Food is Medicine

by Ron Karp, Executive Director

As someone who lives with a life-threatening illness, I know the importance of eating a healthy diet. I was able to recover after chemotherapy and regain my good health due in part to eating fresh, high-quality food.

Everyone with a serious illness deserves to get the food they need to heal. Our goal at Food For Thought is to make sure this happens in our community, and thanks to your support, we’re making great strides toward that goal.

Food For Thought provides vital nutritious food to our clients, including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, meat and vegetarian sources of protein, and much more. Our dietitian teaches cooking classes highlighting the foods we offer, and meets one-on-one with clients to advise them about the best way to eat for their particular health conditions.

We’ve served thousands of people over 28 years, and we know our services are effective. In a recent survey, over 90% of our clients reported that our food makes them feel better physically, that they have better eating habits, and that their overall health has improved.

Food For Thought’s services are funded almost entirely by donors like you, and provided by over 600 volunteers and our small staff. Together, we will continue to enhance and expand this critical work.

For more information about how Food For Thought positively impacts our clients and our community, check out page 4.

SAVE THE DATES!

HUMAN RACE
SATURDAY, MAY 6, 8 AM

Join Food For Thought in this great Sonoma County tradition!

Sign up or donate: humanracenow.org and select Food For Thought as your team.

HOME & GARDEN TOUR
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 10 AM - 5 PM

Join us on this self-guided tour of several Sonoma County homes, featuring biodiverse gardens, spectacular homes, and unique art.

Tickets available for purchase in mid-April at FFTfoodbank.org or by phone (707) 887-1647.
Why I Give

By Larry Needleman

Food truly is medicine. About 40 years ago, I started eating a very healthy diet, and I saw how my own health was impacted for the better. Today, at 74, I attribute my good health and vitality directly to the food I eat and regular exercise.

I joined Food For Thought’s board in 2010, because I care about making sure people in need have healthy food to eat. Over the years, I’ve been impressed by how the food keeps getting healthier, especially with the expansion of services and the new Eat Well plan. In 2013, I decided to put my money where my mouth was, and started making regular, monthly donations through the GEM (Giving Every Month) program.

I made this choice because I have seen how sustaining membership donations have helped other organizations I’ve been a part of. From the donor perspective, being a GEM donor is easy, automatic, and painless—I spent a few minutes setting up a recurring donation, and now it deducts the donation from my bank account each month. As a man of modest means, spreading out my donations this way doesn’t impact me as much as it would to donate the same amount once per year. I used to volunteer on Food For Thought’s finance committee, and I saw firsthand how monthly donations can help with budgeting. It’s efficient and dependable, and I like knowing that Food For Thought can count on the support.

For more ways to give to Food For Thought, check out page 5.

——

Cooking with Coby

Food For Thought Hires Chef to Oversee Lunch Program

We’re now serving freshly prepared food for our congregate lunch program, thanks to our new chef Coby Leibman and his volunteer cooking crew. With produce from our organic garden, Coby creates a delicious and highly nutritious soup and salad, served three days each week.

The lunch program provides a place for our clients to receive a regular hot and healthy meal and a chance to socialize. An added benefit is they can learn about new ingredients and the tastiness of fresh, local food.

Food For Thought would like to thank the dozens of individuals, local businesses, and foundations that have made this lunch program possible.
2016
BY THE NUMBERS

15,667 grocery orders were distributed with enough healthy food to prepare...

21 meals per week
Those orders include fresh produce, whole grains, healthy protein, packaged items, and for those unable to cook, prepared meals.

100 people per week were reached by our congregate lunch program.

93% of our clients are highly satisfied with our services.

Food insecurity dropped to zero for clients receiving our services. Diet quality improved dramatically, and most have made improvements in weight, blood pressure, and mental health.

FFT’s Organic Gardens
Growing Fresh Food & Creating Health

The beautiful and unique gardens that surround Food For Thought began 18 years ago when we moved into our permanent Forestville location. Designed in collaboration with Occidental Arts & Ecology Center (OAEC), the garden program was created to serve clients, volunteers, and visitors in a number of ways: as a welcoming place of beauty; as a therapeutic experience of gardening and connecting with nature; to grow seasonal organic produce; to teach about the links between food, nutrition, and well-being; and to provide a gathering place for mourning, respite, and community-building.

Over the years, thanks to the hard and creative work of many volunteers, the gardens have continued to evolve, extending the food bank’s work of nurturing, informing, inspiring, and supporting people living with HIV and other serious illnesses. The site thrives with mature fruit trees, grape arbors, and productive beds full of annual and perennial vegetables, herbs, and flowers. An abundance of produce is harvested each week, supplying food for FFT’s client orders, congregate meals, U-pick project, and cooking classes. Our productive compost and worm boxes significantly reduce food waste. Our AIDS Memorial Garden includes a new installation of plants to offer clients and visitors strength, courage, and support as they experience the transformative process of grief and loss.

