

THE DISH

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
COMMUNITY NEWS
SPRING 2018

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WE SERVE SONOMA COUNTY

A message
from
Executive
Director,
Ron Karp



Dave Hall Photography

Dear Friend,

As a part of the Food For Thought community, you understand that many of our neighbors in Sonoma County need our love and support as they struggle with a serious illness. This is a crisis that needs our greatest and most thoughtful attention, and action. All of us get sick from time to time, and thankfully most of us can get the help we need from our partners, friends, or caregivers. Food For Thought serves those who don't have the resources and support systems to care for themselves.

Today, because of your support—either as a volunteer or a donor—our much needed work continues. Our goal is not only to continue to serve everyone affected by HIV who needs us, but also to serve people in our community with many types of serious illnesses.

By tracking our clients' data and participating in nutritional study pilots, Food For Thought contributes to a growing body of research showing that providing healthy food for people with serious illnesses reduces suffering and saves money. Unfortunately, there are no ongoing government or dedicated funding streams for specialized nutrition services like the ones we offer. But we are slowly moving the needle, and the article on page 8 about the newest California legislation will give you a better idea of how we are advocating for our clients and all the people in need of nutrition interventions.

Also, we are excited to introduce you to our new Volunteer Program staff members. You can read their interviews as well as our inspiring volunteer highlights in this issue.

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MISSION

**Food For Thought's mission
is to nourish and serve
our community by providing
healthy food and compassion
to people living with HIV/AIDS
and other critical illnesses.**

FOOD BANK

Tues.-Sat. 10 am-5 pm
6550 Railroad Avenue
PO Box 1608
Forestville, CA 95436
(707) 887-1647
FFTfoodbank.org

ANTIQUe STORE

Daily: 11 am-5 pm
2701 Gravenstein Hwy S,
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THANKFUL FOR FFT

I used to have a pretty normal life. Until last July, I was a contractor and was working. Then I had a stroke and was in the hospital for three weeks. My doctor told me that I needed to eat healthier and be on a low-sodium diet. Thankfully, I was referred to Food For Thought and started receiving weekly groceries after I left the hospital.

My stroke has made it tough to get around, so Food For Thought volunteers have been delivering food to me at home. This has been a big help, and what's even better is that I get the low-sodium food items that I need for my diet. Receiving healthy food every week has helped me get better, I've lowered my cholesterol and my blood pressure.

I'm so thankful for Food For Thought. It is an outstanding organization and everyone, the volunteers and staff, are so friendly and have given me so much.



Dale & Belle

IN 2017, FOOD FOR THOUGHT:



DISTRIBUTED FOOD FOR
310,527
HEALTHY MEALS

DELIVERED **6,541**
GROCERY ORDERS TO
HOMEBOUND CLIENTS



DISTRIBUTED **15,670**
BOTTLES OF VITAMINS
TO CLIENTS

SERVED **4,918**
BOWLS OF SOUP AT
COMMUNITY LUNCHEES



408
VOLUNTEERS
CONTRIBUTED
28,439
HOURS



Basil smiles as he takes a client food order.

Dave Hall Photography

Both Sides of the Counter

“Being homebound was a very humbling experience. I was receiving food to help me regain my health. And with the food came kindness and compassion from everyone at Food For Thought.”

Bazil started volunteering at Food For Thought in 1997, when the organization was just a small office off Main Street. That year, Food For Thought served a little over 400 clients, had a volunteer for every day of the year (365), and was run by 3 ½ staff members.

“I was close friends with the staff at Food For Thought, which is one of the reasons I started volunteering.” While the staff has changed and grown over the years, Basil has stayed connected to the organization and volunteered for most of the last two decades. “I’ve done it all. I’ve been a delivery driver, stocked and organized shelves, and now I’m on the phones and taking orders in person at Food For Thought.”

Most recently, Basil has begun taking food orders in Spanish. After teaching English to mainly Hispanic immigrants at the Graton Labor Center for 15 years, he picked up the language. “I immensely enjoy conversing and sharing interactions with the Spanish speaking folk. They are so appreciative of the food and it makes me happy to know it will improve their health.”

But volunteering is just one part of Basil’s relationship with Food For Thought—he has been an HIV survivor since 1979, and he is a client. Basil started utilizing our services a few years ago when he had health issues and couldn’t leave his home. “I needed to have food delivered to me because I couldn’t leave the house and go to the grocery store. So food delivery was essential. And what made it even better was that staff and volunteers, people I knew, delivered my food to me.”

For a few months, Basil received food delivery to his home from familiar friendly faces that cared about his health and wellbeing. “Being homebound was a very humbling experience. I was receiving food to help me regain my health. And with the food came kindness and compassion from everyone at Food For Thought.”

