



Food For Thought  
healing with food+love

# THE DISH

AUTUMN 2025

WE SERVE  
SONOMA  
COUNTY

## Celebrating Our Community

At Food For Thought, we often say that our work is only possible because of the incredible community that surrounds us. Every meal we prepare, every grocery bag we pack, and every client we serve reflects the compassion and collaboration of our partners, donors, and volunteers.

This issue of The Dish celebrates the partnerships that make our mission come alive. Each partnership plays a vital role in ensuring that our clients receive the nutritious food and care they need—whether it's the corporate sponsors who invest in our work, the local restaurants and ambassadors who make *Dining Out For Life* a beloved annual event, the in-kind donors who keep our shelves full, or volunteers like Kathy Dennison, whose kindness and generosity leaves a lasting mark on our community.

Our partners remind us that community is not just who we live with—it's how we take care of one another. Together, we are creating a healthier, more compassionate Sonoma County.



As you read these stories of generosity and connection, I invite you to consider making a gift to Food For Thought. Your support helps us continue providing medically tailored meals and groceries to our neighbors who are critically ill or nutrition insecure.

Thank you for being an essential part of this community of care.

With gratitude,

Ron Karp, Executive Director



### SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

## Sonoma Clean Power

Sonoma Clean Power, the public electricity provider, is more than a source of clean energy—they're a committed community partner. Now in their fifth year of sponsorship, their ongoing support of Food For Thought facilitates our mission to provide life-sustaining nutrition to our neighbors in need.

This year, Sonoma Clean Power played a vital role in helping our operations become more sustainable by providing a rebate when purchasing our new electric delivery van, made possible through our 2023 *Our Long Table* Fund-a-Need. Our new EV now serves as an emissions free workhorse transporting food donations from locations throughout Sonoma County. They also provided the EV charging station in front of our building,

ensuring we can recharge locally and reliably.

Sonoma Clean Power's team is also deeply engaged as volunteers. Their staff regularly roll up their sleeves to lend a hand at a food drive or in the garden, gathering food that goes directly to our clients. Their consistent presence reinforces Sonoma Clean Power's ethos of community investment, not just financially, but through hands-on involvement.

As we look ahead, Food For Thought is grateful to count Sonoma Clean Power not just as a sponsor, but as a true partner in nourishing health, equity, and sustainability in Sonoma County—because caring for others also means caring for the environment we all live in!





IN-KIND DONOR SPOTLIGHT

## West County Community Farm

This month, we’re delighted to spotlight West County Community Farm in Sebastopol for their generous and consistent support of Food For Thought. Farmers Kayta and David Plescica run their small-scale farm with a focus on responsible land stewardship and strong community connection.

Situated along the Laguna de Santa Rosa, the farm employs regenerative practices that nurture soil health and biodiversity. Their popular CSA offers weekly shares of seasonal vegetables and an exciting U-pick operation that invites members to connect with the land while harvesting from rows of vibrant flowers, a massive strawberry patch, and an extensive herb garden.

Throughout their growing season, the farm generously donates a bountiful array of produce to our food program each week—sweet carrots, crisp greens, hearty beets, and other seasonal staples—helping Food For Thought deliver to our clients’ tables the same freshness and quality enjoyed by CSA members.

We are deeply grateful to Kayta and David for their generosity and partnership. Their work strengthens both our local food system and the community we serve.

Interested in joining their CSA? Spots are limited! Visit [www.westcountycommunityfarm.com](http://www.westcountycommunityfarm.com) to sign up for their mailing list and stay informed about openings.



FOR YOUR KITCHEN

## Miso Eggplant

*Recipe by Stephanie Kuo, Operations Director*

Ingredients

- 4 small eggplant, like Japanese or Chinese eggplant
- 4 tbsp vegetable, avocado, or other neutral oil
- ½ cup white or red miso paste
- 4 tbsp mirin
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp sake, Chinese cooking wine, or cooking sherry
- Green onion, thinly sliced, for garnish
- Sesame seeds, for garnish (optional)

Instructions

Set your oven to broil on high.

Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise, and score the inside in small squares/crosshatch with a paring knife. Don’t cut through the skin.

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Place the eggplant in the oil, skin side down. Cook for a few minutes until the skin is brown. Flip over and cover with a lid. Cook until the eggplant is cooked through and the cut side is golden brown, about 3–4 minutes. Remove the eggplant and place skin side down on a foil-lined baking sheet. Set aside.

Meanwhile, make the miso glaze. In a bowl, whisk together the miso paste, mirin, sugar, and sake until the miso paste is not lumpy and ingredients are well mixed. Brush the glaze evenly on top of each eggplant until the surface is coated.

Broil the glazed eggplant for about 4 minutes, watching carefully to not burn the miso mix. It should be bubbling and have a few dark spots, but not turn black.

Garnish with green onion and sesame seeds (optional), and serve.



# How a Table Tent Changed My Life

BY MICHELLE GLEED

I first heard about Food For Thought at a restaurant. My husband and I had stopped for lunch after some post-Thanksgiving shopping when I noticed a small table tent promoting *Dining Out For Life*, a one-day event happening the following Thursday.

