



News from the Food Closet

SOUTH SACRAMENTO INTERFAITH PARTNERSHIP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ♥ AUGUST 2022

TRADER JOE'S CREWS VOLUNTEER AT SSIP Long-standing Partnership Takes on a New Dimension

Food Closet Staff and volunteers welcome work crews from our long-standing grocery partner, **Trader Joe's** #175 on Folsom Boulevard. Our partnership blossomed during the pandemic, where we went from picking up food from two times per week to every day. In the first six months of 2022, this Trader Joe's store donated over 122,300 pounds of food. They are a primary grocery store partner, providing us with the bulk of produce and meat we distribute. Along with our clients, we greatly appreciate this contribution.

In the interest of increasing their understanding of the way SSIP's food distribution process works, Trader Joe's crew chief, Padderson O'Neill, arranged to have 12 of their staff members

work at the Food Closet in March and 10 in June. The fresh crew was very energetic and enthusiastic in assuming all of the regular volunteer duties. This includes riding along to grocery stores for daily pick up of donated food and taking cardboard for recycling.

Padderson hopes to schedule these workdays quarterly.

Padderson shared the following testimonial with SSIP: "Seeing firsthand how efficiently and swiftly SSIP volunteers were able to sort and distribute our shares from that morning, placing them into the hands of their clients by noon, gave us a greater respect for the process as well as greater insight into how we can be more effective on our end. Many people rely on this food and it feels good knowing we are doing what we can to feed families and eliminate waste. It feels good to know that food we pull from the shelves will be going to people in need..."

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Sam, a Trader Joe's volunteer tries her hand at "Fresh & Frozen" station

BACK-TO-SCHOOL, LEARNING TO GIVE AND RECEIVE WITH SSIP

As Sacramento area students prepare to go back to school, we would like to take the opportunity to look at how children in our community are an important part of the SSIP Food Closet's mission of alleviating food insecurity in the Sacramento area.

Students from local schools and churches contribute in a meaningful way by volunteering their time and youthful energy through organized canned food drives. The SSIP Food Closet participated in last fall's **KCRA3 Kids Can! Food Drive** and, with the help of ten partner schools, were able to collect 449 boxes of canned goods.

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PLATES DELIVERED TO OPENING DOORS

Sometimes all the pieces fall in place. Earlier this year, SSIP experienced a "perfect storm" of sorts when businesses, donors, volunteers and non-profits came together in a collaboration that served the Sacramento community on many levels.

It started with a generous home goods donation **Macy's** to the SSIP auction, a donation so large that we weren't sure we could sell it all. SSIP supporter, Julie Davies, a staff attorney at the **McGeorge School of Law** Immigration Law Clinic, provided an introduction to Alyssa Eckels, a law candidate, and liaison between the clinic and Opening Doors, a local resettlement agency. Alyssa was running a home goods donation drive with the McGeorge law students to help refugees arriving in Sacramento.

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FUND DEVELOPMENT CORNER CULTIVATING DONOR RELATIONSHIPS

This summer, we have seen an increase in the number of clients at the food closet each week. With the rise of inflation, we find that more people in our community are food insecure. It is clear to us at SSIP that we have been able to meet clients' needs as a result of the gener-



Mary Lou Hanzlik and Simon Yeh share notes

osity of our donors. We never lose sight of all you have done for us. Over the past few months, Simon Yeh, the Food Closet Manager, and Mary Lou Hanzlik, the Fund Development Chairperson, have been discussing how we can deepen our relationship with our donors. We are so grateful for your donations, whether it be a personal gift, or a response to our annual event or community events like the Big Day of Giving, we thank you. Our donors remember SSIP's important mission, and freely give however much they can to support us.

In the coming months we will be reaching out more to share in our common interest of providing food to the food insecure in our community. While there may be a good number of you who do not wish to be acknowledged regularly for your donations, it's heartwarming and satisfying to know how specifically your dollars help us achieve our success. We want our donors to know that when you donate, it's not just a financial transaction for SSIP. It is a connection to a community of caring, and a relationship that SSIP hopes to foster and cultivate. We will be reaching out from time to time to learn what our common goals are and your communication preferences. Together we can do good and do it well.

