

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

# FOOD SHARE

ventura county

*the  
harvester*

SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER

[WWW.FOODSHARE.COM](http://WWW.FOODSHARE.COM)

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## A note from your CEO

When I last wrote to you at the end of March, we were just beginning to see the impact of COVID-19. At Food Share, we knew that the demand for food was going to increase, but to what extent and for how long was hard to predict. Five months later, and it's clear our worst case estimates were not over-blown. Since April 1, we've distributed in excess of 140,000 disaster relief boxes at more than 130 pop-up, drive-thru pantries, serving more than 500,000 people in our community.

People like Leah, 5, featured on our cover, and pictured right, with her mom, Esmerelda, who've been coming to our Friday distributions in Santa Paula to collect a box of pantry staples like rice, oatmeal and pasta sauce, and a bag of fresh fruit and veggies. "It's really helpful, I use everything in the box, and my kids love the fresh apples," says Esmerelda, who lost her job in March, and has three more children at home.

Leah and Esmerelda are just two of the new faces of food insecurity we're seeing in our county. And though the world is taking its first tentative steps towards reopening, we know that it will be a very long time before we can expect full economic recovery. Food insecurity is now the new normal for roughly 115,000 of our friends and neighbors.

The reality is, there's no short-term fix. We're in this for the long-haul, which is why I'm hoping we can



rely on your sustained support to continue to lead the fight against hunger in Ventura County. Whether it is through donating food, becoming a monthly financial donor, or joining our family of volunteers, on behalf of all of us at Food Share — THANK YOU!



*Monica White*

**Monica White**  
President & CEO

## Since April 1st,

### YOUR SUPPORT HAS HELPED US:



Distribute  
**142,000**  
Disaster  
Food Boxes



Serve Over  
**500,000**  
Individuals



Rally  
**32,000+**  
Volunteer  
Hours

Distribute  
**8.8 MM**  
Pounds  
of Food



Hold **More**  
**than 130**  
Pop-up  
Distributions



Distribute  
**16,000**  
Senior Kits





# We've expanded!

In response to dramatically increased levels of food insecurity, Food Share has expanded its operations through a generous donation of a temporary lease of a 37,000 sq foot warehouse in Oxnard, CA.

The addition of the new space is thanks to Lawrence Joss, owner of Surfaces USA, who has provided the warehouse at no cost while the building is on the market to be sold. The 146th Airlift Wing of the CA Air National Guard provided key logistical support to Food Share staff during the move to help set up the new space for the packing of emergency food boxes.

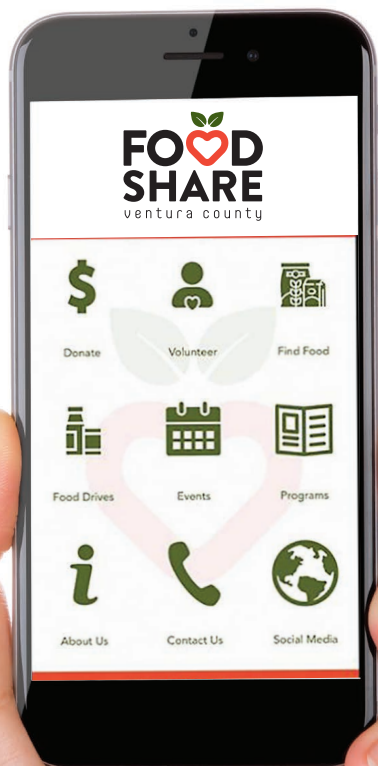
"We were bursting at the seams trying to store and distribute the additional food we've had to bring in to meet the current level of need," commented Monica White, President & CEO of Food Share.



**"Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, we've increased the amount of food we purchase a month from \$50,000 to \$300,000."**

"Lawrence understood our problem and stepped forward without hesitation. We are beyond grateful for his support for us and our community."

## Announcing OUR NEW SMARTPHONE APP!



We're pleased to announce the launch of an app, which will provide information more quickly and efficiently for anyone with a smartphone. The app includes a new Find Food Now search function, which allows anyone in urgent need of food to quickly identify when and where it is available on any given day.

