




Joselyn's Story: A House with Full Bellies

Before the pandemic hit, my husband and I moved from Mexico to the US. I was pregnant with my first child. I was working and attending school, and I had big plans. Then in March of 2020, everything changed. By May I was unemployed and getting bigger by the day. For some reason, I was denied Medi-Cal and bills were piling up. We decided that the best thing to do was for me to travel back to Mexico to have my son. It was tough to go back and forth. At times the border was closed, and the cost of traveling hit us hard because we didn't have any savings.

Then, a family member offered us a place to live for a year in the Bay Area. After arriving, our promised housing arrangement did not go according to plan, leaving us without housing and my husband without employment. A friend suggested we come to Santa Rosa where there was a small studio for rent. Unfortunately, when we arrived, we found out that the studio had many problems. There was mold and it was in need of maintenance.

In December, things began turning around. My husband found a stable job and in January we found out I was pregnant with baby number two. When I was at a *Mi Bebe*

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Y Yo workshop at Corazon Healdsburg, I was introduced to Food For Thought and their Full Belly Program. Once I signed up we received a week's worth of groceries for our entire family. I couldn't believe it! When I received the first order, the driver placed some groceries on my doorstep. I took the bags inside, then to my surprise there was a knock on my door—there were even more bags of food.

Our family only has one car, and even with WIC, grocery shopping can be tough. And the produce is not very fresh. Now, we have enough fresh food for our entire family, delivered right to our doorstep.

I love that my son has been eating more fruits and vegetables. Before we started this program he preferred Cheerios, and now he doesn't go anywhere without his apples. I also really like that I can choose what we receive too. I always order fresh tomatoes and avocados like I enjoyed back in Mexico.

Bit by bit, we have been able to move forward and Food For Thought has helped us do so because we know where our weekly food is coming from. It has been a beautiful experience and we are really, really grateful.



A Message From Ron . . .

When I thank our donors and volunteers, I often say “we couldn’t do this without you.” You can see by reading our annual report that this is literally true. Take a look at our financials—individual donations are by far the largest source of income for FFT. And in 2021, 800 volunteers provided more than 12,000 hours making our services possible.

In the past two years, Food For Thought has served over 6,000 people through our COVID-19 Nutrition Program alone. To get this food to clients all over the county, we added ten delivery routes, bringing the total

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number of routes to almost 40. Volunteers come to Forestville, load their own cars (using their own gas!) with bags and bags of food, and carefully deliver them all over the county—as far as Sonoma, Petaluma, and Cloverdale. Volunteers and a substantial increase in donations allowed us to expand our services from 1,000 clients to over 6,000 in just two years.

FFT also created two new programs last year that address rising hunger and nutrition security in the county. The Full Belly Program serves pregnant clients and their families who are food-insecure for the entire pregnancy plus three months afterwards. And the Oncology Nutrition Program serves people undergoing cancer treatment along with their families.

There is a critical need for our services throughout the county. Lots of individuals and families can’t afford or access nutritious food, and this has only been exacerbated by COVID, inflation, and the cost of housing. By working together and advocating for change, we can end the suffering and poor health brought about by hunger and nutrition insecurity.

In Service,

Ron Karp, Executive Director

Ways to Give

Ways to Give

Here are some ways you can help provide food + love to more than 6,000 of our Sonoma County neighbors in need:

Make an Online Donation

You can easily make a tax-deductible gift on our website: FFTfoodbank.org/take-action

Become a GEM

Giving Every Month (GEM) is Food For Thought’s monthly giving program. GEMs provide a steady monthly source of support to Food For Thought, helping us provide comprehensive nutrition and other services to people living with serious medical conditions in Sonoma County.



“I donate monthly to Food For Thought because it is easy and it ensures that Food For Thought receives my donations regularly—which is important to me as this organization is close to my heart.”
– Laurie P.

Facebook Fundraisers

Did you know that there is an easy way to raise funds for FFT on your Facebook page? It is SIMPLE!



Step 1: Sign in to Facebook. On your computer, click the plus sign in the upper right corner. On your phone, click the menu image in the lower right corner.

Step 2: Select Fundraiser (on your phone you may need to scroll down and select See More).

Step 3: Click on the Nonprofit option.

Step 4: Search for Food For Thought.

Step 5: Update your fundraising goal, end date, and title. Click Create and your fundraiser is posted to your feed!!

Join the many people who have already used this feature to support FFT.

Questions

If you have questions about any of these ways to give, please contact Karen Gardner, Development Director, at (707) 887-1647 ext. 102 or KarenG@FFTfoodbank.org

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From the Kitchen



Pea, Onion, and Mint Soup

Get all your greens with this delicious and nutritious recipe of the month. A little Parmesan cheese on top adds just a hint of richness (serves 4).

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 bunches spring onions, sliced
- 1 russet potato, peeled and cut into ½ inch pieces
- 1 pound frozen petite peas
- 1 quart low-sodium vegetable stock
- ½ small bunch of mint, leaves picked
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Parmesan cheese for garnish

Instructions:

- Heat the olive oil and butter in a heavy saucepan. Reserve 1 tablespoon of the spring onions, and gently fry the rest of the onions and the potato for about 5 minutes, without browning.
- Stir in the stock and bring it to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes until the potatoes are tender. Stir in the peas, bring the soup to a boil again, and cook for about 3 minutes, until the peas are just cooked through.
- Remove the pan from the heat, add the mint leaves, and puree in a blender or food processor until smooth. Top with the reserved spring onion and Parmesan cheese, and serve.



