

*the
harvester*

NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

WWW.FOODSHARE.COM

FOOD SHARE

ventura county

THE TRADE DESK VOLUNTEERING



inside this issue

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR
PRESIDENT & CEO**

PAGE 2

**YOUR IMPACT
IN ACTION**

PAGE 3

**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!**

PAGE 5

**THE ORANGE HEART
OF FOOD SHARE**

PAGE 7

Thank You from Monica White, President & CEO

Dear Friends,

As we head into the holiday season, I am filled with gratitude for the incredible generosity and compassion of our community. Every day, I see how your support, whether through donations, volunteering, or simply sharing our story, helps provide food and hope to thousands of Ventura County families like Kia's, our feature story.

This fall has been full of meaningful moments. Our 4th Annual FED UP Shindig on September 20th was our most successful yet. It was a beautiful evening that brought so many of us together in support of fighting hunger. You'll find photos and highlights from the event in this issue of *The Harvester*. I urge you all to watch our FED UP video (link on page 3), which features our neighbors and volunteers sharing the impact Food Share has on their lives.

These are challenging times for many in our community. Rising costs and growing needs mean that your support is more critical now than ever. As Thanksgiving approaches, I'm reminded of how powerful it is when we come together to care for one another. I invite you to continue that spirit of giving by joining us on **Giving Tuesday, December 2**, and by considering a **year-end donation**. Every gift ensures our neighbors can gather around their tables with food to share knowing their community cares for them.

Together, we're not only fighting hunger — your support brings hope to thousands of Ventura County families.

With gratitude and warm wishes for the season,

Monica White

Monica White
President & CEO



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Together, We Feed VC

Nourishing Hope.

Strengthening Ventura County.

Kia is a mother of three — two girls and a boy, ages three, 19 months, and 11 years. *“I’m a stay-at-home mom, although my husband works, it’s still not meeting our needs. Everything has been increasing so much that it’s been a real struggle to get through the week. Even if we go shopping, halfway through the week, there’s nothing in the fridge.”*

Kia discovered Food Share after searching for local food assistance. *“I nervously went to a pantry, and I didn’t know what to expect. And it’s been incredibly helpful. Everybody has been so warm and welcoming and kind, and it has made a tremendous impact on myself and my family.”* That support has been a lifeline



“

“You are making a bigger impact than you ever could even comprehend ... your gift doesn’t stop with one person. It goes through the whole community. It touches everyone.”

Kia

for Kia and her family; having food assistance meant her husband didn’t have to take a third job, giving them precious time together. *“My kids are so small, we don’t have any family help within Ventura County ... there’s no way I could work, so it would essentially have to be him ... but then there’s no time with us. I really don’t know what we would do.”*

The variety of foods provided by Food Share has made a meaningful difference in their daily lives. *“I love how there’s such a mixed variety of fresh food, and then there’s pasta and other items which are wonderful and easy to make ... everything has been helpful, and we get to try new foods.”*

Kia hopes the community understands that food insecurity *“can happen to anyone. It’s not about demographic or what your job is, ... even strong people need help.”*

Looking ahead, Kia dreams of a life free from the constant worry of food insecurity. *“It would be wonderful to have the freedom to get food ... without having to worry about, do we buy groceries or pay for the electricity? ... we’re always juggling between our needs and other necessities.”* Her hope is profound yet straightforward: to provide for her family without compromise and to enjoy everyday moments without the constant stress of food scarcity.



To see Kia’s interview, visit www.foodshare.com/impact



Fueled By
Generosity

FED UP
4th Annual Shindig

4th Annual FED UP Shindig Brings Community Together to Serve Hope

On September 20th, a sold-out crowd of 380 guests gathered in their best jeans, boots, and dresses for Food Share's 4th Annual FED UP Shindig. It was an evening dedicated to celebrating community, compassion, and the fight against hunger in Ventura County. Southbank Drive was transformed into a breathtaking venue, alive with the vibrant colors for what all attendees agreed was Food Share's "best FED UP ever!"



