

food matters

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Season's Eatings from the SF Food Bank

What do you remember about your holiday meals? The warmth and bustle of the kitchen? The scent of turkey roasting in the oven as the whole family gathers around the table? Here at the SF Food Bank, we hope to provide the stuff of these memories for families throughout San Francisco and Marin County by supplying the essence of a holiday celebration: food.

Every winter, we see demand for food assistance spike as much as 30% as struggling families try to make their holidays special. This year, the Food Bank will provide over 34,000 households with everything they need to make that special holiday meal: a whole chicken, fresh fruits and vegetables, cranberry sauce, stuffing, rice, gravy, juice and a dessert.

Holiday Togetherness

The need to have some respite during the holidays is especially critical in this challenging year. Jobs remain scarce and benefits are drying up for thousands of families, but the need to stay connected as a family never goes away.

Gloria, who is profiled in this issue of *Food Matters*, is among them. For her family, she emphasizes the importance of eating all together: "It's the main point of the morning and the evening," she says. "You need to make time to connect, to find out what's going on in each other's lives. Fixing meals – that's something we all do together." And she's looking forward to the sense of togetherness and belonging that Thanksgiving brings. "Last year, from the pantry, we got all the fixings. So I made sweet potatoes and chicken. And we also got dressing, so I made a salad, too. My son fixed up the rest, like the jell-o for dessert."

Gloria is a grandmother caring for two grandchildren, and she scrimps throughout the year to keep the family afloat.

(Season's Eatings continues on page 2)



FIRST PERSON SINGULAR:

"It takes a lot out of you to be a grandma!"

Gloria visits a Food Bank pantry in the Fillmore, where she lives with her son and two of her grandchildren. In a recent conversation, she reflected on her role in holding her family together:

I try to be supportive of my family. My son, well – he's got baby mama drama. So he's living here with me, and we've got his two children (my grandchildren) here, too. He works for the apartment building taking the garbage out, doing maintenance and that kind of thing. He gets about \$400/month. That's just enough to keep us going along with my money, which is \$845. Sometimes a little goes a long way. We don't get to have all those special things in life, but we're together.



And my daughter's going through a divorce now. She went to school to be a nurse, but she still hasn't gotten a job because it takes a year for the internship. And with the children and everything, it's a little hard for her. So I'm helping her out with the food and stuff like that.

Then, you got to try to keep the neighborhood safe and that's

(First Person Singular continues on page 3)

- inside**
- 1 Season's Eatings from the Food Bank
 - 2 First Person Singular
 - 2 Share and Share Alike.
 - 4 Food Matters—Partners Matter
 - 4 Couscous Salad - A Simply Healthy Recipe
 - 5 Corporate Sponsors
 - 5 Holiday Food and Fund Drives





BIG Acts of Kindness

Holiday celebrations, no matter your faith, often involve many small acts of kindness. Sometimes we are kinder to strangers (although I really haven't noticed drivers around town being more courteous!) but most often we make an extra effort toward our families, neighbors, and friends.

This holiday season we need BIG acts of kindness. BIG acts whose outcome can relieve the frustration, pain and discouragement of being unemployed and poor in an expensive place like the Bay Area. We are heading into a third holiday season with record numbers of San Franciscans and Californians without a job - our state's unemployment rate remains in the double digits. Many more are still working, but have had their hours cut back or can't find enough part-time work to make ends meet.

Every one of us can deliver a BIG act of kindness. Start by looking around. Is there an organization doing good things in your own neighborhood whose work you've noticed? If so, find out how you can help. Engage your family and friends. If the holidays are too hectic, understand that doing something in January or March can be even more important than



Providing FOOD is the perfect way to deliver a BIG act of kindness.

during the holidays, because the need doesn't end when the New Year rolls in.

Providing FOOD is a perfect way to deliver a BIG act of kindness. This year to date, we've increased our food distribution by close to half a million pounds. This BIG increase represents the kindness of donors like you who have found ways to increase their giving despite the economic downturn. And while donations of items like cereal and canned foods have slowed considerably, our contributors have increased their donations so we can make key purchases and continue to provide a variety of foods to our clients. You all have stepped up in a BIG way to support the Food Bank with more money and more time. Last year 22,000 people volunteered at our warehouse! We couldn't do our work without such BIG acts of kindness from our community.

