

Helping Hands

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SACRAMENTO
Food Bank
& Family
SERVICES

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Serving our community since 1976

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD

Mother-Baby program not limited to mothers

During the month of May, we honor all of the mothers in our community who sacrifice so much and dedicate themselves to the most important job in human history; loving, nurturing and raising our children. Our Mother-Baby program recognizes the difficult challenges some mothers face and provides any additional support they may need. However, the Mother-Baby program is not limited to mothers. We understand that fathers play a vital role along with grandparents, other family members, legal guardians, church members and neighbors in the rearing of our tiniest community members.

In today's world, "it takes a village to raise a child" really has special meaning. Many parents who reach out to Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) for assistance are raising a child by themselves or do not have the support system so critical to new parents. Many parents who visit the Mother-Baby program are young, struggling financially or are embarrassed to ask for help. Without a sounding board of supportive family and friends, it is nearly impossible to build a comprehensive understanding of what is involved with parenting. Many of our clients experienced child abuse or neglect growing up and are fearful they may repeat the cycle.

However, all caregivers are welcome in the Mother-Baby program. The program focuses on love and compassion first, education second and, finally, provides basics such as infant formula, nutritious baby food, diapers and clothing. Clients are exposed to love and compassion when they walk through the door. Our volunteers and program staff are dedicated to this approach and provide assistance without judgment. Our educational workshops equip parents with skills that will help them raise healthy children along with information and resources that will guide them through good decision making. The distribution of quality products they earn by attending these workshops can offset the costs of raising children. Many clients who visit SFBFS' Mother-Baby program are pleasantly surprised by the dignified experience and how much care goes into operating the program.

SFBFS' mission is to move people toward self-sufficiency and financial independence. Self-sufficiency is made possible by distributing greatly needed items such as formula and diapers, while independence comes from providing education to new mothers and fathers. Parents with access to resources raise healthy and happy children who benefit us all. Children who are well supported become productive citizens for our community. Something SFBFS is dedicated to achieving.

SFBFS' supporters, like you, want to provide more than a three day supply of diapers on just one occasion to a mother in need. They want to change a life.

This is what we do.

Together, volunteers, donors and staff want individuals and families who walk through the doors of SFBFS to be greeted with respect and helped; shown a healthy approach to a new challenge in their life; encouraged to move forward on their own two feet. This is done on a daily basis, year-round. Because of your support, families receive education, food, clothing, parenting supplies and, most importantly, hope.

In honor of Mother's Day, please consider making a donation in honor or in memory of your mother. Or bring your mother down for a tour and show her the positive impact you and SFBFS are making on new moms in our community. I look forward to seeing you.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community,

Blake Young
President/CEO



*Blake & daughter Dani at
Run to Feed the Hungry*

Volunteer Spotlight

Charlotte Hansen is one of those “can’t live without her” volunteers. She has been volunteering at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) in the Mother-Baby program for just over one year, and staff cannot imagine the program without her. “Her commitment to the Mother-Baby program is fantastic,” says Lorena Carranza, Mother-Baby Program Manger. “She does it all.”

Indeed, Charlotte wears many hats in the Mother-Baby program. She can be found on Mondays and Thursdays in the Mother-Baby clothing area, sorting baby clothing, hanging items, talking to new mothers and babies, training volunteers and more. You may also find her sitting down with a new parent in the mentoring room, making referrals, offering advice or just offering a shoulder to lean on. On special event days, Charlotte is busy

servicing food, facilitating art projects with children, helping with set up or clean up and more. She is currently undergoing training to lead parent education classes about cloth diapers. She really does it all. Charlotte has a pleasant and welcoming demeanor that makes everyone feel comfortable in the program.

“When I moved to Sacramento not too long ago, I wanted to find a worthwhile place to spend some time,” says Charlotte. An online search led her to the Mother-Baby program at SFBFS. Charlotte retired from a career in retail a few years back and came to Sacramento to spend time with her daughter’s family and new grandchild. “I love clothing and I love kids, so this sounded like a great fit,” she says. Charlotte is one of the first friendly faces that new clients see when they arrive to receive help with their brand

new babies. “It’s so nice to see people helping others. I enjoy being a part of that.” Families receive a generous supply of gently used and new baby clothing, maternity clothing, blankets and other baby supplies. “They just can’t believe how much they are able to receive. It’s fun watching the kids pick out their own toys. Both moms and kids are so grateful,” she comments.

Charlotte’s current challenge is learning how to sew cloth diapers. The Mother-Baby program will soon offer a class teaching new parents how to sew their own cloth diapers.



Charlotte in the Mother-Baby clothing area

Moms and dads can take home all the diapers they sew in class. Charlotte has been experimenting with the pattern on her home sewing machine and is feeling confident that she’ll be able to teach the parents how to do it. The diapers are created from donated t-shirts and fabric scraps. “The response from the community is great,” she says. “We’re doing this because the parents want to learn how and save money. It’s wonderful to see.”

