FOOD SHARE
ventura county

the harvester

AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER

WWW.FOODSHARE.COM



feeding our future

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Thank You from Monica White, President & CEO

Dear Friends,

As summer winds down and fall approaches, I'm reminded once again of the strength and compassion of this community. Every day, because of supporters like you, Food Share provides nourishment and hope to neighbors across Ventura County.

In this issue of *Harvester,* we celebrate the life of Jewel Pedi, one of the founders of Food Share. Her vision helped shape a community where neighbors care for neighbors. We are proud to continue her legacy through the work we do every day, ensuring those who are hungry have access to the food they need with dignity and compassion.

You'll also read an exciting update about one of the most important efforts in Food Share's history — our *Feeding Our Future* Capital Campaign. As the need for food assistance continues to grow, so must our ability to respond. This campaign is about more than a building; it's about creating the space, infrastructure, and capacity needed to serve our community for generations to come. Together, we are investing in a future where every neighbor has reliable access to nutritious food and where Food Share can continue leading the fight against hunger in Ventura County.

September is Hunger Action Month, a time when communities across the country come together to raise awareness and inspire action around food insecurity. Consider joining us this month for our 5th Annual FED UP Shindig on Friday, September 18. This evening celebrates the incredible impact we make together while raising critical support for our mission. It is one of the highlights of our year!

Thank you for believing in this work and for continuing to stand with Food Share.

Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more compassionate Ventura County.

With gratitude,

Monica White

Monica White
President & CEO



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A True Jewel of Ventura County

On May 9, 2026, the Food Share family lost a true "Jewel" of Ventura County. As one of our beloved founders, Jewel Pedi was our champion and guiding light. Despite her diminutive stature, Jewel's superpower was her unwavering belief that hunger should never be whispered about in silence or carried as a burden of shame.

Beginning in 1978, Jewel and her friends declared a war on hunger in Ventura County that could not be ignored. Driven by compassion and the determination that a community should care for its own, the Food Share story began in a 2-car garage. Armed with laundry baskets, empty wine boxes, and a truck that sometimes needed brute strength to push out of the mud in the fields, Jewel and dozens of volunteers worked tirelessly to harvest thousands of pounds of produce from our local farms.

In those early days, F.O.O.D. Share stood for "Food On Our Doorsteps," a simple but powerful reminder that helping hungry neighbors starts at home. Driven by increased need and fueled by Jewel's unwavering vision to serve others with dignity and respect, what started as a small grassroots effort has transformed Food Share into the vital community resource that it is today.







There is perhaps no greater tribute to Jewel Pedi than to continue the work she and her friends began nearly five decades ago in her small two-car garage. Food Share's new home will be more than just a concrete warehouse, it is the continuation of Jewel's dream — a community where nobody goes hungry.

> ***No neighbor should go hungry.***
>
> **Jewel Pedi**



Your Legacy in Stone

Help Us Pave the Way

Earlier this year, we introduced *Feeding Our Future,* Food Share's transformational capital campaign to build a new food bank that will serve Ventura County for generations to come. Now, we're inviting our community to become a permanent part of this vision through our personalized paver program.

These engraved pavers will create a lasting pathway at Food Share's future home, honoring the individuals, families, and businesses helping lead the fight against hunger.

Every purchase directly supports the *Feeding Our Future* Capital Campaign and helps build the infrastructure needed to meet the growing demand for food assistance across Ventura County. Additional naming opportunities are also available for those interested in making a lasting impact. If interested, contact Jennifer Caldwell, jcaldwell@foodshare.com

feeding our future

Together, we are paving the way toward a hunger-free future. Visit foodshare.com/paver





Cecilio (left) and Chuys (right) at College Park drive-thru distribution

Your Impact in Action

"Everything You Give Us is a Blessing"

We met two neighbors waiting patiently in line at our College Park drive-through food distribution: Cecilio and Chuys. Though their stories are different, both shared the same concern many families across Ventura County are facing right now — the rising cost of simply getting by.

Cecilio (74) spent 45 years working hard to build a better life. He retired last year, hoping to finally enjoy a well-earned rest. Instead, he now worries about how to afford basic necessities. *"My pension is very little,"* Cecilio shared. *"It is not enough and I am very afraid."*

Sitting beside him was Chuys, who is still working full-time but struggling to stay ahead. This month, he fell behind on bills because so much of his paycheck had to go toward buying food for his family.

"We really appreciate what you give to us, to our community," they shared. *"Everything you give us is a blessing."*

Their words are a powerful reminder that hunger can affect anyone — retirees, hardworking families, and neighbors doing everything they can to stay afloat amid rising costs.

