

### “I have a problem saying no when a child is hungry.”



Suzie Lewis

With help from the community, working mothers like Kathy Beach can provide a few extras for daughter MacKenzie.

Suzie Lewis, site director of the Community Child Care Council in Santa Rosa explains how the REFB helps her feed 23 hungry children each day. “We’re allotted money from the state for half an egg and 3 oz. of juice per child. But what hungry child after playing outside for an hour is satisfied with that?” Suzie asks. It is only through shopping at the REFB for bread and fresh fruit, that our member agencies like the 4Cs can meet their ever increasing challenges.

The 4Cs is a perfect example of how contributions to the REFB radiate throughout the community. With 9 centers providing day care in Sonoma County, numerous families can afford to work, assured their children are being well taken care of. It’s working parents like Kathy Beach who benefit in unexpected ways. Being offered a bag of food at the holidays provides just the extra money she needs to sign her daughter MacKenzie up in a local sports program.

Marinell Eva, 4Cs Executive Director, explains how they started 30 years ago with a simple food program and the mission to support the well being of every child in Sonoma County. Now each site has its own cook. Once they started shopping at REFB, they saw costs go down while increasing their opportunities to help the entire family.

#### **It’s Apple Day in Cotati**

In Cotati, site director Kay Cameron always tries to put a little extra out for hungry siblings and parents. “If we have surplus fruit and bread, anything that we can’t use and will go to waste, I put it out on the counter with a sign, Please Help Yourself.”

Kay’s Apple Day is an especially big hit with the kids. When beautiful red Delicious apples came into REFB from a donor in Washington state, Kay loaded up so her pre-schoolers could eat one at school and take one home. Now every morning the children want to know, “Is It Apple Day?”  
Congratulations 4Cs on your 30th anniversary.

# Feeding Children Nourishing Minds

By David Goodman *REFB's Executive Director*

Improving student performance at 'under-performing' schools is a hot topic these days. I believe childhood hunger needs to be part of this discussion. Study after study has proven that a hungry stomach defies a hungry mind. In Sonoma County, we have a serious hole in the *food safety net* protecting our children, and if we are to repair it as a community, we must begin planning now.

We need to recognize that the school bell announcing vacation, whether it is the winter holidays or the long months of summer, represents the beginning of hunger for many children. Consider these staggering figures: at Brook Hill Elementary in Santa Rosa, 81 percent of the children depend on free or reduced price lunches. It's 70 percent at Flowery Elementary in Sonoma and 58 percent at Cali Calmecac Charter School in Windsor. It is distressing that in a county with a culture so rich in food and wine, we rank 38th out of the state's 58 counties in providing summer lunches to needy children. What happens to these children during *the holidays*? How many of these kids will go without? Many, I suspect. Poverty relishes a holiday.

For those who want to help, there are many ways to make a difference. You can contact your school board and request that they provide food to low-income children during vacations and holidays, volunteer your time at a local food pantry, contribute financial resources to organizations serving children, call your legislators and ask for legislation and funding that supports the efforts of those who feed children, or start a food program with your business, community service group, or congregation.

## The hardest part of effecting change is deciding to get involved.

To prepare for next summer's long school vacation, we have only 8 months to establish a sufficient number of distribution sites at schools, churches and other locations where children can eat. Our efforts now can help close the "summer gap" that leaves more than 16,000 school-age kids without adequate food for months at a time.

### A New Hit from KFOG Helps Feed the Hungry



With rare live tracks from Jack Johnson, Norah Jones, Stevie Nicks and Elvis Costello to name just a few of the 19 participating artists, KFOG's newest CD, Archives 9 is sure to be a hit. Last year's Archives 8 release generated over \$24,000 for REFB. For more information on where you can purchase this exclusive CD, visit [www.kfog.com](http://www.kfog.com).

