

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

*the  
harvester*

**JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER**

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

# FOOD SHARE

ventura county



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# A note from your CEO

## A Tough Reality

Can it really be two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic? The world has certainly been impacted dramatically, not least in the economic ripple effects disrupting the supply chain of everything from cars to groceries, and in the escalating cost of many necessities like gas and electricity. The price of meat, poultry, fish, and eggs are up 15 percent since the start of 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. While some of us are able to withstand these short-term shocks, for many others the increasing costs are stretching already tight household budgets to the breaking point.

That's just one reason why we continue to see new people showing up in line at our food distributions and at our pantry and agency partners each week. While those lines are down from the peak of the pandemic, they are still much longer than ever before and are a daily reminder that too many in our community continue to struggle with the stress of not having enough nutritious food to feed themselves or their families.

## A Vision for the Future

It is, therefore, timely that we have been actively engaged with our board of directors, staff, and other stakeholders to create a new strategic plan for Food Share to lead us through the next four years. As we reflect on unprecedented growth and innovation in our services necessitated by COVID-19 (as well as recent wildfires in the region), we've celebrated our organizational adaptability and resilience, while recognizing the need to enhance our organizational infrastructure and capacity to meet the needs of the Ventura County community over the long term.

## Key Objectives of Our Strategic Plan Include:

- ♥ Increasing the number and scale of the programs serving vulnerable populations including farmworkers and the unhoused.
- ♥ Investing in technology to better manage the distribution of food; and investing in staffing, because without our dedicated team we cannot operate.
- ♥ Expanding our operational infrastructure to meet the needs of our community for the long term.
- ♥ Growing our supporters, whether they be financial donors or volunteers because without the generosity and commitment of the people of Ventura County, we cannot lead the fight against hunger.

I hope we can continue to earn your support. Please reach out to me at [mwhite@foodshare.com](mailto:mwhite@foodshare.com) if you have any questions, comments, or ideas about how we might best continue to serve our friends and neighbors in need.

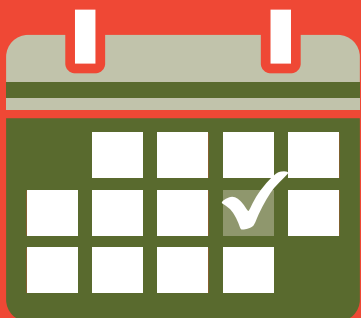
With gratitude,

*Monica White*

**Monica White**  
President & CEO



## SAVE THE DATE!



Get involved in our upcoming events.  
For details visit: [foodshare.com/events](https://www.foodshare.com/events).



**3rd Annual Day of Giving**  
Tuesday, February 22, 2022



**New! "Blue Jean" Event**  
Friday, April 29, 2022



**National Association of Letter Carriers**  
"Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive  
Saturday, May 14, 2022



