

# FOOD For THOUGHT



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2023

## Caring for Seniors, Feeding Our Communities Through the Holidays

Thinking about the joy and festivities of the holidays at FIND Food Bank, we reflect on the gratitude our seniors share with us as we help them have nourishing meals during a particularly difficult time of year for those on limited incomes. **Over 25,000 seniors rely on FIND's food assistance programs**, including Christina Becerra, a recent widow who visits our Mobile Market in La Quinta to subsidize the cost of groceries.

"It has been difficult. Everything has gone up so high that I don't get as much food when I go to the grocery store. Now that my husband has passed, I need FIND Food Bank to help make ends meet."

Food insecurity is a reality for many of our local seniors living on a limited retirement income. The holidays can become particularly isolating without food to share with their families, or loved ones to care for them. At FIND, we ease the stress of tighter budgets, that will hopefully help our clients experience the warmth of a holiday meal.

Through our 150 food distribution sites, including 35 senior-specific locations and our homebound delivery program, we distribute healthy groceries that provide proper nutrition for seniors, families, and individuals experiencing food insecurity. Thanks to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), thousands of our seniors have access to \$50 worth of food tailored to their specific health needs.

**CSFP is a USDA government program administered locally through FIND Food Bank and our registered agency partners, designed specifically for seniors with low incomes.** Seniors aged 60 or older register to receive a box of

nutritious food sourced specifically for their health needs once a month.

Tommy Mondello, a caretaker at a retirement community in La Quinta, praises the new items available to seniors thanks to our CSFP boxes. "We used to receive food that served families even though we only support seniors who live alone. Sugar cereals and hot dogs do not pair well with their medications. Now, the food boxes we get from FIND Food Bank are amazing. They have cheese, different types of vegetables, chicken, and tuna. It's good because these are things our senior clients are definitely using."

While pasta, certain proteins, and vegetables might serve a family with children well, seniors suffering from diabetes or taking specific medications would end up having to avoid those specific foods. We love to hear from clients like Rosario McCord, who picks up food at FIND's Mobile Market for her elderly parents.

"Now that FIND offers an extra box for them, it's even more helpful. They look forward to it because they get a lot of vegetables and produce, which goes a long way. They get excited and always ask, 'Oh, what did we get today?'"

Thanks to the help of our supporters, we can continue to nourish seniors and their families throughout the year. **Donate to help FIND continue feeding the most vulnerable in our communities at [FINDFoodBank.org/donate](https://FINDFoodBank.org/donate).**





## Message From CEO Debbie Espinosa

Familiar faces visit FIND Food Bank's distributions for stability and nourishment through these uncertain times. The faces of hunger have not changed, but they have grown in numbers while the prices of transportation and food hit all-time highs during the holidays. FIND continues to serve our seniors surviving on fixed incomes, children whose families rely on school meals to get their kids through the day, and working parents trying to balance mortgages, car payments, and other bills with their strained budgets.

While the recession looms and food insecurity remains a prevalent issue across the United States, we continue to make progress locally by strengthening and diversifying new and old partnerships. I am pleased to share that not only did FIND maintain our increased food assistance services, but we also expanded our network to tackle the root causes of hunger.

Through strategic planning and public-private partnerships, we moved forward on our program initiatives with healthcare institutions, universities, and colleges to build new pathways for a future free of hunger in our communities.

It is a great comfort knowing that we have our community of donors, volunteers, and advocates to help FIND end hunger on the ground today, and the support of research institutions and industry experts to provide resources and find solutions that end hunger for a lifetime.

In this newsletter, learn more about our new program addressing food insecurity for college students and find new ways to support our existing programs. I appreciate your continued support while we weather new and unexpected challenges in our work to achieve food security in the desert region. Now, Let's End Hunger.

Debbie Espinosa,  
President & CEO

## Breaking Down Nutrition Barriers with Strategic Partnerships:

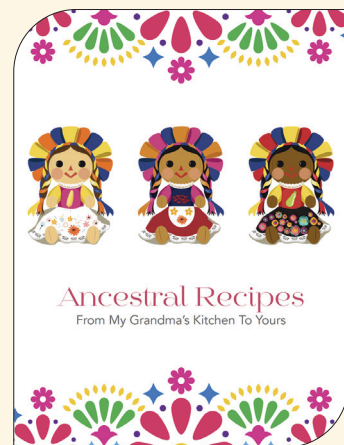
### A Case Study in Culturally Relevant Recipes

FIND's mission is to end hunger today, tomorrow, and for a lifetime by tackling the root causes that lead to food insecurity. Like poverty, hunger is linked to the social determinants of health, including place, race, and resource access. To address the specific barriers that impact access to proper nutrition access in our communities, FIND partnered with the University of California Riverside and the University of California, Los Angeles.

