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FOOD SHARE

ventura county

*the
harvester*

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

WWW.FOODSHARE.COM



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A note from your CEO

As we approach the season of giving, I look forward to gathering my family around our table. I can't help but think of the neighbors in our community who are struggling to put food on theirs.

In this issue of The Harvester, we share our 2023 County Impact Report. You may be surprised by the city data — people may believe our primary focus is feeding the unhoused population, which we do, but the latest census revealed about 2,500 people in Ventura County are experiencing homelessness.

Those we serve are working individuals, some in lower-wage jobs, some struggling business owners, seniors on fixed incomes and single parents, and individuals with chronic illnesses or disabilities. The common denominator is that these are our neighbors, our friends, the parents we meet in school drop-off, those who serve us, or those alongside us in the line at the supermarket.

With the rising costs of living: rent, utilities, food, and gas, we've seen a staggering increase in neighbors seeking food assistance this year. 267,000 people depend on us and our 221 distribution locations each month. To put it into perspective, **Food Share is currently serving more people than we did during the height of the 2020 shutdown** — the highest in our 46-year history.

However, while the need has grown, disaster relief funds have dwindled, and economic instability has decreased donations significantly. Consequently, we are no longer able to purchase as much food as we did during the pandemic. Although we are working tirelessly to increase food donations and finances, we still need your support.

We are projecting to provide approximately 17 million meals this year. It will take all of us to ensure we can feed everyone in our community who is food insecure.

During this season, let's take a moment to reflect on how each of us can make a difference. Every gesture of support, no matter how small, goes a long way in helping us ensure that no one in Ventura County goes hungry.

Thank you for being a valued member of our Food Share family.

Warm regards,

Monica White

Monica White,
President & CEO



It's time for **CAN TREE** 2024

13TH ANNUAL

We're excited to announce that our most popular community event, CAN-tree, is back for the holidays! Over 300 CAN-trees were built in 2023, creating an inspiring display of joy and generosity. Join us at Figueroa Plaza from December 5 to December 8, 2024, as our community helps build and display a forest of CAN-trees made of food!

There are many ways to get involved, from sponsoring a tree, building one yourself, or volunteering during the event. Gather your colleagues, friends or family, get creative, and help us spread holiday cheer while fighting hunger in our community!



Scan the code or visit
[foodshare.com/cantree](https://www.foodshare.com/cantree)
for details.



Ventura County Impact Report 2023

Addressing Food Insecurity

One in four people in Ventura County struggle with food insecurity. Last year, Food Share distributed over 19 million pounds of food valued at more than \$59 million.

We support 174 agency partners and food pantries throughout Ventura County and receive rescued donations from more than 125 retail partners, growers, manufacturers, and individuals.

	# Of Pantry Partners	Pounds of Food Distributed	# of Meals Provided	# Of People Served Through Pantries	Total City Population*	% of City Population Served	# of Retail Partners	Retail Value of Food Distributed
Camarillo	12	961,089	800,908	5,910	70,593	8.37%	12	\$2,950,543
Fillmore/ Piru	11	488,133	406,778	6,163	16,373	37.64%	2	\$1,498,568
Moorpark	7	1,678,964	1,399,137	7,819	36,201	21.60%	6	\$510,919
Ojai/ Oak View	8	166,423	138,686	2,483	7,640	32.50%	6	\$5,154,419
Oxnard	56	7,958,567	6,632,139	144,975	202,981	71.42%	25	\$24,432,801
Port Hueneme	6	63,171	52,643	7,658	21,954	34.88%	0	\$193,935
Santa Paula	9	1,294,042	1,078,368	16,232	30,741	52.80%	2	\$3,972,709
Simi Valley	14	1,883,220	1,569,350	20,366	126,809	16.06%	21	\$5,781,485
Thousand Oaks	17	1,870,155	1,558,463	32,648	127,274	25.65%	20	\$5,741,376
Ventura	29	1,926,045	1,605,038	17,951	110,572	16.23%	20	\$5,912,958
Westlake Village/ Agoura Hills	3	437,312	364,427	997	27,158	3.67%	5	\$1,342,548
Other/ Unincorporated	2	667,176	555,980	3,769	66,959	5.63%	6	\$2,048,230
Total	174	19,394,297	16,161,917	266,971	845,255	32%	125	\$59,540,491

