Food For Thought
healing with food+love

THE DISH

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

SUMMER 2024

Carmen's Story: A Lifeline in the Dark

When I received my diagnosis in March of 2023, my life was turned upside down. It was unexpected, drastic, and devastating. It changed me completely. I was no longer able to work and for months I feared not having enough food for my family and me to survive. That is, until a social worker at Memorial Hospital in Santa Rosa referred me to Food For Thought.

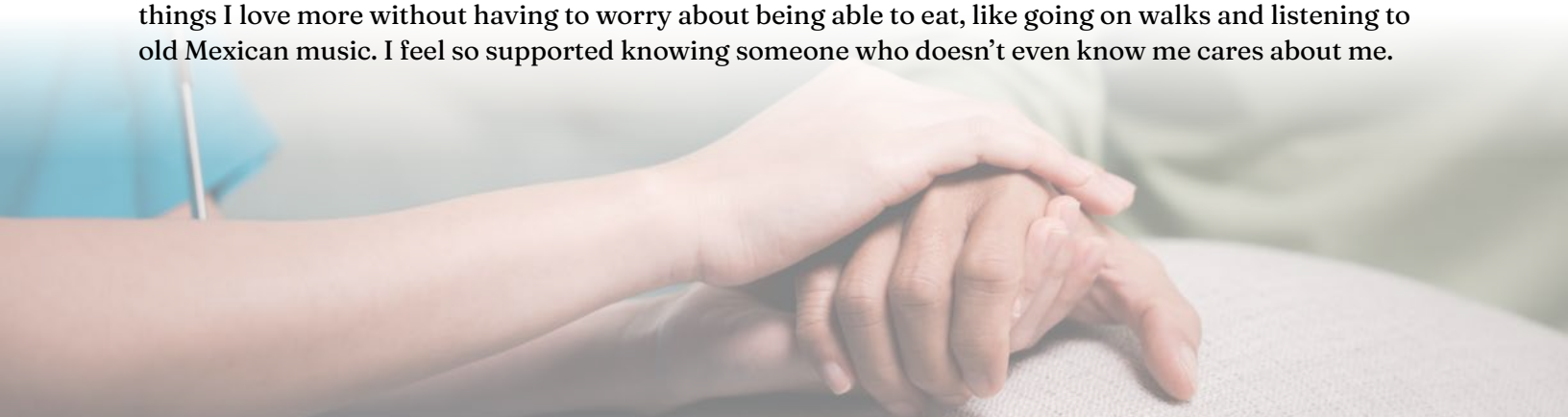
My family and I started receiving nutrition services from Food For Thought's Oncology program in January 2024. They have helped us so much. Each week when my food arrives, we get very excited and select what we are going to cook that same day.

Thanks to the food they send me, my family and I are eating healthier and incorporate more fruits and vegetables into our diet. I really like the vegetables and proteins and use them to make healthy meals, such as chicken or tuna salad.

Food For Thought provides more than just food. Not only do I receive groceries, but I also enjoy talking to their staff when I place my weekly order. It helps to talk to someone who cares each week, specifically Jacqui. It feels great to have someone ask me how I am.

Everyone at Food For Thought is so kind, including the volunteers who pack and deliver my food. The delivery drivers will leave the grocery bags when I am not home, but they always make sure to get in touch with me.

I am extremely grateful for all the help Food For Thought continues to give me. I am able to enjoy the things I love more without having to worry about being able to eat, like going on walks and listening to old Mexican music. I feel so supported knowing someone who doesn't even know me cares about me.



From Our Executive Director

Dear FFT Supporters and Friends,

In 2021, Food For Thought created the **Oncology Nutrition Program** to provide medically tailored groceries and meals to clients receiving cancer treatment along with members of their household. As **June was National Cancer Survivors Month**, I have been reflecting on how cancer has affected my life, as well as many of our clients, volunteers, staff, and members of the community.

Support for people living with cancer is especially critical in Sonoma County. According to National Institute of Health, Sonoma County has the 2nd highest rate of cancer in the San Francisco Bay Area. Cancer is also the leading cause of premature death, with our county's rates exceeding the state average.

As new and effective treatments become available, more people are able to survive and live much longer. All of us together help provide critical nutrition services to Oncology Program clients and families, and just as importantly, love, support, and human touch from our volunteers and staff.

