

FOOD For THOUGHT



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2022

Feeding Families Beyond the Holidays

FIND's Food Programs Work to End Hunger Today, Tomorrow, and for a Lifetime

Being a new single mom with three children means Raquel Saldana has to plan *everything*. In fact, she budgeted for Thanksgiving dinner weeks in advance. Still, she couldn't have anticipated the skyrocketing prices at the grocery store. Meat, produce, and nearly every seasonal dish hit record high prices.

Thankfully, because of the turkey, fresh produce, and other staples distributed at FIND Food Bank's Mobile Market in Coachella, Raquel's family enjoyed a full Thanksgiving dinner. FIND also provided frozen chickens at our Mobile Markets throughout November to ensure equitable access to nutrient-rich protein across the desert region. Raquel shared how helpful the meat is for her family: "I am going to cut (the meat), divide it, and make it last longer. **Everything that you guys bring is so helpful. Everything. It's not just one thing.**"

It is not just during the holidays that food from FIND Food Bank can make a difference for families like Raquel's. Groceries from FIND Food Bank help Raquel afford other necessities like diapers for her two-year-old son. Unemployment benefits allow her to stay home to care for her son, who has Down Syndrome. She explains that the food from FIND and CalFresh benefits create a full meal for her family. To manage food, clothes, and other expenses with government support, Raquel controls her spending meticulously. "I have to be wise and measure the money because it's just a little help. What do I really need to buy? Because it has to be something important."



Studies show groceries are a top concern for families, seniors, and working individuals feeling the brunt of inflation. No parent should have to choose between paying for diapers and other necessities over a healthy meal for their kids.

FIND is on the frontlines fighting childhood hunger, and with your support, we can create a community free of food insecurity. Donate, volunteer, and advocate at findfoodbank.org.

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Message From CEO Debbie Espinosa

Beginning the year always fills me with excitement at the thought of new possibilities. And that is in part because of you — our generous supporters. Community-wide food drives and financial donations fed thousands of people facing food insecurity in our desert region through the holidays, giving our neighbors a healthy start to 2022.

The economy is slowly recovering, but the lasting impact of the pandemic is burdening working families with inflated prices and the rising cost of living in California. We continue to help feed an average 150,000 people per month and remain dedicated to educating the community, raising awareness, and mobilizing resources to fight hunger. FIND is also refocusing on addressing the root causes of hunger by investing in programs, research, and public and private partnerships to aid our work in ending hunger for today, tomorrow, and a lifetime. Follow along in the next phase of FIND's work to end cycles of poverty, starting on pages 3 and 4 in this newsletter!

Debbie Espinosa,
President & CEO



Feel the Team Spirit and Join FIND's Corporate Volunteer Family!

Volunteers play a crucial role in our work, especially as FIND's services remain in high demand. Over 2,500 volunteers donated their time to FIND last year, giving over 16,500 hours — the equivalent of 8 full-time employees and saving FIND \$470,000 in administrative costs per year. We could not serve over 20 million meals annually, without consistent, reliable supporters.

Corporate volunteerism is essential to support our mission to end hunger in the desert region. Large groups of coworkers get together weekly or biweekly to sort and pack food in our warehouse — what better way to build camaraderie and team spirit than through the act of volunteerism.

"It brings a sense of community to all of our teams in the stores and gives a bigger purpose to what we do every day," exclaims Monica Evans, District Leader of Southern California Target.

We are always looking for new volunteer groups! We have opportunities to fit every schedule, including



daytime, evening, and weekend options, with sorting sessions at our facility, distribution opportunities, and special events in the community. **View our volunteer calendar at findfoodbank.org/volunteer or contact our Volunteer Programs Manager by calling 760-775-3663 ext. 123.**



Ending Hunger Tomorrow, Means Feeding Our Future Today

Tackling the Root Causes of Food Insecurity Starts with Childhood Hunger

Child hunger is unacceptable. Kids unequipped to learn due to hunger face serious disadvantages that increase the likelihood of adult poverty. Nationwide there are approximately 6 million children living in food-insecure households.