The restaurant would be donating a generous percentage of its sales to Food For Thought and was inviting diners to come back to support the cause. I remember thinking, *What a fun, easy way to make a difference—and I don’t have to cook next Thursday night!*

That was years ago, and *Dining Out For Life* has become one of our favorite holiday traditions. Each November, we look through the Dining Guide to decide where to go. Some years we’ve gathered with friends; other times we’ve ordered takeout. I remember waiting in a socially distanced line during the pandemic, surrounded by people who—like me—wanted to show up for our community. Most years, we dine out because it’s delightful to share a meal knowing everyone around you is there for the same reason: to enjoy good food while supporting a local business *and* a local nonprofit.



Patrons observe a Dining Out For Life table tent at Russian River Brewing Company in Santa Rosa.



Terrapin Creek in Bodega Bay serves up impeccable dishes at a past Dining Out For Life event.

At nearly every restaurant, a friendly Food For Thought volunteer ambassador would stop by our table. We’d enter the free drawing, make a small donation, and chat about volunteering. While we never won a prize, I eventually did something even better—I became a volunteer myself. Then last year, in a wonderful twist of fate, I joined the Food For Thought team as Events Manager.

Now, I have the joy of collaborating with our *Dining Out For Life* partners, restaurants, volunteers, and supporters. What strikes me most is the kindness and generosity of Sonoma County’s restaurant community.

This year, more than 60 local restaurants will participate—including over a dozen first time partners—

ranging from cozy coffee shops and cafes to beloved casual and fine dining spots. Amazingly, about a third of our restaurant partners have supported *Dining Out For Life* for more than a decade, some for over twenty years! Their loyalty and generosity make this event possible, and for that, everyone at Food For Thought is deeply grateful.

So mark your calendar, check out the Dining Guide ([FFTfoodbank.org/DOFL](https://fftfoodbank.org/DOFL)), and join us for Food For Thought’s **24th annual Dining Out For Life on Thursday, December 4, 2025**. Dine out, take out, or grab a coffee—it all helps nourish our neighbors and build a stronger, healthier community.

## 20+ YEARS AS DOFL PARTNER

Martha’s Old Mexico – Sebastopol  
Sushi Tozai – Sebastopol

## 15+ YEARS AS DOFL PARTNER

Russian River Brewing Company – Santa Rosa  
Mac’s Deli & Cafe – Santa Rosa  
Rocker’s Roadhouse – Valley Ford  
Russian River Vineyards – Forestville  
Central Market – Petaluma  
Sunshine Coffee Roasters – Forestville & Sebastopol  
The Lodge at Dawn Ranch – Guerneville  
Umé Japanese Bistro – Windsor  
The Spinster Sisters – Santa Rosa

## 10+ YEARS AS DOFL PARTNER

Canneti Roadhouse Italiana – Forestville  
Baci Cafe & Wine Bar – Healdsburg  
O & C China Bistro – Sebastopol  
Sazón Peruvian Cuisine – Santa Rosa  
Terrapin Creek – Bodega Bay  
Spoonbar – Healdsburg  
Hole in the Wall – Sebastopol  
Handline – Sebastopol



**Community spirit shines at Baci Cafe & Wine Bar in Healdsburg**, where owner Lisbeth Holmefjord has supported FFT for over a decade through *Dining Out For Life*, donating 50% of the day’s sales. Volunteer Ambassador Drea White (center, above), a former Baci employee, connects with guests throughout the evening, inspiring individual contributions.

Drea’s current employer, Jackson Family Wines, supports her efforts and contributes to the prize drawing, boosting the event’s success. Together they make a powerful team and generous Food For Thought partners—last year more than \$9,000 was raised at Baci in a single night!

Big thanks to Drea and all volunteer Ambassadors who raise vital funds to Food For Thought.





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Honoring the Legacy of Kathy Dennison

Food For Thought was built on the kindness and dedication of volunteers—and few embody that spirit more than Kathy Dennison, our very first volunteer, whose recent passing has touched so many.

Kathy and her husband, John Dennison, began volunteering in 1989, when Food For Thought was just getting started. From those earliest days, Kathy brought her warmth, dependability, and remarkable work ethic to every corner of our organization. Whether opening the food bank on Sundays to lead food drive donation inventory, or spending Tuesday mornings calling clients to take their grocery orders for home delivery, Kathy’s presence was a constant source of steadiness and care.

Her impact extended far beyond her volunteer shifts. Kathy played a key role in strengthening FFT’s infrastructure and was always ready to roll up her sleeves to pitch in wherever needed. She even co-wrote our Volunteer Program Manual in 1996—a testament

to her deep understanding of, and commitment to, the people and processes that make FFT thrive.

Kathy was named Volunteer of the Year in both 1990 and 1999, honors that reflected her unwavering commitment to serving others. In 2009, to celebrate Kathy and John’s twenty years of service, FFT created the Dennison Award—a tribute that continues to recognize volunteers who demonstrate the same long-term devotion and heart that Kathy embodied.

Kathy’s legacy lives on in every act of kindness shared through Food For Thought—in meals provided, smiles exchanged, and every volunteer who shows up with the same spirit of compassion she modeled for decades.

We are deeply grateful to Kathy and the Dennison family for helping lay the foundation of care that continues to guide Food For Thought today.

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

Food For Thought is a 501(c)3 organization. Our EIN number is 68-0181095

DINING OUT FOR LIFE



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4



Thanks to our generous sponsors:



SERVING SONOMA COUNTY FOR OVER 35 YEARS.

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