a very happy birthday, indeed.

## Wishing Our Long-Time CEO Good Luck in Her New Role



needed help with food than at any time in FIND's history. Something had to change.

And change we did in the eight years Ms. Houston spent as our President and CEO. Our Board and staff grew.

It was November 2009 when Lisa Houston took the helm at FIND Food Bank. Her to-do list was daunting, especially in the midst of the Great Recession. Our new warehouse could hold more food, but we were struggling to keep up with local demand: more people

We added programs, partners, and new trucks. We strengthened the foundation of donors that makes our work possible.

So it was with tremendous gratitude that we bid Ms. Houston farewell in December 2017. She is leaving FIND to take on a new role as the Chief Operating Officer of the Desert Healthcare District & Foundation. The Healthcare District has been a major grantor of FIND's in the last several years, supporting our signature initiative, "Project Produce."

At the time of publication, FIND's Board of Directors was in the final stages of a national search for a new CEO. We look forward to sharing new information on this front soon.

Support **FIND Food Bank** and you help 85,000 men, women, children, & seniors across the Coachella Valley every month.

FIND Food Bank is Food In Need of Distribution, Inc. Established 1983.

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**FINDFoodBank.org**

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## In a League of Her Own: Gwen Ford

As this newsletter goes to print, we are wrapping up the 2017 holiday season, which was one of reflection and gratitude for FIND Food Bank.

Part of that reflection included appreciation for a legendary FIND volunteer and one of our most dedicated champions, Gwen Ford.

Mrs. Ford found her way to FIND in 2008. She and her husband had recently retired to the Valley and were just getting to know people. Both



Gwen Ford, center, doing what she does most at FIND — helping volunteers sort and pack hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables that go out through our local distribution network.

*“From the beginning, it was clear Ms. Gwen was a go-getter.”*  
— Lisa Houston, FIND CEO

retired banking executives, Mr. Ford was keeping himself busy on the golf course, but that just wasn't cutting it for Gwen — she needed a project, something to keep her busy.

One of the people she met on her quest to get involved locally was Sam Hook, another long-time friend of FIND. In fairly short order, Mrs. Ford began volunteering at the food bank. She dug right in, sorting food-drive donations with other volunteers, learning about our history and needs moving forward.

"As I was coming on board in late 2009, I met and instantly connected with Gwen. She'd been serving on our auxiliary group at the time and was asked to join the Board of Directors, where she served until earlier this year, including several years as Chair. Her influence was driven by her passion for the work, and that energy was both inspiring and contagious," said Ms. Houston.

Some of Gwen's earliest and most impactful work was in

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**HUNGER** does not discriminate  
**HUNGER** knows no age limits  
**HUNGER** knows no boundaries  
We know **HUNGER**



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## In a League of Her Own

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organizing the thousands of volunteers that share their time with FIND each year. “We absolutely rely on people willing to share their time and talent with us,” said Ms. Houston. “What we needed was someone to keep this vital resource organized and working in sync with our operations team. We found that person in Gwen.”

Mrs. Ford served as FIND’s Volunteer Coordinator through 2014. She did so as a volunteer, recognized by our local RSVP chapter for the 2,000+ hours she donates each year to the food bank. Clearly, Mrs. Ford’s commitment to FIND speaks volumes about her concern for others.

“I’ve been so fortunate in my life,” said Mrs. Ford. The oldest of eight siblings born and raised in Missouri, life may not have been easy, but it was good, she says.

“I learned early on the importance of giving back, sharing what we had to help others, even paying it forward when we had the chance. Those were all lessons I learned young and

carried with me. I have my family and a handful of mentors who helped guide me to thank for these life lessons,” said Mrs. Ford, “And my life is all the richer for the experience. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

To learn more about volunteering at FIND Food Bank, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Yessenia Teran, at [volunteer@findfoodbank.org](mailto:volunteer@findfoodbank.org).



Lisa Houston, left, FIND’s outgoing CEO; Gwen Ford, center, and Delia Lechuga, FIND’s Director of Programs during Telethon 2017.