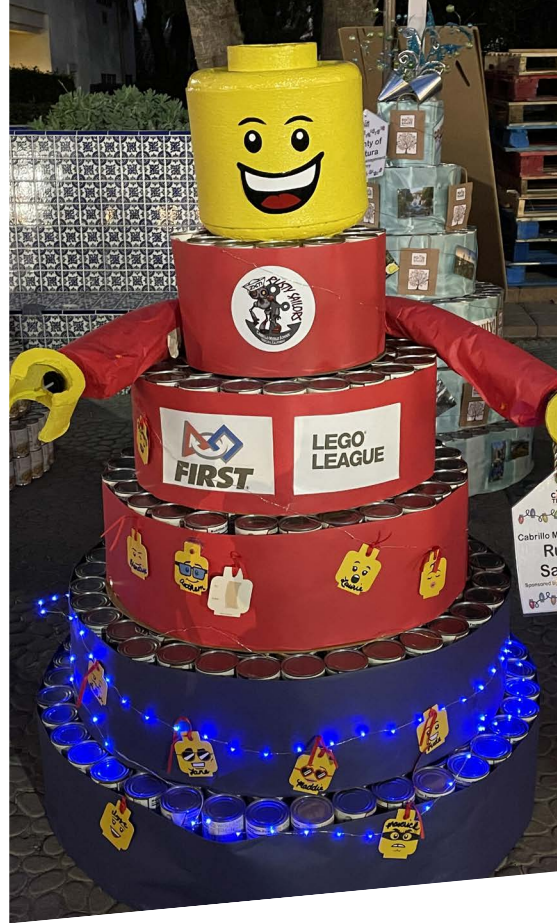
**Feed SoCal**  
June 2022





## Our most joyful *CAN-tree* ever!

Our community of supporters brought a burst of creative energy and big-hearted generosity to our 10th Annual CAN-tree Food Drive at Figueroa Plaza, building 172 trees totaling 130,000 pounds of food to help feed our hungry friends and neighbors. Thanks to our major sponsors Dole Sunshine, Sysco, LA Rams, and HPC Dispensary, plus all the other organizations that brought a much-needed jolt of joy to the festive season. Event award winners include the County of Ventura, Ventura County Credit Union, and Cabrillo Middle School Rusty Sailors Robotics Club, sponsored by Sessa Manufacturing. To check out all the winners go to our website at [foodshare.com/can-tree](https://foodshare.com/can-tree).



### Have you Followed the Can?!

If it wasn't clear from our annual CAN-tree event, cans of food are a BIG DEAL to us and the people we serve. Canned foods stay fresh for many months and even years; they help us to provide more variety in what we offer to our agency and pantry partners. Plus, donated cans mean that we don't have to buy so much food on the expensive open market. The importance of every single can donated via a food drive is the subject of a recent video that follows the journey of a can from a kitchen cupboard through our facility, out to a pantry, and finally to a stovetop of a family in need. It was fun to film and it's even more fun to watch. It also just won Platinum Award at the 2021 MarCom Awards!



Scan the QR code to watch *Follow the Can!* and to learn all about our Virtual Food Drive. Or visit: [foodshare.com/fooddrives](https://foodshare.com/fooddrives)

**Remember — Every Can Makes a Difference!**





# Spotlight on



**CALIFORNIA  
ASSOCIATION OF  
FOOD BANKS**

Food Share is a long-standing member of the CA Association of Food Banks (CAFB), an organization that works with 41 member food banks across the state to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to feed our communities in need. The organization also works to increase access to CalFresh, California's food stamp program; creates partnerships with the agriculture industry to secure excess produce and reduce food waste; and advocates for pro-food bank and anti-hunger policies at local, state, and federal levels.

## Farm to Family

One of the most important resources coordinated by the CAFB is the Farm to Family program, which allows farmers with surplus products to reduce food waste by donating it to the food banking system in their local community and beyond. In return, farmers are reimbursed for some picking and packing out costs and receive documentation to help secure a tax credit.

Approximately 34% of Food Share's food inventory was supplied through the program in 2020, which enabled us to provide wonderfully fresh produce alongside shelf-stable items to our pantry partner organizations and via the more than 500 drive-thru distributions we've held since the start of the pandemic.

**If you're a farmer with surplus product to donate, or you would like to donate food via our gleaning program please contact Brian Fisher at [bfisher@foodshare.com](mailto:bfisher@foodshare.com) or call 805-983-7100.**







**Thank you to our local Ag partners for your support.  
Because no one should go hungry.**



**To donate food contact  
Brian Fisher at  
bfisher@foodshare.com  
805 983 7100**



Allied Avocados & Citrus • Anacapa Fresh Logistics • Apricot Lane Farms • Baby Root Farm • The Berry Man • Beylik Farms • Boskovich Farms, Inc. • Brokaw Ranch • Cal Veg Farm • Calavo • Hacienda Linda • Central West Produce • Chiquita Brands International, Inc. • Creek House Ranch • Deardorff Family Farms • Del Monte Fresh Produce • Driscoll's • Duda Farm Fresh Foods • Dudley Ranch • Eagle Produce, LLC • Farmcart Organics • Freska Produce • Freyr Farms • Gills Onion • Houweling Nursery JNJ Ramos, LLC • Juarez Produce • Laubacher Farms • Limoneira Company Living Systems • Ingrid & Christopher Loh • Mendez Produce • Mission Produce • Monsanto • Muranaka Farms, Inc. • Naturipe Farms Berry Growers, Inc. • Nova Farms • Ojai Pixie Packers • Pacific Fresh Produce • Padua Farms Rancho Paseo Escondido • Rollin R Enterprises • San Miguel Produce • VCAAA Senior Nutrition Garden • Silent Spring Ranch • Underwood Ranches • Waters Ranch • Westfall Fruit

**foodshare.com**

\*All the beautiful produce featured in this ad was grown by our Ag supporters in Ventura County.



