

Hunger to Hope

Good news from the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

May 2017

Thank you for providing for my family

My name is Norma. This is the first time I've come to this mobile pantry. I brought my son Daniel with me and I have two older children who live with us while they attend college.

I rent two rooms in a house, and we do our own cooking in the kitchen. I clean houses and babysit to pay the rent and our bills. I haven't been able to work full time for a while. I was very sick when I was pregnant with Daniel, and then it was too expensive to get child care for him when he was little. Now that he's in school, I was able to get him into an after-school program so I can work full time again.

"It's a blessing, and I'm very grateful." —NORMA

Education for a better life

My older son and daughter are 19 and 20. They're both going to school and working part time. They're doing well and getting their education, so I try not to put any extra burden on them. I had them when I was young, so I didn't have the same opportunities. Now I want them to succeed at doing what I couldn't do. My son is studying to become a mechanic. My daughter is at community college, but she is transferring to UCLA later this year. I'm proud of what they are accomplishing.

My friend told me about the food distribution, and I was happy to come down with her and get this food for my family. I'll do anything I can to keep enough food on the table. We're not picky, so everything they give us we'll put to use. I thank God we've never had to go hungry.

I really appreciate the opportunity this food distribution gives to all the families who are here. It's a blessing, and I'm very grateful.



This was Norma's first visit to a food distribution, and she was happy to receive food for her three children.

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MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

A message from Michael



Michael Flood
President and CEO

“We’re feeding children today and investing in a healthier future for them.”

Every summer, the Food Bank’s Summer Lunch Program steps in to meet a critical need for children

who no longer have access to daily school meals. Now in its 10th year, this program serves a weekday, kid-friendly meal to children at 70 sites across Los Angeles County. Providing children with access to nutritious food allows them to learn, grow and play. In the summer, it lets children be children without the stress of worrying about their next meal.

Recently I was able to visit a site similar to the Boys & Girls Club that Ruben runs. Listening to one young girl talk about how good the food tastes and what she’s learned about the types of food that can help her grow up strong illustrated for me just what these meals accomplish. Not only are we feeding these children today, we’re also investing in a healthier future for them.

Thanks to a grant from Albertsons and the Entertainment Industry Foundation, we’re excited to be launching a new program to serve children breakfast while they’re out of school. During this initial year of the program, we will be identifying the areas of greatest need for children who require food assistance during summer vacation, as well as throughout the school year.

Ensuring children have the nutrition they need to thrive is a year-round endeavor. We are so thankful for your continued support as we work to leverage both financial and food resources to ensure our children have the healthy food they need to thrive. We hear from parents like Norma and Erin about how hard it is to keep enough nutritious food on the table and how deeply grateful they feel for what you do to make that possible. On behalf of all those we serve, thank you.

Gratefully,

Michael Flood, President and CEO

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

A birthday celebration that gives back



For eight years, Ryan and his friends have been volunteering at the Food Bank on his birthday.

When Ryan Colburn turned 25, he wanted to do something different for his birthday, so he invited his friends to a “volunteer party” at the Food Bank. Now, every January a group of Ryan’s friends and family—anywhere from 25 to 50 volunteers—spend a Saturday morning sorting food or filling distribution boxes.



Ryan’s mom joins him for his birthday celebration at the Food Bank.

“It’s a hodgepodge group of old and new friends, and we have a great time. Everybody’s smiling and we get to catch up with each other,” says Ryan. “Everybody in our group ends up saying, ‘I feel good. That was fun.’ It’s easy to identify with the benefit you’re providing.”

The bank of kindness

Although Ryan has been fortunate enough not to need food assistance, the idea of helping others relates to his desire to practice reciprocity. “I do have some need in my life for kindness. I benefit from the kindness of others, and I need to put some deposits back into that bank if I’m making withdrawals from it,” he explains.

“It’s easy to identify with the benefit you’re providing.”

—RYAN

Ryan was particularly drawn to volunteering at the Food Bank because he loves the city in which he was born and raised. “I want to make sure I’m feeding back into the city and the city’s

health,” says Ryan. “I like the Food Bank because of the far reach they have. They touch a lot of people, and they do a great job of being universally helpful.”

After doing this for eight years, Ryan has a new understanding of what he calls “this whole big ecosystem that is in place to address the hunger issue.” It’s affected how he views the world as he encounters issues of hunger, need and food waste. “I’m more aware of that dimension of society, and I hope it’s true for my friends as well.”

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Boys & Girls Club: Growing healthy children

Every weekday during the summer, the 200 children who come to the West Valley Boys & Girls Club know they can count on a healthy lunch. As one of our partner agencies, the Boys & Girls Club participates in our Summer Lunch Program, as well as our after-school meal program during the rest of the year. These programs provide nutritious, child-friendly meals to the children they serve.

It's a service that branch manager Ruben Rodriguez says they couldn't offer without the support of the Food Bank. "For the demographics we serve, the food program is definitely a necessity," says Ruben.