### IN JUST A FEW CLICKS, USERS CAN:

- ♥ Find food quickly using the new Find Food Now search
- ♥ Receive updates about drive-thru food distributions and other important info
- ♥ Register to be a volunteer
- ♥ Make a donation
- ♥ Connect to our social media platforms
- ♥ View information about our programs for seniors
- ♥ And much more!

The app was created by OCV, LLC, which specializes in designing and creating custom apps for state, county and local government agencies, law enforcement and public safety organizations across the country.

## Download the app for FREE.

**Visit the App Store or Google Play and search "Food Share of Ventura County."**



## Food Share PROVIDES 23,000 “KITCHEN-FREE” BAGS FOR THE HOMELESS

Volunteers at Food Share have been busily packing 23,000 “kitchen-free” food bags to be distributed to unhoused people living in the community.

The bags contain food items that Food Share has purchased after consultation with homelessness advocates to ensure that they best meet the needs of the population. A huge effort has been made to ensure that the bags contain only items like pop top chicken salad, crackers, apple sauce, peanut butter, nuts, and dried fruit that are tasty and nutritious, but suitable for people with limited access to a kitchen or kitchen tools.

The food is being packed into 23,000 reusable bags, which are being distributed to people living without housing or in motels, via Food Share’s partner agencies and food pantries including Spirit of Santa Paula, Catholic Charities — Ventura, Community Action, The Salvation Army, The Samaritan Center and Help of Ojai.



## STAFF spotlight

### Jennifer Caldwell, Chief Development Officer

*Jennifer has been at Food Share for 4.5 years and has recently taken on a new position as Chief Development Officer. In her new role, Jennifer oversees all the external facets of Food Share - from brand awareness and marketing to community outreach and events. She is responsible for planning and implementing strategies to secure organizational donors, in addition to providing oversight to fund development programs and grants.*

**Why I work here** — I was raised by a single mother and witnessed firsthand how hard she worked to provide the best possible life for me. If my work can help alleviate the food burden of even one family, it’s all worth it.

**Best part of your job** — I am surrounded by incredible people everyday; our staff, our volunteers, our donors, our community supporters, and the people we serve. Every single person is working together to make Ventura County a better place and I’m honored to be a small piece of that.

**One thing you didn’t know about me** — I am ambidextrous in sports! I can hit/throw/kick with both arms/legs in any situation.



## VOLUNTEER spotlight

### Jeanna Polisini

*Jeanna is one of our most dedicated volunteers. A student at Chapman University, Jeanna has managed to squeeze in a truly incredible 460 hours of service to Food Share since she first joined our volunteer family in 2019. Wow! That’s what we call dedication to our mission.*

#### Why do you volunteer at Food Share?

Since I was little, my mom and I always made lunch bags and served the homeless hot dinners at the shelters. Through these experiences, I have developed a passion for fighting hunger because nobody should have to worry where their next meal is coming from.

#### What’s your favorite thing about volunteering?

I love volunteering in the VCAA Senior Nutrition Garden on Mondays, because it’s harvest day! Bob Mancuso, who manages the garden, is someone who’s really inspired me. We share the same passion for growing fresh food and getting it to people in need. I could not imagine my life without the garden!



**Interested in volunteering? Visit [foodshare.com/volunteer](https://foodshare.com/volunteer)**



# Food Share in Action!

## OVER 4 MILLION POUNDS OF FRESH PRODUCE DISTRIBUTED DURING COVID RESPONSE

Since mid-May, Food Share of Ventura County has provided a staggering 4.1 million pounds of fresh produce to people experiencing hunger in the county.

The scale of food insecurity in Ventura County has nearly doubled since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Current projections from Feeding America show that 115,000 people, including 42,000 children in our County, are now facing a daily struggle to access enough nutritious food.

The fresh produce is a result of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Farmers to Families Food Box Program." Oxnard-based wholesale produce distributor, The Berry Man, was approved to deliver the first 3.6 million dollars of a 14.7 million dollar contract to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to nonprofits throughout the Tri-Counties Area. The majority of the produce is locally-grown.

