

FOOD For THOUGHT



FALL NEWSLETTER 2023

Uniting Hearts and Hands: FIND Food Bank's Annual Telethon Raised over \$255,000 for the Children in Our Community

In a powerful display of compassion and unity, FIND Food Bank's Annual Telethon once again brought together individuals from all over the Coachella Valley Region in the fight against hunger. This year's theme was devoted to the children of our community. The telethon, a much-anticipated event, serves as a critical fundraising initiative that helps the food bank continue its mission of providing nourishment and support to nearly 4 out of 5 children in the Desert Region experiencing food insecurity. On Friday, March 31st, at the FIND warehouse, the telethon served as a beacon of hope, rallying supporters and volunteers alike to address the growing issue of food insecurity.

The heart of the telethon lay in its steady vision: to ensure that no one in our community goes to bed hungry. As the cameras rolled, FIND's CEO, Debbie Espinosa, acknowledged, **"Our annual telethon is more than just a fundraiser, it is a celebration of solidarity, and an affirmation of our shared humanity."**

A dynamic lineup of city officials, sponsors, local volunteers, and talented student performances gave their time and talents to create a captivating and inspiring experience for viewers. We had Amelia Earhart Elementary Folklorico, Jefferson Middle School Performance Band, Palm Springs High School Dance Team, and the Academy of Musical Performance's Volatile band, put on a memorable show. From heartwarming interviews with our city mayors to exhilarating performances by our local youth, the telethon resonated with both emotion and purpose.

At the heart of the telethon's success were the countless individuals, businesses, and organizations that extended their hands and funds to support the cause. Phone lines buzzed as viewers dialed in their donations, and online platforms were flooded with contributions from near and far. The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation once again matched our donations, doubling the impact of each contribution and creating a ripple effect of change. Tim Wood State Farm Agency was also present, and Intersect Power visited the FIND warehouse to hand-deliver a check towards feeding our communities.

The impact of the annual telethon extends far beyond the event itself. The funds raised will enable FIND to expand its reach, enhance existing programs, and invest in innovative solutions to tackle food insecurity head-on. By investing in long-term solutions such as nutrition education, financial literacy, and workforce development support, FIND will continue to address the root causes of hunger and build a brighter future for all.





Message From CEO Debbie Espinosa

Dear Friends and Supporters of FIND Food Bank,

At FIND, our mission has always been clear: to alleviate hunger in the Coachella Valley by providing nutritious food to those in need. We understand that behind every meal, there is a story, a family, and a community relying on our efforts. This sense of responsibility fuels our determination to make a lasting impact.

Over the years, we have achieved remarkable milestones, thanks to the boundless generosity of our donors, the tireless commitment of our volunteers, and the collaboration of our community partners. Together, we have expanded our reach, pioneered innovative distribution methods, and adapted to new challenges with resilience and creativity.

As we navigate the path ahead, we remain dedicated to our core values of inclusivity, compassion, and integrity. Our commitment to sustainability drives us to explore eco-friendly practices, reducing food waste and its impact on the environment. Our aspiration to empower individuals and families motivates us to provide not only food but also access to resources for education, healthcare, and personal growth.

The heart of our work beats in unison with that of the Coachella Valley. Together, we can turn obstacles into opportunities, struggles into strengths, and uncertainty into hope. As we look ahead, let us remember that every act of kindness, no matter how big or small, contributes to a brighter future for those we serve.

I am immensely grateful for your continued support, trust, and belief in the mission of FIND Food Bank. Together, we are nourishing lives, fostering resilience, and building a stronger community.

With deep appreciation and warm regards,

Debbie Espinosa,
CEO, FIND Food Bank



Hunger Action Month

September may mean the beginning of fall, but it also means National Hunger Action Month, an annual initiative from Feeding America to raise awareness and funding to address food insecurity. At FIND, we came together with food banks from across the country to bring awareness to the problem of hunger in our respective communities.

Hunger Action Month gave our community the opportunity to join a movement that has a lasting impact on our collective efforts to end hunger. This movement is needed more than ever as the ongoing impacts of economic inflation continue. **Thank you to all the businesses and community members for taking action to fight hunger in September and all year long.**

You can still make a difference, whether it is by advocating and raising awareness, donating, or volunteering.

Visit our website at findfoodbank.org for more information, and follow us on Facebook, X, and Instagram for ways to take action in your community.

**ON AN EMPTY
STOMACH, I CAN'T**

Make a difference

HUNGER ACTION MONTH





FIND Food Bank's Kids Summer Market Provides Children with Snacks and Food for the Hot Summer Months

We are thrilled to spotlight an inspiring initiative that has been making a significant impact on the lives of children and families in our community, our Kids Summer Market. This remarkable program is not only addressing food insecurity but also instilling hope and nourishing the 4 out of 5 local Coachella Valley children impacted by food insecurity.