*Source: Ventura County Civic Alliance 2023 State of the Region



Bringing Holiday Cheer to Families Facing Hunger in Ventura County

For our neighbors facing hunger, grocery budgets are tight all year. The pressure intensifies during the holidays. With children home from school and families gathered, the expectation of plentiful holiday meals is at odds with the reality of food insecurity. For many Ventura County residents struggling to make ends meet, providing festive meals is simply out of reach.

At Food Share, we're committed to helping bridge this gap. Each year, our dedicated staff, alongside an incredible team of volunteers, assemble Holiday Meal Boxes filled with seasonal favorites such as green beans, mashed potatoes, canned vegetables, cranberry sauce, stuffing, rice, and beans. These boxes provide families with the ingredients to create warm, comforting holiday meals they might not otherwise afford. Additionally, we are organizing special distributions of 5,000 turkeys to ensure those most in need can enjoy a traditional holiday meal.

With your support, we're making the holidays a little brighter for families across Ventura County.



Edible Food Recovery Summit

On October 10, Food Share hosted an Edible Food Recovery Summit for the regional coalition of Waste Free Ventura County. Attendees learned about the regional approach to excess edible food donations and SB 1383 compliance. Bringing

together sustainability experts and public, private, and non-profit stakeholders is key to developing highly successful solutions. We are excited about increased collaboration, knowledge, and strategies to reduce food waste and combat hunger.



Community Engagement Department: *Empowering Volunteers to Fight Hunger*

Volunteers are the backbone of Food Share's mission to combat hunger in Ventura County. Without their unwavering support, we would not be able to provide food to the 267,000 residents in need across the county. Our Community Engagement Department plays a crucial role in this effort, ensuring that every volunteer experience is welcoming, safe, and rewarding.

Corporate volunteers are particularly vital to our operations. Companies like Amgen, Ventura County Credit Union, and The Trade Desk bring groups of enthusiastic employees who contribute significant time and energy to our cause. These corporate partnerships not only help us achieve our goals but also foster a sense of community and shared purpose among employees. The support of corporate volunteers enhances our capacity to serve more people and allows us to scale our efforts during critical times. We can accommodate any group size and choreograph a schedule of volunteer rotations, workstations, and tours, culminating in lunch and a photo opportunity. In addition to the hands-on contributions, organizations often provide generous donations.

We are incredibly proud of the efforts of our Community Engagement team and all our volunteers. Together, we are making a tangible impact on hunger in Ventura County. To schedule your corporate groups contact Jessica Hug at (805) 983-7100 ext. 114 or JHug@foodshare.com.



Premier America Credit Union Celebrates Give Back Day at Food Share

On October 14, Premier America Credit Union celebrated its 2024 Give Back Day at Food Share, demonstrating its commitment to community service. One of the nation's largest credit unions, brought 87 enthusiastic staff members for a morning filled with meaningful volunteer activities.

After a tour of our facilities, the volunteers were divided into groups of 25 and participated in various tasks crucial to our operations. They engaged in food sorting, produce packing, senior kit assembly, and built kitchen-free bags. Each activity contributed significantly to our mission of fighting hunger in Ventura County.

Rudy Pereira, CEO of Premier America, emphasized his organization's commitment to community service, stating, "Premier America is committed to doing all we can to strengthen our communities. Including working to reduce food insecurity across the region. We are grateful for the work of Food Share and for our continued partnership."

We are immensely grateful for the support of Premier America and all other corporate groups. Their efforts help us in our mission to provide essential resources to those in need and strengthen our community ties.



Celebrating Success

Third Annual FED UP Shindig Supplies 1 Million Meals for Ventura County

On September 21, nearly 350 guests came together in their finest jeans, boots, and dresses to celebrate our third annual FED UP Shindig. Southbank Drive was transformed into a stunning dining venue, adorned with the signature colors of green and orange, and flanked by lush greenery.

