

“The idea was to bring our services directly to people who have health conditions.”

- Rich
Food Bank employee



Rich (right) poses with Aaron, who receives food from the Mobile Food Pharmacy.

HOW YOU'RE TAKING HEALTH ON THE ROAD

Aaron didn't grow up eating a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables. But since being diagnosed with diabetes in retirement, he's approached a plant-based diet with the same enthusiasm he has for the Bay Area sports teams whose logos and championship dates adorn his van.



Fresh produce now makes up the majority of his diet, and **it's made a difference he can feel**. That's why he appreciates the

fruits and vegetables you provide him every week through our Mobile Food Pharmacy in Vacaville.

“I'm actually a few years past where I thought I was going to be,” he shares. “Because I've been sick like this for a while now. **It's a blessing that I'm still here and I think it has something to do with produce.**”

Each weekday, the Mobile Food Pharmacy stops at a different Family Health Services clinic in Solano County to offer fresh produce

Aaron's story continues on page 4 →



Caitlin Sly hands out produce at a Community Produce Program in Fairfield

CEO Message

One of my favorite things about this time of year in the Bay Area is the incredible variety of seasonal produce. And I'm so proud to share that, because of you, our neighbors facing hunger are also enjoying even more fresh, nutritious California-grown fruits and vegetables this summer.

This year, **65% of the food you help provide to our community is fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products and proteins.** That's a five percent increase from last year. And these fresh foods aren't just good to eat — they are preventative medicine.

Research has shown that people who are food insecure, often have to rely on low-cost foods with low nutritional value, which increases the likelihood that they will develop chronic conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes. Making fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods accessible to all is the first

step in breaking this cycle of poor diet and poor health.

The Food Bank has been a leader in this work for nearly 50 years — and it's near and dear to my heart as well. As you may know, I previously worked at the Food Bank helping to create many of the nutrition programs that continue to support our neighbors today. And since returning as President and CEO this spring, I've been heartened to see that **improving our neighbors' health is now a central pillar of our strategic plan.**

We continue to face the challenges of declining private support, high food costs, the end of pandemic-era government grants and likely cuts to state and federal programs that provide food benefits and support food banks. But, **steadfast supporters like you have made it possible for us to continue to provide fresh produce and nutritious food to all who need it.** Thank you for helping us provide seniors, children and neighbors of all ages with the food they need to manage and maintain their health.

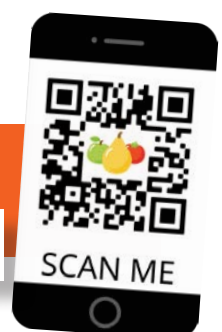
In this newsletter, you'll read about the partnerships you've supported, and the healthy successes you've already made possible. I hope these stories inspire you, the way they have inspired me. Together, we are getting more healthy food directly to those who need it, and I don't think there is a more rewarding feeling than that.



Caitlin Sly
President and CEO

SEE YOUR IMPACT

foodbankccs.org/impact





You Keep Us Fresh!

65%

**OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED IS VEGGIES,
FRUITS, PROTEINS
AND DAIRY**

**IMPROVING OUR NEIGHBORS'
LONG-TERM HEALTH OUTCOMES**

Improving long-term health outcomes is a key pillar of our three-year strategic plan. And thanks to supporters like you, we're offering even more fresh, nutritious foods to our neighbors!

Fresh vegetables, fruits, proteins and dairy products now account for 65% of the food we distribute! To celebrate this achievement, we asked our volunteers to show off some of the amazing fresh produce you've provided in recent months.



Continued from the front cover.

to community members like Aaron. And, thanks to an ongoing partnership with Solano County Health and Social Services Department and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, clinic patients can also receive a “food prescription” from their doctor or dentist. **Each prescription provides nearly 20 additional pounds of healthy staple foods!**

“The idea was **to bring our services directly to people who have health conditions** that could benefit that much more from these whole foods,” says Rich Oliver, our Mobile Food Pharmacy coordinator.

Like many of our programs, the need for these healthy foods has only grown. At many of his sites, Rich says he’s seen the number of visitors double over in the last two years, as high inflation made healthy groceries too expensive for many of our neighbors.

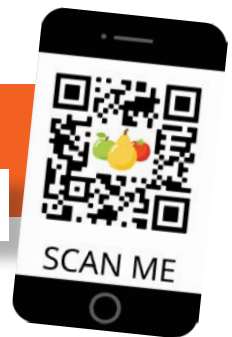
As a senior on a fixed income, Aaron faces that same challenge. “Produce costs a lot and my food stamps don’t buy enough to make it through the month,” he says. Coming to the Mobile Food Pharmacy means he can stick to his diet, instead of relying on less expensive foods that make him feel sick for the last few weeks of the month.

And, thanks to cooking suggestions from our Food Pharmacy volunteers, he’s also gained a new appreciation for how vegetables taste, too.

“I’ve figured out some ingenious ways to make salads,” he says. “And greens. I love greens.”

DONATE TODAY

foodbankccs.org/table





Volunteers give out healthy food at a Mobile Food Pharmacy distribution in Vacaville

What is Food is Medicine?