Maybe the most extraordinary thing about BIG acts of kindness is that when you share one, you are helping someone you don't even know. And that says a lot about you.

Paul Ash
Paul Ash, Executive Director



(Season's Eatings continued from page 1)

"I eat lunch at the church on Wednesdays and Thursdays," she said. "Because then, those are meals I'm not taking away from my grandkids. You got to make sure there's always enough food around."

Ann Moberg, director of City Crossroads, our featured SF Food Bank partner, embodies the energy and compassion that the holidays bring about in us all. Since 2001, Ann has been putting on a Thanksgiving dinner for the children and families she serves, and preparations for this year's event are well underway.

Ann is an old hand at "shopping" at the Food Bank, and she relies on us to have the basics for the nightly meals she serves. She is confident that as the big day nears,

she can depend on the Food Bank to have everything she needs to put on a beautiful meal: turkey, fresh produce, cranberries, gravy, and stuffing.

Hot meals and holiday groceries for all

The holiday spirit will be in full force at over 400 nonprofit organizations that run neighborhood pantries and provide meals year-round with food from the Food Bank. In addition to our special holiday distributions, the SF Food Bank will provide over 2,000 turkeys and fixings to hot meal programs throughout San Francisco and Marin. Please join us as we work to meet this most basic of needs and good holiday memories in this most difficult of times.

*(for more on City Crossroads, see pp. 3-4)
(to read Gloria's story, see p. 1)*

(It Takes a Lot continued from page 1)

another thing. I had to fight for my children not to be in the gangs. We went through that, and now it's a whole new crew of guys coming up. So I got to keep an eye on my grandchildren, too. And they always say, "oh that's that nosy old lady over there." It's a steady fight.

We are blessed to have a food bank that helps us out so much. When I get home from the pantry, I'm really, really happy. All those vegetables! And the bread! The bread is really important to us because decent bread is like \$2.99 a loaf, and I can get whole grain bread from the Food Bank. Sometimes we get a little meat. And it all stretches.

I mean, it's all about stretching your money! My mom grew up in the country, so she taught me to find all kinds of herbs and greens right here in the area. Like bay leaves. So I'll go to the park or to a few trees I know on Fulton street and gather those. I got a fish tank off the street and I started a little herb garden in that. I'm proud, but not too proud. You got to make do with what's around you.

But sometimes, it just seems like I'm so tired. And you just have to keep things together. That's why I get my butt up and go to the pantry and get food for my family. That's why I'll pick up clothes off the street and clean them off to give to my family. Because that's all I can do. When I share the food with my daughter, she appreciates it so much. I tell her, "You take this so that you can put gas in your car and go to those interviews."

I'm just thankful for the Food Bank. The different yogurts and juices we get - these are things that are out of your budget. The vegetables, and the juices and the milk - that keeps my grandchildren from being sickly, and they're able to go to school. Because we're pretty strict about that: eating properly and going to school. My grandson has a B+ average now! So that's really, really good. And he's in all kinds of groups and activities at school.

It can all be a handful. It takes a lot out of you to be a grandma, but everything just works out. I don't know what else to tell you. You just can't give up.

Food Matters

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Couscous Salad - Simply Healthy

Notes: Couscous is a low-fat complex carbohydrate, meaning it does not produce rapid spikes in blood sugar. It is often referred to as a grain, but is actually pasta. Like grains such as rice, couscous tends to take on the flavor of whatever sauce or other ingredients it is prepared with. Couscous is best steeped in hot water, rather than boiled.



Try making this quick, nutritious salad as a side dish for your holiday meals!

Couscous Salad

Serves 4	Directions
Ingredients	
1 1/2 cups couscous	Place the couscous in a medium bowl.
1 tablespoon butter	Melt the butter in the boiling water and pour over the couscous. Cover tightly and allow the couscous to soak for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
1 1/2 cups boiling water	
2 carrots, diced	
1/2 red onion, diced	
1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded	Add diced carrots, red onion, cheddar cheese, bell pepper and toss with Italian dressing.
1 bell pepper, diced	
5 Tablespoons Italian salad dressing	Serve at room temperature.
Salt and Pepper to taste	

Food Matters—Partners Matter

Meet City Crossroads in SoMa, One of 400+ SF Food Bank Partner Organizations

On Thanksgiving Day, Ann Moberg of City Crossroads expects to serve dinner to at least 125 people. For many neighborhood families living in small SRO* rooms, the simple act of eating together around an actual dining table will make the full turkey dinner even more special.

