

Foodfirst

Moving the Community from Hunger into Health
Spring 2024

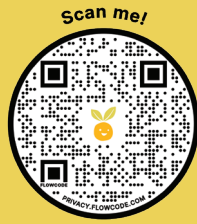
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LOMPOC
EMPTY BOWLS
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End Summer Hunger

Through targeted programs like Picnic in the Park, we are actively addressing the rise in child food insecurity and mental health challenges. Join us as we strive to ensure every child has access to vital nutrition, fostering not just physical health, but also resilient mental wellbeing.



ENSURE NO CHILD EXPERIENCES HUNGER THIS SUMMER

Donate today at: FoodbankSBC.org/Donate



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We have been buzzing with activity at the Foodbank this spring season. We were incredibly grateful to have the Chief Executive Officer of Feeding America, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, come visit the Foodbank in April and meet with our staff. Claire was insightful, inspiring, and impressed with the work we are doing. Claire reminded us of the importance and impact of policies that address the root causes of hunger. During the COVID-19 pandemic, support programs effectively halved childhood poverty rates and notably improved food security for children and their families. However, the subsequent removal of these programs has seen childhood poverty levels revert to pre-pandemic standards, with a concerning upward trajectory. As per the USDA's 2022 Household Food Insecurity study, the incidence of children facing food insecurity has surged by 40% compared to the preceding year.

As we approach the summer season, we are acutely aware of the growing rate of child food insecurity. At the Foodbank, we are gearing up for one of our most crucial initiatives: End Summer Hunger. While California's current Universal Meals Program supports school children during the academic year, a significant gap remains during the summer months, leaving thousands of children to wonder where their next meal will come from. Our Picnic in the Park program aims to fill this void by providing free, nutritious lunches, fostering social interaction, and offering vital nutrition education to children throughout the summer. Together, we can ensure that no child experiences hunger this summer.

With gratitude,

Erik Talkin
Chief Executive Officer
Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

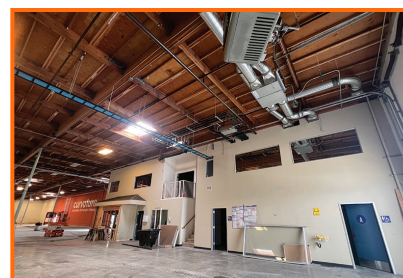
SHARING PROGRESS ON THE SHAREHOUSE



This year our team has been working diligently on realizing the vision of our new Sharehouse: we are building a powerful communitywide movement around food, and we are excited to say that we have made tremendous progress. While the Sharehouse undergoes its extensive renovation, this has not impacted our ability to serve all neighbors in need of food assistance. We look forward to opening our Sharehouse doors in the near future.

"After months of field revisions and building plan check reviews, construction is moving forward with the scheduled completion of some critical path milestones, such as the interior framing and dry-walling of the volunteer sorting and donation salvage rooms and the installation of our 4,000-square-foot cooler and freezer."

—Paul Wilkins, Chief Operating Officer



FOOD IS MEDICINE – ADDRESSING THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Ensuring all children have access to nutrient-dense food is essential to supporting healthy development not only physically, but socially and emotionally as well. Studies indicate that adequate intake of nutrients allows children to build healthy immune systems, strengthen cognition, build strong social-emotional wellness, and strengthen academic performance. In contrast, low levels of food insecurity have devastating impacts on child development, such as increased risk of chronic illness, behavioral problems, and mental health challenges in the present and the long term.



Mental health professionals and doctors have reported that the rates of children with mental health challenges have drastically increased, and even doubled in some instances, since the onset of the pandemic. In response to this alarming situation, esteemed organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), and the Children's Hospital Association (CHA) collectively declared a National State of Emergency in Children's Mental Health in 2021. It's crucial to recognize that children facing hunger are particularly vulnerable amidst this ongoing mental health crisis. Increased access to food and education about mindful eating has shown to improve children's mood, focus, ability to learn, and their holistic wellbeing.