Along with the meal programs that ensure these children get the food and nutrition they need to be able to focus on learning, the Boys & Girls Club offers homework tutoring during the school year and a variety of classes and activities for children and teens. This includes a college-bound program that has successfully encouraged first-generation attendance at colleges and trade schools. "This is something I deeply believe in. We're making a huge impact; we're changing generations," says Ruben.

Ruben grew up in the San Fernando Valley. He remembers the mentors that kept him off the streets. "I knew from day one that if I had an opportunity, I would give back and give these kids an opportunity for a better life," says Ruben who has been with the program for 22 years.



To those who support the Food Bank, Ruben says, "Without your contribution to this program, there would be a lot of hungry little boys and girls. With the Food Bank and the Boys & Girls Club, everything comes together so we're able to provide a happy place."

Ruben (back right) likes to play soccer with the students during activity time.

"Without your contribution, there would be hungry boys and girls." —RUBEN

Thank you for healthy meals for my daughter

My name is Erin Jane. My daughter attends the Boys & Girls Club, and I'm thankful for the healthy meal she gets here.

I have an office job that is just part time. I grew up helping in my parent's business, so I'm good at doing office work. Unfortunately, with what I make, it's difficult to cover all our bills. We only live in a studio apartment, but by the time I pay for the rent, electricity and my car, I'm counting pennies for everything else. Having a full-time job that pays more would make a big difference for my daughter and me.

Berries for a treat!

My paycheck doesn't go far. There was one month where I had to go to a food pantry just so we could have enough to eat. That was a big help. People always say you should eat healthy, but it's hard to afford that kind of food. When you're on an extreme budget, it's a lot more expensive to get a salad than a 99-cent cheeseburger. When I do get extra money, I buy my daughter berries. That's her favorite treat. If she could live off fruit, she would!

We aren't starving, and we certainly have a much better life than many people in the world, so I'm grateful. I want to say thank you to the people who support the Food Bank. You're not just helping my family but so many other families who are struggling.



"The food was a big help."
—ERIN JANE

THANK YOU

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Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.

The mission of the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank is to mobilize resources to fight hunger in our community.

Hunger to Hope is a quarterly publication. If you are receiving multiple copies, please call us at (323) 234-3030, ext.140.

We welcome questions, comments and ideas. Please address all correspondence to:

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL
FOOD BANK

Communications Department
1734 East 41st Street
Los Angeles, CA 90058
(323) 234-3030, ext. 196
pr@lafoodbank.org

Your support provides healthy meals for healthy children

Across Los Angeles County, 66 percent of school children are eligible for free and reduced-price school lunches, and over 500,000 children live in food-insecure households. When that last school bell rings letting students out for summer break, these children lose access to at least one daily meal. For families who are already struggling, trying to provide these extra meals can take a real toll on the family budget. At the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, meeting this critical summer need is an important focus of our child nutrition programs.

Over 500,000 children live with food insecurity.

All summer long, the Food Bank's Summer Lunch Program will provide nutritious, kid-friendly lunches to at-risk children and teens at parks, libraries, Boys & Girls Clubs and summer program sites across the county. Each hot or cold lunch consists of a main entrée, low-fat milk, a fruit and a vegetable. Over 3,000 students will know they can count on this meal every weekday thanks to the support of people like you.

Your gift today will help us provide summer lunches for children and ensure our partner agencies and mobile distributions have the healthy food choices their families need. You can give today by going online to lafoodbank.org/donate or sending in the enclosed reply slip. Not only will you be ensuring children don't have to experience hunger, but you'll be providing the nutrition they need to grow up strong. As Ruben says on page 3, "We're making a huge impact. We're changing generations." Thank you for investing in the healthy future of our children.



The Summer Lunch Program offers fresh fruits and vegetables with each meal, encouraging children to enjoy a well-balanced diet.

Thank you for these hunger-fighting gifts

We are honored to recognize the **S. Mark Taper Foundation** for their generous gift. This contribution means that fewer people will be at risk for hunger, more children will experience better health and school performance, and more low-income seniors will achieve an improved quality of life.

The **Albertsons Companies Foundation**, **The Vons Foundation** and the **Entertainment Industry Foundation** have made a major gift through *Hunger Is* to help us launch a pilot Children's Breakfast Program. Thanks to this generous funding, in 2017 we plan to serve 1,100,000 supplemental breakfast meals to 2,500 children.

We are deeply grateful to **Target** for their significant support of our *Produce Distribution to Schools Program*. Their contribution will be used to purchase food for distribution to 2,400 underserved children at seven elementary schools.

Stay connected to the work you support!



MY SUMMER DONATION

YES, Michael, I want every child and family who is struggling to have access to healthy food this summer.

☐ \$150 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ **I'll join the Meal A Day Monthly Giving Program.**
My first gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

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To charge your gift by phone, please call (323) 234-3030, ext. 140. **It's easy! Give online at lafoodbank.org/donate**

Please make your check payable to: **Los Angeles Regional Food Bank**
1734 East 41st Street | Los Angeles, CA 90058-1502 | (323) 234-3030

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