"Most of the kids we serve live in SROs, or in the affordable housing developments around here. Some of them live in pretty tight quarters," City Crossroads Director Ann Moberg says.

"People see this block, and they see it's rough. But what they don't see is all the families here who are trying to make it in spite of it all!"



Ann prepares dinner for 25 kids on one September evening. "They like that here, not just anyone can walk in off the street. It's a safe space for them to play in."

After dinner, the kids romp around and get ready for a group music class.



Ways To Give

Why get caught up the gift-giving rush? Now is the perfect time to start a holiday gift tradition that also helps people in need.

- Instead of swapping small gifts or stocking stuffers this year, consider asking others to text EAT to 50555 to donate \$10 and provide enough food for 30 meals for hungry neighbors in our community*.
- Does your family or office play secret santa during the holidays? Donate in the name of your recipient and we will send them a greeting card notifying them of their gift, signed by their secret santa.
- Know any Top Chef fans? Our **Chef for a Day** package gives you four hours of one-on-one cooking time with Executive Chef Robert Helstrom of Kuleto's, and a gourmet Italian meal. Visit www.sffoodbank.org/chefday for more information.
- Designate the Food Bank as the recipient of a holiday food and fund drive. Go to [sffoodbank.org/holidaydrive](http://www.sffoodbank.org/holidaydrive) to sign up for an online food and fund drive at your office or in your community.
- Make a **tribute gift** to the Food Bank in the name of a loved one. We will be happy to notify your honoree with a greeting card or email. Visit www.sffoodbank.org/donate to make your gift online.

*\$10 will be added to your mobile phone bill/ deducted from your prepaid account. Message and Data Rates May Apply.

Wheat bread, tofu and cherries, oh my!

With demand for food assistance up by 25% this year, we've had our work cut out for us. But thanks to the continued generosity of our supporters, we've been able to increase the amount of food we send out as more people come out to our pantries. This year, we got an extra boost through the addition of some new and very nutritious foods.



Whole wheat bread

We've fostered a relationship with a local bakery to secure whole wheat bread for our pantry clients. The bakery, which also supplies area grocery stores, bakes over 25,000 loaves of bread specifically for the SF Food Bank each month.



Tofu

"Tofu is a very healthy food. It also gives people a sense of family and familiarity," says John Louie. Louie works for Wo Chong Company, a local Chinatown producer that has provided 7,000 pounds of tofu to the SF Food Bank. Products like tofu are especially meaningful given the diverse population we serve.

Cherries

This past summer, our first ever donation of 25 bins of cherries arrived from a California grower. Typically, the produce that makes its way to food banks through Farm to Family is excess or is slightly irregular in size, shape or color but still edible and nutritious. But the almost 50,000 pounds of cherries were picked right along with the fruit going to supermarkets and were not culls or "seconds."



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Season's Eatings from the Food Bank



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Holiday Food & Fund Drives

Give Food: The Perfect Gift

Feed a family this holiday season! Hold a food and fund drive. Register your company, family or community group today using our online tool!

Details and sign-up at
holidaydrive.sffoodbank.org

Donate non-perishable foods throughout the holidays at the following food drives:

San Francisco Schools Food Drive at over 100 SFUSD schools

November 1 - December 17

Food for Bay Area Families
drive at Whole Foods Markets
A partnership with CBS5
Ongoing throughout the holidays

ABC/Safeway Share your Holiday at
Safeway stores
Ongoing throughout the holidays



SF 49ers
Tackle Hunger at Candlestick Park
Sunday, November 14

Corporate Leaders Lunch
Tuesday, November 9
<http://www.sffoodbank.org/events>



Supermarket Street Sweep
Saturday, December 4
Take part in an exciting bike race to collect food for the Food Bank! To learn more, check out
<http://supermarketstreetsweep.blogspot.com>

Corporate Sponsors

Corporate sponsors partner with the San Francisco Food Bank in ending hunger by making a special donation to the Food Bank's distribution programs. Additionally, corporate sponsors commit to fundraising, contributions and volunteer programs year-round. For more information on corporate sponsorships, please contact Susan Morenstein at smorenstein@sffb.org or (415) 282-1907 x259

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