

# Helping Hands

Winter 2011



SACRAMENTO  
Food Bank  
& Family  
SERVICES

A quarterly publication of Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services

*SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1976*

3333 Third Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95817  
(916) 456-1980

[www.sacramentofoodbank.org](http://www.sacramentofoodbank.org)

## HEALTHY FOOD IS THE FIRST STEP

*See the difference you are making in Ossie's life*

On a dark and cold, but thankfully rain-free night in December, I visited North Metro Church of Christ in Del Paso Heights to provide groceries at one of Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services' (SFBFS) mobile distributions. A crew of enthusiastic, young volunteers erected tents at lightning speed and bagged pallets of squash in a flurry. A small, self-contained city sprung up in the church parking lot in a matter of minutes ready to serve those in need. Lights, laptops, legumes and lemons were all there. A line of individuals and families quickly assembled, a volunteer chef whipped up squash soup for sampling and grocery distribution began promptly at 5:00pm.

While speaking with clients in line, I met Ossie, a 51 year old woman living in the neighborhood. This was Ossie's sixth visit to a mobile distribution and her eyes lit up when talking about the food she receives from SFBFS. "The food is so fresh and it's so nice that they teach you how to use it. This is very important because I'm on a strict budget." Ossie makes the six block trek on foot once per month to the distribution site because the \$150 worth of free groceries she receives not only offsets the cost of some food from her modest income, but also is improving her well being. "I've lost 8.5 pounds in just four months, can you believe it? What I'm eating is helping me feel better and I've lost weight." Ossie also takes advantage of the nurses who volunteer their time at the mobile distributions by getting her blood pressure and glucose levels checked each month. "My cholesterol was very high and my blood pressure, too. Since I started incorporating more veggies and fruits into my diet, the nurse says both have dropped and my cholesterol is practically perfect!"

What moved me most about Ossie's story is her excitement and enthusiasm for the free services. Ossie is truly representative of SFBFS' mission of meeting

people's immediate needs and moving them to self sufficiency and financial independence. In addition to feeling better and losing weight because of the groceries she receives, she is making positive changes in her own life such as returning to school to pursue an associates degree, taking computer courses and re-connecting with her family. "These services help you to live a better life and give your body what it needs to be productive."

Over 300 families received groceries in less than two hours at this distribution, a goal SFBFS is thankful to be able to meet. It amazes me the strides our Food Assistance program has taken to better serve families in our community since the program began this type of distribution just three years ago. Returning volunteers agree that the plethora of fresh fruits and vegetables, cooking demonstrations, recipe cards in various languages, health screenings and tangible resources placed in the hands of those who need them most is the direction this organization needs to be going.

Serving people with dignity in a holistic approach is the route SFBFS is dedicated to taking. But serving men, women and children with respect during hard times is something only possible by your generous support. I invite you to refer someone in need, volunteer your time or donate food to an upcoming mobile distribution. Information about mobile distributions is available online at [www.sacramentofoodbank.org](http://www.sacramentofoodbank.org).

Thank you for all that you do in our community to help people like Ossie.

Sincerely,

Kelly Siefkin

Communication and Development Director

# Holiday Happenings



From mid-October through late December, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) is busier than ever, helping families in need experience the magic of the holiday season. Volunteers can be seen wrapping gifts, distributing holiday food and organizing event registration forms. If you came down for a tour or volunteered your time at SFBFS this fall, thank you - you know firsthand what hustle and bustle looks like! Here are a few of the wonderful holiday happenings at SFBFS from this past year:

## TURKEY DRIVE 7,000

In an effort to help more families than ever before, SFBFS hosted the 3rd annual Turkey Drive with KCRA. In 2008, community members drove by SFBFS and dropped off 2,766 turkeys for our first event. The following year, despite the pouring rain, 6,592 turkeys

came our way. The tradition of giving continued this year with Sacramentans donating **7,053 turkeys** between 4:30am and 7:00pm on November 19. The tremendous outpouring of support is humbling. Donors shared stories of standing in line for a turkey themselves not long ago and individuals brought down 1, 2, even 17 turkeys at a time. Volunteers tallied and organized all of the turkeys over the weekend in anticipation of the largest request for assistance from the community in SFBFS' history.



