



**Food For Thought**  
healing with food+love

# THE DISH

SUMMER 2025

WE SERVE  
**SONOMA  
COUNTY**

## Marsha's Story: Nourished by Love

My older sister Marsha was a beneficiary of Food For Thought. Their support came at a time when our family needed it most. They provided more than just nutrition—they gave us comfort, dignity, and compassion during one of the hardest chapters of our lives.

Marsha and I were born 21 months apart. Marsha was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, a brittle bone condition. She was a sheltered child but despite her physical limitations, she blossomed into a strong-willed independent woman with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Marsha was passionate about helping others find love and ran a successful matchmaking business. She took care to interview every candidate, and her clients enjoyed having long conversations with her. She married over 200 couples!

When I was 25, I moved to California. Marsha followed a year later, wanting to get away from the ice (Michigan winters are abominable for someone who's always worried about falling). With our family still in Michigan, I felt responsible for her, though she wouldn't want me to say that.

In June of 2020, Marsha fell and broke several bones. She spent 2 ½ years at a nursing facility. With no income and all her hard-earned savings paying for the skilled nursing facility, she almost lost her apartment. My husband and I helped her through the eviction process and were able to get her back in her apartment.

Marsha had many food allergies and preferences. We tried different food programs but none were tailored to her diet, so she'd give the food away. She was miserable. I constantly made phone calls trying to find nutritional resources. Finally, an angel at Partnership HealthPlan of California referred me to Food For Thought.

We started receiving "food with love"—just like the beautiful motto. Even though Marsha was in Marin County, Food For Thought lovingly agreed to deliver groceries to me in West Sonoma County. I would cook healthy meals using the variety of fresh produce and



*Me (left) and Marsha (right).*

deliver them to her weekly, along with pantry and freezer staples. The phone and delivery drivers were all aware of this effort and helped me immensely with their kindness. It was a wonderful three months!

The thing I loved most about Food For Thought was the connection. It was lonely caring for her at times, but Food For Thought made me feel like I wasn't alone. I'd call and talk to Carlos, who always asked me, "How is Marsha this week?" That is the specialness of this place. It took a load off to know there was someone else, besides me and my husband, thinking about her.

Marsha's condition went downhill after that, but while we were receiving Food For Thought's services, I was happy. One of my better memories is Carlos' voice over the phone as he patiently guided me in helping her.

Marsha passed away in March 2025. There aren't any recent photos of Marsha and me, but I love this one of us when we were kids—because this just might be us as our truest selves.

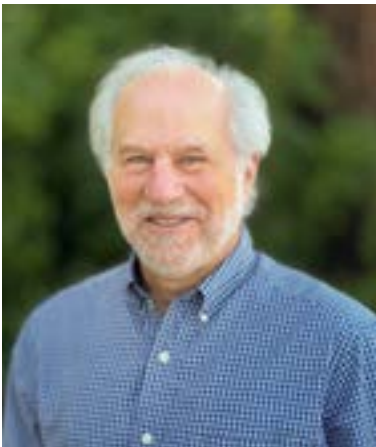
## From Our Executive Director

Dear FFT supporters and friends,

In early July, legislation was passed that will drastically reduce funding and change eligibility requirements to Medicaid and Medi-Cal, which will leave millions of people without health coverage. The legislation also includes major cuts to food assistance programs—\$267 billion over ten years to the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (food stamps). This is the largest cut to SNAP in history.

This news is especially troubling for families and individuals with disabilities in our community who are already facing health and financial challenges. With cuts to health programs looming, we face a stark reality: many of the families who rely on our programs may soon lose access to support that is vital to their recovery—and their ability to care for their families.

At Food For Thought, we believe no one should have to choose between medical treatment and feeding their family. Our clients are parents, caregivers, and neighbors who are fighting to stay strong for their loved ones. Right now, they need our help more than ever.



We're asking you to stand with us in support of these families. Your gift today will help us continue delivering healthy food and compassionate care to those who are most vulnerable.

Together, we can ensure that every family in our community has the nutrition they need to heal, thrive, and stay connected.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Karp".

Ron Karp, Executive Director



## In Memory of Nancy Tello

JUNE 10, 1940 – JUNE 5, 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of our longtime friend and volunteer, Nancy Tello. She was a cherished member of the FFT family for over 20 years.