The night was a feast for the senses, featuring delicious food and drinks, engaging conversations, and an opportunity for guests to connect with Food Share's mission firsthand. Attendees toured the warehouse and heard moving testimonials from the families and individuals who rely on Food Share every day. A highlight of the evening was the **Serving Hope Silent Auction**, where guests bid on beautiful hand-crafted items, knowing that every purchase directly supports Food Share's programs.

As our largest fundraiser of the year, 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.

The combination of celebration, storytelling, and giving made the evening not only memorable but also the most successful FED UP Shindig to date, raising over 1 million meals. When a community comes together, the impact of generosity spreads far and wide, touching every table, home, and heart served by Food Share.

Save the date for FED UP's 5th Annual Shindig on September 19, 2026.



The Difference Community Makes

Girl Scout Silver Project Inspires Healthy Eating and Community Support

Fourteen-year-old Girl Scout Cadet Maya of Camarillo is making a significant impact in our community with a thoughtful Silver Project that combines creativity, kindness, and practicality. Recognizing that families receiving food assistance often need ideas for meals, Maya designed bilingual recipe cards — featuring two simple, healthy recipes in both English and Spanish — to help inspire nutritious and delicious dishes.

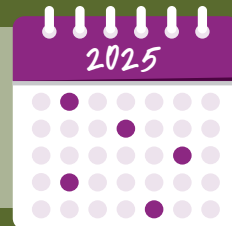
Maya's project goes beyond just sharing recipes. She wanted to ensure that families could make the most of the food they received from Food Share, providing them with tools to create meals that were both easy and nourishing. Her attention to detail and focus on accessibility demonstrate a deep understanding of community needs, even at her young age.

This past summer, Maya took her project one step further by coming into our warehouse to pack boxes alongside Food Share volunteers, personally ensuring that her recipe cards reached families across Ventura County. Her enthusiasm and dedication were inspiring to everyone she worked with, demonstrating that one person's ideas and energy can have a ripple effect in meaningful ways.

Maya's Silver Project reminds us that community support comes in many forms — not just through donations, but through thoughtful acts that empower others. Thanks to her creativity and hard work, families now have new ways to prepare healthy meals and enjoy the food they receive, making a real difference in their daily lives.



Mark Your Calendar!



Nov
8-9

Ventura County Potters' Guild Bowl of Thanks

Ventura County Potters' Guild (VCPG), Bowl of Thanks will be held at Ventura Harbor from 10 AM to 5 PM on November 8 & 9. Each day, the first 300 bowl purchases (\$25 each) will include a taste ticket, redeemable for free food samples from participating Harbor Village restaurants. This is a fantastic event in a beautiful location, and the best part is that VCPG donates Empty Bowl sales to Food Share!

For more information on this and other events, visit www.foodshare.com/events.

Dec
4-6

CAN-tree 2025 Build Hope this Holiday

This holiday season, Food Share invites you to be part of CAN-tree 2025, Ventura County's most fun and creative food drive. Families, friends, colleagues, and community groups of all sizes come together to build holiday "trees" made entirely of canned food. Each tree not only brightens the season, but also helps feed thousands of neighbors in need.

Anyone can participate! Whether it's a group of friends, a workplace team or a family, CAN-tree is about building something meaningful together.

You can dedicate your tree to someone special, create one instead of exchanging holiday gifts, or kick off a holiday party with a team build.

Every can is more than food — it's a symbol of hope and community support.



The Difference You Make



Harvesting Hope: Fresh From the Tree to the Table

Excess crops are an essential source of fresh food for our neighbors. **In 2024, 101,643 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables were gathered through 184 gleaning events** — all thanks to the dedication of Food Share volunteers led by Head Gleaner, Dave Orr.

For the past 10 years, Dave has led Food Share's gleaning program, coordinating volunteers, scouting for fruit to pick, and managing the logistics that bring fresh produce directly to families in need.

Dave's work begins long before anyone sets foot in an orchard. He lines up sites, sends texts and emails to rally volunteers, and makes sure every ladder, bin, and registration detail is in place. Over the years, the program has shifted from row crops to citrus and avocados, crops that are abundant in Ventura County and a little easier for community volunteers to harvest.