## TURKEY DISTRIBUTION

Every one of those turkeys, along with all the holiday trimmings including stuffing, yams and green beans, found their way to a family in need just two days after the successful drive. On November 22 and 23, at a rate of 800 turkeys per hour, SFBFS volunteers and staff served **6,744 families** with all the ingredients for a complete holiday meal. The remaining turkeys were distributed to 17 Sacramento charities for their smaller distributions and hot meals on Thanksgiving Day. Improved logistics and a dedicated volunteer corps prepared SFBFS to serve an increased number of individuals in a much more dignified and timely manner than in years past. Much of the flow for this event was modeled after SFBFS' successful mobile distributions - serving families at a rapid rate, but doing so with respect and providing choices. Reactions from clients ranged from smiles to tears, all extremely appreciative for the kindness of our community. Without your support many of the families would not have had the opportunity to spend time with their families around a holiday meal.



## RUN TO FEED THE HUNGRY

Sacramento's fall season is often cool and crisp, but from time to time a cold snap will catch us Californians off-guard. The icy temps broke a record on November 26 with the coldest Thanksgiving in our history - a frigid 28 degrees. However, this did not deter the nearly **26,000 participants** from the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Run to Feed the Hungry. Company teams, individuals, families and friends, many dressed in holiday costumes, turned out to participate in the 5K and 10K fun run and walk. Participants enjoyed the newly designed race courses, technical shirt made from recycled bottles and rockin' after-party. Between sponsorships, participant registration and fundraising challenges, SFBFS raised over \$800,000 for programs and services. Our strongest year yet! SFBFS would like to thank you for continuing to turn up on a day off and think of others in Sacramento who are a bit less fortunate.

## SPIRIT OF GIVING

With constant reminders of the difficult times families face, it is always nice when giving exceeds expectations. SFBFS hosted our 17<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Spirit of Giving drive to collect food, winter clothing and toys for struggling families in our community. The drive plays a key role in SFBFS' ability to provide emergency groceries to families during the holiday season and well into the new year. Over the last sixteen years, hundreds of local businesses and organizations have helped SFBFS collect and distribute over 4.6 million pounds of canned and non-perishable food items for local families in need by participating in this drive. This year, **431 schools, businesses and groups** signed up to host at least one barrel for one month during the fall quarter. 56 businesses took on



the challenge of hosting for the entire holiday season. To improve donations, companies are encouraged to decorate their barrel and the competition for best decorated container is fierce. Please visit [www.sacramentofoodbank.org](http://www.sacramentofoodbank.org) to see the barrel winners along with the total amount of food, clothing and toys collected. If you are interested in hosting a barrel, opportunities exists year round! More information can be found online.

## ADOPT-A-FAMILY

SFBFS asked supporters to make the holidays a bit brighter for clients by participating in Adopt-a-Family holiday assistance. In just 4 hours, over 400 families who access programs at SFBFS completed holiday assistance applications and drew up wishlists. Between November 1 and December 17, adopters in the community wanting to provide holiday cheer were matched up with a family in need. The number of children per family ranged from 1 to 11 and requests brought many adopters to tears. In addition to wishes for clothing, toys and food, the most commonly requested holiday item was toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste and toilet paper. During the week of Christmas, SFBFS staff and volunteers collected and distributed gifts to **452 families**. Because of generosity like yours, more than **1,200 children** in our community experienced a very Merry Christmas. Incredibly appreciative families expressed their gratitude for the gifts as these were the only presents some children received.



