



WE ARE THE FOOD BANK

Partner Agency Food Distribution News

January 2024



From the CEO

Happy New Year Agency Partner,



As we continue to navigate the post pandemic economy, we face new challenges in our community and at the Food Bank. Despite progress in some areas, our food distribution lines remain long and unfortunately, funding and donations are on the decline. During these trying times, I recognize that it is through partnership that we will overcome these challenges.

In response to these challenges, we have embraced a strategy centered around community engagement and advocacy. Our collective efforts have earned legislative attention on the federal level. We are delighted to share that through our advocacy, Representative Jimmy Panetta has introduced a federal bill aimed at increasing the volume of produce and USDA commodities to food banks. This is an action-oriented example of our commitment to address our current reality as we continue to work together with you and others to build resiliency in our community.

Your ongoing partnership is crucial as we continue this journey. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of those who depend on us. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our shared mission.

Learn more about these and other efforts by joining us at our next Partner Agency Meeting on Monday, January 22, 2024. I look forward to seeing you there.

In partnership,

Erica Padilla-Chavez
Chief Executive Officer

Programming Notes & ShopSmart Changes

We are excited to announce the beginning of our **Fresh Equitable Produce Program** providing partners with extra produce at the peak of freshness when available! Mushrooms are a great example. Think of this program as a bonus load of fresh produce. We will never send more than one to two additional items per order at a quantity we are confident you can intake and distribute. This is an exciting new program to ensure that we are getting you and your participants the freshest produce possible.

Partner Agency Meeting - You're Invited!

Our quarterly meeting is Monday, January 22, 2024, at Holy Cross Church, 170 High Street, Santa Cruz, and we'd love to see you in person. As always, this meeting will be engaging and informative. Second Harvest CEO Erica Padilla-Chavez will provide updates and information regarding our commitments to Feeding America. Lunch will be provided by Saint Francis Soup Kitchen. Email agencies@thefoodbank.org for more information, or to attend via zoom.

Nominations Are Open

Hunger Fighter of the Year nominations are open. Do you know someone who goes above and beyond in their efforts to help feed members of our community? Nominate them today!

The Hunger Fighter of the Year is recognized at our annual Holiday Food & Fund Drive Awards Dinner in March.

Nominations are due Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – nominate today using the QR code!



Agency Participation Numbers

November, 2023		
County Zone	All Households	All Individuals
North County	14,782	28,114
South County	8,853	25,282
San Lorenzo Valley	4,895	10,440
Out of County	478	1,067
Total	29,008	64,903
Network Meals Served	12,765	

Inner Agency Spotlight - Inner Light Ministries Merges with Santa Cruz Bible



Our Partner Agency, Inner Light Ministries (ILM) Food Pantry, has some amazing volunteers. They are constantly learning and enhancing their efforts in order to better assist those in need. The Inner Light Ministries Church has been running a pantry on Tuesdays and Thursdays but needed more volunteers.

Inner Light Ministries Food Pantry to the rescue! These two have joined forces and now operate a farmers' market-style distribution at the church's campus. The church provides more space and support, creating a greater sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Over the years, Inner Light Ministries Food Pantry felt an increasing attachment to their Tuesday pantry. Recently, Second Harvest invited them to make it official, so now they are simply the Thursday Santa Cruz Bible Church Food Pantry.

If anyone would like to join or observe, The Pantry is open (almost) every Thursday from 12–1 p.m. Setup begins a few hours before and clean up lasts for an hour after. They are still continuously learning and improving, so perhaps you can bring ideas to help better fulfill their mission of feeding those in need.

Written by Miguel Aznar

Knowledge Corner: Transformative Relationships

“The importance of creating a dignified culture at a food pantry [distribution] and building relationships between staff, volunteers, and guests cannot be overstated. The food maybe the reason why people come to a food pantry [distribution], but social interactions and the resulting connections can be a factor that helps get them back on their feet and not need to go to the pantry long term.”

Reinventing Food Banks and Pantries, Katie S. Martin

Second Harvest Calendar

Mark your days with the warmth of giving! **We kindly request agencies update us regarding changes or cancellations in distributions.**

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tues</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thurs</u>	<u>Fri</u>
JAN. 8 Reports due	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22 Partner Agency meeting	23	24	25	26 Last Shipment/Pick-Up
29 Inventory closure	30 Inventory closure	31 Inventory closure	FEB. 1 Shipment/pickups resume	2
3	4	5	6	7

Got Participant Stories?

Participant stories help us secure funding, and more importantly, they remind us about the human impact our work has on the community. Got a story? Email us at agencies@thefoodbank.org Pictures are great too!

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