What keeps Dave climbing trees and sending reminders after a decade of service? "Sometimes I'll be up on a ladder, reaching for just one more orange," he shares. "And I think — if I get this orange, maybe a seven-year-old will have it for breakfast. That keeps me going."

The impact is felt not only by those who receive the food, but also by those who donate and volunteer. Homeowners with a single tree often light up when they hear how many pounds of fruit their tree produced and how quickly it will reach food pantries. Dave says, "It's a win-win for Food Share because those donors will tell people about Food Share. They might tell someone with an orchard, or even a friend who can offer support."

Dave sees gleaning as more than just picking fruit — it's a way of living out the lesson his parents taught him: "We're not alone. We're all in this together, so let's help each other."

He encourages anyone curious about gleaning to give it a try: the more hands, the faster and easier the work, with community impact and friendships as the lasting reward.

To Dave Orr, and to every volunteer, donor, and fruit grower who makes gleaning possible — thank you. Together, we are harvesting hope and feeding Ventura County. To find out more about gleaning visit www.foodshare.com/gleaning.



To hear Dave's complete interview, visit www.foodshare.com/impact



The Orange Heart of Food Share



At Food Share, the orange heart in our logo is what we call the Jewel. It is named after our founder, Jewel Pedi, whose vision and compassion sparked a movement to ensure no one in Ventura County goes hungry.

Today, the Jewel reminds us daily of her legacy — a symbol of love, care, and community at the heart of everything we do. It is a tribute to our volunteers' compassion, commitment, and the vital role they play in feeding Ventura County.

Food Share's work is powered by the dedication of more than 4,400 volunteers who give their time, talents, and compassion to ensure no one in Ventura County goes hungry.

Whether it's sorting food in our warehouse, harvesting fresh produce in local orchards, or assisting at community distributions, volunteers make an impact on thousands of lives and are truly the heart of Food Share.

Here's a look at the incredible difference they create every year:

Volunteer Impact Report Calendar Year 2024



44,000 Volunteer Hours

The total number of hours for on-site and off-site projects.



4,319 Annual Volunteers

The number of unduplicated volunteers.



22 Full-time Employee Equivalency

The number of full-time employees that Food Share would need to hire to equate to the volunteer hours donated.



Your Support Fuels Everything We Do

Giving Tuesday: This Year, Your Gift Matters More Than Ever

Giving Tuesday is a day when people around the world unite with a shared goal: to improve the lives of those less fortunate through our collective humanity and generosity. At Food Share, we see the power of that generosity every day — in the faces of children who no longer go to bed hungry, in the relief of parents who can put a meal on the table, and in the gratitude of seniors who know they haven't been forgotten.

This year, your help is more crucial than ever. Food insecurity affects **1 in 4 people in Ventura County**, and the demand for food has reached unprecedented levels. Together, we can make a difference.

When you donate to our **Feeding Hope Campaign** this Giving Tuesday, your gift will be **matched dollar for dollar, up to \$100,000, thanks to the Bill & JoAnne Miller Charitable Trust**. That means your generosity will have double the impact — turning \$50 into \$100, \$100 into \$200 — all to provide healthy meals to our neighbors in need.

Giving Tuesday is more than just a day on the calendar. It's a reminder that kindness can ripple through a community, transforming fear and uncertainty into hope. With your support, we can ensure that no one in Ventura County faces hunger alone.

Please double your impact this Giving Tuesday and help us reach our \$100,000 match. Together, we can fight hunger and feed hope.



Double Your Impact This Giving Tuesday!

Your gift to Food Share's Feeding Hope Campaign will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$100,000, thanks to the generous support of the Bill & JoAnne Miller Charitable Trust. \$1 provides 3 meals but with the match funding \$1 provides 6 meals!



**\$25
Provides
150 Meals**



**\$50
Provides
300 Meals**



**\$100
Provides
600 Meals**

Donate Now

www.foodshare.com

**FOOD
SHARE**
ventura county

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

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