This experience has given Basil a unique perspective of being both a volunteer and a client. When asked what it feels like to be on both sides of the counter, Basil paused for a moment. “It helps me understand the clients more. When they have frustrations and wants and needs or aren’t feeling well, I can understand where they are coming from because I have been there.”

Now retired, Basil continues to volunteer at Food For Thought because of the relationships he has built with clients. Every Friday morning, he takes food orders over the phone or cheerfully discusses healthy food options with a client at the counter.

“Volunteering at Food For Thought provides a valuable spot in my week where I can support the important work being done here. I very much enjoy the volunteers on my particular shift, but when you get right down to it, it’s the work itself that brings me back. I love to see the regulars that come in and am happy to be interacting with them, gradually getting to know them, and helping them get the food they need to heal.”

We Serve Sonoma County

The baskets on this map represent the communities we currently serve across Sonoma County. Of the 800 clients we serve, one-third receive delivery services because they are homebound or homeless and can't get the food they need to heal. The largest and fastest growing population of our clients live in Santa Rosa.



Volunteer Drivers

Our volunteer drivers deliver groceries to 5-10 homebound clients weekly. Each driver donates their time, vehicle, and gas to bring clients the food they need.

"I drive because I wanted to volunteer with my kids and teach them how they can be useful to others."

– Maya Rossi, volunteer driver pictured with her son Max



Getting to Know All About You

Get to know Food For Thought's newest staff members through this exclusive Q&A interview.



HELEN MYERS
Volunteer Program Manager

“Every volunteer has an amazing and inspiring story and I love finding out what that is.”

– Helen

Tell me about your background and how it relates to Food For Thought. Both of my parents worked in the medical field, serving others, and that really shaped my values. So after college, I joined AmeriCorps and was placed at Redwood Empire Food Bank for a year of service. This experience reaffirmed my passion for health and helping others.

Why were you interested in working for Food For Thought? I was drawn to FFT because of its focus on health and the belief that food is medicine. I also like that it's a small grassroots organization where many volunteers have been here for decades. I'm looking forward to getting to know all of our wonderful volunteers.

What do you find most interesting about volunteers? Every volunteer has an amazing and inspiring story and I love finding out what that is. Volunteers also have great qualities like thoughtfulness and optimism. Being around them reminds me to mirror those qualities in my own life.

ERIN BUTTERFIELD
Food Drive and Volunteer Coordinator

What led you to Food For Thought? After college, I joined the Peace Corps and spent a large part of two years doing HIV/AIDS work in Zambia. Coming back to the U.S., I was worried that I wouldn't find meaningful work. But I started volunteering at FFT, and a few months later began working here. I'm so thankful that I found FFT and get to do meaningful work within my community.

What do you think makes Food For Thought unique? I've never seen a food bank that has clients tell you what they want and then receive the food they requested. It's so important to offer our clients as many options as possible, and I'm proud that food drives are a large part of that.

Why do you like working with volunteers? So many people have never thought about making a difference in their communities, but we are lucky to have hundreds of passionate volunteers. For that reason, volunteers give me hope. They also give me energy because they give so much of their time to support our clients.



“Volunteers give me hope. They also give me energy because they give so much!”

– Erin

VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

January - May 2018

29 YEARS
Kathy & John Dennison

26 YEARS
Marty DeKay-Bemis
Doug Gosling

22 YEARS
Diana Lobush
Randi Megorden

19 YEARS
Michael Fontaine
John Sutherland

16 YEARS
Barbara Doyle
Sandra Palmer
Jack Welch

15 YEARS
Gar Cross
Amanda Wood

14 YEARS
Sandra Orr
Leslie Tuttle

13 YEARS
Daniel Henderson
Ron Otley

11 YEARS
Joanie Carlson
Karen Gosling
Jackie Mendoza
Sandy Younglove

10 YEARS
Cheryl Armstrong

9 YEARS
Erica Alsbury
Marion Dutra
George Harrington
Ann Kaplan
Lynn McCarthy
Pat Vossen

8 YEARS
Rebecca Guarda
Shelley Rust

7 YEARS
Terri Blackley
Bea Griffiths
Wally Krampf
CJ Vandegrift

6 YEARS
Pepé Conran
Roberta DeMartini
Linda Hall
Paty Hermosillo-Perkins
David Hubbard
Jennie Madden
Richard Waldinger

5 YEARS
Mike O'Malley
Donna Smith

4 YEARS
Alex Azevedo
Chris Azevedo
Nyla Fleig
Dana Higgins
Connie Malczynski
Oscar Miranda
Henry Romero
Suzanne Ruggirello
Gretchen Whisenand

3 YEARS
Cristina Campbell
Erik Deste
Vincent Di Camillo
Barbara George
Marge Holland
Jake Jacobs
Stephanie O'Connell
Karen Smith
Cheryl Vargas
Terry Wilson

