



News from the Food Closet

SOUTH SACRAMENTO INTERFAITH PARTNERSHIP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ♥ MARCH 2023

TABLE FARM & TABLE BREAD

NEW BREAD MINISTRY DELIVERED TO SSIP

In August of 2020, The Table at Central United Methodist Church planted the first crop for their new Table Farm ministry about a mile from the SSIP Food Closet. Since then, SSIP has reaped the bounty with ongoing donations of fresh farm produce for our clients. Now, under the care of Chloe McElyea, the Table's Cultivator for a Sustainable Future, Table Bread is open for business. Through the generosity and vision of The Table, SSIP clients remain the beneficiaries of this new ministry.

The Table Farm & Table Bread enterprise has been created to feed our community and deepen relationships with the land and with neighbors. Table Bread is now accepting sign-ups for weekly bread subscriptions which are priced at \$40/month. For every subscription sign-up, one loaf is baked for clients at the SSIP Food Closet. Subscriptions are monthly and are not recurring. Bread is ready for pick-up weekly on Sundays between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m. at The Table UMC (5265 H St., Sacramento). Subscribers are able to choose from a variety of rotating bread types. Sign up for a bread subscription at www.thetable.farm.

Table Bread believes that bread is an amazing way to practice one's faith and reach in love. Thank you, Table Farm & Table Bread for sharing your love with the SSIP Food Closet.



Table Farm Community Gatherer, Andie Pashal displays one of the bread choices.

FALL KIDS CAN! DRIVE OFFERS STUDENTS A LESSON IN GIVING

As one of the beneficiaries of the 2022 KCRA3 Kids Can! Food Drive, SSIP was paired with 11 area schools: Hollywood Park Elementary, Merryhill School, Smythe Academy Middle School, James Rutter Middle School, Brookfield School, Charles Mack Elementary, Learning Tree School, Tahoe Elementary, Sol Aureus College Prep, John F. Kennedy High School, and John Cabrillo Elementary. The Fall drive resulted in 264 boxes of food or approximately 13,250 pounds. Tom Busch, volunteer and Board chair, served once again as the project leader for SSIP.



Our December 8 pickup crew included Tom Busch, John Sugar and Jim Hoffsis with (far left) Sol Aureus College Prep teacher Mr. Cain. Not pictured: Simon Yeh and Mark Hanzlik

All of the donated cans were picked up from the schools by our faithful drivers, transported to SSIP, then unloaded and sorted. During one pickup, a teacher told us about a particularly enthusiastic 2nd grader who was intent on winning the can competition for her class. The night before the count, she prevailed on her mom to please get more cans. Mom agreed and away they went to the Dollar Store. While there, the youngster's effervescence (and perhaps volume) apparently caught the attention of other shoppers, who started asking questions. Her fervor ultimately resulted in donations of canned food from every other patron in the store, thereby illustrating what kids CAN do and proving that giving is contagious!

Simon Yeh, Food Closet Manager

2022 Recap: SSIP Food Closet Resiliency

It's no surprise that 2022 was another record-breaking year in SSIP's history. Last year, we served 45,524 households, feeding 136,382 individuals. That's a 64% increase and a 42% increase, respectively, compared to 2021 numbers. By the end of the first quarter, we could already sense a change in the wind as we saw the climb from 2,600 households to over 3,600 households in 3 months' time. Inflation was in the air. By the end of summer, we broke the 4,000 level, and nearly breached the 5,000 ceiling in November with our annual Thanksgiving Holiday distribution. I'm grateful that we were able to meet the increased demand, yet I'm concerned about the organization's ability to pivot its operations successfully with this trajectory.

	2022		2021	
	Households	Individuals	Households	Individuals
January	2,633	8,051	2151	8608
February	2,926	8,732	2051	8254
March	3,622	10,796	2457	9929
April	3,611	11,076	2275	9134
May	3,395	10,112	1872	7069
June	3,685	11,047	1950	6613
July	3,699	11,153	2058	6388
August	4,219	12,353	2291	7135
September	4,249	13,094	2384	7550
October	3,995	12,097	2907	9098
November	4,933	14,846	2664	8205
December	4,557	13,025	2667	8131
TOTAL	45,524.00	136,382.00	27,727.00	96,114.00

This past year also offered us a few windows of opportunity to try out a choice-model distribution in contrast to our current pre-bagged method. During a two-month period, whenever SSIP received bonus pallets of fresh produce from Sacramento Food Bank, we set up an outdoor "farmer's market." Clients were given a plastic bag they could fill with their choice of vegetables and their desired amounts.