Our Mobile Food Pharmacy is just one of the ways you are supporting a Food Is Medicine approach to fighting hunger. But what does "Food is Medicine" mean?

As the U.S. Department of Health explains it: Food is Medicine recognizes that access to high-quality nourishment is essential for well-being. Eating the right foods can prevent, manage and even reverse conditions like heart disease, stroke, obesity, type 2 diabetes and more. And while eating healthily benefits all of us, Food is Medicine goes a step further – prescribing dietary plans that utilize healthy, whole foods to treat disease.

Your support allows us to invest in foods that not only meet our neighbors' needs today, but can make a positive impact long-term.

Here are more ways your support is improving our neighbors' health outcomes:

Extra Helpings: Patients referred to this program by the Contra Costa County Health Department receive supplemental food and fresh produce twice a month.

Senior Food Program: Foods are chosen to help manage a range of health conditions reported by our senior neighbors.

Farm 2 Kids: Children receive fresh produce to enjoy at their after-school programs.





Supporter Spotlight: Berkeley Lab

Four years ago during the pandemic, Trent Northen, a senior scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, started a Berkeley Lab virtual food drive with the help of many of his colleagues. It took off – and to date, **the lab's annual Winter Food Bank Challenge has provided more than 450,000 meals to neighbors in need** across Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

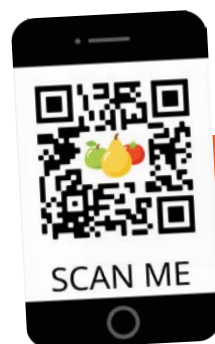
The Winter Food Bank Challenge is just one of the ways Berkeley Lab is making a difference for neighbors facing hunger. Additional corporate and staff donations have provided meals for our neighbors throughout the year. And staff members also come together to volunteer – ensuring the food they've helped provide is sorted, packed and distributed to those who need it. Together, they have served over 280 volunteer hours.

"Supporting the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano through volunteerism and donations is

incredibly meaningful to the Berkeley Lab community, because **it provides a tangible way for our employees to help combat hunger** in the Bay Area," shares Jenn Tang, the lab's Director for Community Relations. "We've heard from many of our volunteers and donors that **they feel good about the positive impact their efforts have** in helping to ensure that everyone in the community has access to healthy, nutritious food."



Thank you to Berkeley Lab for making a difference in our community in so many ways!



START YOUR DRIVE
foodbankccs.org/VirtualFoodDrive



Rainbow Fried Rice

INGREDIENTS

Serves 2

3 cups of refrigerated cooked brown, white or jasmine rice

Tip: *Rice should be cooked with a 1/3 less water than normal to ensure it is not too sticky.*

1 cup of mixed frozen peas, diced carrots and sweet corn

½ cup diced mushrooms

½ cup diced firm tofu

1 tsp sesame oil

1 tbsp avocado oil

1 tbsp coconut aminos or soy sauce

2 cloves of minced garlic

1/2 cup finely chopped green onion

This recipe was submitted by Sophie, a Contra Costa County high school student, and her mother Dr. Chen. They have made it their mission to show others that healthy food can be delicious, too. Together, they've created Plate For Health, a cookbook filled with healthier alternatives for comfort foods. **"The great thing about fried rice is I simply use a variety of whatever vegetables are sitting in the fridge,"** says Dr. Chen. While these ingredients are staples in their household, feel free to substitute any of your favorite veggies.

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil over medium-high heat in non-stick skillet or wok for 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Saute mushrooms, tofu and garlic for 3 minutes until the mushrooms are semi-softened.
3. Add in frozen peas, carrots and sweet corn and continue cooking for 2 minutes.
4. Wet your hands and break up your rice so there are no large clumps. Add the rice to your pan and mix together well, breaking up any remaining clumps.
5. Add the coconut aminos or soy sauce and the sesame oil. Mix well and continue to mix as you cook for another 3 minutes.
6. Add in the chopped green onions and serve.



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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

AN EDUCATION IN VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering at the Food Bank does more than help our neighbors – it’s a great way to connect with the community and learn valuable lessons. That’s why the Speckman family has been helping to distribute food twice a month for the past eight years in North Richmond. Mom Lettie found volunteering so beneficial that she made it part of her children’s homeschool program!

Volunteering at food distributions provides many lessons for her kids, Orinthia, Clara and Thomas. They’ve been able to improve their Spanish, learn more about food and get more confident interacting with their community. **“In the beginning I volunteered because mom said so,” says Orinthia. “Now I like to contribute to the community and interact with people. I’ve learned a lot over the years.”**



Want to connect with your community too? Plan a “volunteering staycation” with your friends or family this summer! You’ll make a difference in our neighbors’ lives – and yours, too. Children ages 11 to 15 can volunteer with an adult present, while those 16 and older can volunteer solo.

Visit volunteer.foodbankccs.org to register and find times that fit your schedule.

AT-THE-TABLE

What’s inside

- What is Food is Medicine?
- Berkeley Lab spotlight and an easy way to give back.
- A message from the Food Bank's new President and CEO, Caitlin Sly.