



## Sheila's Story: The Value of Hope and Inspiration

About two years ago, I ended up in the hospital after falling in the shower and contracting a terrible case of septic pneumonia which could have been deadly. Luckily, the good people at Kaiser and Jill, my wonderful social worker from Linkages, connected me with Food For Thought. Through the Welcome Home Program, I was able to receive healthy groceries and recover at home. I am very appreciative of the support that I received from the staff and volunteers.

Giving to others has always been a source of great joy for me. From my work as a musician, poet and author, to the volunteer work that I have done providing musical therapy to veterans, I try to show kindness and compassion to everyone. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, I've had some very serious medical issues that have limited my work helping others and I have had to be on the receiving end of support.

I also have rheumatoid arthritis, a chronic inflammatory disorder in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissue including the hands, feet and in my case, the lungs. There is no cure for the condition, but I had been able to manage it. In June of 2021, I suffered a debilitating attack which put me in the hospital again. Once again, FFT was there for me.

It was a great comfort to me to know that I would be able to receive the food that I needed to recover at home. I can't say enough positive things

about the program or the team at FFT. Every week, I get a call from a volunteer named Mark, who is so supportive and fun to chat with on the phone. He makes a point to remember what is going on in my life and the foods that I like. When you are suffering from a chronic illness, it can be very humbling, and you often feel that you don't have control over anything. This program is designed to give people choice and I love that it includes so many fresh fruits and vegetables.

Being able to select what you would like to eat and having it delivered by kind people provides me a deep sense of dignity. It may seem like a small thing, but it is so wonderful. I grew up in post-World War II England, where it was important to have "a stiff upper lip" and be self-sufficient. While I can compassionately offer aid to others, it is difficult for me to ask for help. My experience made me keenly aware of the predicament of many other disabled seniors. I am now an advocate for those who are not seen and have no voice. I am especially appreciative of the help that FFT provides to seniors.

If my illness has taught me anything, it has been to be more patient and kinder to myself. It is much easier to do that if you have thoughtful support. For me, life is a spiritual journey and I have found that providing people with hope and inspiration is very important. I truly value the support that FFT and others have provided me.

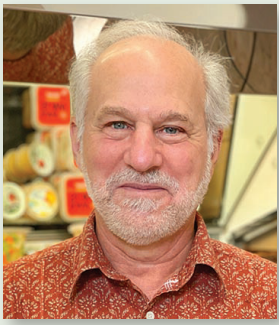
*"This program is designed to give people choice and I love that it includes so many fresh fruits and vegetables."*

For more information about the Welcome Home Program, contact:

Client Services Director **Nina Redman** at [NinaR@FFTfoodbank.org](mailto:NinaR@FFTfoodbank.org) or (707) 887-1647 ext. 119



# Ways to Give



## A Message From Ron . . .

In the face of what seems like an endless pandemic, I find great solace in the opportunity to dig in and help thousands of people in need in our community.

The pandemic has affected all of us greatly: jobs have been lost, businesses have closed, the cost of housing has skyrocketed and as a result, many more people are struggling to get by. Food For Thought has responded by serving more people than ever—over 6,500 people impacted by COVID-19, HIV and other serious medical conditions in the past 12 months.

At the end of each day, the food bank looks like a cyclone blew through and emptied out all the food. Fortunately, by the next morning the shelves are all full again, thanks to our amazing food bank staff and volunteers.

*“It is truly because of our donors and volunteers that we are able to feed our neighbors in need.”*

It is expensive to buy healthy food to serve so many more clients, and after the COVID-19 pandemic began, we needed to hire six additional

staff members to work in the food bank. FFT would never have been able to accomplish all of this without the support of so many generous donors.

This issue highlights how your support is making a difference and helping some of the most vulnerable members of our community, including seniors and people experiencing homelessness. It also includes information on how you can help our clients during this busy holiday season.

Please consider making a monetary donation, volunteering or donating at one of our food drives, or participating in Dining Out For Life, our biggest and most delicious fundraiser of the year on Thursday, December 2, 2021.

Thank you for your past, present and future support. It is truly because of our donors and volunteers that we are able to feed our neighbors in need.

Wishing you a joyful, peaceful and safe holiday season.

In service,

Ron Karp, Executive Director

## Ways to Give

Here are some ways you can help provide food + love to more than 6,500 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](https://FFTfoodbank.org/take-action)

### Monthly Giving

By becoming a Food For Thought GEM (Giving Every Month), 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 your neighbors in need all year long!



To sign up, go to:

[FFTfoodbank.org/take-action](https://FFTfoodbank.org/take-action) and select MONTHLY below DONATION FREQUENCY.