In the desert region, over 80% of kids in the three school districts in our service area qualify for free or reduced price meals, which is FIND's indicator for household food insecurity. Research by Feeding America and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation indicates that Latino and Black children are twice as likely to be food-insecure than white children. Over the past decade, there was an average 5% increase in diabetes rates among youth, with one of the largest increases in American Indian/Alaskan Native, Latino, and non-Hispanic Black children.

Children who lack adequate, consistent access to healthy food can end up in a cycle of poor-quality diets, inadequate healthcare, and a lifetime of chronic disease. FIND Food Bank addresses child hunger today through our Mobile Market Distributions and agency partner network. **To empower families to end hunger for themselves tomorrow, we invest in our CalFresh Case Management program that helps single mothers, working families, and others, purchase more fruits and vegetables at the store.**

To address the root causes of food insecurity, with the ultimate goal of ending hunger for a lifetime, we advocate on the national, state, and local levels for policies that mitigate child hunger and increase healthy food access and education. Early diet patterns shape lifelong food preferences. FIND partnered with healthcare and research institutions to create a community-based cookbook, *Ancestral Recipes*, to provide nutrition education that improves children's physical, cognitive, emotional growth and development to help prevent the onset of chronic diet-related health conditions.

Join our advocacy efforts. **Visit findfoodbank.org/advocacy for the latest updates and campaigns to tell your representatives that no child should go hungry.**

News from Team FIND

Welcome to the newest member of the FIND Family, George.



Congratulations to newlyweds
Danny and Ana Gonzalez!



In Memoriam Monica Franco



FIND lost a loyal team member of eight years this past November, one who helped build the food bank to what it is today. Monica gave selflessly to serve the community. Her straightforward attitude and considerate nature brought joy to all who worked with her. She is remembered fondly as a mother, sister, aunt, coworker, and friend.

Youth Bring their Energy and Ideas to Create a Community Free of Hunger



Youth volunteerism does more than support our mission to end hunger today; it educates and encourages our next generation of service-driven

leaders to build valuable skills and imagine solutions to end hunger for a lifetime. Youth Saturdays are a recurring volunteer event once a month for hunger-fighters under 18 to get together and do something good for their neighbors.

La Quinta High School's Key Club is a student-led service organization that began volunteering at FIND in February 2021. Key Club President Christina Morcus volunteered her team to help after noticing the line of cars waiting for food outside of her neighborhood. Now at least once a month, they pack bags in our warehouse and encourage more of their classmates to join.

"Just a small amount of your time can make such a big difference in your community. Those few hours when

you might be sleeping or watching TV, you could be doing something for a better cause," said Christina.

Since her youth, Ashley Wilkins volunteered with FIND and continues giving back at Youth Saturdays with her Girl Scout troop. Passionate about feeding her community, Ashley chose to champion FIND Food Bank for her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

Building on Youth Saturday's momentum, Ashley spearheaded the FIND Food Bank Youth Advisory Council. The Council includes two high school students from each participating school who meet with service-oriented peers to learn more about systemic hunger and share their ideas to create healthier communities.

Graduates of the program will receive a FIND Food Bank scholarship to continue using their voice to advocate and build a future where healthy food and opportunity is accessible to all.



Save The Date

PALM DESERT FOOD&WINE

PRESENTED BY
AGUA CALIENTE CASINOS
March 25-27, 2022

Calling all food and wine lovers! Join us March 25-27, 2022, for Palm Desert Food & Wine, presented by Agua Caliente Casinos and organized by Palm Springs Life in the breathtaking El Paseo shopping district in Palm Desert. This three-day culinary experience benefiting FIND Food Bank will feature a diverse selection of mouth-watering eats, premium wines, hands-on cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs, and much more. **For tickets or more information, go to: palmdesertfoodandwine.com.**

It's FIND Food Bank's 12th Annual Telethon!

Tune in for the live television broadcast of FIND Food Bank's 12th Annual Telethon sponsored by KESQ News Channel 3 on Friday, April 8, 2022. FIND's 2022 Telethon is vital to raise critical funds that help feed an average of 150,000 people each month through the summer. **During the event, donate by calling FIND Food Bank or visiting the Telethon link on our website: FindFoodBank.org.**



Support FIND Food Bank and you too can help feed the 150,000 adults, children, and seniors we provide with food assistance across the desert region every month.

Follow us on:   

FINDFoodBank.org

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