



Coming Back Home

Client Story: Doral Borgnis



Ten years ago an overwhelming cycle of loss began for Doral Borgnis that took a great toll on his physical and mental health. Doral, who ran his own successful contracting business, had known for several years that he had a serious health issue, but was able to manage it by living a healthy lifestyle.

“My house burnt down, and soon after the relationship with my partner ended in a very painful way,” said Doral. “All the turmoil in my life was overwhelming. I just didn’t have the physical energy to keep the business going. I worked to stabilize my life and found a job as a caretaker of a property, only to be told by the landlord that the property was in foreclosure. I

knew I would soon have no place to live. I was in a very dark place.”

Doral sought the help of a therapist. “I was severely depressed and literally starving. I can still recall eating a piece of bread and thinking that I better save the crust so that I could eat it later,” said Doral. His therapist had a connection with Food For Thought and suggested that he might be eligible to receive groceries and services. Doral contacted FFT and began receiving services immediately.

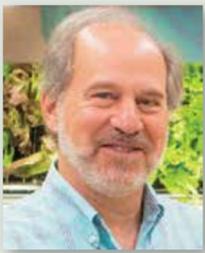
“I was so impressed with the support that I received from FFT’s staff and volunteers. Everyone was so authentic and sincere. They really cared about me.” Doral credits both his therapist and FFT with helping him get to a better place both mentally and physically.

A couple of years later, he moved to San Diego and became a caretaker for a friend’s relative. He volunteered at a local food bank, but just didn’t find the same welcoming spirit that he experienced at FFT. In 2014, Doral returned to Santa Rosa and he knew immediately that he wanted to reconnect with FFT.

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Today, life is very different for Doral. He and a friend share a home in Santa Rosa and together they care for three elderly relatives with health complications. “It is really a 24-hour job, but every week

I look forward to volunteering at FFT,” said Doral. “It is such a magical place and so full of positive energy. It really helps ground me. I definitely get back just as much as I give.”



A Message From Ron

We are all vulnerable to illness, as is evident from the current COVID-19 virus outbreak. The circumstances in our lives can change suddenly, and we may need help, as Doral's story on page 1 illustrates.

For those recently hospitalized or diagnosed with a serious illness, our nutrition services may

be just what they need. Clients can meet with Nina, our registered dietitian, and will receive food that is medically tailored to meet their health-specific needs.

In recent years, Food For Thought has served an

increasing number of clients who are homeless and suffering from an illness. Although we are flexible and creative in the way we get food to homeless clients, many are not able to access our services and fall through the cracks.

In response to these challenges serving homeless clients, Food For Thought created the Bags of Love program last year. We distribute bags of food countywide through health centers and homeless outreach agencies. The program brings healthy food to people in great need as well as encouraging people to seek medical and other care services. In this newsletter, we highlight our partnership with the Santa Rosa Community Health Brookwood Campus and how this program supports their efforts.

From our founding over 31 years ago, Food For Thought has always treated our clients with dignity and respect. We strive to embody these values in all of our interactions. We know that acts of kindness can make a big difference for everyone, and especially for those suffering from illness.

In Service,

Ron Karp, Executive Director

Ways to Give

Here are some ways you can help provide food + love to 850 of our Sonoma County neighbors in need:

Make an Online Donation

You can easily make a gift to Food For Thought on our website: FFTfoodbank.org/take-action.

Monthly Giving

By becoming a Food For Thought GEM (Giving Every Month) donor, you provide us with predictable funding, allowing us to plan for the future. Your monthly contributions play a major role in providing nutritious food + love to our neighbors in need all year long!



To sign up, go to:

FFTfoodbank.org/take-action and select MONTHLY below DONATION FREQUENCY.

Leave a Legacy

You can make a lasting impact by designating a gift to FFT as part of your estate plan. To learn more about joining our Legacy Giving Circle visit: FFTfoodbank.org/leave-a-legacy



Support FFT's Efforts by Donating at our Virtual Food Drive

Due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, Food For Thought has suspended our food drives at grocery stores to protect our volunteers and the public. But our clients still need food, and you can help feed our neighbors in need during this challenging time!

Please donate food by visiting FFT's new "virtual food drive" experience to buy critically needed groceries for our clients. Make a donation at: FFTfoodbank.org/virtual-food-drive.

Questions

If you have questions about any of these ways to give, please contact Mark Green, development director, at (707) 887-1647 ext. 102 or MarkG@FFTfoodbank.org.

From the Kitchen

Egg Muffin Cups

This flavorful recipe makes a delicious main dish. Add a side salad of seasonal berries to round out the meal.

Egg Muffin Cups

Ingredients:

For the base:

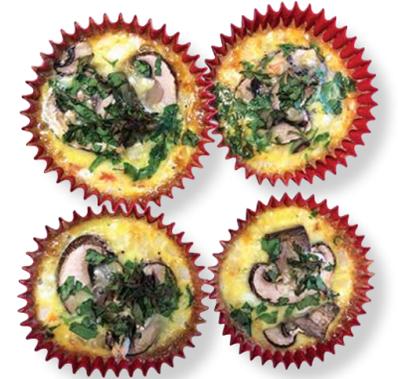
- 12 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped onion (red, white or yellow)
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the topping:

- 3/4 cup brown mushrooms, sliced
- 3/4 cup red bell pepper, diced
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic powder or 1/2 teaspoon garlic, minced

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Lightly spray a 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick oil spray. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs and onion. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add egg mixture halfway up into muffin cup. Divide



the topping evenly into muffin cups. Bake for 20 minutes. Serve OR store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days and reheat when ready to serve.