Thanks to your support, Food Share's distributions provide more than groceries. For many, like Cecilio and Chuys, they provide relief, stability and hope.

Nourishing News

Food Share is honored to be recognized for the work happening across Ventura County — achievements made possible because of our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters.



Food Share was proudly named California State University Channel Islands' **2026 Non-Profit Partner of the Year,** recognizing our ongoing collaboration and shared commitment to serving local students and families facing food insecurity.



Monica White has once again been recognized by *Pacific Coast Business Times* as one of the **2026 Top Women in Business** — a testament to her visionary leadership and dedication to fighting hunger in Ventura County.

Food Share was also honored for the fifth straight year, to be named one of **Central Coast Best Places to Work 2026** by *Pacific Coast Business Times,* reflecting the passion, purpose, and people who make our mission possible every day.

Fueling Our Youth

KIDS' KITCHEN SNACK PACKS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Access to nutritious food doesn't stop at home, it matters just as much during the day. From January to June 2026, the Kids' Kitchen Program provided 8,038 snack packs to children across Ventura County. Each pack is thoughtfully assembled with shelf-stable milk, cereal, crackers, and fruit pouch to provide energy and help bridge the gap between meals. Snack packs are distributed at 40 after-school programs, schools, agencies, and program partner sites in Ventura County, who continue to share the positive difference they make in a child's concentration and confidence.

Through Kids' Kitchen, Food Share is helping ensure that local children grow and thrive, one snack pack at a time.





Fueled By *Generosity*









Stamp Out Hunger Delivers Once Again!

The National Association of Letter Carriers' annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive once again highlighted the incredible generosity of Ventura County. This year, more than 96,000 pounds of food was collected in a single day to help support neighbors facing hunger.

Thank you to the letter carriers, USPS staff, volunteers, and community members who made this long-standing tradition such a success. Every donation helps Food Share continue feeding hope across Ventura County.







Revving Up Support for Neighbors in Need

Engines were revved and the community showed up in a big way at the Father's Day Car Show benefiting Food Share. Car enthusiasts and families came together to support neighbors facing hunger, helping provide 75,000 meals just in time for summer.

EVENTS YOU *Don't Want To Miss!*



Get FED UP *(and have the best night doing it)*

Dust off your boots and get ready, the 5th Annual FED UP Shindig is happening Friday, September 18, and it's shaping up to be the best yet!

Enjoy all the favorites, great company, delicious bites, generous spirits, and the relaxed, welcoming energy that makes this event so special. It's a feel-good evening where every laugh, bid, and toast helps provide meals for neighbors facing hunger.

We can't wait to see you there. Buy your tickets at foodshare.com/fedup

Mark Your Calendars!



Monthly Join a (free) ***Food for Thought*** breakfast or lunch to tour our warehouses and see how we feed 254,000 neighbors experiencing food insecurity each year. foodshare.com/fft

Sept 11 Join us on **September 11** as we celebrate a historic milestone for Food Share — the **groundbreaking of our future home at 1425 Mariner Drive.** This special event marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter as we build the space and capacity needed to continue Feeding Our Future for generations to come. RSVP at foodshare.com/mariner

Nov 7-8 Ventura County Potters' Guild (VCPG), ***Bowl of Thanks*** will be held at Ventura Harbor. Handmade bowls are $25 and the first 100 bowls purchased each day, will receive a ticket for free tastings at select harbor restaurants. VCPG donates all Bowl of Thanks sales to Food Share, so drop by and pick out your favorite bowl.

Dec 3-5 **CAN-tree:** The 15th Annual CAN-tree Food Drive promises to be even bigger in 2026. Why not start a new family tradition by building and decorating a CAN-tree together, or sponsor one in honor of someone special? It's a fun and meaningful way to give back during the holiday season. Full details can be found at foodshare.com/cantree

Visit foodshare.com/events for all the latest updates

Volunteer *Impact Report*

Calendar Year 2025

4,540
UNIQUE VOLUNTEERS

18,650
VOLUNTEER VISITS

44,223
VOLUNTEER HOURS



$1,846,310
VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME IN DOLLARS

5,527,875
VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME IN MEALS

22
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE EQUIVALENCY

Calculations were made using the value of a volunteer hour, $41.75, as determined by the Independent Sector at independentsector.org

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CONTACT US

Food Share Ventura County
4156 Southbank Road
Oxnard, CA 93036

TEL: 805-983-7100
www.foodshare.com
info@foodshare.com