## New! Virtual Food Drives Raise Funds for Food

From volunteering to organizing a canned food drive, or simply making a monetary donation, there are many different ways to give back to FIND throughout the year, but are there other ways? **Yes!**

Whether your group is a business, alumni association, student or youth group, or simply a group of neighbors helping neighbors, a [virtual food drive](#) can help make your giving easier and more powerful.

### A Virtual Food Drive allows you to make your food donation online

When you register your virtual food drive online, you become an ambassador for FIND Food Bank. You become the link to community members and groups that may not know about FIND, the severity of food insecurity in our Coachella Valley, or how to help. That’s where YOU come in!

### WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF A VIRTUAL DRIVE?

- **Easy and fun:** Quickly create a page to show your support for FIND Food Bank, to share with your friends and fundraise for a great cause
- **\$1 = 7 Meals:** FIND Food Bank can provide 7 meals for every dollar donated!
- **Awareness Ambassador:** You become an ambassador, spreading awareness to community members and groups that don’t yet know FIND.
- **Convenient:** Anyone can participate, make a donation, start another page, or simply share!
- **Efficient:** Choose from pre-selected items FIND always needs.

For more information on how to get started, please e-mail Zack Musselman at [zmusselman@findfoodbank.org](mailto:zmusselman@findfoodbank.org) or phone him at 760-775-3663.

### How it Works



Make a direct donation or start your own fundraising page



We buy the staple food items that maintain a balanced diet



We distribute that food to the community and our partners

### FOOD DRIVE Items

**Cans:** Soup, Vegetables, Stew, Spaghetti Sauce, Beans, Peanut Butter, Tuna, Spam, Chicken

**Dry Food:** Rice, Beans, Boxed Cereal, Macaroni & Cheese, Pasta, Prepackaged Meals in a Box

DONATE



## SAVE THE DATE FOR PALM DESERT FOOD & WINE MARCH 23-25, 2018

**Palm Desert Food & Wine Festival** returns for its 8th annual event featuring some of “the very best” in the food industry — chefs, vintners, and craft beer brewers — from across the country and welcomes all who share a love for good food and fine wine to the beautiful, tree-lined El Paseo district in Palm Desert.

A James Beard Gourmet Four-Course Luncheon prepared by celebrity chefs kicks off the weekend, followed by two days of grand tastings, where you can sample exquisite bites from local and regional restaurants, sip more than 60 premium wines, and savor some of the country’s most unique beers and ciders on tap. Vintners and chefs will even be on hand to discuss their culinary offerings.

The event organized by *Palm Springs Life* will benefit FIND Food Bank; with each ticket purchase, Palm Desert Food & Wine will donate 35 meals to FIND.

**Last year, Palm Desert Food & Wine provided over 70,000 meals! Help us grow that number in 2018!**

**For tickets or more information go to:**  
[palmdesertfoodandwine.com](http://palmdesertfoodandwine.com) or call 760-325-2333

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**PALM DESERT  
FOOD&WINE**  
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MARCH 23-25, 2018



## Calling All 2018 Telethon Sponsors!

**Tune in Friday, April 6, 2018, 5 – 11pm**, on CBS Local 2 for our 8th Annual Telethon, raising funds and awareness in the fight to end hunger in the Coachella Valley. Watch as local officials, politicians, celebrities, and community heroes answer phones to take your donations, share their own insights on fighting hunger. They will share information about how YOU can step up to the plate in the fight against hunger.

Our CBS Local 2 hosts will also be interviewing and highlighting our Telethon sponsors — the angels that make this event possible. The evening is also our largest volunteer event of the year. What does that mean? Teams of volunteers from businesses and organizations across the valley will join together in our FIND warehouse to pack boxes of food for our neighbors in need. Keep a close eye out — you might just see someone you know!

Want your business or organization **to be a highlighted sponsor** of our biggest event of the year? Contact Donor Relations Officer, Theresa Jewett, at [tjewett@findfoodbank.org](mailto:tjewett@findfoodbank.org) or 760-775-3663, Ext. 124.

Want more information about **how to become a volunteer** at our Telethon Volunteer Event? Contact Volunteer Coordinator, Yessy Teran, at [TRM-Volunteer@findfoodbank.org](mailto:TRM-Volunteer@findfoodbank.org) or 760-775-3663, Ext. 116.