*Thanks for all that you do!*  
More photos available online at [www.sacramentofoodbank.org](http://www.sacramentofoodbank.org)

# Volunteer Spotlight

**EVAN  
BERRY**



Friday, November 19 started as a cool, somewhat cloudy morning for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Turkey Drive at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS). The rain held off for the majority of the day, making it easy for donors to swing by and drop off a turkey. Volunteers from local corporations, service groups and schools pitched in for a few hours of unloading and sorting turkeys. Although most volunteers contributed a four hour shift, a few volunteers enjoyed it so much they stayed alongside SFBFS staff for the entire day. Among these hardworking volunteers was Evan Berry, a regular volunteer in the Food Assistance program, often giving his time at mobile food distributions. Evan arrived at the Turkey Drive at 10am to help for a few hours. Still volunteering at 5pm when the rain finally moved in, Evan was inspired by the energy of the volunteers and staff and impressed with the outpouring of support from donors. He knew he had to stay to see SFBFS reach the goal of 7,000 turkeys.

At about 6pm, the Turkey Drive was wrapping up, but the goal of 7,000 was still a few hundred turkeys away. The volunteer group that had been controlling traffic flow at the event left at 6pm, but cars continued to roll in. Evan saw the need for help, grabbed a reflective vest and a flag and stepped into the rain to assist. With Evan's leadership and the help of the other positive and

energetic volunteers, the Turkey Drive had a smooth and successful conclusion at 7pm with 7,053 turkeys.

Evan first became involved as volunteer for SFBFS five years ago while completing community service hours for his high school project. He started his service tenure by bagging and distributing food at the Del Paso Food Locker in north Sacramento. For him, volunteering at SFBFS was just plain fun. He enjoyed serving clients and always found that individuals were very pleasant and grateful for the help they received. In mid-2010 while completing coursework at American River College, Evan began preparing for his transfer to UC Berkeley. He found a bit of extra time on his hands before moving to the Bay Area and thought it would be a good time to volunteer at SFBFS again. He attended SFBFS' volunteer orientation, immediately finding his niche helping out at mobile food distributions.

Part of SFBFS' Food Assistance program, mobile food distributions are farmers' market style events that take place in church, school or community center parking lots throughout Sacramento. People living in these underserved neighborhoods are able to walk to the sites and receive an emergency supply of nutritious groceries from SFBFS without having to find transportation to SFBFS' Oak Park facility. The distributions

involve a lot of set-up and break down, moving tables and equipment, setting up tents and bagging groceries. Evan quickly became a regular volunteer at several mobile sites and an important asset to the Food Assistance team because he understood the set-up of each site and could lead new volunteers to prepare everything in a quick and accurate manner. "He's extremely reliable," says Marshall Graves, Food Assistance Director. "Evan never has to be told what to do – he senses where help is needed and does what needs to be done. He is never perturbed by the chaos of setting up an event, which is so nice to be around."

"It's easy," says Evan. "Sometimes I see that I just have to kind of jump in where I'm needed and do my best." Evan's philosophy on volunteering appears to have carried over to his personal life. He spent two weeks interning in New Orleans this January providing services to families in the Ninth Ward and is currently at UC Berkeley finishing his undergraduate degree. After that? "Not sure," Evan laughs. "I'll figure it out at Berkeley. I hope to continue volunteering and interning and learning through those experiences."

SAVE THE DATE

## April 2

### Women's Wisdom Art celebrates 20 years of healing

You are cordially invited to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's Wisdom Art program. Past and current clients, volunteers and art instructors welcome you to learn the history of Women's Wisdom Art and admire art pieces of every form. Please join us for a reception on April 2 from 6-8pm at SFBFS' facility in Oak Park – 3333 Third Ave. More information available online.

## May 21

### Race for the Ring

Please join us for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Race for the Ring to raise funds for programs and services at SFBFS. Fundraising has never been so FUN! Grab a bike, a cell phone and a friend and put your Sacramento knowledge to the test on May 21. This text-message based scavenger hunt on bicycles for diamond jewelry provided by Rogers Jewelry Co. raised over \$20,000 for SFBFS last year. Help us raise at least that much again in 2011. Register at [www.raceforthering.com](http://www.raceforthering.com).