The Kids Summer Market is a unique mobile pantry provided at four of our mobile market locations: Palm Desert High School, James O Jesse Civic Center, Rancho Las Flores Park, and Shadow Hills High School. These markets are located within the community, eliminating barriers to access of fresh, nutritious food for children and their families. During the summer when children no longer have access to reliable meals provided to them at school, FIND works to ensure that our local children have nutritious food throughout the hot summer months. This food support allows families to readjust their budgets and have more for bills, rent, and other priorities. The primary goal of this program is to ensure that no child goes to bed hungry and every child has the opportunity to grow up with adequate nutrition and support.

The program's impact goes beyond immediate hunger relief. By introducing children to a variety of fresh and healthy food options, the Kids Summer Market also promotes education on nutrition and encourages healthier eating habits from a young age. The initiative aims to break the cycle of food insecurity by empowering families to make informed choices about their diets and health, which can have lasting effects on the well-being of future generations.

College of the Desert Congratulates College Corps Cohort I Graduates and Welcomes Cohort II

With the start of a new academic year, we are delighted to celebrate the conclusion of Cohort I and extend a warm welcome to Cohort II. The College of the Desert's College Corps program students are required to fulfill 450 service hours, 360 of those hours are strictly dedicated to FIND. With a program completion rate of 92%, there was much to celebrate.

As we bid adieu to our inaugural Cohort I, we cannot help but be amazed at the milestones they have achieved during their time



in the College Corps program. From the moment these students started their College Corps journey, they exhibited enthusiasm and an unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on our community. Over the past year they have had the opportunity to engage in meaningful service, build professional development, foster connections, and create impactful initiatives.

These exceptional individuals had the honor of being joined by multiple local and statewide public figures. The offices of Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia, State Senator Steve Padilla, and Assembly Member Greg Wallis acknowledged these students with certificates for their achievements. Indio Mayor, Oscar Ortiz, participated by swearing in our Cohort II students, and our very own FIND CEO, Debbie Espinosa, gave a speech to the students, filled with motivation to continue raising awareness towards hunger relief in our community and nationwide.



As we reflect on the achievements of Cohort I and eagerly anticipate the contributions of Cohort II, one thing remains clear:

the strength of the COD College Corps program lies in the unity and determination of its participants. Together, we are creating a community that believes in the power of education, service, and collaboration to drive positive change.

Amazon Donates \$20,000 to FIND Food Bank

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to Amazon for their generous contribution of \$20,000 to FIND Food Bank. On Friday, June 23rd, Amazon gathered at the FIND warehouse for a day of giving and volunteering. We had over 50 Amazon volunteers help our warehouse unload trucks, pack produce bags, and put together senior boxes.

The Amazon team expressed that their time at FIND was memorable and gratifying, knowing that they are helping their community. **“The Coachella Valley and Riverside County is our home. Our employees live here, they play here, they raise their children here, we are a community member, and it is important to show up that way,”** said David Ambroz,

Head of External Affairs and Community Engagement for Amazon.



As one of the world's most influential and prosperous companies, Amazon has consistently demonstrated its commitment to corporate social responsibility. The Amazon team understands the importance of giving back to the communities in which they operate. Their contributions extend beyond financial aid, often involving partnerships with local organizations like FIND, to make a meaningful and lasting impact.

Guardians Breakfast

The 2023 Guardians Breakfast held special significance as we reflected on the challenges our community has faced and the incredible resilience that has emerged from within. FIND was proud to award Omar Allievi from the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa and Thomas Scaramellino from the Westin Mission Hills Resort, as well as FIND board member Keith Flagler, this year's Hunger Hero Award for business and individual efforts. We also had an amazing panel of local students who joined FIND's CEO, Debbie Espinosa on stage and shared personal experiences with food insecurity and how FIND has provided them with assistance.



This annual event is our opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to the individuals and organizations that have been our steadfast partners in the fight against hunger. **From volunteers and donors to community leaders and corporate sponsors, we recognize those who have gone above and beyond to make a difference.**

FIND Sends Emergency Food and Water to Salton City During Electrical Outage

Salton City was plunged into darkness on a cold February night, as a widespread power outage had struck the small desert community, leaving its residents grappling with uncertainty and fear. With communication lines down and temperatures plummeting, the situation was serious. However, amid the darkness, FIND Food Bank illuminated the path towards relief and support.

As news of the power outage spread, FIND's Community Impact Team immediately responded. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, they activated their emergency response plan and mobilized their resources. **The FIND Food Bank staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to coordinate efforts and ensure that help reached the most vulnerable in Salton City.**

Our first priority was to secure perishable and non-perishable food items, knowing that many households would be left without access to fresh supplies. FIND partnered with local grocery stores, farms, and generous donors to bring in an abundance of nutritious provisions. With the mobile market fully stocked, the team set out on a mission to bring relief to the community.

“The outage has lasted three days, all my food went to waste, we have no air conditioning and my family as well as other families, were not sure what to do” shared Eziqiel Molina, **“FIND Food Bank came when we needed them the most.”**



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

83775 Citrus Avenue • Indio, CA 92201 • (760) 775-3663
#FINDaWaytoEndHunger
501(c)(3) TAX ID # 33-0006007



15-FINCA-1123-N