2 YEARS
Christine Anderson
Tammy Barcomb
Daniela De Vasques
Christine D'Ottavio
Raleigh Elliott
Barbara Ellis
Petra Hemphill
Terry Jackson
Leslie Kielar
Eric Leuschner
Erik Matisek
Josh McDonald
Alexander Newhouse
Amara Pardo
Sandra Pardo
Rachel Platt
Evan Wright

1 YEAR
Max Azevedo
Darina Byrne
Laurie Chestnut
Julia Cipollone
Anne Coelho
Rick Cutler
Natasha Dallin
Willow Dizenzo
Kathy Duran
Saray Garcia
Janet Gardner
Pam Graber
Mark Gura
Clem Hockstein
Kathy Hughes
Nancy Martin
Jeanna Menze
Bonnie Moore
Valerie O'Neill
Julie Patterson

Daniel & Chris Pinney
Noriko Rosenthal
Elissa Rubin-Mahon
Donna Sanfilippo
Mitch Savitsky
Steve Scavo
Jeanne Sternbergh
Linda Swan
Bear Vanden Heuvel
Robyn Vance
Shannon Williams



Estelle and Hal

Volunteer spotlight

A few years ago, around the Christmas holiday, Estelle Rogers had accumulated too much food and didn't want anything to go to waste. She researched places to donate the food and one of the only agencies that would accept food was right in her home town of Forestville. When Estelle dropped off her donation, she came in and looked around Food For Thought. She was impressed not only by the healthy food but the welcoming community made up of staff, volunteers, and clients. She thought, "Wow this is an incredible place, and I would like to volunteer."

Estelle, a retired voting rights lawyer, and her husband Hal Kwalwasser, an educational consultant, moved from Washington, D.C. and became full-time residents of Sonoma County a few years ago. They are both politically active and Estelle often travels to cities around the country for important elections, working to improve voter turnout. They both volunteer at Food For Thought and Estelle has worked over 300 hours filling clients' healthy grocery orders since 2015. As she explains, "I love the people. There is a sense of joy working collegially."

"I love the people at Food For Thought. There is a sense of joy working collegially."

- Estelle

Estelle also took on the responsibility of being on Food For Thought's Advocacy Committee because she "wanted people to get what they need for a healthy life." Estelle's support led to Hal volunteering as a Dining Out For Life Ambassador at K&L Bistro. Hal is great at talking to the diners, making them feel comfortable, while sharing his enthusiasm for Food For Thought. Dining Out For Life is Food For Thought's biggest fundraiser of the year and its volunteers like Hal and Estelle are true ambassadors for our clients.

Medi-Cal Medically Tailored Meals Study

Food For Thought is participating in a groundbreaking three-year study—the first of its kind in the nation. We are partnering with five other nonprofit agencies throughout California to provide 12 weeks of medically tailored meals and medical nutrition therapy to 1,000 low-income, Medi-Cal patients with congestive heart failure who have been discharged from the hospital or a care facility.

Funded by the California legislature, the study will evaluate the impact of medically tailored meals—meals that reflect appropriate dietary therapy and are approved by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)—on health outcomes and health care costs of seriously ill low-income, Medi-Cal patients. The impact will be measured by an independent research team. Although the state is funding a 12-week intervention, Food For Thought will provide an extra two months of service for the approximately 150 study clients that we serve. Our experience with the recent studies conducted with West County Health Centers has shown that seriously ill clients benefit from a longer period of service. We are planning to fund the extended services through foundation grants and donations from individuals.

Other agencies involved in the study include: Project Open Hand in San Francisco, the Health Trust in San Jose, Project Angel Food in Los Angeles, Mama's Kitchen in San Diego, and Ceres Community Project. Food For Thought is partnering with Ceres to serve study clients in Sonoma County. We expect to see positive outcomes from this study which will validate what we already know—that nutrition services save money by helping patients regain their health quickly and avoid costly hospital readmissions. For example, Food For Thought can serve a client for a full year for less than the cost of one day in the hospital!

If you would like more information about this exciting study, please contact Ron Karp by phone, at (707) 887-1647, or email him at RonK@FFTfoodbank.org.

3 YEAR Study:
Medi-Cal Medically Tailored Meals



150 NEW CLIENTS
from the hospital living with
congestive heart failure

21 MEALS per week for **5** MONTHS



FOOD = MEDICINE

A Stigma-Free Environment

As if being ill weren't bad enough, many diseases come along with a social stigma. Stigma means that people with certain conditions are thought of as inferior, offensive, or "other," and they are often scorned and blamed for their situation.