BIG SUPPORT FOR SSIP ON THE BIG DAY OF GIVING

The Big Day of Giving (BigDOG) is a 24-hour giving challenge that brings together the region's non-profit community to help raise much-needed funds and shine a spotlight on the work of non-profits in the Sacramento Area. This year, over 13 million dollars was raised for local non-profits with SSIP receiving over \$10,000 in donations. A big thank you to our donors for supporting the SSIP Food Closet mission through your participation in the Big Day of Giving.

FARMER'S MARKET OFFERS CHOICE

During the past few months, Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services (SFBFS) has increased the supply of produce to SSIP. Our clients really appreciate the extra quantity and the wider variety of produce, like cucumbers, cauliflower, eggplant, zucchini, grapes, cabbage, and bell peppers. Instead of pre-bagging the extra fruits and vegetables, we were able to set up a "farmers' market" outside that allowed clients to choose their own produce. This was very popular with our clients, and their eyes lit up during the weeks we were able to offer this choice-style market.

Often, we don't get much advance notice from Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services (SFBFS) about bonus products such as extra produce, eggs & dairy but we graciously accept these generous donations/windfalls of good quality, desirable, perishable food.



We were fortunate to gain access to an off-site walk-in refrigerator at the site of our partner church, Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church (SJUMC), to help with capacity expansion for the frozen fish donation.

While we needed to schedule more volunteer runs to transport the boxes of produce to and from SJUMC to SSIP for daily distribution, the smiles and thanks from our clients more than made up for the added effort. Having a larger facility on-site at Bethany campus is a future dream that would keep everything under one roof. This solution will save SSIP many volunteer hours and energy from the need to "bus" food to and from off-site locations. We could stop moving pallets, products, equipment day in and day out so we have room to conduct the daily distribution (Staff refer to this constant "in and out" as the "accordion effect") We work around capacity constraints with the constant long-term vision of expanding our facilities to improve efficiency.

A MESSAGE FROM SSIP BOARD CHAIR

After six months as the Chair of SSIP's Board of Directors, there is one thing I can say with certainty: we are a very busy organization.

We are busy picking up food:

Our volunteer drivers pick up from our grocery partners seven days a week, 363 days a year.

We are busy preparing packages of food to distribute:

Every weekday a group of 10-12 volunteers, along with our incomparable staff, gather and package an assortment of healthy, nutritious food to be distributed to our clients.

We are busy serving clients:

Approximately 170 households every weekday from 9:00am to 11:30am

We are also busy behind the scenes.

Our committees are busy organizing our operation, raising funds, publicizing our activities, tracking our finances, and looking for more space to supplement a building bursting at the seams.

The efforts of all these volunteers allow the SSIP Food Closet to continue our mission to provide for food insecure individuals and families in Sacramento. It is best expressed by long-time volunteer and board member Chuck Snyder, who says: "This is a place where miracles truly happen."

- Tom Busch

SPOTLIGHT ON CHURCH MEMBERS

CENTENNIAL UMC RENEWS COMMITMENT TO SSIP



Centennial United Methodist Church has a long history with the SSIP Food Closet that continues to grow. Back in 1969, Pastor John Taylor, with support from congregant Don Trimble, had a vision to form an organization of South Sacramento churches with the goal of providing support to the community. Originally named the South Sacramento Ecumenical Parish, Centennial partnered at first with 6 other churches and later a total of 16 to provide a variety of community services. In 1971 a food closet was added; in 1996, the name of the organization was changed to the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership.

Centennial has continuously supported the work of the Food Closet throughout the years, but there was a renewed commitment when COVID hit in 2020. While the SSIP Food Closet remained open during the pandemic, many of the longtime volunteers were too at-risk to

serve. There was call from the pulpit for a renewed commitment to feeding the food insecure in our community, and many new Centennial volunteers stepped forward. In addition, after the vaccine was developed, many former volunteers were able to return to serve in food preparation shifts.

One of the blessings of this new commitment to SSIP and its mission has been the added participation of members of the Centennial congregation. Organized themed food drives have mobilized the congregation in meaningful ways. During the month of November congregants were invited to participate in the “Blessings to Share” in celebration of Thanksgiving. In May, “Blessings for Mothers and Others” focused on the donation of goods for women in honor of Mother’s Day.