**This ad ran in the December issue of Central Coast Farm & Ranch to thank our local Ag community for their support.**

## Monica White named Chair of the Board of Directors of the CAFB

We're delighted that Monica White was recently named the new Chair of the Board of Directors of the California Association of Food Banks. The appointment runs from October 2021 through May 2022. Monica has served for three years on the CAFB Board of Directors, previously serving as Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Governance and Membership Committee.

Commenting on Monica's appointment as Chair, Stacia Hill Levenfeld, CEO of CAFB, said, "Monica's leadership skills have made her an invaluable resource for our organization over the past difficult months as hunger has risen dramatically across the state and the country. I am delighted to be able to continue to draw on her expert counsel as we continue the fight to end hunger in California."

## Everyone to the table!

If you follow us on social media you may have seen posts about the #EveryoneToTheTable campaign, launched by CAFB in October 2021, which advocates for action against hunger by raising awareness about the underlying issues and scale of the problem across California. Did you know, for instance, that as of September 2021, almost a third of Black Californians and more than a third of Latinx families are food insecure? Or that despite a recent hiring surge, California has the second-highest unemployment rate in the country with 7.5% of our residents out of work, and with agriculture-producing region rates lingering in the double-digits?

The awareness campaign is ongoing and features staff from across the California food banking system. You may recognize some of our own team in the ads!

**To learn more about how you can get involved with the Everyone to the Table campaign visit: [everyonetothetable.org](https://everyonetothetable.org).**

**FOOD SHARE**  
ventura county

**I'M HERE UNTIL HUNGER ISN'T.**

Together, we can end hunger in California.

**[Everyonetothetable.org](https://Everyonetothetable.org)**

**Jesus,**  
**Food Bank Warehouse Assistant**







staff  
spotlight

## LAURA THOMSON, FACILITIES & FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR

*Laura, who first got to know Food Share as a volunteer, has been responsible for ensuring our three warehouses are safe and sanitary for the past two and a half years. She led the charge in securing an AIB Certification, which involves a rigorous food safety inspection, ensuring that Food Share received the highest possible grade — Recognition of High Achievement — Superior.*

### Why I work at Food Share:

I spent many years working in hospitality and wanted to do something more fulfilling. I believe strongly in our mission and love being a part of such a dynamic team of staff and volunteers.

### Best part of my job:

There are so many good parts to my job, but if I had to choose one thing it would be seeing the impact our organization has on the community. Food Share has grown so much in just the short time I have been here, and I look forward to seeing where we go in the future and continuing to help feed our neighbors.

### Something you don't know about me:

I love to bake. Going through cookbooks and watching shows like “The Great British Baking Show,” and getting inspiration and then creating something beautiful and tasty to share with my family and friends is fun and very cathartic.

## Pantry Partners in Action!

### STILL WATERS PANTRY AT SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY CHURCH, SIMI VALLEY

*When Nancy Mason retired from her role as a principal in the Simi Valley School District, the last thing she expected was to take on a new and equally challenging role. But Nancy's leadership and logistical skills, plus her long-standing involvement with the Still Waters Cafe, a hot-meal site operated by the Shepherd of the Valley Church, made her the perfect person to take over when the previous director retired.*

That was right before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. After an initial shift to making hot meals to go, Nancy soon realized that it was too dangerous for the mostly older volunteer staff to continue. She made the difficult but necessary decision to shut down the cafe and put the health of the cafe's volunteers and clients first. But that also meant the needs of a vulnerable, low-income population would now go unmet at a time when they needed assistance the most. The solution was to expand the service capacity of what was then a small, on-site food pantry serving just a few dozen people each month.



Nancy (right) with  
volunteer Traci



# Volunteer Spotlight

## TRACI'S STORY

Eighteen months later, with just a handful of tireless volunteers and food supplied largely by Food Share, the pantry is now serving more than 600 people each month, including 240 families, a third of which have young children, plus more than 160 seniors. The pantry provides a range of shelf-stable foods, plus fresh fruits and vegetables, and with the help of Food Share's Agency Relations Manager, Pam Castro, has recently qualified as a USDA-site, meaning it can now accept and distribute dairy products and meat proteins like chicken and pork.

