

## **PD Editorial: Putting meals on everyone's holiday table**

*Published: Monday, November 21, 2011 at 3:00 a.m.*

Hunger exists year-round, even in affluent communities.

Here in Sonoma County, generous donors and volunteers support an array of nonprofit groups that provide groceries and hot meals for thousands of people — struggling families, senior citizens and others in need.

Yet half of the county's low-income adults still experience "food insecurity," a bureaucratic euphemism meaning that they miss meals or don't get enough nutritious food. The percentage is higher only in Contra Costa, Napa and Orange counties, according to a survey released this past week by California Food Policy Advocates.

The survey findings are consistent with what we hear from local food banks, which are finding that ever-larger numbers of people need help getting proper meals on the table.

Many of us are preparing for Thanksgiving feasts and the ensuing holiday season. If you want to help others put food on their tables, here are some organizations in Sonoma County that provide groceries or meals for people in need:

- The Redwood Gospel Mission will host its annual Thanksgiving dinner for 5,000 people on Wednesday. Then it will gear up to do it again at Christmas. Donate online at [srmission.org](http://srmission.org), bring a turkey to the mission at 101 Sixth St. in Santa Rosa, or call 578-1830.
- Catholic Cherities distributes 26,000 pounds of food each month to about 4,000 families through its rural food program, which serves communities away from pantries and food banks. To donate food, call 528-2646. To donate money for food, call 528-8712 ext. 160.
- The Redwood Empire Food Bank supplies 149 agencies around the region including soup kitchens and food pantries. Donate online at [refb.org](http://refb.org), send contributions to 3320 Industrial Drive, Santa Rosa 95403, or call 523-7900. Each dollar donated to the Food Bank translates to \$4 worth of goods distributing around the community.
- Friends in Service Here, or FISH, is an all-volunteer food bank that provides free groceries to 65,000 people a year in Sonoma County. Call 527-5151.
- The Salvation Army distributes seven tons of food to needy families each month. It is currently seeking volunteers for its annual red kettle campaign. Address: 93 Stony Circle, Santa Rosa 95401. Phone 542-0981.
- The Committee on the Shelterless, also known as COTS, provides shelter, transitional housing and training and serves 100,000 meals and distributes 500,000 pounds of food annually. Donate online or see a wish list and volunteer opportunities at [cots-homeless.org](http://cots-homeless.org), or send a donation to COTS, P.O. Box 2744, Petaluma 94953.

- Food for Thought, a Forestville-based food pantry, serves AIDS and HIV patients. Donate online at [fftfoodbank.org](http://fftfoodbank.org). To volunteer, e-mail [volunteer@fftfoodbank.org](mailto:volunteer@fftfoodbank.org), or call 887-1647.

- The Council on Aging delivers more than 250,000 meals annually to senior citizens and provides social, financial and legal services. You can volunteer or donate at [councilonaging.com](http://councilonaging.com). Send donations to 30 Kawana Springs Road, Santa Rosa 95404 or call 525-0143.

Our list is a small sample of the charities in our community. You can find others through the Volunteer Center, the Community Foundation of Sonoma County and online services such as [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org) and [giveusa.org](http://giveusa.org).

If you want to draw attention to a charity that we didn't mention, post a comment on this editorial at [pressdemocrat.com/opinion](http://pressdemocrat.com/opinion).

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