For Charlotte, the joy of volunteering is creating a welcoming space for clients. “SFBFS fulfills important needs. It’s very family-oriented,” she says. Her focus is always making the families feel comfortable inside the Mother-Baby program. “We have a very happy environment here,” Charlotte says. Lorena agrees wholeheartedly, saying “Charlotte spreads love and compassion to the families enrolled in the Mother-Baby program. Everyone loves working with her because of her warm personality.”

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or bringing your company to volunteer at SFBFS, please contact the Volunteer Services Manager at volunteer@sacramentofoodbank.org.



Charlotte sews cloth diapers

James & Lindsay Smith



Lindsay Smith, nine months pregnant with her first child, learned about the Mother-Baby program at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) through a referral from a friend. Lindsay was ecstatic to learn that the program offered a three day supply of diapers, formula, baby food and clothing for families in need. To earn these items at no cost, Lindsay began attending family life workshops on topics such as budgeting, health, nutrition, child development, stress-management, potty training and more. Lindsay felt that these classes would come in handy to first-time parents.

Lindsay and her husband, James, quickly found themselves enjoying all aspects of the program and benefiting from the services and classes offered. The pair became regular participants in Mother-Baby classes and outstanding examples to other parents. As little Matthew grew, Lindsay began to take him to interactive classes that allowed the two to participate together. They first attended infant massage and story time and later joined a developmental play group that focused on socialization.

In March 2010, Mother-Baby opened the new, incentive-based store filled with supplemental baby supplies such as strollers, high chairs, swings and other larger items not typically available for all clients. Program participants could earn Baby Bucks by attending multiple workshops each month, helping other parents and showing personal improvement in the program. Lindsay submitted the winning entry to name the new store – The Baby Bucks Boutique. When Channel 3 news featured the new and exciting, incentives-based store, it was Lindsay and Matthew's story and success in the program that stole the show.

But Lindsay didn't stop there. When Mother-Baby unveiled the cloth diapering initiative to help parents save money, Lindsay was one of the first moms to sign up. Although using the reusable diapers was a new experience for her and her family, Lindsay knew that the benefits and

savings of cloth diapers would far outweigh the learning curve.

Two years flew by and Matthew graduated from the program at 24 months of age. However, Lindsay continued to attend classes and bring her son to PlayCare, a program for children 1 – 5 years old which allows parents to attend classes while their children are in a safe educational setting. Soon thereafter, Lindsay happily announced that she and her husband were expecting a little girl and Elizabeth was born on December 1, 2010.

The Smith's latest accomplishment took place just last month. Lindsay and James attended a four day course for families with newborn babies. One of the classes in the course taught parents how to sooth a crying baby through the techniques offered by Dr. Harvey Karp's book and video *The Happiest Baby on the Block*. "The advice given in that video has helped me dramatically. Our daughter now sleeps for 6 – 8 hours a night and barely cries anymore," wrote James in his thank you note after the course finished.

Although the Smiths are no longer first-time parents, they quickly realized that they can always learn something new in the challenging world of parenting. Lindsay and her family continue to participate in Mother-Baby classes and are thriving. "The program not only helped me become a better mother, but it has also helped me become a better person," says Lindsay.

Thank you to all of SFBFS' supporters whose contributions make programs such as Mother-Baby a huge success. Families regularly share how much stronger their family has become, especially during financially hard times, due to the support, supplies and education they receive from the program. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Race for the Ring



Fans of TV's globetrotting race game can now test their skills right here in Sacramento! Rogers Jewelry Company is preparing to host the 3rd annual Race for the Ring on May 21, 2011 to benefit programs at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS). 2,000 Sacramento area residents are expected to turn out for this exciting, location based game where clues and answers are sent via text messages. Participants race from location to location in downtown and mid-town Sacramento, solving riddles and challenges while earning points. The team with the most points at the end wins! Prizes include over \$30,000 worth of jewelry from Rogers Jewelry Company.

The \$40 registration fee for any team of two includes a pair of race shirts, entrance into the after-party, lunch, goody bags and a guaranteed day of fun. Because of Rogers Jewelry Company's generous support, 100% of the proceeds from each team's registration fee directly benefit programs at SFBFS to help serve families and individuals in need.

For registration and more information about the event, including video from last year's event, please visit www.raceforthering.com.



Unable to attend on May 21, but want to support SFBFS?

1. Register as a virtual participant – All of the fun, without any of the work!
You can still receive a t-shirt, but don't have to bike or text.
Sign up at www.raceforthering.com
2. Become a sponsor – Encourage your company to have a booth at the event, sponsor a text clue or contribute a silent auction item.
Visit www.sacramentofoodbank.org for sponsorship details.
3. Spread the word – Download a flier about Race for the Ring at www.sacramentofoodbank.org and post it at work or school.



See you at the Race!

www.raceforthering.com