Thank You and Farewell

By Jude Mariah

In the 1980s, the early days of the AIDS epidemic, I was a volunteer and then a full-time employee at Face To Face, an organization dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV/AIDS. It was my heart's work.

Very quickly, the need arose in Sonoma County for a program to provide food, calories and sustenance to these very vulnerable individuals. I watched a magical team create Food For Thought, dedicated to meeting this vital need. What a gift to the community!

FFT has always held a very special place in my heart. Over the years I have stayed involved. I created two memorial gourds for loved ones who died of AIDS and was a guest speaker at the Calabash event. I spoke of the profound impact the epidemic had and actually still has on my life, from the deaths that came in alarming numbers to all the bittersweet moments working with people facing the last days of their lives.



When I left my full-time job as a social worker at a housing site for seniors, I knew I wanted to volunteer at FFT. It didn't take long to be recruited for a part-time job as the client services coordinator. I've felt blessed to essentially come full circle in my professional life and to work with a beautiful team of people providing nutritious food to those in need.

I really feel like I saved the best for last! In the past several years, I've been a part of FFT's growth and transformation, not only serving those living with HIV, but also people suffering from other serious illnesses including congestive heart failure and diabetes.

My time at FFT has been extremely moving and enriching. The work I've done with our clients has been a gift to me. For this, I am very grateful.

Jude will be retiring after four years as client services coordinator at FFT.



Why I Give By Mary Ann Furda

I first came to know Food For Thought through Ron Karp and Ann Dolin. I helped them break down after a Calabash event at FFT. I was so impressed with the warmth of everyone I met that day, the facility and the garden. I got a real visceral hit and thought, "this is a healing place."

I first started giving by making a gift at the end of the year in 2014, but a few years later I came to understand how important it is to provide an organization with support

on a regular basis. As a GEM (Giving Every Month) donor, I have the highest confidence that the funds I provide will have a direct impact on individuals needing nutrition support. I give because the support that FFT provides is palpable and so important to the community.

As a chiropractor, I am a health care provider and I am also greatly concerned with the health of our planet. I feel that Food For Thought exemplifies empathy and I am very impressed that much of the produce provided to clients comes from the onsite garden. Food is life, and so important for people living with HIV and other serious illnesses.



Bags of Love: Partner Spotlight

Santa Rosa Community Health Brookwood Campus

Making an Impact

In March of 2019, Food For Thought delivered the first Bags of Love to our partner agencies, enabling them to provide nutritious food to homeless people who are struggling with a serious illness.

“Even if homeless individuals are eligible for FFT’s nutrition services, many don’t participate because shelter instability keeps them on the move, they lack transportation to our location or they simply don’t have a way to store the groceries that we provide,” said Nina Redman, client services director for Food For Thought. “We created Bags of Love to ensure that this vulnerable segment of Sonoma County’s population has access to our nutrition services.”

Every week, FFT volunteers stock paper bags with food items that are all packaged in easy-to-open containers or pop-top cans that don’t require refrigeration or cooking. The bags, containing the caloric equivalent of 11 meals, are delivered to local health care and social service agencies.

Santa Rosa Community Health serves the diverse North Bay community by providing excellent, culturally responsive, comprehensive primary care that is accessible to all people. Its Brookwood Campus, centrally located near other social service agencies, provides quality health care to many low-income and homeless individuals.



“Being able to provide people with nutritious food helps them see us as compassionate and competent organization that cares about their health and wellbeing. We really appreciate Food For Thought’s support.”

“The Bags of Love provided by FFT are very important in helping us to establish trust with patients. Providing food helps us to connect with people when we go out into the community to make outreach to homeless individuals who are seriously ill,” said Olivia Ortiz, special population outreach coordinator at the Brookwood Campus. “We also provide bags to clients who participate in our weekly Community Resource Group where we provide insight, guidance and assistance about how to access vital community resources. Being able to provide people with nutritious food helps them see us as compassionate and competent organization that cares about their health and wellbeing. We really appreciate Food For Thought’s support.”

Brookwood’s Senior Clinic Operations Manager, Stephanie Lopez adds, “It is important for us to serve our clients in a holistic way, and eating healthy food is very important to the healing process.”

She continued, “We recently had a gentleman come in who was in pretty rough shape both emotionally and physically. He had broken up with his girlfriend, was suffering from a serious illness and living in his car. Our partnership with Food For Thought helped us provide assistance and comfort to him in an immediate way. He is now a client and receiving treatment at our clinic. The Bags of Love program helps seriously ill people from falling further into despair.”



OLIVIA ORTIZ

STEPHANIE LOPEZ

Food For Thought Provides Curbside Delivery to Clients

Food For Thought has begun delivering groceries to clients curbside in our parking lot and continues to make deliveries to home bound clients. As many of our long-time volunteers are 65 or older or have compromised immune systems, we asked them to stay home. FFT’s staff and additional volunteers from our community have stepped in to keep the food bank operating.

Below is one of the notes received from a grateful client:

Dear FFT,
I came yesterday to do a food order and stayed in my car. I am 70+. It was very well done with the young woman who came to the car to help me. It was also great to see key staff members walking around and helping others.
The food is very important and thanks to all of you in these difficult days.
J.
FFT client



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

