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AMERICA**

FOOD SHARE

ventura county

*the
harvester*

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

WWW.FOODSHARE.COM

**Our Kids' Farmers'
Market program is
back in action!**

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A note from your CEO

The issue of hunger touches the lives of people from all walks of life — at Food Share, it's a reality we see every day. Shockingly, 1 in 4 people in our county grapples with the challenge of having reliable access to affordable, nutritious food. This means that those affected are not just statistics but people we know.

To grasp the extent of the situation in Ventura County, I encourage you to take a moment to explore our County Impact Report on pages 3-4. The numbers might surprise you, shedding light on the significant number of individuals and families facing the uncertainty of food insecurity. And here's something else that might surprise you - every city in Ventura County houses food pantries for those in need. There is no jurisdiction that is immune to hunger.

While the struggle with hunger might not always be visible, the network of pantries we've established county-wide extends a lifeline in more ways than one. Seeking food assistance can come with feelings of guilt and shame. Yet, thanks to the dedication of the remarkable volunteers who run

these pantries, those in need not only receive nourishing food but also find understanding, hope, and connection.

The generosity of our community is the cornerstone of ensuring that no one goes hungry. Your involvement makes a profound difference in the lives of our friends and neighbors facing adversity. If you ever have any questions on how you can help tackle the issue of hunger, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at mwhite@foodshare.com. Together, we can create positive change together.

With gratitude,

Monica White

Monica White
President & CEO



How Your Support Helps Build Better Lives

Stacy's Story

Stacy is a store manager at a Trader Joe's in Ventura County. One of her responsibilities is to ensure food that's approaching its sell-by date, but is still good to eat, is packaged up and ready for pickup by Food Share. It's a task that's close to her heart. Here, she reflects on a time as a young mother when she struggled to feed her family and the impact the support she received had on her and her children's lives.



“ There was a short time in my life when unfortunately, I was not able to provide food for my family. I had this amazing opportunity to receive food from Food Share, to help support me and my children during a time of need.

Even though it was a tough time for me, my children have fond memories we were able to create with the food we were given. For example, one time we got pizza dough, and we were able to roll that out and it was so fun — an opportunity to make a positive memory during a hard time.



It gave me a sense of strength as a mother that I was able to provide healthy and nutritious food for my kids during a time when I felt like I couldn't. To have produce, to be able to make a healthy dinner, it gave me a sense of strength knowing I was feeding my children healthy meals.

The Food Share program absolutely gives people the opportunity to create a better life. It gives us that sense of community and gives us that sense of belief. And it gives us that sense that we matter, that people take the time to build these food boxes for families. They're going to people that could use that support. And sometimes it takes other people to believe in us so we can believe in ourselves.”

December 1 - December 3

2023 CAN TREE 12TH ANNUAL

Scan the code or visit foodshare.com/cantree for details.



The enchantment of CAN-tree returns for its 12th year at Figueroa Plaza in the heart of Downtown Ventura! Prepare to be whisked away into a winter wonderland where over 300 magnificent CAN-trees will adorn the plaza, each brought to life by the creativity of more than 100 diverse businesses and groups. Multiple registration options are available, including one that's FREE!



The State of Hunger in Ventura County

2023 Impact Report

Food Share provided assistance to 267,000 individuals in Ventura County during the recent fiscal year (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023), which is more than 25% of the local population.

Several factors are causing an escalation in food insecurity in our county. Data from RentData.org shows the Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura area is 86% more expensive than the average in California. Rent for a two-bedroom apartment is an average of \$2,218 per month, rising by 15.34% from the previous year.



Furthermore, two important programs — the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 and the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency payments — that helped alleviate hunger in the past three years have come to an end. Cuts to emergency payments, including to CalFresh, have led to a reduction in food support for five million people statewide. On average, each CalFresh participant has lost \$82 per month, resulting in meager benefits of around \$6 per person daily. For certain individuals, like older adults receiving the minimum benefit, assistance has decreased from \$281 to \$23 per month.

Despite low unemployment rates, other factors like heavy rainfall in the first half of 2023 left many farm workers jobless for months. This has created a loss of income that thousands are still struggling to overcome.

See How Hunger Impacts Your Local Community

	Pounds of Food Distributed	Equivalent Number of Meals Provided	Retail Value of Food Distributed*	Number of Emergency Food Boxes Distributed	Number of People Served	Percent of City Population Served	Distribution Locations	Number of Retail Partners	Number of Kitchen-Free Bags Distributed
Camarillo	698,663	582,219	\$2,129,259	3,506	5,426	8%	18	11	682
Fillmore (With Piru)	532,446	443,705	\$1,622,693	2,814	5,564	34%	26	2	130
Moorpark	1,968,244	1,640,203	\$5,998,458	4,555	7,896	22%	15	6	N/A
Ojai (with Oak View)	163,638	136,365	\$498,706	N/A	2,543	18%	9	1	115
Oxnard	8,579,235	7,149,363	\$26,146,240	83,171	145,091	72%	115	25	3,392
Port Hueneme	243,590	202,992	\$742,370	N/A	7,701	36%	4	3	33
Santa Paula	1,287,737	1,073,114	\$3,924,532	10,007	14,320	47%	24	2	738
Simi Valley	1,587,651	1,323,043	\$4,838,555	N/A	16,802	13%	26	20	740
Thousand Oaks (with Newbury Park)	1,719,445	1,432,871	\$5,240,213	436	30,246	24%	27	13	163
Ventura	2,002,527	1,668,773	\$6,102,939	6,929	22,113	20%	47	18	4,564
Westlake Village	537,922	448,268	\$1,639,381	N/A	1,420	3%	4	5	N/A