Want to help out with the garden? Contact Elisa Baker at volunteer@FFTfoodbank.org or (707) 887-1647 x103

Photos: From top, Elisa Baker, Karen Ahn, Jude Mariah, Dave Hall Photography
Ways to Give Back

✔ **BECOME A GEM**

Monthly donors are indispensable! Plus, GEMs receive special benefits, including limited mail solicitations, invitations to special donor events, and the joy of helping feed people in need.

*Visit FFTfoodbank.org to learn more.*

✔ **SHOP FOOD FOR THOUGHT ANTIQUES IN SEBASTOPOL**

Shop one of the most unique stores in Sonoma County where there's something for everyone: antiques, gifts, garden art, mid-century modern, collector's books, Sonoma County farm relics, and more!

Proceeds from the store provide life-giving nutrition services for Sonoma County residents living with HIV and other serious illnesses. Come browse—the friendly staff and volunteers will help you find what you need.

Open daily from 11 am to 5 pm

*2701 Gravenstein Highway S., Sebastopol  (707) 823-3101 FFTantiques.com*

✔ **LEAVE A LEGACY**

Did you know our building and our antiques store exist because of legacy gifts? Include FFT in your will or trust and you can ensure that Sonoma County residents dealing with HIV and other serious illnesses will have plenty to eat well into the future.

*For questions or suggested language on how to leave a legacy to FFT, contact your estate planning professional or email Ron Karp at RonK@FFTfoodbank.org.*
VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES
January – March 2017

28 Years!
Kathy & John Dennison
Gregory Venegas

21 Years
Randi Megorden

20 Years
Keith Fratzke

18 Years
John Sutherland

15 Years
Barbara Doyle
Jack Welch

13 Years
Lyn Johnson
Sandra Orr

12 Years
Joseph Ambrosio

10 Years
Joanie Carlson
Karen Gosling
Sandy Younglove

9 Years
Cheryl Armstrong

8 Years
Marcus Cayson
John Considine
George Harrington
Ann Kaplan
David Kruppa

7 Years
Rebecca Guarda
Shelley Rust
Nancy Vallee

6 Years
Erica Alsbury
Fabian Alvarado

5 Years
Pepe Conran
David Hubbard
Jennie Madden
Michael Strain
Richard Waldinger

4 Years
Donna Smith

3 Years
Oscar Miranda
Henry Romero
Suzanne Ruggirello
Margie Tygerson
Gretchen Whisenand

2 Years
Erik Deste
Vincent DiCamillo
Marge Holland
Jake Jacobs
Karen Smith
Cheryl Vargas

1 Year
Arel Alvarez
Christine Anderson
Tammy Barcomb
Raleigh Elliott
Barbara & John Ellis
Ron Hennessey
Terry Jackson
Leslie Kielar
Eric Leuschner
Alex Newhouse
Sandra Pardo
Rachel Platt
John Andrew Wesley
Evan Wright

Donations have been made
In Honor of

John Adams
Kris Barrows
Dena Bliss
Ryan Boduch
Gene Bonino and Will Brown
Allen Chivens
Elizabeth and John Cotton
Barbara Doyle
Karen Gardner
Rachel Gardner
Miki Hashizume
Sabhat Imran
Doug Jackson
Ron Karp
Dan Lapsansky
Jan Marsiglia
Aliyah Rautenberg
Kathleen Richards
Thurston Smith
Sandy Younglove

Donations have been made
In Memory of

Daniel Bunch
Victor Calvi
Ruben Carrillo
Dexter R. Clary, Jr.
Bob Cornwall
Kathy D’Asaro
Larry Duling
Sue Engel
John Giambastiano
Toby Hemenway

Daya Judge
Brian Kelly
Ted Lawyer
George Lord
Kevin McDaniel
Chris Merryman
Erik Orav
David Palmer
Dennis Paynter
Stuart Peot

Steven Pepper
Marc Phillips
David Robinson
Joel Robinson
Rabbi Michael A. Robinson
Stewart Scofield
Gerald Simpkins
Ron Tokunaga
George Triest
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.

Food For Thought • FFTfoodbank.org

The Dish Newsletter • March 2017 • 7
Donate to Food For Thought today
and provide food + love
for our neighbors in need.

SPRING EVENTS

HUMAN RACE
SATURDAY, MAY 6, 8 AM

Join Food For Thought in this great
Sonoma County tradition!

Sign up or donate: humanracedonow.org and
select Food For Thought as your team.

HOME & GARDEN TOUR
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 10 AM - 5 PM

Join us on this self-guided tour of several Sonoma County homes,
featuring biodiverse gardens, spectacular homes, and unique art.

Tickets available for purchase in mid-April at
FFTfoodbank.org or by phone (707) 887-1647.