Cancer treatment professionals advise that a diet rich in plant-based foods—such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans—not only reduces the risk of certain cancers, but also is ideal for our clients undergoing chemotherapy or other cancer treatments. For many, maintaining a healthy diet is difficult without the resources needed to access nutritious foods. Food For Thought's programs remove the barriers to access, providing our clients with fresh produce from local farms and our organic garden all free of charge. This would not be possible without the generous support of our donors, volunteers, and sponsors.

As we celebrate 35 years of service, we extend deep appreciation to you, our supporters. Your sustained generosity provides lifesaving nutrition interventions and a pathway for greater impact in our communities.

With gratitude,

Ron Karp, Executive Director

Heart of Sonoma County™ 4th Annual Awards

2024 AWARD WINNER

Achievement in Nonprofit Excellence

FOR YOUR KITCHEN

Cabbage Slaw

Ingredients

- 1 small head of Napa or cabbage of your choice, shredded
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced

FOR THE DRESSING:

- ¼ cup unseasoned rice vinegar *(Note: if you have seasoned rice vinegar, omit the honey)*
- 1 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil or olive oil
- 1 tbsp water
- 2 tsp minced fresh ginger
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes, jalapeño, or serrano chili, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions

To make the dressing, combine all the dressing ingredients in a small bowl. Dip a piece of cabbage into the dressing and taste, adjusting seasoning as needed. In a large bowl, toss the dressing with the cabbage and green onion, and serve.

National Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Month

Did you know filling your plate with foods grown in the ground may be the best diet for cancer prevention? Eating lots of fruits and vegetables can reduce your cancer risk, which is why the American Cancer Society recommends eating a variety every day. According to the Mayo Clinic, aim to eat these amounts to feel full and get the necessary nutrients:

FRUITS

1.5 to 2.5 cups per day

VEGETABLES

2.5 to 4 cups per day

WHOLE GRAINS

3 to 5 ounces per day

LEGUMES

1.5 cups per week

PROTEIN

5 to 7 ounces per day

FATS

3 to 5 servings per day

Why I Give

BY MARK SHORT

Looking back on your life, what has given you the greatest satisfaction? For me, it's knowing I made a difference in someone else's life.

When I grew up on a farm in Iowa and a neighboring farm family suffered a tragedy, the natural impulse was to help. Sometimes it meant harvesting their Fall crops or helping rebuild a barn destroyed by a tornado. However, the most common effort was to bring food for the family.

My family benefitted from that love and compassion. When our mother died in a farm accident, leaving my father with my six younger siblings (I was 18 and at college), meals were delivered every day for weeks by caring neighbors. That instinctive drive helps build community, even if we don't know the recipient. However, the biggest personal impact is knowing we made a difference.

That's why I donate to Food For Thought. I only know a few of the clients who receive healthy groceries and meals. But I know all Food For Thought clients are facing health challenges and don't have healthy groceries or meals (primarily due to low income) that will provide the nourishment they need to recover.

Because I volunteer on Food For Thought's Finance Committee, and have been a FFT Board member and Treasurer, I know the money I donate is used efficiently to make the biggest impact possible. And because they leverage the work of hundreds of volunteers, the operations and deliveries run economically and smoothly.

I get great satisfaction from donating every month and giving bigger gifts when I am able. Food For Thought helps me make a difference and my life is better because I donate.

Mark Short
Food For Thought Donor, Volunteer, Former Board Member

Ways to Give

Donate Online

Every online donation helps us to grow and to swiftly allocate resources to those in need.

Give Every Month

Our GEMs create a reliable foundation, playing a critical role in our sustainability.

Major Gifts

One-time, single donations of $1,000 or more are a vital source of revenue for FFT.

Double Your Donation

Did you know you may be able to double your impact? Many companies match charitable contributions made by their employees.

Volunteer

Since our founding in 1988, volunteers have been crucial to our organization. Take a hands-on role in our work by donating your time.

If you have questions about any of the ways to give, please contact
John Liang, Development Director, at JohnL@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 102.

Happy Hour at Russian River Vineyards

Wednesday, July 31, 2024
5:00–7:30 pm

5700 CA-116
Forestville, CA 95436

Enjoy live music by 3 Acre Holler, Russian River Vineyards wine, tasty bites, a fantastic raffle, and more. A portion of proceeds will benefit Food For Thought.