Our Volunteers of the Year

Usually Food For Thought focuses on one outstanding volunteer to award, but this year, we had to break tradition and award the outstanding work of a group of volunteers, our Garden Fairies! Vino, Rebecca, Erica, Diana, Jacob, Sioux, Nicole, Orny, and Jude work with Doug “Dougo” Gosling and Sean Fleming, our staff gardeners, to make sure that our gardens are beautiful and productive, so that they continue growing fresh, life-giving fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers for our clients.

As Diana says, “One of my passions is to make sure that the clients get healthy produce and learn how to prepare it. By working in the garden, I can contribute to that effort, while working inside gives me the opportunity to talk to the clients who benefit from our labor of love.”

Vino finds being in the garden accomplishes several things at once: “My favorite thing about the garden is that it connects me with others. Gardening is a beautiful way to give back, it’s a way to commune with nature. It’s meditative whether you weed or harvest or sift compost or plant, and I enjoy it very much.”

The garden continues to grow and feed even more people thanks to our hard-working garden fairies, who are here no matter how hot, rainy, or chilly it is.

When you step into the garden, you know immediately you’re in a special place: one that’s designed for nourishment and healing. What was once a blackberry patch in inhospitable soil is now a beautifully designed garden full of fruit trees, berries, vegetables, and culinary and medicinal herbs.

The garden continues to grow and feed even more people thanks to our hard-working garden fairies, who are here every week no matter how hot, rainy, or chilly it is.
Why I Give

By Rebecca Guarda

There is an old Italian saying, “Chi mangia bene, vive bene,” which means “the person who eats well, lives well.” This is true at Food For Thought, where I’m a Saturday garden volunteer. Its garden is a place where lifelong friendships are formed among its plants—and it always has room to welcome more!

I’d like to be remembered in this place, too, which is why I wrote FFT into my will.

The spirit of kindness at FFT brings me back every week. It gives me strength in times of hardship, and I’ve seen it transform the lives of others. I deeply believe that growing and sharing food with love can help people heal from illness, grief, and suffering.

I’ve lost FFT friends to illness, but their memories live on. I’d like to be remembered in this place, too, which is why I wrote FFT into my will. I know this simple act will have a positive impact on many lives, helping people eat well and live well long after I’m gone. I earnestly hope others will join me.

Our garden continues to provide a space for beauty and healing, and produces organic produce and flowers for our clients.

Out of the blue, I got a call from then-volunteers Doug Gosling and Rachel Gardner. They wanted to know if we could work together to create a beautiful and healing garden all around the building. Now, 17 years later, our garden continues to provide a space for beauty and healing, and produces organic produce and flowers for our clients.

As we continue to support our clients living with HIV and welcome clients with other serious illnesses, we know the garden will continue to grow and serve the community, just like Food For Thought.
**SAVE THE DATE!**

**TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE FOR CALABASH**

*A silent auction of fine gourd art to benefit Food For Thought*

Sunday, October 2  1–5 pm

Attend one of Food For Thought’s most beloved fundraising events! Held at our world-class organic gardens, attendees enjoy fine wine, food, and live music played on hand-made gourd instruments as they view generously donated gourd, garden, and book art made by local artists. Tickets are $50 in advance, $55 at the door.

Sponsorship opportunities are now available. Contact Mary Bigelow-Gale at MaryB@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 107 to learn more.

**Thanks to our presenting sponsors:**

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**DINING OUT FOR LIFE**

Thursday, December 1

*Dine Out, Fight AIDS*

Dine out at over 80 amazing eateries in Sonoma County and 25–50% of your purchase will go directly to Food For Thought’s life-giving nutrition services. It’ll be the most satisfying meal you’ll have all year!

Want to sign up as a sponsor or participating restaurant? Contact Mary Bigelow-Gale at MaryB@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 107.

Want to be a Dining Out For Life Ambassador to help us raise funds in individual restaurants? Contact Elisa Baker at Volunteer@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 103.
Generous donor Mel Davis, husband of FFT volunteer Emily, passed away early this June. Mel was known for his kindness, generosity, and civic devotion. He served for many years as City Manager of Sebastopol and volunteered for many local causes. He was a beloved friend as well as a generous supporter of Food For Thought, and we will miss him greatly.