When we stigmatize people who are ill, we don't see them as worthy of our compassion or generosity. This can have a powerfully negative impact: the fear of being judged or shunned keeps people from telling their doctors about their symptoms, getting tested, confiding in their friends and family, and getting needed treatment and services—all of which leads to additional suffering.

Even after 30 years, HIV/AIDS remains a highly stigmatized disease, in part because it's still strongly associated in people's minds with gay men and intravenous drug use—groups who, sadly, are already shunned and marginalized in our society.

In the 1980s, Food For Thought responded to this crisis by creating a culture where everyone is accepted and welcome, no matter who they are or how they became HIV-positive. There is no judgment or criticism or shaming. We believe that along with the lifesaving food that we provide, this love and acceptance helps our clients heal.

Today, Food For Thought also serves people affected by a wide range of other illnesses. Unfortunately, many of these illnesses are also highly stigmatized, especially if the condition is connected to a behavior or lifestyle that is viewed as voluntary or immoral. Many clients who are affected by diabetes, lung cancer, and other diseases face stigma and suffer unnecessarily.

“Along with the lifesaving food that Food For Thought provides, love and acceptance help our clients heal.”

No matter what illnesses our clients face, who they are, or what their life's circumstances may be, Food For Thought is committed to serving each individual in a respectful, open-hearted way. We are a community with the philosophy that all people deserve healthy food and unconditional love.

A Heartfelt Thank You to all our Donors!

Donations have been made In Honor of...

Elisa Baker	Rachel Gardner	Sabahat Imran	Laurie Plant
Connie Beall	Barbara Gerber	Frederick Kasl	John Ross
Lance Cook	Nancy Giannini	Jubal Ace Kohn	Rebecca Siagari
Rodney DeMartini	Ric Giardina	Emily Lee	Sandy Younglove
Barbara Doyle	Miki Hashizume	Fiona Moise	

Donations have been made In Memory of...

Esther Asimow	Robert & Bernice Gosling	Ted Lawyer	Dennis Perry
Jerry Bandy	Joyce Greenberg	George Lord	James Ruzsicska
Ron Baumgartner	Giancarlo Guarda	Kevin McDaniel	Alan Lee Snodgrass
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John Camp	Jerry Hoy	Richard Neveadomi	Roger Torre
Charley	Daya Judge	Erik Orav	Elizabeth Wakefield
Robert DeVee	Brian Kelly	Dennis Paynter	Roger Wishard
Sue Engel	Robert & Susan Kusters	Stuart Peot	

Services for Clients



Dave Hall Photography

COOKING WITH NINA REDMAN, REGISTERED DIETITIAN, NUTRITIONIST

Every first and third Wednesday of the month from 12-1:30 pm, FFT clients learn how to make a variety of healthy, easy to prepare meals. From pot pies to stir-fries, Nina will teach you how to prepare and cook tasty and healthy meals! Lunch is included.



Dave Hall Photography

LET'S DO LUNCH!

Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, from 11 am-2 pm, our clients can come to Food For Thought and eat a healthy soup and salad made with vegetables, herbs, and flowers from our garden.

Volunteer Opportunities



FOOD DRIVES

Do you work during the week but still want to volunteer for a few hours? Volunteer on a Saturday or Sunday and collect food from shoppers at local markets across Sonoma County. Find a list of upcoming food drives at FFTfoodbank.org or email Erin at ErinB@FFTfoodbank.org to sign up.



NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

If you're interested in becoming a FFT volunteer, we hold a one-hour orientation meeting every 1st Monday of the month at 1:00 pm and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm. Volunteers help with food drives, grocery delivery, gardening, and taking client orders in the food bank. Sign up online at FFTfoodbank.org or email Helen at HelenM@FFTfoodbank.org.

Julie and Tom Atwood
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 Broadway Cares / Equity Fights AIDS, Inc.
 The Community Foundation
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 Gilead Foundation
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 George W. Lord Revocable Trust
 M.A.C. AIDS Fund
 RiskPress Foundation / Charlie Pendergast
 Mert Preston
 Sonoma County Wine Weekend
 Until There's a Cure Foundation



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 The Elder California Foundation
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 Yvonne Schell
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 Daniel Shanahan and
 Dale Miller
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 John Weinstein
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 David Gray
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Food For Thought
P.O. Box 1608
Forestville, CA
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(707) 887-1647
FFTfoodbank.org

Support us in the HUMAN RACE!

Saturday, April 28 • Race Begins at 8am
Herbert Slater Middle School 3500 Sonoma Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95405



Help us raise \$18,000 to provide lifesaving nutrition services—all free of charge—to your neighbors in need.
Sign up or donate at humanracenow.org
Questions? Call us at (707) 887-1647

Shop for a Great Cause!



Store proceeds benefit Food For Thought, meeting the nutritional needs of people affected by HIV and other serious illnesses in Sonoma County.

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