In an average year, 40% of neighbors who are served by the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County are children. In some school districts in the county, as many as 87% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. School meals are a vital resource in ensuring that children have the nourishment they need to support their physical health and resilient mental wellbeing, but are limited to the school year. When school ends



for the summer, the Foodbank's Picnic in the Park ensures that all children in our community do not experience meal gaps during the summer months. This program provides children with congregate lunches, nutrition education, and physical activities every weekday, for the entire summer. These efforts are essential to ensuring that children in our community do not experience summer hunger and consequent challenges to their healthy development.

CELEBRATING SEASONAL PRODUCE

In the warm summer months, eggplants and tomatoes flourish, offering delicious nourishment. Enjoy the following recipe highlighting this seasonal produce from our Healthy School Pantry program. Perfect for kids as an afternoon snack that's both nutritious and tasty.

Fiesta Tacos

Serves: 1 | Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 corn tortilla
- ½ cup cooked eggplant
- ¼ cup chopped tomatoes
- ¼ cup crumbled queso fresco
- 2 tbsp shredded purple cabbage
- 1 tbsp chopped cilantro

Dressing

- 2 tsp lime juice
- Salt
- Pepper

Instructions

- Mix eggplant, tomatoes, cabbage, and cilantro in a bowl.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together lime juice, salt, and pepper until well combined.
- Assemble your tacos: warm your tortilla on your griddle and fill with mixed veggies and dressing.
- Sprinkle queso fresco on top. Serve and enjoy!

DONATE TO END SUMMER HUNGER

Your generous support is essential in ensuring that children across Santa Barbara County have access to nourishing meals this summer, enabling them to thrive, grow, and play. Together we can make a profound difference in the lives of children in our community.

FUNDRAISING GOAL:

\$150,000

DONATE TODAY!

STAR VOLUNTEER: ERIKA CULWELL NORTH COUNTY



For the past seven years, Erika Culwell has been an invaluable volunteer at the Foodbank. This will be Erika's 5th year as serving as the Chair of Lompoc Empty Bowls. We would be lost without her dedication and support. Erika shares with us that one of her favorite memories from volunteering with the Foodbank was, "After going through Covid and hosting our first event- I was really nervous that no one would show up. But, not only did our community show up- they helped us meet our large goal of \$50,000." Thank you, Erika, for dedicating your time and energy to supporting our community. We are deeply grateful for your leadership!

STAR VOLUNTEER: TODD DERR SOUTH COUNTY



Todd Derr has generously volunteered his time assisting our team process and pack food for weekend distributions for the past year. At packing events, Todd enjoys getting to work as a team with other Foodbank volunteers, and the sense of camaraderie this creates. When asked what one thing Todd loves about his community is, he tells us it is "the commitment from so many to help others in need. Giving of your time, and not just money, is such a positive statement that people truly care about their community." Thank you for your support Todd. We deeply appreciate your partnership!

HARVEST HEROES MONTHLY GIVING CLUB:

JOIN THE HARVEST HEROES CLUB!

Every meal matters.

Your commitment to supporting our community makes a world of difference. Join the Foodbank's Harvest Heroes Club and be a hero all year round.

To join...

email **Laurel Alcantar** at lalcantar@foodbanksbc.org or visit foodbanksbc.org/HarvestHeroes.



LOMPOC EMPTY BOWLS 2024

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

DICK DEWEES COMMUNITY AND SENIOR CENTER
1120 W. OCEAN AVENUE, LOMPOC

SEATINGS AT 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM

We are so excited to gather together again this summer to enjoy delicious soup while raising awareness of and funds for food security in Lompoc. Attendees will be able to choose from hundreds of handmade bowls and together we'll savor nourishing soup, watch pottery demonstrations and enjoy a raffle full of lovely prizes.

Buy Your Tickets:

donate.foodbanksbc.org/Lompoc2024



Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

Donate • Volunteer • Get Help

(805) 967-5741 • www.FoodbankSBC.org

For senior food delivery, help with CalFresh applications and other immediate information, call (805) 357-5761.

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FoodbankSBEspanol

FoodbankSBC

FoodbankSBCBilingue

Foodbank SBC

Foodbank SBC

Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

501(c)3 Tax ID # 77-0169214

4 | FOOD first

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4554 Hollister Avenue
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Santa Maria Warehouse
490 W. Foster Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455

