

# The Bread Box

A Publication of the Thurston County Food Bank

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## Clients Receive More Produce with TCFB Participation in CSAs

During the winter months, the Food Bank sees a dramatic decline in donated produce, reducing the availability of these nutrient packed foods to clients.

To help remedy this void, the Food Bank partnered with a local farmer through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. CSA's are a way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer, committing to purchase a certain amount of produce during a given season. The farmer then provides boxes of produce on a given schedule.

February thru May of 2009, the Food Bank's winter CSA program reached 128 clients including both individuals and families. A total of

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## Summer Mobile Meal Program

For many families, transportation is the largest barrier to accessing food assistance. The Summer Mobile Meal pilot project worked to remove that barrier by directly distributing sack lunches to children living in low-income neighborhoods.

Traveling from one location to another on a fixed route, the summer program served between 120 and 150 meals a day at five neighborhoods in the Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater area. The numbers of children participating varied from day-to-day, often depending on weather. The largest stop had 65 children on July 14, 2009. During the first month of operation, 224 different children were served more than 1,000 total meals.

The program was created to help address many families need for increased food once school is out. Sites were chosen collaboratively with school district and city recreation program staff.



*From left, Anthony, Elizabeth and Kelsy load up the Food Bank's newest van with sack lunches for the Mobile Summer Meal Program. This pilot project funded by local donations provided sack lunches to school age children at five locations in the greater Olympia area. The van a gift of the Fred Meyer Foundation enabled the program to transport the lunches to where the kids are.*

## Workplace Giving Campaigns Kick Off

Each fall marks the beginning of the annual giving campaign season.

The largest annual campaign locally is the Combined Fund Drive through the State of Washington. It is the Thurston County Food

Bank's single largest source of support, coming through payroll deduction.

Similarly, the Combined Federated Campaign is the annual giving campaign for Federal

*"Giving Campaigns" continued on back*



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# Gleaning Helping to Increase Nutritional Density with Local Produce



Heather Davis (center), a Vista volunteer and the Food Bank's gleaning coordinator, unloads gleaned produce with the help of Donna Tabor (right) and Curtis Topliss. Gleaning is harvesting unmarketable produce that would otherwise be tilled under.

As part of a state-wide effort spearheaded by Rotary First Harvest, the Thurston County Food Bank has a new staff member charged with developing a local gleaning program.

Heather Davis, a Vista/AmeriCorps Member, has been with the Food Bank since April busily building relationships with local farmers. The goal is to increase the quality and quantity of the produce available to clients.

Local growers are very willing to donate their surplus produce but do not have the resources to pay laborers to harvest the crops or transport the produce to the Food Bank. Gleaning programs provide resources to harvest and transport surplus and donated agricultural goods.

Through Heather's efforts, and the early support of Kirsop Farms, Helsing Junction and Wobbly Cart, August gleaning teams harvested hundreds of pounds of local organic produce, from leafy green vegetables to radishes.

## Cash Gifts Are Important

The Food Bank enjoys strong support from our community, but the very real fact is, we're serving more people than ever before. Your cash contributions are critical to the continued success of the Thurston County Food Bank.

Even though food drives continue to grow, they are not keeping up with the number of clients and are limited to non-perishable foods. The Food Bank buys meat, produce, eggs and dairy products, and some non-perishable, foods such as peanut butter, mac & cheese, and canned meats. We also need to purchase specialty items -- like baby formula, Ensure, and vegetarian products -- to meet specific dietary needs.

Then there's our large warehouse to heat in the winter and cool in the summer, equipment to maintain from forklifts to computers, a small number of highly motivated staff to pay and basic supplies to buy.

The Thurston County Food Bank could not help so many without your support of time, food and cash donations. Thank You!

## Clients Receive More Produce *(con't from front pg.)*

61 families received boxes of produce over the four month period, enjoying such things as potatoes, cabbages, onions, broccoli, cauliflower and hardy leafy greens such as kale. There was more interest in the program than boxes available, so some families went on a waiting list.

When asked about the program, the majority of clients found the produce familiar and the accompanying information useful for cooking, storing, and identifying the produce. "All the produce was familiar and delicious," commented one client. "Very helpful. I love to cook," said another.

A few suggestions from clients included a desire for more greens, particularly salad greens, as well as more frequent distribution. The Food Bank anticipates expanding the program in 2010 by about 20 shares, thus serving 25 additional families.

## Thanksgiving Volunteers Needed

Each year the Thurston County Food Bank prepares Thanksgiving Day meal baskets for the needy in our community.

This effort has been very successful over the years due to the help of volunteers. Families, groups, and individuals are all needed to box up the food for distribution the week of Thanksgiving.

For more information, or to join us on November 19, 21 and/or 22, please call 360.352.8597.



# Our Diverse Programs Make a Difference!

**BASIC FOOD BAGS.** Non-perishable food for a week, as well as fresh produce, frozen meat, bread, dairy and some frozen foods.