### FFT's Wish List



Help us make our clients' holiday season a little brighter! We're looking for microwaves and slow cookers for clients who don't have these items so that they can make healthy, easy-to-prepare meals at home. To purchase a new item to donate, please visit: [tinyurl.com/FFTwishlist](https://tinyurl.com/FFTwishlist)

### Questions

If you have questions about any of these ways to give, please contact Karen Gardner, FFT's development director, at (707) 887-1647 ext. 102 or [KarenG@FFTfoodbank.org](mailto:KarenG@FFTfoodbank.org).

Please support our Major Business Sponsors:







## Cauliflower and Pumpkin Gratin

Serve this delicious seasonal side dish at one of your holiday meals.  
(Serves four to six)

### Ingredients:

- 2 mini pumpkins or 1 ½ pound sugar pumpkin
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup milk
- 1 head cauliflower, core removed, florets cut into bite-sized pieces
- 8 ounces flavorful hard cheese such as Gruyere, Gouda or sharp Cheddar, grated

### Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Wash pumpkin(s) and pierce with a fork or knife in a few spots. Microwave pumpkin(s) for 8 minutes or until slightly soft. The pumpkin(s) can also be baked at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20-30 minutes if no microwave oven is available. Allow to cool. Melt the butter in a skillet and sauté the onion over medium heat until it starts to brown.



When the pumpkin(s) are cool enough to handle, peel and remove the seeds and stringy centers. Place in a bowl, mash with a fork and stir in the milk. When it is thoroughly mixed, stir in the onions and cauliflower. Pour into a casserole dish, and sprinkle with the grated cheese. Cook for 30 minutes, or until the cauliflower is fork tender and the cheese has melted and browned.

## Help Us Provide Holiday Meals for FFT's Clients!

### Donate through our Virtual Food Drive

Every year Food For Thought's clients receive everything they need to make a festive holiday meal. We would love your help providing them with all the trimmings! You can donate through our Virtual Holiday Food Drive on our website at [rb.gy/srbqwq](https://rb.gy/srbqwq) or by scanning the QR code below.



FFT's dedicated food bank team, led by Food Program Manager Roberto Martin, is ready for the busy holiday season!



### Holiday Food Drives

FFT's team of volunteers will be full of holiday cheer and collecting food items to help feed our neighbors in need at local markets in Sonoma County. Look for them near the entrance of the store before you do your shopping and pick up our most needed holiday items: stuffing, masa, pie crust mix, pumpkin pie mix and cranberry sauce for our clients. Here's a list of upcoming events:



FFT volunteers Prudence and Bonnie at a food drive at Oliver's Market

#### December 2021 Food Drives

- Saturday, December 11 - Oliver's Montecito
- Tuesday, December 14 - Oliver's Stony Point
- Saturday, December 18 - Petaluma Market
- Saturday, December 18 - Pacific Market Sebastopol
- Tuesday, December 21 - Pacific Market Sebastopol

**Hours: All food drives run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

We also need volunteers to help staff the events, if you are interested, please contact Chelsea at [ChelseaP@FFTfoodbank.org](mailto:ChelseaP@FFTfoodbank.org) or (707) 887-1647 ext. 125 for more information.



# Bags of Love: Partner Spotlight



**Reach for Home**  
Housing for People. Skills for Life.

Since 2019, Food For Thought has delivered Bags of Love to our partner agencies, helping them to provide nutritious food to people experiencing homelessness who are struggling with a serious medical condition.

"We launched this program to ensure that these vulnerable members of Sonoma County's community have access to our nutrition services," said FFT's Client Services Director Nina Redman. "Each bag contains the caloric equivalent of 11 meals and includes food items in easy-to-open containers that don't require refrigeration or cooking. These bags are delivered to local social services and health care agencies."

Reach for Home, a nonprofit based in Healdsburg, is dedicated to ending homelessness in North Sonoma County. "FFT's Bags of Love is such a thoughtful program. Providing nutritious meals in a way that is accessible is a wonderful way to connect and build trust with people," said Margaret Sluyk, executive director. "While providing a man in Cloverdale with a bag of food, our nurse noticed that he had a large growth on his face. She suspected that it might be cancer. Due to the bond they had formed, she was able to convince him to let her take him to a doctor who provided treatment."

Reach for Home recently acquired an R.V. equipped with medical equipment that allows the outreach team to offer education and basic health care to people in a safe, private and clean setting. "We have the Bags of Love on hand in the vehicle. Being able to offer healthy food to someone suffering from malnutrition on the spot makes a big difference," said Sluyk.



