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Foodbank Steps Up to the Plate for the Holidays

Responding to increased demand for services and cash-strapped budgets of local non-profits, the Foodbank grants \$80,000 to key member-agencies to purchase more food for families in need.

Thousands of working and underemployed families in Santa Barbara County feel the strain of the economy; as such, local non-profits that assist people during tough times have seen both a dramatic increase in demand for their services, while also having their budgets slashed. In response to this crisis, which peaks during the holiday season and cold winter months, the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County has stepped up to the plate and committed to grant \$80,000 from its own budget to key member agencies to empower them to immediately purchase more nutritional food.

The Foodbank provides food in bulk to 264 member non-profits and programs countywide. These member agencies range from large organizations like the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities and Community Action Commission, to small church distributions, domestic violence shelters, in-treatment rehab homes and head start programs for preschoolers. These organizations face increases of up to 35% in the need for their services and now with a combination of the recession and winter months, a lot of people need food assistance.

“We needed to take extra steps to assist those organizations on the front line of emergency food distribution and feeding,” said Foodbank Executive Director, Erik Talkin. “Every day we are searching for new ways of bringing nutritious food into our communities. While we get a lot of food donated generous individuals, local growers and statewide food distributors, we also have to purchase upwards of \$1 million dollars of food annually that cannot be donated.” The Foodbank has tremendous purchasing power—leveraging its relationship with Feeding America, the nation’s largest hunger-relief organization—for every \$1 invested in the Foodbank, it can purchase \$15 worth of food.

The Foodbank has allocated an immediate \$50,000 to 43 key agencies this week to assist them throughout the holidays. Another \$30,000 is committed for January through the Children At Risk program to assist agencies that provide items like eggs, milk and protein to children and expectant mothers.

Captain Phil Smith of the Salvation Army Pantry, a grant recipient, said, “We are very thankful for the food purchasing grant we received—it came at a really good time. The fact that the Foodbank can give key agencies unsolicited funds is huge and speaks to how they support their agencies.” Captain Smith added that this extra money will allow his organization to purchase extra food for the 400 families they serve this holiday season, especially high protein items like whole chickens. He also pointed out that not only would the Salvation Army Pantry benefit, but also the Salvation Army Hospitality House, which got a separate unsolicited grant.

The \$80,000 will come from additional fundraising initiatives the Foodbank has undertaken. Talkin said, “The community has stepped up to support the Foodbank, because they know that in turn we support so many wonderful non-profit agencies. Together we will ensure that holiday hunger is banished and replaced with healthy, nutritious food.”

About the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County:

The Foodbank is the largest hunger-relief organization in the county. Distributing food out of two warehouses, one in Santa Maria and one in Santa Barbara, the Foodbank served 165,000 individuals countywide last year—an increase of more than 40,000 since 2007. The Foodbank distributes to 264 member-agencies and non-profits, which provide a range of human services in addition to providing food assistance. Part of the Feeding America network of 205 food banks nationwide, the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County was recently identified as one of the top 10, putting it in the top 5% of all food banks.

A complete list of non-profit agencies receiving an immediate \$50,000 in food purchasing grants:

South County

Catholic Charities, Carpinteria

Catholic Charities, Isla Vista

Catholic Charities, Santa Barbara

Community Kitchen

Food from the Heart

Grace Lutheran Church Food Distribution

Salvation Army Hospitality House

Salvation Army Pantry

Santa Barbara Community Development Center, Iglesia Bautista El Calvario

Santa Barbara Community Development Center, Free Methodist Church

Santa Barbara Community Development Center, Food for Angels

Mental Health Housing

Santa Barbara Rescue Mission

Unity Shoppe

Word of Life Christian Church

Community Action Commission, Nutritional Program

Pacific Pride

North County

Beatitude House

Buellton Senior Center

Central Coast Rescue Mission

Christian Family Program

Coast Valley Worship Center

Guadalupe Hispanic Foursquare Church

Johnson Temple

Orcutt Presbyterian Church

Santa Maria Foursquare Church

Seventh Day Adventist Church

Vineyard Christian Fellowship

Centro Cristiano Pan de Vida

Pacific Christian Church Metro Kids

Good Samaritan Community Pantry

St. Peter's Martha's Meals Program

Assembly of God Church

Lompoc 4 Square Church

La Purisima Conception Church

Catholic Charities Lompoc

Catholic Charities Santa Maria

People Helping People, Santa Ynez Food Program

People Helping People, Los Alamos Food Program

Salvation Army Pantry

Transitions Mental Health, Gate House / Santa Maria Recovery Learning Community

Transitions Mental Health, Supported Housing

Transitions Mental Health, Lompoc Drop In Center

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