### A Day of Caring Makes a Difference



In honor of this year's Day of Caring, North Coast Mortgage sent 51 of their employees to REFB to help us. Large groups often get a lot accomplished, but this group really out did itself! In a matter of a few hours, they packed 744 boxes of food for our children's programs, they labeled 6,000 cans and they bagged over 3,000 pounds of fresh grapefruit.

## Every Child Every Day Every Meal

14,181 children in Sonoma County live in poverty. The most devastating symptom of poverty is hunger. The Redwood Empire Food Bank, in partnership with member agencies and local community organizations, is working to insure that every child in Sonoma County gets the proper food and nutrition they need, every day. Here are some of the actions we are taking.

- Creating additional food distribution sites throughout the county to serve children through REFB's Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
- Operating A Child's Portion, which provides nutritious food to those pre-school children that fall through the cracks and are unable to access other assistance.
- Encouraging local non-profits and community groups to sponsor an after-school, holiday or summer food program.
- Joining with other hunger advocates to write state and federal legislators in support of Child Nutrition Reauthorization, due to expire in 2003.
- Contacting school and community leaders about expanding the Summer Food Program so that needy children don't go hungry when school is out.

As a community, we have a special responsibility to our most vulnerable population, children. If you are interested in hunger issues or would like to sponsor a CSFP site, contact Terry Garner, Programs Manager, at 523-7900 ext. 20.



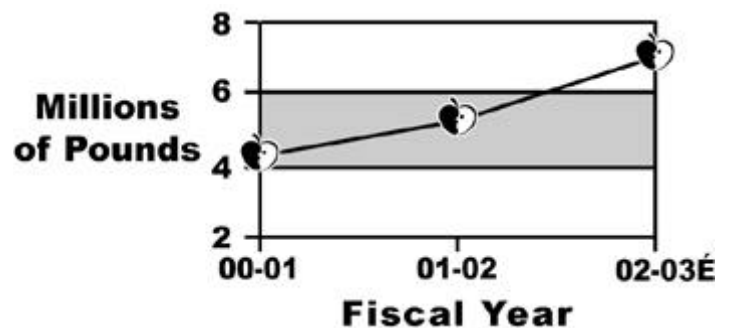
### Our smallest contributors are often the most inspiring

Every week, Leah Newton receives her \$1.41 allowance – a penny, nickel, dime, quarter and dollar bill - with the challenge that the money be divided between savings, gifts, spending and charity. It took Leah over a year to save up her contribution of \$19.80 to help feed children not as fortunate as herself. As Leah, 5, posed atop a box of food being packed for A Child's Portion (a program that feeds children exactly her own age), we were all reminded that charitable giving can and should be incorporated into everyone's budget. Even the smallest gifts can make a difference.

## Meeting Our Poundage Goals

With help from everyone in the community, REFB was able to collect and distribute over 5 million pounds of food this past fiscal year.

That's the equivalent of 4 million meals. Next year, we hope to increase our poundage by 2 million pounds with your help.



## Goodbye Ken and Good Luck



Sonoma County lost one of its best friends when Ken Kushner moved his family to Southern California this summer. And the Redwood Empire Food Bank lost a valued member of its Board of Directors, as well as a volunteer who helped operate one of the area's largest food distribution programs.

Ken firmly believes, "Nobody should go without food. Not children, not seniors, not sick people. No one."

As manager and director of FISH in Santa Rosa, Ken fed nearly 60,000 needy people each year. Last year alone he picked up over 200,000 pounds of food at REFB.

"I've been doing this for more than 13 years, six days a week, and I get more from this than I give. I feel good when I go home at night," Kushner explains. "It's bad out there for a lot of people and if we can help people we should do that. Everyone can make a difference and we all should try."

**Thank you Ken for all your goodwill,  
time, and hard work.**

## Mark Your Calendars

Opportunities To Help



### Start Now

Calling all businesses, schools and community groups - it's time to set up your holiday food and funds drive. Call Food Drive Coordinator Lee Bickley at 523-7900, ext. 15.