Over the 50 years many church members left their mark on the SSIP including Cliff Bales, Dorothy Booker, Ralph Buell, Judy Dallow, and Cal Locher. In 2021, three members, James and Jean Chew and Shirley Manning, were honored for their more than 20 years of service at SSIP. Currently, more than a dozen members of Centennial members volunteer regularly; three serve on the SSIP Board: Loretta Fransham, Vice Chair; Mary Lou Hanzlik, Fund Development Chair; and Kathy Anderson, Secretary. It has been a privilege for Centennial to have the opportunity to share in the mission of the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership.



A PARTNER WE CAN COUNT ON A HUGE THANK YOU TO FRANK'S QUALITY MEATS

SSIP regularly receives frozen items from our grocery partners which we can generally accommodate in our two double-door commercial freezers. Occasionally, however, we receive larger quantities of frozen foods that we cannot store on-site at the Food Closet. Recently, we were offered several pallets of frozen fish sticks, far more than we could hold.

On short notice, our trusty nearby community partner, **Frank's Quality Meats** at 6580 Belleau Wood Lane in Sacramento, came to the rescue. Frank's has a huge freezer they allow us to use for overflow as needed, and without it we would need to decline frozen foods that we know our clients would really appreciate. Thank you to our “cool” partner, Frank's Quality Meats.



Brian Moese inspects the boxes of fish sticks at Frank's Quality Meats

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL

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Among other volunteers, students from Faith Presbyterian Church later helped to sort about 200 boxes of food.

Other schools, such as **Sol Aureus College Preparatory School**, through their Food for Families Food Drive last Spring, have helped to collect dozens of boxes of food. See adjacent story about Sol Aureus celebratory event earlier this year.

These efforts are so important to the mission of SSIP, both in contributing to provide food to needy families, and, maybe more importantly, instilling in youth the value of serving others in need and, hopefully, cultivating hearts and minds willing to make such community service a vital part of their lives. We look forward to partnering with KCRA3 Kids Can! Food Drive this fall and working with students over the next school year.



Students sort non-perishable food at Sol Aureus to be picked up by SSIP.

Along with other food distribution centers, SSIP Food Closet also recognizes that we are a resource for students in need. As reported by Capital Public Radio in October 2021, about 16% (or about one in six families) experience low or very low food security in the Sacramento area. Many studies have shown how food insecurity affects children's ability to attend and perform in school. SSIP hopes to continue being a resource for Sacramento area children, so that they can have their needs met, improve school attendance, focus on academics, and be the best that they can be.

As we look ahead, we are committed to helping families with children in need to learn about our program and receive healthy and nutritious food, so that children can go back to school and make the most out of their educational opportunities. It is also hoped that students from local schools and churches continue to serve with us, learning to give of their time and energy to help others in their own communities. Together, let's have another amazing school year learning to give and receive with SSIP.

Editor's note: *The 2021 KCRA3 Kids Can! Food Drive was featured in the February 2022 issue of this newsletter.*

SOL AUREUS AND SSIP VOLUNTEER TEAM CELEBRATE VICTORY TOGETHER

As students began to reach the end of the school year at Sol Aureus Preparatory School, they were excited to wrap up their three-month-long Food for Families Canned Food Drive with a creamy celebratory event served up by a team of volunteers from SSIP Food Closet.



On May 6, a half dozen SSIP volunteers plus Food Closet Manager Simon Yeh visited the Sol Aureus campus and served students and staff ice cream. Pictured (L to R) Pat Aguiar, Kathy Anderson, Shigeeko Shibata, Loretta Fransham and Mary Lou Hanzlik

The two classes (kindergarten and 5th grade) that gathered the most food between February and April won the school-wide competition. For their efforts, they were rewarded with an ice cream party which was also shared with a number of Sol Aureus staff members.

Beginning late February, students in all grades at Sol Aureus began collecting canned goods and other non-perishable food for SSIP. Food Closet Manager Simon Yeh, student and staff leaders kicked off the canned food drive on February 22 with ABC-10 news covering the event. Several months later, Food Closet volunteers picked up more than a dozen large boxes filled with food collected by the students. Rev. Jesse Larson and volunteers from Bethany Presbyterian Church helped sort the donations for distribution at the Food Closet.