She had a fierce loyalty to and love of the food bank, its clients, staff, and fellow volunteers. She led with genuine openness, a sense of humor, and a steadfast nature. Nancy started her journey as an AIDS caregiver in the early '80s. Amid that loss, she and her sister of choice, Randi Francis, saw the need for home-baked love. They began baking hundreds of cookies as the "Sisters of Perpetual Cookies" (she was sister Cocoa Nut!), a tradition which volunteer bakers still continue at the holidays for our clients. Nancy was a gourd artist, teaching classes and tabling a booth with her gourd collection each year at Food For Thought's fundraiser, Calabash. She was most proud of her role as Saturday crew leader, mentoring youth volunteers and mentoring us all through her wisdom and experience. Her favorite role was as "Ambassador" as she loved giving tours and showing off the food bank to others. Nancy died peacefully at home, surrounded by friends.

While we grieve her loss, we celebrate her amazing spirit. "Go easy," as Nancy always said.

A celebration of Nancy's life will be held on Sunday August 17, at 11:30am at the gazebo in Ragle Ranch Regional Park, 500 Ragle Rd, Sebastopol. Bring a park pass or \$8 parking fee, and potluck item to share after the tribute.





## IN-KIND DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### Mark Short and Carl Ray

When it comes to commitment, generosity, and heart, Mark Short sets the bar high. A longtime champion of Food For Thought, Mark has supported our mission in just about every way imaginable—from serving on our board and various committees to fundraising and hosting events. But one of the most remarkable ways Mark shows up for our clients is through the food he and his husband, Carl Ray, lovingly grow and donate.

Their two-acre property, Breezy Lane Orchard, affectionately named after Carl's father's farm in Missouri, is a small but mighty hub of nourishment. Mark currently cares for 39 hens and 17 pullets, tracking breeds, egg color, and quantity in a meticulous spreadsheet. Each Monday, he washes and packs the farm fresh eggs, thoughtfully arranging a colorful variety in every carton, before delivering them to Food For Thought to be distributed throughout the week. "I want the people receiving the eggs to open the carton and feel joy," says Mark. "That's what I hope to give them."

Mark's steady egg donations have been especially meaningful in recent years (his flock generated 562 dozen eggs for FFT last year!), helping us get through multiple egg shortages when store shelves were empty

and prices were high. His reliability and generosity ensure our clients continue to receive weekly fresh, local protein.

While Mark cares for the hens, Carl tends the garden. In addition to maintaining a diverse collection of fruit trees—many rare local varieties developed by Luther Burbank—he cultivates an impressive production garden. This year alone, he planted 140 broccoli plants for our food program. In past seasons, his efforts yielded over 300 pounds of green beans!

Mark and Carl's in-kind contributions make a tangible difference in our ability to nourish the community. Week after week, their homegrown eggs and produce supplement the food we provide to clients—fresh, high-quality items that would otherwise be difficult to source or afford. Their generosity is given with care and consistency, and we are truly grateful.

If you have a backyard garden or a few hens of your own, consider planting or raising a little extra to donate. Every carton of eggs or basket of produce helps feed someone in need—and just like Mark and Carl, you too can make a real difference, one harvest at a time.

## Ways to Give

**There are many ways to support our mission. Visit our website for all the ways to give.**

*If you have questions about giving, please contact us at [donations@FFTfoodbank.org](mailto:donations@FFTfoodbank.org)*



**Donate Online**



**Volunteer**



**More Ways to Give**





FOR YOUR KITCHEN

# Carrot Dill Salad

### Ingredients

- 1 lb carrots, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
- ¼ medium onion, finely diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp white wine vinegar
- ½ tsp dried dill or 1 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### Instructions

In a saucepan, bring a few cups of water to boil. Place a vegetable steaming rack in the pan and add the carrots. Steam the carrots until they are tender enough to eat, but not mushy.

Drain the carrots and toss with olive oil, vinegar, onion, and dried dill, if using. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Chill for at least 2 hours. If using fresh dill, add once the carrots are cooled.



## Our *Long Table*

On June 8, community supporters, volunteers, clients, and staff gathered at Vine Hill House for *Our Long Table*. The delightful evening was filled with fabulous wine, delicious food, music and a lively raffle, auction, and paddle raise. **Food For Thought's annual gala and corresponding online auction raised over \$260,000 in crucially needed funds.** Thank you to everyone who contributed to this vital fundraiser.





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**SONOMA COUNTY**



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