Reach for Home staff members Jim and Rick with Bags of Love

*"FFT's Bags of Love is such a thoughtful program. Providing nutritious meals in a way that is accessible is a wonderful way to connect and build trust with people," said Margaret Sluyk, executive director.*

According to Homeless Outreach Coordinator Rick Cafferata, FFT's Bags of Love are an unbelievably valuable resource. "For weeks, I met a man at the bus stop in Healdsburg and provided him with a bag of food. I knew he was in poor health, and I feared he was drinking himself to death. He really began to trust me. I offered to take him to the doctor who confirmed that his liver was deteriorating. This news was life-changing for him. We helped him to reconnect with his family living in New Jersey. Once he went home, he enrolled in the Salvation Army's detoxification program, and he now has a job and is doing well. We still stay in touch."

Reach for Home also participated in a major effort to encourage unsheltered people to get the COVID-19 vaccine. "We were able to spread the word about vaccine availability while distributing the Bags of Love to our clients, who are especially at risk of contracting the virus. The Bags of Love provided a great incentive to motivate people to come to the vaccination day," said Cafferata. "It was a very successful event."

Food For Thought is incredibly grateful to all our Bags of Love partners. They are essential to helping us reach people with serious medical conditions who don't have shelter.

## 20TH ANNUAL DINING OUT FOR LIFE SONOMA COUNTY THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021

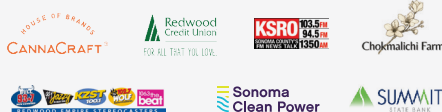
Plan to dine at or order takeout from these restaurants on December 2 and a portion of your bill will be donated to Food For Thought.

- |                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>BODEGA BAY</b><br>Terrapin Creek Cafe                         | <b>GEYSERVILLE</b><br>Rustic Francis's Favorites                                                                                                                          | <b>HEALDSBURG</b><br>Baci Cafe & Wine Bar<br>Chalkboard<br>Spoonbar |
| <b>FORESTVILLE</b><br>Canneti<br>Roadhouse Italiana*             | <b>GUERNEVILLE</b><br>boon eat + drink<br>Koala's Fine Food                                                                                                               | <b>KENWOOD</b><br>TIPS Roadside                                     |
| <b>FARMSTAND</b> at<br>Farmhouse Inn<br>Sunshine Coffee Roasters | 25% of sales, 50% of sales, *100% of food sales, **100% of food & drink sales go to Food For Thought. We recommend reservations. Please contact the restaurants directly. |                                                                     |

- |                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>OCCIDENTAL</b><br>The Altamont<br>General Store                                                                                                                                         | <b>SANTA ROSA CONT.</b><br>Russian River Brewing Co.<br>Sazon Peruvian Cuisine<br>Tambayan Filipino Eatery<br>The Spinster Sisters<br>Three Leaves<br>Heritage Foods<br>Walter Hansel<br>Wine Bar & Bistro**<br>Zoftig Eatery | <b>SEBASTOPOL CONT.</b><br>O & C China Bistro<br>Ramen Gaijin<br>Retrograde<br>Coffee Roasters<br>Rialto Cinemas<br>Sonoma Burger<br>Sunshine Coffee Roasters<br>Sushi Tozai |
| <b>PETALUMA</b><br>Cucina Paradiso                                                                                                                                                         | <b>ROHNERT PARK</b><br>Hana Sake Bar<br>& Tasting Room<br>Simmer                                                                                                                                                              | <b>SONOMA</b><br>Reel & Brand<br>HopMonk Tavern Sonoma                                                                                                                       |
| <b>SANTA ROSA</b><br>Dierk's Midtown Cafe<br>Dierk's Parkside Cafe<br>JoJo Restaurant<br>& Sushi Bar<br>Khoom Lanna<br>Mac's Deli & Cafe<br>Ricky's Eastbound<br>Rosso Pizzeria & Wine Bar | <b>SEBASTOPOL</b><br>Acre Pizza<br>Fork Roadhouse<br>Gravenstein Grill<br>Handline<br>Hole In The Wall<br>HopMonk Tavern<br>Sebastopol<br>Martha's Old Mexico<br>Namaste Kitchen                                              | <b>WINDSOR</b><br>Pizzaleah<br>Qimura Sushi & Ramen<br>Russian River Brewing Co.<br>Sweet T's<br>Restaurant + Bar<br>Umé Japanese Bistro                                     |



Scan QR code to donate and enter raffle or visit [FFTfoodbank.org/DOFL](http://FFTfoodbank.org/DOFL)



DINE OUT. TAKE OUT. GIVE BACK.

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

Food For Thought | (707) 887-1647 | [info@FFTfoodbank.org](mailto:info@FFTfoodbank.org) | [FFTfoodbank.org](http://FFTfoodbank.org)

