

REGISTRATION

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WRITE US

The Register-Pajaronian welcomes letters. Letters and col-
umns may be dropped off or mailed to the Register-Pajaronian, 100
Westridge Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Letters and columns may also be sent via email to newsroom@register-pajaronian.com.

All letters and columns must be signed and have an address
and phone number for confirmation purposes. We reserve the
right to edit and condense all submissions.

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How to Contact Us (area code 831)

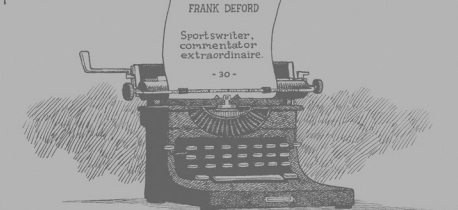
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REVAL 2017 THE STORE



What's your skill? Everyone has something to give

CONTRIBUTED BY SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK

“What can I do?” Sometimes we hear this in response to a daunting problem, like the number of people in Santa Cruz County who don't for their families.

But sometimes it means, “How can I help?” As in, “What can I do?” The truth is, everyone has something to give. It takes money to fund the important work nonprofits do, but we simply couldn't help the community the way we do — feeding 55,000 people in need every month — without the work of volunteers.

Some people have special skills developed through their work and career. Some have hobbies or interests they can apply to volunteering. And some just have life experience and a willingness to help. Second Harvest and other nonprofits need them all.

Watsonville resident and mother of two Yvonne Perez decided she had a skill she could donate. She knew about Second Harvest, and knew people who needed a little extra food at some time in their lives.

“When a family's income decreases,” she said, to temporary unemployment, Perez remarked, “and the money on hand must be used to pay rent, and there's not enough left for groceries — you can count on the Food Bank.”

So Perez wanted to help the organization that helped the people she knows. And Perez knows flower arranging.



Contributed

Before becoming a full-time mom, she created floral arrangements for an event management company. She offered those same skills to Second Harvest, and soon her creative centerpieces were decorating the rooms at Second Harvest's events, helping the group to connect with the community and raise funds for their work.

“Sometimes it's not money,” Perez said. “Sometimes it's contributing with our talents or hobbies that makes the difference.”

Longtime Watsonville resident Ann Bornstein's skills are more technical. Before she retired 20 years ago, she worked as a computer modeler for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Their mathematical operations were quite different from Second Harvest's work fighting hunger and malnutrition, but Bornstein knew she could help.

“I know statistics. I know spreadsheets. I know organization needs and manage and crunch data,” Bornstein said.

“It feels good to put my skills to use helping a nonprofit feed the community.”

Likewise, Santa Cruz Independent Database Developer Jerry Vilhauer enjoys donating his expertise to Second Harvest's mission. Though he contracts to implement a key database, he volunteers extra time to train staff to operate what he's built.

“I've always enjoyed working with the folks at Second Harvest,” he said. “They are a fun bunch to be around and always show their appreciation.”

Vilhauer and Bornstein contribute technical skills, but the needs of nonprofits run the gamut. Second Harvest is fortunate to have top chefs cook dinner for our annual Chef's Dinner fundraiser, skilled photographers help communicate our work, and volunteers with great interpersonal skills educate the public and strike partnerships in the community.

One of the Food Bank's biggest ongoing needs is people to sort the produce we receive from local farms and bag it at our operations in Watsonville for the children, families, elderly, and others we help across Santa Cruz County. And that requires no special skills — just a kind heart.

“People bring all sorts of interests and abilities to volunteering,” reflected Ely Morales, Second Harvest's Volunteer Services Director, “but the most valuable asset of all is the desire to help.”

To find out how you can help Second Harvest Food Bank feed the community, contact Ely at ely@thefoodbank.org or 722-7110, extension 205.