Sol Aureus teacher Daniel Cain "Mr. C" assists Gary Aycocock load more than a dozen boxes filled with non-perishable food gathered by students.

TRADER JOE'S CREWS

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Trader Joe's crew chief Padderson O'Neill and SSIP volunteer Jim Hoffsis, his partner and mentor for the morning deliver food to clients.

Padderson offers the following advice to any organization who is interested in witnessing SSIP's operation. "We would highly encourage any organization working intimately with SSIP to volunteer and see the processes firsthand. This exercise was incredibly fruitful and eye-opening; from this single field trip we were shown many ways to better our processes ... reduce waste further and create a more cohesive donations program."

Thank you Padderson and every member of the work crews. We hope to continue this mutually beneficial relationship for years to come.



Trader Joe's volunteers Audrey and Stormie sort through produce at SSIP

PLATES DELIVERED

(Continued from page 1)

Then the magic happened. The word went out that as a result of the Full Plates, Full Hearts fundraiser, SSIP had a lot of wonderful merchandise that could be purchased for Opening Doors refugees to get established in homes. SSIP provided vans for delivering the merchandise to the Opening Doors warehouse. As a result of the generous donations from our community, SSIP received necessary funds to feed our food insecure neighbors and refugees received the merchandise needed to set up their first American kitchens. All the Macy's merchandise was purchased by SSIP volunteers.

Much gratitude to Macy's; Alyssa Eckels and the McGeorge Law students; Kyle Ketsdever, Opening Doors Community Engagement Associate; the SSIP FPFH Committee, and all of the donors who participated in making this special collaboration happen.



Mary Lou Hanzlik, Simon Yeh, Alyssa Eckels and Kyle Ketsdever unloading Macy's plates.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Individuals</u>
APRIL	3,611	11,076
MAY	3,395	10,112
JUNE	3,685	11,047

NEWS FROM SSIP THE FOOD CLOSET

August Issue Contributors

- Tom Busch, Chair, SSIP Board
- Jim Hoffsis, Co-Chair Operations Committee
- Wally Hoffsis, Co-Chair Operations Committee
- Chong Choe-Smith, Communications Committee
- Mary Lou Hanzlik, Chair Fund Development Committee
- Mark Hanzlik, Communications Committee
- Kathy Anderson, Secretary, SSIP Board
- Simon Yeh, SSIP Food Closet Manager



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THE SSIP MISSION

The primary mission of the SSIP Food Closet is to maintain and operate an emergency food distribution to help alleviate food insecurity for Sacramento residents. Partner faith-based organizations, with assistance from local businesses and other community members, provide the support and resources for the SSIP mission. In carrying out its mission the Food Closet adheres to the values of service, integrity, stewardship and accountability.

GROCERY PARTNERS

A big thank you to our partner grocers:

- Grocery Outlet (Florin Rd./Riverside Blvd.)
- Nugget Market (Florin Rd./Greehaven Dr.)
- Raley's (Freeport Blvd.)
- Trader Joe's (Folsom Blvd.)

FAITH-BASED PARTNERS

Faith-based partner organizations, with assistance from local businesses and other community members, provide the support and resources for the Food Closet's mission.

Members:

- Bethany Presbyterian Church - Rev. Jesse Larson
- Centennial United Methodist Church - Loretta Fransham, Kathy Anderson, Mary Lou Hanzlik
- Faith Presbyterian Church - Chong Choe-Smith, Tom Busch, Deb Kanner
- Florin United Methodist Church - Chuck Snyder
- Hope United Methodist Church - Joyce Forrest
- Parkside Community Church, United Church of Christ - Margaret Brown, John Sugar
- Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church - Shigeko Shibata, Elaine Maeda
- Saint Anthony Catholic Parish - Leonor Alvarez, Pat Aguiar Ramirez, Henry Sepulveda

Associate members:

- Fruitridge Christian Church
- Lutheran Church of the Master
- Prince of Peace Baptist
- Wesley United Methodist Church

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