### November

Look for our brown paper grocery bag in your home delivered Press Democrat during the week before Thanksgiving. Fill up your bag with canned foods and deposit at the REFB, your local Safeway, G & G or other participating locations.

### December 16

Tune in to ABC 7, as Safeway kicks off its annual holiday food drive with live coverage. We hope Sonoma County's own Deborah Villalone will join us again this year.

### Volunteer Saturdays

Join us from 8 to noon on November 9, 16 or 23, December 7 or 14 and help us prepare for our holiday food distributions. Reserve your spot by calling Lindajoy Vantrease at 523-7900, ext. 17.

## How Many Tortillas Would You Swap For a Box of Cornflakes?



*REFB's Executive Director, David Goodman, explains how non-profit food banking is big business during a featured interview in Sonoma Business Magazine's August issue.*

“It’s an incredibly dynamic business.” says David Goodman as he talks to Brian Fies of the Sonoma Business Magazine. “Day to day we take into account hunger, poverty, the economy, grocery, agriculture, the capacity of our customers and the ability of our agencies to take the product...it’s the professional drive to grow and be the best business you can be that feeds a lot of people.”

REFB moved more than five million pounds of food last year, providing the equivalent of four million meals. Goodman also realizes that services such as transportation can be as valuable as food. Using a \$40,000 trailer donated by Grove Street Winery, staffers from REFB drive up and down the state delivering goods to and from other food banks and accepting food in trade. Bartering is the lifeblood of what Goodman calls “the art of food banking” where three pallets of tortillas may be worth one pallet of breakfast cereal.

Assistance comes in many forms in addition to food and funds, from 50-cent a piece shipping boxes (which we can always use) donated by Kendall-Jackson and Porex to a \$75,000 truck provided by the Rotary Club of Santa Rosa.

### What’s Needed Next?

This coming year, we’re hoping to create a Food Sorting System to enable our volunteers to more efficiently sort and pack up donated foods for our clients. This system will be used and appreciated by hundreds of volunteers striving to make a difference in our community. Let us know if you would like to help by donating funds or equipment.



## The Year In Review

### **Summer Soiree is a success thanks to all our Sponsors, Participants and Volunteers**

Over 400 people enjoyed beautiful summer weather and the lush grounds of Kendall-Jackson Wine Center while sipping wine and tasting local offerings from Sonoma County caterers and restaurateurs. Spirited bidding at our auction and a sold-out audience helped us raise over \$40,000. Thank you all for your generosity.

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### **St. Joseph Health Takes Care of REFB**

Recently, we had a packing emergency and 32 employees from St. Joseph Health Systems, led by Kathy Exelby, boxed up 240 children's food boxes with only a few days notice. If your business would like to help, call Lindajoy at 523-7900.

### **Feinstein Foundation Grant**

Thanks to all our Spring Newsletter donors who made possible a "March to End Hunger" challenge grant from the Feinstein Foundation of \$1,110.

### **FISH welcomes Ron Ausburn**

Ron Ausburn of Sebastopol is the new manager of FISH and we know he's up to the challenge of feeding the hungry in Sonoma County.

### **Our Letter Carriers Really Deliver**



May 11 marked the National Association of Letter Carriers annual food drive and it was a first-class success. At REFB alone, we received over 39,800 pounds of food.

*Volunteers and staff members sort the 39,800 pounds of food that Letter Carriers collected on their routes in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Cotati for the REFB.*

## **CISCO Gives Funds, Furniture & Fellows**

Meeting their own challenges didn't stop CISCO from making an incredible contribution this year to REFB. The company and its employees were the financial leaders in our Calling On Hunger campaign, which was led by Cisco fellow, Lynne Trainor. Lynne was joined by technology expert, Paul Robinson, both of whom worked for one year at REFB while being paid by Cisco. The company even donated an office system to furnish our programs department. We are very grateful for all your help, Cisco, and we miss you Lynne and Paul.

### **Board of Directors**

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