Five months ago, Food For Thought realized a long-held goal of expanding our services. We continue to improve our offerings for our HIV-positive neighbors and are now helping other critically ill members of our community who do not have enough to eat.

EATING WELL THANKS TO FFT

By Therese “Tess” Wharton

When I first got a phone call from Nina, Food For Thought’s nutritionist, I was blown away. I was amazed at the extent of the food I could receive, and that it would be ongoing. I’m forever grateful!

I started getting meals around Christmas and it’s helped so much. I’m eating better food and more fresh produce. My mental health has improved. I used to worry about where my next meal was coming from, and now that fear is gone.

I have a lot of health concerns: fibromyalgia, diabetes, and Hepatitis C. I also struggle with anxiety and depression. These conditions make it hard to manage my portion control and sugar intake.

I used to worry about where my next meal was coming from, and now that fear is gone.

The frozen meals I get from Food For Thought are my favorites, especially the lemon fish. I have arthritis in my hands, so cooking is tough. Prepared meals make it so much easier to eat well and eat the right amount.

I know that the staff and volunteers of Food For Thought care about me. I look forward to getting a weekly call to place my order. My volunteer driver, Maya, along with her son Max and baby Theo, bring my groceries every Thursday. On Valentine’s Day, Max picked a flower for me. It’s this type of kindness that keeps me going.

YOU CAN HELP FEED OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

PLEASE SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS
COMMUNITIES IN NEED
by Ron Kar, Executive Director

For 27 years, our lifesaving nutrition services have been available to anyone living with HIV in our region. Now we are bringing our comprehensive nutrition services to those in our community with other illnesses as well. Last November, we began accepting new clients with a range of serious medical conditions as part of our Vital Nutrition program.

In this short time, we have learned a lot about those experiencing hunger, poverty, and illness in our region. What is most shocking to me is that the need for our services exists in virtually every community in Sonoma County. In Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Petaluma, Windsor, and throughout our county, we have neighbors who struggle with illness and lack access to healthy food.

Everyone suffering from critical illness and malnutrition can receive the services they need to be healthy.

We’re now serving more people than ever before, and with the support of our community, I am confident in our ability to serve many more in the coming years. We know that the need is great, and that this effort will take some time. But together, we can make sure everyone suffering from critical illnesses and malnutrition can receive the services they need to be healthy.

Every day when I come to work, I am amazed and humbled by the support of our community around this expansion. Because of you, we are able to serve people across the entire county who so desperately need our help.

WHY I GIVE  By Greg Mitchell

Food For Thought is a homegrown, local organization that helps people in a very meaningful way. You can just feel the personal connections between the clients, volunteers, and staff. When I give my time or money to Food For Thought, I can feel the impact immediately, and I know that what I contribute is appreciated.

I’ve been HIV-positive since 1985, and though my life hasn’t always been easy, I feel blessed and grateful for what I have now, and I consider it an honor to give back to my community. I may not be wealthy, but I give what I can. I donate monthly through the GEM (Giving Every Month) program, and I volunteer regularly at food drives and at Dining Out For Life.

When I give my time or money to FFT, I can feel the impact immediately.

I am so happy to hear that FFT is expanding its services and serving other people who need help. This expansion is a way to help more people who are ill and need food. It will also help the organization grow as it continues to support the HIV community in Sonoma County.
EXPANSION UPDATE

Good news! The Vital Nutrition pilot program is now in full swing. We're now serving 42 men, women, and children affected by a range of serious illnesses, in addition to our 700 HIV-positive clients. We're bringing our new clients all the same lifesaving nutrition services that Food For Thought clients have always received.

We know that there are many people in Sonoma County who are ill and hungry, and we're in a great position to help feed more people in our community. We're starting small with our Vital Nutrition program, and we have set a big goal to double the number of clients we serve in five years.

To identify our new clients, we're working with West County Health Centers to refer patients who are suffering from a wide range of critical illnesses and are at great risk of malnutrition. As they get groceries, meals, vitamins, supplements, and nutrition education, we'll be monitoring improvements in their health.

This work is only possible because of our volunteers and donors. If you have contributed to the Vital Nutrition program as a volunteer or donor, then THANK YOU for making this possible.

HIV & AGING

Food For Thought has been serving people in our community living with HIV/AIDS for 27 years, and in that time, a lot has changed.

Today, many of our clients are newly diagnosed with HIV, but the majority are long-term survivors who are now dealing with the challenges of being diagnosed with other illnesses as well. Like most people blessed with a long life, many of our clients are facing health issues such as cancer, heart conditions, respiratory issues, and other age-related conditions such as frailty and isolation.

Food For Thought is committed to serving people living with HIV/AIDS for as long as they need us. We're currently expanding services for these long-term clients as well. We're now offering more food options than ever before, and are in our second year of our hot lunch program. It is our goal to remain a safe, welcoming, and inclusive place for all of our clients.
GET INVOLVED
COME TO A NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION!

Third Tuesday of every month: March 15, April 19, and May 17 at 7 pm at the food bank
Contact Elisa at volunteer@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 for more information

Ruben Carrillo
January 1, 1931–December 15, 2015
We recently said goodbye to a longtime friend. Ruben was a fierce advocate for HIV-positive Latinos, especially farmworkers and immigrants who were not getting the support they needed. Ruben was a father figure, bringing comfort, humor, and grace to those around him. Ruben volunteered at FFT to translate materials, take grocery orders, and make sure that Spanish-speaking clients were welcome in our community. We miss him dearly.

Check out our volunteers in action!

VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES
JANUARY – MARCH 2016

27 years!
Kathy and John Dennison
Gregory Venegas

20 years
Randi Megorden

19 years
Keith Fraztke
Craig Zimmerman

17 years
Michael Fontaine
John Sutherland

15 years
Khysie Horn
John Rizzi

14 years
Barbara Doyle
Jack Welch

13 years
Debbie Feraco

12 years
Allan and Mary Cone
Lyn Johnson
Sandra Orr

11 years
Joe Ambrosio

9 years
Joanie Carlson
Karen Gosling
Sandy Younglove

8 years
Cheryl Armstrong

7 years
Erica Alsbury
Tim Bernard
Marcus Cayson
John Consedine
George Harrington
Ann Kaplan
David Kruppa

6 years
Shelley Bermudez
Rebecca Guarda
Nancy Vallee

5 years
Fabian Alvarado
Bea Griffiths
Wally Krampf
CJ Vandegrift

4 years
Pepe Conran
Roberta DeMartini
David Hubbard
Jennie Madden
Michael Strain
Richard Waldringer

3 years
Donna Smith
Sharon and Bill Whitten

2 years
Steven Lovejoy
Oscar Miranda
Henry Romero
Alice Rossiter
Suzanne Ruggirello
Margie Tygerson
Gretchen Whisenand

1 year
Marge Holland
William Jake Jacobs
Lynn Lacount
David Palmer
Kathy Prather
Barbara Shatto
Karen Smith
Cheryl Vargas
WAYS TO GIVE

Give the Gift of Food + Love
By mailing in a gift in the enclosed envelope, you can provide so much for our neighbors in need. Your donation will help provide healthy groceries, prepared meals, vitamins and supplements, hot lunches, and nutrition education for those affected by HIV and other critical illnesses in our community.

Monthly Giving
Setting up a monthly gift is easy and automatic, and will help feed people in need in our community. GEM benefits include receiving limited mail solicitations from FFT, invitations to special donor events, and plenty of warm fuzzy feelings. For more information, visit FFTfoodbank.org.

Leave a Legacy
Your legacy gift will make a huge difference to those we can serve in the future, and to the future of Food For Thought. Please consider naming FFT in your will, trust, or life insurance policy. For questions or suggested language, please contact your estate planning professional or Ron Karp at RonK@FFTFoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647.

Project Africa
You can help feed orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in Namibia by supporting our partnership with Hope Initiatives. Based in Namibia’s capital, Windhoek, Hope Initiatives provides nutritious food, education, and support to over 300 children and caregivers. To support their work, write “Project Africa” on your check and send in the enclosed envelope.

DONATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN HONOR OF:
The Barone Family  Jim Kaiser
Rodney DeMartini and Frederick Kasl  Margo Triest
Barbara Doyle  Charles Wallis
Rachel Gardner  Chris Wilson and Stephanie Marquez
Kim, Shelley, and Kerry Garloff  Jim York
Julia Grant  Sandy Younglove
Parke Hafner

DONATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN MEMORY OF:
Caolín Bryan  Hector Hernandez  Erik Orav  Jacqueline Sears
Lynn Campanario  Lyman Johnston  Dennis Paynter  Gerald Simpkins
Ruben Carrillo  Daya Judge  Stuart Peot  Alan Lee Snodgrass
Mark Chilton  Larry Kittell  Steven Peper  Randall Thompson
Bill Day and Jim Hickey  Kirk Lawler  Marc Phillips  George Triest
Paul DesMarais  Ted Lawyer  Gary A. Pierce  J. Russell Wherritt
Rob Eason  Kevin McDaniel  Donald B. Rice, Jr.  Chris Wilson
Don Frost  Raymond Najar  David Robinson  Stephanie Marquez
Greg Hage  Jeffry Nathan  Stewart Scofield

The DISH  April 2016  5
An average grocery order contains enough healthy food for three meals per day for the whole week. Here’s a closer look at what we offer to all of our clients.

**Protein:** We offer a wide range of frozen meats and fish, canned tuna and chicken, deli meats, tofu, tempeh, eggs, hummus, cheese, yogurt, beans, almonds, peanut butter, and much more!

**Grains:** Clients get a variety of bread, cereals, rice, quinoa, barley, polenta, and pasta.

**Fresh produce:** Clients pick from a fully stocked produce section, featuring lots of local, seasonal fruits and veggies—including items from our own organic community garden.

**Vitamins and supplements:** We give out over 12,000 containers of supplements per year, offering high-quality options recommended by our on-staff nutritionist.

**Packaged items:** From canned soup to prepared meals, frozen veggies to energy bars—you name it, we have it.

And the list goes on! We’ve got a huge assortment of condiments, sauces, teas, baking ingredients, and more.

### CHOICE AND PERSONALIZATION

Each one of our 750 clients is a unique individual. One of Food For Thought’s founding principles was to provide not just healthy food, but food that people want. That means that we have lots of choices, and that people can pick food that is familiar and comfortable, and can also try new things.

At Food For Thought, we believe that honoring the unique needs of every person is as important as the food we provide.

“I just love all the veggies and the organic garden as well as the free-range chicken offered. The folks there could not be any kinder. I could not make it without Food For Thought, and I can’t thank them enough.” —George
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.
VISIT OUR STORE
2701 Gravenstein Highway South, Sebastopol, CA
All sales benefit Food For Thought!
11 am–5 pm every day

Save the date for two great FUNdraisers

HUMAN RACE
SATURDAY, MAY 7
Come on a fun walk with us as we raise money for Food For Thought.
Sign up or donate at www.humanracenow.org

Spring Home & Garden Tour
SUNDAY, MAY 29
Join us on a self-guided tour of spectacular West County private properties.
More information at www.FFTfoodbank.org