**DIABETIC BAGS.** Includes fruit packed in own juices or water, low salt soups and vegetables, and foods without sugar.

**VEGETARIAN BAGS.** Includes vegetable based soups, meat substitutes, and vegetable based proteins.

**NO COOK BAGS.** Includes foods that don't require cooking, snack/breakfast bars, and easy open cans.



**BABY FOOD.** Three days of baby food sorted by stages 1-3, rice cereal and formula, both milk and soy based.

**NUTRITIONALS.** Based on availability, Ensure and other liquid nutritionals are available on request as a meal supplement or replacement.

**CSFP (The Commodities Supplemental Food Program).** This case managed Federal Program targets seniors, women, infants, and children. Eligibility requirements must be met before receiving services and are tested every six months. The amount of food is consistent from month to month and offered in addition to TEFAP and Basic Food Bags. Service level is based on the individuals.



**HOLIDAY MEAL BASKETS.** In addition to our regular food bags, meal baskets are prepared and distributed for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter (Easter baskets for the kids too), and the Fourth of July.

**TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program).** These Federal Commodities are distributed on a first come first served basis starting the first of each month to those who meet income guidelines. Although the amount and quantity is limited, it is offered in addition to the Basic Food Bag.



**FORKs (For Kids Program).** This is our school backpack meal program, targeting hungry, homeless children. Two days worth of kid friendly foods are provided on Fridays at elementary schools, creating a support bridge for the Free and Reduced School Lunch (Breakfast) Program.

**SUMMER SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM.** Under the umbrella of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction provides, sack lunches to children in collaboration with local service providers.

**BASIC FOOD PROGRAM EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.** Under this USDA Program, staff assist clients in completing the Basic Food Program application and help in negotiating the system. The goal is to improve access to food stamp benefits.

**COOKING DEMOS.** Held once each month, these demonstrations provide recipes and food samples to encourage the use of unfamiliar fresh produce or under-utilized shelf stable products. Sponsored in part by the Bayview School of Cooking and other community groups.



**BIRTHDAY BAGS.** For parents with children (up to sixth grade), bags with small gifts, party favors, and cake mixes are available for a family celebration. The bags are designed to be age and gender appropriate.

## Fun at the Thurston County Fair

*Thurston County Fair Berry Pie Contest judges (including TCFB Director Robert Coit) wait for the next sample. This event, sponsored by Spooner Farms, provides contestants with prizes, as well as donating pie sale proceeds to the Thurston County Food Bank.*

*The ongoing support of the Fair, its Board and the 4-H clubs is most welcome. Our thanks to every one who participated in One Buck Wednesday and of course the Berry Pie Contest.*



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**STAYING  
CONNECTED  
IN TOUGH  
TIMES . . .  
GET HELP  
PAYING THE  
PHONE BILL**

More than ever, people need to stay connected to community emergency resources to help them survive economic struggles. Access to local telephone service can be the difference between finding help, and feeling isolated.

The WA Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP) offers eligible residents a low-cost landline phone for about \$8 a month. Those receiving assistance from DSHS could qualify for the program.

The ability to stay connected with family, friends and resources can improve the quality of life for those who may be struggling. Please pass this information on to those who need to stay connected.

For more information call the Help Line WTAP at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882) or e-mail [consumer@utc.wa.gov](mailto:consumer@utc.wa.gov).

# Backpacks Get Food to Kids

Taking food home in school backpacks is a simple concept with tremendous impact. A principal noted that classroom behavior and readiness to learn has improved dramatically among participating children. Counselors ask for the program to be expanded to serve non-homeless children (not currently eligible), who could benefit from the additional food.

The backpack For Kids Program (ForKs) is a collaborative effort uniting local service providers, school districts, and the community to ensure kids receive food outside of school. A child's school backpack is used as a delivery system for a number of human service organizations. The Food Bank's food bags are delivered each week to staff at local schools and students retrieve the food from a counselor's office, where the transaction is private.

During the 2008-2009 school year, the Food Bank's ForKs program serviced elementary children in North Thurston, Olympia, Tumwater and Griffin School districts. The program served 650 children a week at 27 elementary schools, targeting homeless children enrolled in the Free/Reduced School Meal Program.

ForKs served 1,113 (26% increase) homeless children over the course of the year, providing 18,822 (139% increase) weekend meal bags.

### ForKs Impact per School District

N. Thurston: 470 kids and 8158 bags  
Tumwater: 182 kids and 2551 bags  
Olympia: 421 kids and 7672 bags  
Griffin: 40 kids and 441 bags



## Giving Campaigns (con't from front pg.)

employees, also through payroll deduction. Of course one of the oldest annual giving campaigns is the United Way's, which reaches out to all members of our community, also encouraging giving through payroll deduction.

Remember, your gift can often result in additional support from your employer through matching gift programs. Check it out.

This fall, please consider giving locally through your workplace. For the cost of a lunch out each month you can make a real difference in the lives of the hungry in our community.

### Thurston County Food Bank's Core Values

**Philosophy:** "We believe that the hungry must be fed in an atmosphere of neighbor helping neighbor."

**Mission:** "It is the mission of the Thurston County Food Bank to eliminate hunger within our community."



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