Commenting on the impact of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program on people in the community, Roseanne Hernandez, Community Market Coordinator at Community Action of Ventura County, one of Food Share's network of pantry partners said, "The Berry Man boxes have benefited the community we serve greatly. We have been able to keep up with the demand and not only assure food security, but The Berry Man has delivered amazing quality produce. We are so grateful for Food Share of Ventura County and Berryman Inc. A million Thank You's!"

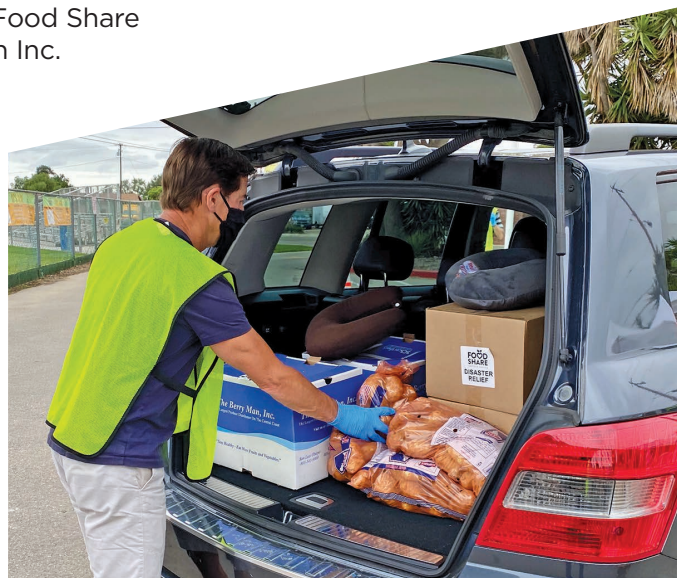
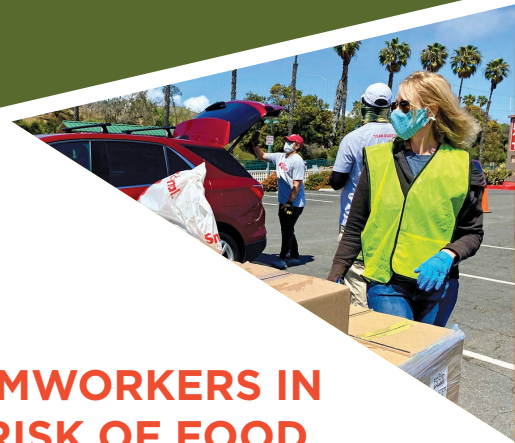
## LOCAL FARMWORKERS IN FOCUS AS RISK OF FOOD INSECURITY INCREASES

Food Share has received three significant donations to ensure the county's farmworker population and their families have access to adequate food. The funds will be used to purchase food, equipment, and supplies to help Food Share feed underserved farmworker communities.

One of the funding sources, administered through the California Association of Food Banks, will enable Food Share to further develop food distribution programs with other organizations trusted by the farm and agricultural worker communities.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated half a million agricultural and farm workers in California regularly experienced food insecurity. Now these workers, who have been deemed essential by the federal government, face even higher levels of food insecurity and risks to their health and well-being.

Over the past decade, Food Share has built collaborative relationships with organizations such as Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation, the Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), and the United Farm Workers (UFW) in addition to working with growers to provide field-direct distributions to ensure our local farmworker population is not overlooked.





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Find us online!



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Meathead Movers  
Mission Church Ventura  
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Move for Hunger  
Northrup Grumman  
Omar Espinoza with Create  
2 Inspire Film  
Oscar Hernandez with  
Eight O Five Detail Shop  
Oxnard City Corps  
Oxnard Downtown Lions  
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Storage  
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Yardi

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*Thank you*  
**TO OUR  
INCREDIBLE  
DONORS!**

We have been humbled and inspired by the outpouring of support for our mission to lead the fight against hunger in Ventura County. Here are some of the many individuals and organizations that have helped support our hunger-relief efforts in a myriad of ways over the past four months.

Albertsons/Vons  
Amgen Foundation  
Anderson Stewart Family  
Foundation  
Assemblymember Jacqui  
Irwin  
Bank of America  
Bonnie Mercadante / Soft  
Touch Photography  
Boskovich Farms  
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