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) grant funded the research and distribution of a client-focused recipe book that engages the traditional food and recipes of our Hispanic communities. Utilizing the food items FIND distributes and family recipes submitted by our clients,

researchers created a cookbook that includes traditional Latino recipes, but with a healthier twist, to combat the increasing rates of diabetes.

**As the expert on food insecurity in the desert region, FIND links research institutions and expert organizations to those with lived experience of food insecurity to amplify their voices and find sustainable solutions to a growing problem in the desert and across the United States.**







## Celebrating a Big Win in the Fight to End Student Hunger!



We all remember the stress of school, balancing grades, extracurriculars, family responsibilities, and social life. Now, imagine doing all of that on an empty stomach. Food insecurity is a reality for too many students seeking higher education, in addition to managing financial and academic stress. The state of California recognized this dilemma across college campuses and introduced the Californians for All College Corps, a statewide initiative to build a debt-free pathway to college.

The state's historic \$1.8 million investment in the Coachella Valley offers \$10,000 in paid fellowships and scholarships to students who serve 450 hours of community service over a year. FIND Food Bank partnered with the College of the Desert to focus students' efforts on mitigating food insecurity, a significant barrier for many local students to receive their degrees.

In addition, the grant supports two brand-new on-campus food pantries filled with free healthy snacks, fresh produce, coffee, milk, and non-perishable items stocked by FIND Food Bank. Students will man the grocery store-style pantries at the COD Indio Campus serving eastern Coachella Valley students and the Central Pantry at the main campus in Palm Desert.

Students can pick up 35 pounds of food per week for themselves and their families. They will also have access to a FIND Community Health Worker — a professional who can help connect them to government resources like CalFresh. This is a major victory in our fight to

alleviate food insecurity for students so they can focus on their academics and other responsibilities — on a path to being strong members of our community.

**Nearly 50 college corps fellows will volunteer at FIND Food Bank, building workforce development skills and gaining an appreciation for service while working directly in their communities.** Not only will students support our operations, but they'll also gain real technical skills assisting with our warehousing, logistics, and inventory systems for our network of 150 food distribution sites. These skills are especially relevant as employers like Amazon bring their warehouses and distribution centers to the Coachella Valley.



For students like DJuane Nunley — who is balancing school and supporting a family — this program will help him earn his degree sooner while helping reduce the stress on his budget. “This is like a prayer being answered,” says Nunley, about the ability to pick up fresh, healthy groceries at no cost.



# Del Webb Rancho Mirage “Move for Food” 5K Event

The Good Trouble Group is a passionate group of residents living in the newly developed Del Webb Rancho Mirage 55+ community. They all came together to support FIND Food Bank and hosted their first-ever mini-triathlon on December 10, 2022. This event was opened to anyone interested in supporting The Good Trouble Group and Del Webb Rancho Mirage’s “Move for Food” event that benefited FIND Food Bank. Participants did a 5K walk/run, cycling/biking, and water aerobics.

Residents of the Del Webb Rancho Mirage community raised over \$8,500 through this successful event. This group of committed FIND supporters not only worked tirelessly to raise funds, but also to spread awareness in support of hunger relief throughout the desert communities. Businesses like The Westin Rancho Mirage, Southwest Landscaping, Pulte, Seabreeze Management, Vintage Security, and Power of Fitness were committed to supporting this cause and generously sponsored the event.



Thanks to the support of these caring community members and sponsors, FIND was able to provide holiday meals to an average of 150,000 people continuously impacted by the ongoing rise of inflation.



## Palm Desert Food & Wine

Join us March 24-26, 2023, for Palm Desert Food & Wine, presented by Agua Caliente Casinos and organized by Palm Springs Life. This year’s food and wine festival will be held at The Gardens on El Paseo in Palm Desert. This beautiful three-day event benefiting FIND Food Bank will feature many Celebrity Chefs with the James Beard Luncheon, Grand Tastings, Baking Battle, and even a Date “Paarti”. You won’t want to miss out on this year’s Palm Desert Food & Wine.

To learn more or buy your tickets today, please visit [palmdesertfoodandwine.com](http://palmdesertfoodandwine.com).

## FIND’s 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Telethon

You know it’s spring when it’s time to tune in for the live television broadcast of FIND Food Bank’s 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Telethon, sponsored by KESQ News Channel 3, The Desert’s News Leader, on Friday, March 31, 2023. FIND’s upcoming Telethon is vital to help raise critical funds that will go toward fighting child hunger and helping them through the difficult summer months when 86% of the children in school lose their breakfast and free lunch June-August. Your donation on March 31 will help ensure four out of five local children at risk of food insecurity will know where their next meal is coming from. Be the first to donate **during FIND’s Telethon**. Call (760) 775-FIND (3663) or visit [FINDFoodBank.org](http://FINDFoodBank.org) to donate online.



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](http://FINDFoodBank.org)

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