**For more information on how to partner with Food Share please contact:
Jennifer Caldwell at jcaldwell@foodshare.com or (805)983-7100 x129**

All data is for calendar year Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2022

**The estimated value at full retail price of the distributed food*

***Food Share distributed a total of 19 million pounds of food in 2022*

Farm Share: Cultivating Fresh Produce and Hope

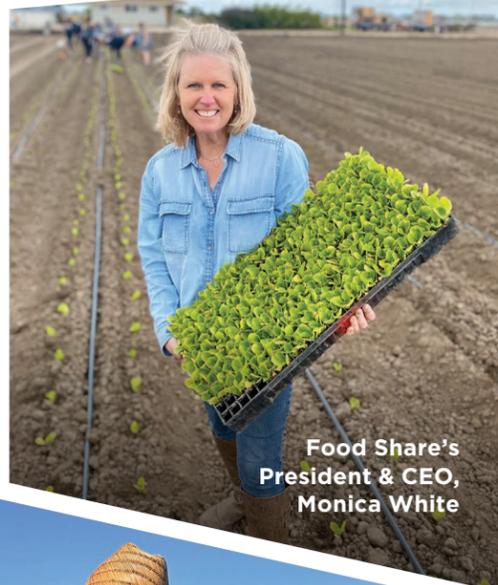
In a world where access to nutritious food remains a challenge for many, the Farm Share program aims to bridge the gap between quality produce and those in need. This exciting new project, which took root in June on seven acres of land in Camarillo donated by Deardorff Family Farms, has yielded over 100,000 pounds of fresh produce in its first year, including romaine and head lettuce, cabbage, and cauliflower.

The brainchild of local high schooler Kate Deardorff, an active volunteer at Food Share, the Farm Share initiative is a testament to the power of inspired ideas fueled by genuine passion. Kate's observations on the need for a consistent supply of fresh produce to those most vulnerable in our community led to discussions with her father, Tom Deardorff, and the Farm Share initiative was born.



Kate Deardorff, and her father, Tom

“To have this many people come out each day is really awesome. It's been super inspiring and has got me working out here every morning!”
- Kate



Food Share's President & CEO, Monica White



Volunteers from Amgen have donated more than 250 hours of their time to planting and harvesting



Christina Forino, Food Share's Director of Volunteer Services, with Armondo Navarette, Ranch Manager



Drew West, Chair of Food Share's Board of Directors, harvests romaine lettuce

“As a member of this community, we just feel it's incumbent upon us to help out,” comments Tom. *“As we've started to help, other people are helping us help Food Share. So it's going to be a community that drives this program going forward. Everyone's ready to step up and make it happen.”* With donations of fertilizer and seedlings from Beardsley & Sons and Naumann Ranches, the initiative has thrived on a foundation of community support.

The driving force behind the success of Farm Share has been the dedication of hundreds of volunteers. *“To have this many people come out each day is really awesome,”* notes Kate. *“It's been super inspiring and has got me working out here every morning!”*



Caitlin Barringer (left), Food Share's Program Manager with Meghan Cipolla (right), Finance Manager, harvesting lettuce



The project attracted volunteers as young as 12 and as old as 86!



Youngsters Dive into Healthy Food at Kids' Farmers' Market

The youngsters at Valle Naranjal Apartments in Piru were positively beaming with excitement as they delved into the wonderful world of nutritious fruits and vegetables during a recent Kids' Farmers' Market (KFM) event. One of five KFM events in recent months, it was made possible through a partnership between Food Share and the Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), which manages 24 affordable housing communities in Ventura County. Funding for the events was provided by Wells Fargo.

After a hiatus due to the pandemic, the KFM events are back in action, providing opportunities for kids to learn about nutrition and the joy of creating simple, tasty dishes using fresh produce. They also take a box of fruit and veggies home to share with their family!



Welcome New Board Members

We're delighted to be joined by two new members who bring a wealth of knowledge and philanthropic experience to our board.



Bethany Mancilla Chief Business Officer, Capsida Biotherapeutics, Inc.

Bethany is an executive with over 25 years of leadership experience in business development, corporate strategy, and financing across small and large biopharmaceutical companies. Bethany moved with her family to Ventura County in 2016 to serve as Vice President of Business Development for Amgen. In 2020, Bethany assumed the role of Chief Business Officer for Capsida Biotherapeutics, where she works with a team of gifted scientists to advance gene therapies for neurodegenerative diseases. "I have always been passionate about working to bring innovative medicines to patients in need. I am equally inspired to advance the health and well-being of our community by working with the talented team and board of Food Share to identify and provide nutritious sources of food for the 1 in 4 individuals with food insecurity."

Ryan Maley Managing Director, Private Client Advisor II, Bank of America



Ryan is a Certified Financial Planner, and a Managing Director and Private Client Advisor with Bank of America Private Bank in Westlake Village and Santa Barbara, CA. He has a BS from Cal Lutheran University and completed his graduate work at UCLA. Born and raised in Ventura County, where he continues to live today with his wife Roxanne and son, Landon, Ryan has been an active volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, California Lutheran University Community Leaders Association, the Surfrider Foundation, and Heart's Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Santa Barbara. "Being of service and giving back to my community is of immense importance to me. I'm honored to be joining the Food Share team in the critical fight against hunger in our county."



GIVING TUESDAY is almost here!

It's a day when the whole world comes together with one common goal — to make life a little better through shared humanity and generosity. Donate to our Faces of Food Insecurity campaign and your gift will be **matched up to \$100,000 thanks to the Bill and JoAnne Miller Charitable Trust.**



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