"I was recently approached about going back to work as a principal," comments Nancy. "I had to tell them that I have a whole other life now that I can't walk away from. And while the pandemic and running the pantry have been really hard, I and everyone here have grown from doing this work."



**Interested in  
volunteering? Visit  
[foodshare.com/volunteer](https://foodshare.com/volunteer) or  
download our app at the  
App Store or Google Play.**

**Search: Food Share  
of Ventura  
County**

*Traci is a volunteer at Still Waters Pantry and has been one of a small group working with Nancy Mason throughout the pandemic to feed the increasing number of people seeking help.*

"I'm a survivor of domestic violence. It left me with PTSD and I have a lot of anxiety and depression. I ended up homeless on the streets for six months until I found a shelter in Santa Monica. That saved my life because I had access to free mental health care and other supports that really helped me move forward with my life.



Traci has volunteered at the pantry throughout the pandemic.

**“We'll feed anyone who needs it.”**

I moved to Simi because my son is here. I found a roommate, and I've been here for nine years now. My roommate sings in the choir at this church. He told me about the program here, and so I came along to check it out, and then I started volunteering. I feel like I can really relate to a lot of the struggles these people are going through, whether they're homeless individuals or families having a hard time. There were times when my son was small that I had to send him to his dad's house because I didn't have enough food to feed him.

It brings me so much joy to be able to provide what we can to these people. I hand out cards to people I meet, telling them about the pantry. Just because someone looks like they might have it together on the outside, it doesn't mean that they have enough. I tell them we don't judge. If you're hungry and you need food, then all we need is your name and the number of people in your household. You don't need to be a member of the church. We'll feed anyone who needs it. And doing things for other people helps make my anxiety and depression more manageable."





# THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!



## SUSTAINING DONOR

Become a sustaining donor with a monthly or quarterly donation. Becoming a sustaining donor helps us establish a reliable revenue stream throughout the year. Having an income we can rely on allows us to plan ahead and spend more time developing programs to reach those hardest hit by hunger.



## VOLUNTEER

Join our family of volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of our work. We can't operate without the thousands of people who give their time to us each year.



## HOST OR DONATE TO A FOOD DRIVE

Donate canned food at a food drive. Donated cans are critical to our operation. They help reduce the amount of food we need to purchase and enable us to provide variety to those we serve.

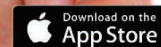
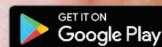
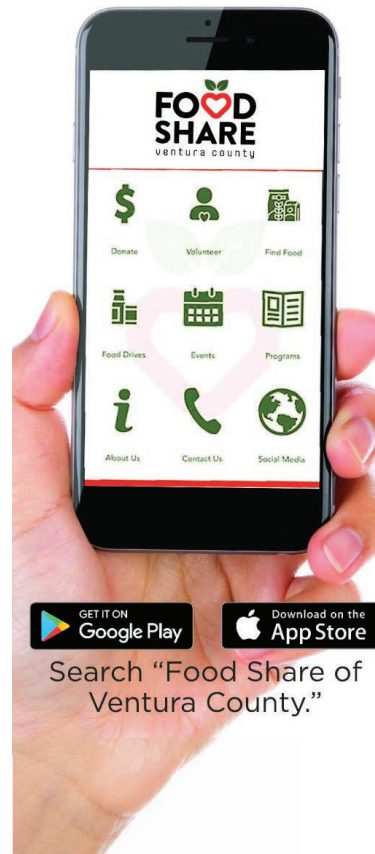
Find us online!



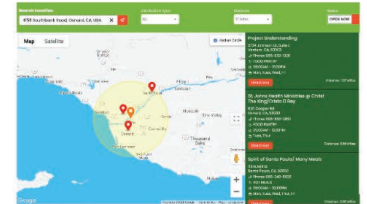
# Download OUR NEW SMARTPHONE APP!

## NEW FEATURE!

Find the nearest pantry, meal, or drive-thru distribution open NOW! with the Find Food Now map.



Search "Food Share of Ventura County."



- Find food NOW!
- Sign up to volunteer
- Host a food drive
- Make a donation



Scan me  
to download the app.



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## CONTACT US

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## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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