FFT volunteers celebrate their anniversaries.

in memory of Mel Davis

DONATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

In honor of
- Elizabeth Cotton
- Rodney DeMartini and Frederick Kasl
- Jackie Dono
- Barbara Gerber
- Parke Hafner
- Dave Hall
- Jim Humrich
- Peaches Henning and Katherine Kendall
- Shelley Rust
- Jack Welch
- Sandy Younglove

In memory of
- Dexter R. Clary, Jr.
- Steve Cohan
- Melvin Davis
- Sue Engel
- Ellis M. Gans
- Brian Kelly
- Erik Orav
- Dennis Paynter
- Stuart Peot
- Joel Robinson
- Rabbi Michael A. Robinson
- M. H. Sariaslani
- Stewart Scofield
- Robert Screes
- Ron Tokunaga
- Russell Wherritt
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

FOOD DRIVES: 2 1/2 HOURS OF YOUR TIME CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

Each food drive brings in an average of $2,500 in food and cash. In fact, food drives account for 1/3 of our annual food budget. We need your help to keep them going throughout the year.

To sign up or learn more, contact Ali Archer at AliA@FFTfoodbank.org or call (707) 887-1647 ext. 116.

Volunteer orientations are held the third Tuesday of every month at the food bank: 6550 Railroad Ave., Forestville, CA 95436. Stop by September 20 or October 18 to learn how you can help.
Contact Elisa Baker for info or to RSVP: Volunteer@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 103.

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS WITH STRONG BACKS & BIG TRUCKS

We’re always picking up lots of groceries from our food drives and generous donors around Sonoma County, and we need volunteers who are ready, willing, and able to make those pick-ups to make sure our clients get fed.

If you’d like to volunteer for FFT but can’t take on a regular weekly shift, this is the perfect fit for you.

Contact Elisa Baker at Volunteer@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 ext. 103 to learn more.
IN THEIR OWN WORDS: DOUGO & SEAN SPEAK ABOUT THE GARDEN

Garden Manager Doug Gosling and Garden Assistant Sean Fleming talk about what makes our world-class organic garden so special.

Dougo
I really believe the garden has a reciprocal relationship with Food For Thought. This is an extraordinary garden: It’s unusually abundant and exuberant, and it has to do with the energy and love that radiates from here. You can feel it when you walk in the gates—it feels like a magic garden.

There’s something about the garden that embodies the message of FFT, which is that we care about your mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical health. The garden is very reassuring to people, especially clients. The garden sends a message that we value a whole vision of health, which includes a relationship to the land and to where food comes from.

This garden is unusually abundant and exuberant, and it has to do with the energy and love that radiates from here.

The fact that FFT embraces the garden and never questioned building it is visionary and unusual. For a food bank to really understand that complete health is about having a holistic vision of the health of the planet is profound.

Sean
The garden mainly serves two purposes: one, we want to provide clients of Food For Thought with healthy, organic, locally produced fruits and vegetables. Two, we want to provide an example of what can be grown in the area. Plus, if people see some different foods, maybe they’ll be more willing to try them.

We want to provide clients of Food For Thought with healthy, organic, locally produced fruits and vegetables.

Beyond the availability of nutritious food and nutritional counseling, this organization has always provided a loving, safe area of support. There’s always a lot of love that just flows out from all the volunteers and the staff members. From the minute I was a client here, I have been impressed by how loving the staff and volunteers are toward the clients. For clients, FFT provides an island of stability and loving support.

I’ve been involved with many different nonprofits, and I have to say, Food For Thought treats their clients in a more humane manner than many others. It really blew me away. This is really and truly a special place.
Ways to Give

Become a GEM
Monthly donors ensure that our clients will always know where their next meal is coming from. As a GEM, you'll receive special benefits like limited mail solicitations, invitations to special donor events, and the joy of helping feed people in need. For more information, visit FFTfoodbank.org.