Oncology Nutrition Program: Customized nutrition for Sonoma County neighbors living with cancer

Did you know that Food For Thought has served people impacted by cancer since 1988?

All these years, we've been working with clients living with HIV, and since HIV impacts the immune system, our HIV-positive clients are prone to other illnesses as well. We've heard from clients over the years that their primary health concern isn't always HIV—10% have told us that it's a co-diagnosis of cancer.

Last year, we launched our new Oncology program. We're now bringing our tried-and-true model of comprehensive nutrition services to people who are going through cancer treatment and at risk of malnutrition.

Unlike some other conditions our clients live with, such as diabetes or congestive heart failure, there is no one-size-fits-all diet for people with cancer. That's why our program is so flexible and customizable.



Each client receives medically-tailored groceries and/or prepared meals, depending on the client's ability to prepare food themselves—either way, we offer enough for 21 meals per week. We offer a huge range of choice, based on personal and cultural preferences, as well as medical needs. We also offer vitamins and supplements, and one-on-one nutrition counseling to each client.

In the words of an anonymous client:

"I am on chemo for Multiple Myeloma and I became a client at the advice of my cancer nurse.

Coming to Food For Thought enabled me to eat well, and I had a big breakthrough: The nutrition I got from FFT made me feel much better and helped me heal. My treatment requires extra protein, and I'm so glad I can get high-protein items like chicken, hummus, and tofu—organic!—at Food For Thought."

For more information about the Oncology Nutrition Program, contact Client Services Director **Nina Redman** at NinaR@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 119

Volunteers: The Backbone of Food For Thought



2022 Volunteers of the Year
Chris and Daniel Pinney

In 2016 Chris and Daniel Pinney found themselves seeking a way to give back to our community. They attended a nonprofit symposium at the county fairgrounds and came across the FFT booth. As Forestville residents, volunteering at FFT was a perfect fit. We estimate that Chris and Daniel have delivered more than 13,000 meals to our clients over the past year. This is in addition to working inside the food bank to fill bags of food for our clients, picking up donations at food drives, and more.

"I have been amazed about how adaptable FFT has been through this whole pandemic. I am just in awe of the leadership, what they have been able to do, and and the population they have been able to serve."

– Chris Pinney

"I see the food that goes out. It is food I would eat, food I would buy. FFT is a great organization that serves a really great need."

– Daniel Pinney



2022 Dennison Award
Nancy Scott-Hunnicuttt

Named after our longtime volunteers Kathy and John Dennison, each year we give the Dennison Award to a volunteer for their outstanding service for 10 or more years.

This year, the Dennison Award goes to Nancy Scott-Hunnicuttt. Nancy has been volunteering at Food For Thought for 27 years. During this time, Nancy has helped with almost everything, including collecting donations at food drives, picking up donations at local markets and other retailers, working at the antique store, helping with our former wine box fundraiser and our annual Dining Out For Life event, and many other tasks!

"Some of the more touching moments are when I would take client orders, and they would start talking—about their life, what they have lost—personal things like that. That is when you get your heart touched, which is what FFT does. They nourish their clients' souls as much as they nourish their stomachs."

– Nancy Scott-Hunnicuttt

We are truly grateful for Chris, Daniel, and Nancy for their dedication to Food For Thought and for supporting our clients.

Ron Rubin Winery: A BIG Supporter of FFT

The story of Ron Rubin Winery begins over 40 years ago. Having studied viticulture and enology at UC Davis in 1971, Ron Rubin held a dream close to his heart of eventually owning a winery. The forty-year dream was achieved in December 2011 when he purchased a ten-acre vineyard in the Green Valley area of Russian River Valley. Finding himself in the prestigious Russian River Valley made this "dream come true" even more meaningful. The vision for the winery has always been to offer premium wines at an exceptional value while providing A Beautiful Experience.

The Ron Rubin Estate is a ten-acre property in the Russian River Valley that comprises eight acres of Pinot Noir and two acres of Chardonnay. The winery is situated only 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean. It's cool, foggy—and it is absolutely perfect for growing grapes that turn out exceptional Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The weather, coupled with Goldridge sandy loam soil, allows the fruit to ripen slowly, which means the wines ultimately have lower alcohol content and balanced acidity, making them pair better with a wide range of food. Over 40 years ago, Ron Rubin Winery was a dream. Now, it is a winery and vineyard that holds the core philosophy that each person should enjoy A Beautiful Experience through the winery, and the wines, for many years to come.



"We are proud to be part of Food For Thought, a nonprofit that impacts the community of Sonoma County by providing healing nutrition for people living with serious medical conditions."

– Ron Rubin

Food For Thought's mission is to foster health and healing with food and compassion.

Food For Thought | (707) 887-1647 | info@FFTfoodbank.org | FFTfoodbank.org