The evening was filled with delicious food and drinks, offering our extended Food Share family a chance to connect and experience the heart of our mission. Guests toured our warehouse and heard powerful testimonials from those we serve.



They shared how essential Food Share is to their families and expressed deep gratitude to everyone who contributes — whether through food, time, or financial support — to help us fight hunger in Ventura County.

As our largest fundraiser of the year, the preparation for this event begins months in advance. **We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who attended, our sponsors, and to those who contributed from afar. Your support is making a real difference in our community, and we couldn't do it without you.**

Supporting Food Share

Multiple Ways to Make a Difference



At Food Share, we rely on the generosity of our community to continue our mission of feeding 267,000 Ventura County residents who face hunger each year. While traditional monetary donations are always appreciated, there are several other impactful ways you can support our work. Here's how you can contribute:

1 Donor-Advised Funds (DAF):

A Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) is a charitable giving account that provides an easy, flexible, and tax-efficient way to manage your charitable donations. By recommending grants from your DAF, you can support Food Share in a way that aligns with your financial and philanthropic goals.

2 Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Charitable Contributions:

If you're 70½ years old or older, you can make a tax-free donation directly from your IRA to Food Share. This Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) and can be a smart way to reduce your taxable income while supporting a cause you care about.

3 Bequests of Real Estate or Other Valuables:

Including Food Share in your will or estate plan is a meaningful way to leave a lasting legacy. Bequests of real estate, valuable collectibles, or other assets can significantly bolster our efforts to fight hunger for years to come. These types of donations are often tax-deductible and can help secure the future of our mission.

4 Stock Donations:

Donating appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds is another powerful way to give. By donating these assets, you can avoid paying capital gains taxes and receive a charitable deduction for the full market value of the stock, making it a win-win for you and Food Share.

5 Cryptocurrency Donations:

Food Share accepts donations in cryptocurrency, providing a modern and secure way to give. Donating crypto can be a tax-efficient method for those looking to reduce capital gains taxes while making a significant impact on hunger in Ventura County.

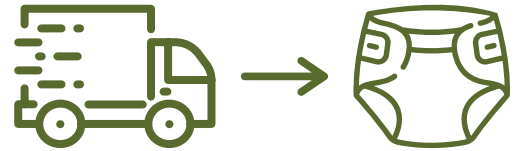
No matter how you choose to give, your contribution makes a real difference in the lives of those we serve. If you're interested in learning more about these donation options or need assistance with the process, please contact our development team at: JCaldwell@foodshare.com or (805) 983-7100 x129.

Together, we can continue leading the fight against hunger in Ventura County.





Addressing the Diaper Need in Ventura County



While food is a crucial need, diapers are another essential item that many families in Ventura County struggle to afford. In fact, diapers and wipes are the second most requested item to Food Share after food.

The inability to afford diapers can have severe consequences. Babies who are not changed frequently enough are at risk of developing diaper rash, infections, and other health problems. Parents may also face added stress, knowing they cannot provide this basic need for their children. Additionally, many childcare centers require parents to supply diapers, meaning that a lack of diapers can prevent parents from working or attending school.



According to the National Diaper Bank Network, Diapers can cost up to \$100 a month, creating a significant burden for low-income families who already face financial challenges. Recognizing this, Food Share is a proud member of the California Association of Diaper Banks. This network has been actively advocating, raising awareness, and addressing diaper needs across eleven counties throughout California. Food Share was successful in securing funds from the CA State Diaper Program, which allows us, for the first time, to purchase diapers, wipes, and Pull-Ups for infants in our county. In August, Food Share started to receive a monthly delivery of 226,800 diapers. These will be shared with Ventura County diaper banks, pantries, and other key agencies in Ventura 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.**



CONTACT US

Food Share of Ventura County

4156 Southbank Road
Oxnard, CA 93036

TEL: 805-983-7100

FAX: 805-983-2326

www.foodshare.com

info@foodshare.com

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