Leave a Legacy
Did you know Food For Thought’s permanent home and our antiques store are the results of legacy gifts? By including us in your will or trust, you can ensure that Sonoma County residents dealing with HIV and other serious illnesses don’t have to go hungry well into the future.

For questions or suggested language on how to include FFT, contact your estate planning professional or Ron Karp at RonK@FFTfoodbank.org.

Celebration Pathway
This lovely memorial walkway is an important part of our organic gardens. For either a $100 or $200 donation, you can install a 4” x 8” or 8” x 8” plaque inscribed with a special message and the names of loved ones. It’s a wonderful way to celebrate life events, from anniversaries to milestones to passages. For more information, contact Karen Gardner at KarenG@FFTfoodbank.org.

Contribute Now!
Food For Thought exists solely because of the generosity of donors like you. 40% of our funding comes from small, private donations. Make a difference right away by contributing to Food For Thought—just use the enclosed envelope to send in a donation. Any amount is welcome!

Left, staff member Karen Gardner holds a check from Sonoma County Wine Country Weekend, which donates to many local nonprofits.
Feeding People Throughout Sonoma County
Our Donors and Volunteers Make It Possible

DID YOU KNOW…

That FFT delivers food to 275 homebound and homeless men, women, and children throughout Sonoma County?

That the majority of our clients are located in Santa Rosa?

That donors and volunteers are our lifeblood? In 2015 alone:

• 597 volunteers contributed 28,936 hours (that’s the equivalent of 15 full-time staffers)
• Over 3,000 donors contributed $560,889

That our clients receive these services for free and for as long as they need them?
By the Numbers: Food For Thought’s Life-giving Nutritional Support
We Provide Food and So Much More

Here’s what we accomplished together in 2015:

Distributed **15,350 weekly grocery orders** (enough food for **322,350 meals**)!  

Delivered **6,214 grocery orders** to homebound and homeless clients

Served **3,554 lunches** through our Congregate Lunch Program

Led **21 group classes** on healthy & nutritious cooking

Distributed **12,374 bottles** of vitamins & supplements
In 2015, Food For Thought realized a long-held dream of expanding our mission: to continue to feed our HIV+ clients and provide those same life-giving nutritional services to Sonoma County residents dealing with other serious illnesses as well.

Thanks to the prudent long-term planning of our board and staff, Food For Thought is financially well positioned to slowly and steadily continue on this journey. Our ultimate vision is that no one in Sonoma County who is sick should have to go hungry.

We were fortunate to have received several large, one-time legacy gifts during the past few years and we made sure to invest these funds strategically. This allowed us to cover the necessary expenses we incurred this year in order to build a fiscally sound foundation.

One example is our investment in Food For Thought Antiques, Gifts, and Garden. We made improvements to the building and signage in order to be more visible and profitable well into the future. We thank you, the donors and volunteers of Food For Thought for your gifts of time, money, and commitment—we couldn’t do it without you!

Frederick W. Kasl, Outgoing President of the Board of Directors

Our finances are audited by an independent accounting firm: Dillwood, Burkel & Millar, LLP

2015 Annual Report
Making Smart Financial Decisions for Sustainable Growth

TOTAL 2015 INCOME: $2,053,025
TOTAL 2015 EXPENSES: $2,400,353

Large one-time legacy gifts from the past two years covered the new, necessary expenses we incurred this year, allowing us feed more people in need in our community.

Our finances are audited by an independent accounting firm: Dillwood, Burkel & Millar, LLP
It is the generosity of our donors that ensures that our clients continue to have the nutrition they need to survive and be healthy. Thank you to all the individuals, businesses, and foundations who contribute to this important work.
Save the Date!

Sunday,  
October 2  
1–5 pm  
See page 3 for more info

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO  
FOOD FOR THOUGHT ANTIQUES, GIFTS, AND GARDEN!

CELEBRATE WITH A 20% OFF STOREWIDE SALE AUGUST 26–28

Food For Thought Antiques, Gifts, and Garden is nine years old! To celebrate, the store will have refreshments and raffle prizes every weekend in August.

Aug. 26–28, stop by for BBQ treats and a 20% off storewide sale!