When SMUD turned off the electricity for a day to work on the neighborhood powerlines, we moved food distribution outdoors to the alley. In addition to receiving a bag of USDA staple items and produce, clients had a choice of bread and pastry as well as a wide selection of fresh and frozen items. The experiment provided a valuable learning experience for SSIP, and our clients enjoyed choosing what they wanted or needed. Surprisingly, the multitude of choices overwhelmed some of our clients who had a hard time making a decision and asked, "Can I exchange for this instead?"

Feeding on average 3,800 families monthly is no small feat. This is a testament to the resiliency of the SSIP organization. Nothing materially changed at SSIP in 2022. We continued to work around our on-going capacity constraints. We continued to have approximately the same number of volunteers to help with distribution and grocery store pickups and maintained four part-time paid staff. We were fortunate, near the end of the year, to pick up another grocery partner – the Bel Air on Rush River Drive in the Pocket. Only through operational efficiencies could we achieve these new heights. A shout-out to the Food Closet Operations Committee Chairs – Jim and Wally Hoffsis, who have been at the helm since January 2020.

In 2023, I hope our focus will be on increasing access through making more meaningful connections. I would like to improve our "match rate." Here at the SSIP Food Closet, we are always striving to do better, and I'm confident we can. It is in our DNA.

A MESSAGE FROM SSIP BOARD CHAIR

Calendar year 2023 promises to be a year of challenge and opportunity for the SSIP Food Closet. We continue to welcome more and more clients and to receive and distribute more and more food. We have worked to meet these challenges by updating our organizational structure and streamlining our operations. We revised our Bylaws, in part by removing geographical boundaries to reflect the fact that we serve everyone who comes to us and that we welcome new partners (such as Parkview Presbyterian Church) from outside our traditional South Sacramento neighborhoods. We also created the designation of Honorary Affiliate for founding member congregations that are no longer active in the SSIP Partnership.

Our Fund Development and Communications Committees are focused on outreach to our supporters and keeping you informed of what SSIP is doing and planning. In an effort to better serve the many needs of our clients, we are having an event in May to collaborate with other community organizations to focus on how we can work together in our mutual clients' interests. Our Finance Committee continues to carefully manage our resources in a challenging economic climate. Our Food Closet Operations Committee does a masterful job, along with our excellent paid part-time staff of four, of keeping the Food Closet running five days a week, often in inclement weather, as we have outgrown the building we have occupied since 2011. The need for more space that is sheltered is a major challenge. It presents an opportunity to further engage our Partners, supporters, volunteers and the community in solving this dilemma.

We look forward to these challenges with confidence and faith because, for more than 50 years, SSIP has met similar challenges and has continued to be a lifeline for the food-insecure residents of our community.

- Tom Busch

SSIP FOOD CLOSET 2023 PLANS

We are busy planning a series of events in 2023 that will support our community of caring and mission. Thank you to all our supporters.

- Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, April 20
- Community Services Collaboration Event, May 3
- Big Day of Giving, Thursday, May 4
- Full Plates, Full Hearts, Silent Auction & Event, Summer
- KCRA3 Kids Can! Food Drive, November
- Giving Tuesday, November 28

Month	Households	Individuals
NOV.	4,933	14,846
DEC.	4,557	13,025
JAN.	4,342	12,085

FAITH PARTNER SPOTLIGHT SACRAMENTO JAPANESE UMC

Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church (SJUMC) was formed in 1970 from a merger of Pioneer UMC and a former Florin UMC (not our current partner). A few years later, SJUMC joined SSIP as an active Partner. Reverend Joe Sakakibara and founding members, such as Yuri Ishii and Chiz Ito, believed churches working together helped to strengthen one another and make community outreach and service more effective. From the 1970s to the present time, SJUMC has provided many leaders for the SSIP organization and faithful volunteers to support our mission.

In the mid-2000s, Reverend Gary Grundman, Member and Chair of the SSIP Board of Directors, worked with Partner churches, the Building Committee and supporters, to lead the campaign to build the current Food Closet building. The building was completed in 2011.



A dozen hard-working volunteers, many of whom are SJUMC members, gather together for a Wednesday morning last Fall.

SJUMC's commitment to SSIP has been consistent and varied. In addition to regular financial support, they have provided their facilities for hosting annual dinners, volunteer appreciation luncheons, fundraising dinners, and organization meetings. For years, KCRA3 KidsCan! Food Drive donations have been stored and sorted at the church. SJUMC has been especially generous in sharing space in their walk-in refrigerator over the years. During the pandemic, the need for refrigeration escalated as SSIP received an abundance of perishable items from the Sacramento Food Bank with little room to store them on site. Their assistance during this critical time allowed us to provide our clients with fresh food as well as avoid food waste.

For many years, Reverend Motoe Yamada Foor has championed the connection between the Church and Partnership. Member Frances Lee has worked over the past two decades as an engaged volunteer serving in many capacities, most notably as Board Chair and long-time Treasurer. She is still known for bringing home-baked cookies for the daily volunteers. Currently, Shigeko Shibata and Elaine Maeda represent SJUMC on the Board of Directors. Shigeko has served as Treasurer for many years and currently is Treasurer and Vice-Chair of the Board.

Thank you, SJUMC, for your commitment to the Partnership in addressing the needs of our food insecure neighbors.

DONATIONS IN MEMORY AND HONORING

Donations received Nov. 2022 - Jan. 2023

**In Memory of Pam Anderson
Robert Anderson**

**In Memory of Art Baker
Bryan Baldwin, Margaret Brown, Noreen Kellough**

**In Honor and Memory of Jan and Gary Bond
Todd Merrill**

**In Memory of Ralph Buell
Ada Schloeman**

**In Memory of Casper Carlton
Rosella Lane**

**In Honor and Memory of Mike Dazey
Thomas Busch**

**In Honor of Madi Elsea & Rod Lee
Sharon Miyako**

**In Memory of Barbara Hansen
Sue Hansen**

**In Memory of Jim & Joan Healy
Michelle Mouser**

**In Memory of Grace Y. Hiuga
Larry Hiuga**

**In Honor of Wally & Jim Hoffsis
Norma W. Yerkey**

**In Honor of Michael & Christine Hollis
Cameron Yee**

**In Memory of Frank Iritani
Ken and Lesley Iritani**

**In Memory of K. Kim
Susan Kim**

**In Memory of Barbara Maier
Margaret & Charles Brown**

**In Honor and Memory of Ben Marquez
Shari Anders**

**In Memory of Genevieve Maxwell
Dave & Carol Roberts**

**In Memory of Fred Nichols
Douglas & Anna Skewes**

**In Honor and Memory of Rebecca Rabovsky
Daniel Rabovsky, MaryAnn Rabovsky**

**In Memory of Sheila Sabiston
Margaret Brown, Edward & Rebecca Anton**

**In Memory of Christopher Shepherd
Patricia Shepherd**

**In Honor of Shigeko Shibata
Betty Hirata, Amy Kawahara, Hatsumi Yamamoto**

**In Honor of St. Anthony's Parish
Andrea Allen**

**In Memory of Olive Tiller
Jeanne Peterson**

**In Memory of Allen Wise
Margaret Brown**

**In Memory of Rev. Jim Zazzera
Tanya Anderson, Charles & Margaret Brown,
Betsy Keating**



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PAPER OR DIGITAL?

If you prefer to receive only an electronic version, please email your request to info@SSIPfoodcloset.org

THE SSIP MISSION

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

GROCERY PARTNERS

Grocery partners serve an important role in providing a vital resource for our clients in the form of perishable foods, fresh produce, and packaged dry goods.

Grocery Partners:

- Bel Air (Rush River Rd.)
- Grocery Outlet (Florin Rd./Riverside Blvd.)
- Nugget Market (Florin Rd./Greenhaven Dr.)
- Raley's (Freeport Blvd.)
- Trader Joe's (Folsom Blvd.)

Bad Weather or Not, SSIP Food Closet Soldiers On

Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night... Substitute "wind" for "heat" and you have the weather conditions that ushered in the new year and posed a challenge for SSIP clients, volunteers, and staff because of our indoor/outdoor operation. However, throughout the storm, the Food Closet was able to maintain its regular distribution hours, Monday thru Friday from 9 to 11:30 a.m. SSIP incurred only minor flooding in the parking lot and some broken tree branches. When we lost internet and landline service, a staff member used a cell phone to check in the clients.

Fortunately, during the very cold weather of a few weeks prior, SSIP relocated its check-in process so that registrars now sit inside a different building and the client queue is somewhat more sheltered. Picking up and unloading food from our grocery partners in the wind and rain was not much fun, but we are grateful for the perseverance of our intrepid staff and volunteer drivers.

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
- **Faith Presbyterian Church** - Tom Busch, Deb Kanner, Chong Choe-Smith
- **Florin United Methodist Church** - Chuck Snyder
- **Hope United Methodist Church** - Venéta Forrest Saulny
- **Parkside Community Church, United Church of Christ** - Margaret Brown, John Sugar
- **Parkview Presbyterian Church** - Carla Hart, Lois Van Beers
- **Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church** - Shigeoko Shibata, Elaine Maeda
- **Saint Anthony Catholic Parish** - Leonor Alvarez, Pat Aguiar Ramirez, Henry Sepulveda

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