**Food Insecurity in our own backyard**

It is commonly known that food scarcity, or a lack of adequate food resources, is a chronic problem in far-away places like Ethiopia, Haiti, and India. Few understand that Food Insecurity, which is simply defined as a situation of limited or uncertain availability of safe foods, is also a problem in our own country.

In many ways, America is the land of plenty. But for one in six people in the United States, hunger is a very real struggle. Many people believe that the problems associated with hunger are confined to small pockets of society, certain areas of the country, or certain neighborhoods. But the reality is much different.

Right now, millions of Americans are at risk of hunger. Locally in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties there are 675,000* food insecure people. These are often hard-working adults, children and seniors who simply cannot always make ends meet and may be forced to go without food.

One of the most common misconceptions is the assumption that if someone is hungry, that means they do not have a job and are living on the streets. What most people don’t understand is that anyone can experience hunger. Take for example this story of an elderly woman, told to us by First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino which runs a Food Ministry Program and feeds 1,500 individuals each month.

“Jean***, an elderly woman who attends our church regularly, was seen surreptitiously slipping a half-donut into her purse week after week. On a hunch, the manager of the food closet approached Jean and told her she had some fresh fruit and vegetables left in the refrigerator and really needed to find a home for them before they needed to be thrown away.

Would Jean like to take them home? Her reply after some hesitation was, ‘Only since they are going to be thrown away.’ This exchange went on for a few months. One day, Jean offered the following: she was raising two granddaughters. Their father had lost his job. Her other son was a quadraplegic, raising four children as a single parent. She was supporting the entire family on her social security payment. As it turned out, the half donut was her evening meal. The food manager now saves food bags for her and the family. Jean is now one of our more faithful volunteers.”

The food ministry program at First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, a multi-year grant recipient from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation Advised Fund at The Community Foundation, has been assisting food insecure people for over 30 years. Run by 50 church-member volunteers, the program takes a three-pronged approach to relieving hunger. First, there are daily bags of groceries available for emergencies. Guests are allowed one bag a month if they run out of food. Second, in partnership with Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County, two bags of food (non-perishables and fruits and vegetables) are given to guests monthly. And the third approach is the holiday baskets that the volunteers prepare for 25 families in need at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

*According to FeedingAmerica.org   ** For confidentiality, not her actual name
We have some exciting news to share with you. The Community Foundation just completed the best year of increasing its assets in our entire 72-year history. We now steward donor funds totaling nearly $80 million! As a result, through the generosity of donors who provided $16 million in new gifts to TCF, as well as through existing funds, we were able to provide $7.5 million in grants and scholarships to nonprofits in the two-county region we serve: San Bernardino and Riverside, including the Coachella Valley where our second office is located in Palm Springs.

In addition, The Board of Directors of The Community Foundation has approved a new Strategic Plan for 2014-2018. A strategic planning committee comprised of current and former Board members – led by James Cuevas, our Board Chair – and senior leadership staff members worked with a highly qualified and respected consultant in the community foundation field, Chris Sutherland from Sutherland – Edwards, LLC, to craft a plan that focuses on four specific goals: asset development, our business model, grantmaking, and governance. One of the most important outcomes of the strategic planning process was the crafting of a new vision statement for the foundation: A vibrant, generous and just region – with unlimited opportunities.

We also updated our Mission Statement, which now reads “Strengthening Inland Southern California through Philanthropy.” This is in keeping with our role of serving the local communities and, through a special fund, allows The Community Foundation to fund selected nonprofits in the nation and even internationally. Equally important, we added the words “diversity” and “inclusion” to TCFs guiding values.

The most important outcome of the strategic plan, however, is a renewed focus on our donors and fundholders. To this end, we hired Thomas Stephenson as our new Vice President of Philanthropic Services. Tom’s department was formerly known as the Development Department; however, in keeping with our mandate to serve our donors and to focus on deepening and broadening relationships with these and other philanthropic partners, we changed the department’s title to one of service.

Because we believe that philanthropy matters—that it does, indeed, make a positive difference, beginning with this first issue in 2014 of Philanthropy Matters, we will be highlighting the ways in which The Community Foundation partners with our donors to improve quality of life based on their particular causes they care about and support through their fund at TCF.

– Jonathan Lorenzo Yorba
For the past 24 years, Martha’s Village & Kitchen has been feeding the hungry of the Coachella Valley. Today, they serve over 300,000 meals a year to 3,500 men, women and children in need.

In 2000, Martha’s Village partnered with Father Joe’s Villages and now offers many professional and structured programs that change lives—in addition to their food programs.

Their transitional housing program provides shelter for 96 families and 24 single men or women at any one time. Their clients are offered a full-range of services to help them get back on their feet.

“Our goal is to get our clients to self-sufficiency and to us that means having a permanent income and permanent housing,” says Bob Thérieau, Communications Manager at Martha’s Village & Kitchen.

Professional services available include job skills training, career counseling and GED classes. Something as simple as not having a call-back number for potential employers to reach you is a barrier to employment, so Martha’s Kitchen has voice mail accounts and a message service for its clients as well.

Lack of high-quality daycare and healthcare are also barriers to self-sufficiency. At Martha’s Village, both are available for clients. The child care center is located on-site and also offers after-school care for older children. The on-site medical clinic provides primary care to over 1,900 patients a year and fills 12,500 prescriptions each year.

“Our new upgraded health clinic opened this month, and we are so excited to serve even more clients,” says Maribel Pimentel, the Volunteer Relations Program Supervisor. “We offer mental health counseling, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, health maintenance classes and so much more.”

In addition to these programs, Martha’s Village also offers emergency services such as assistance with utilities, transportation, clothing, and infant supplies. And, naturally, at the core of their mission, they offer assistance with food.

Food insecurity is a bigger problem today than 24 years ago when Martha’s Village & Kitchen was opened by two women who heard the call to feed the hungry. To address this, Martha’s has broadened its food programs to not only feeding the transitional residents three meals a day but also to providing lunch to over 500 neighbors in need each day.

But what about preparing food at home? Through a partnership with FIND Food Bank in Indio, which is led by former TCF board member Lisa Houston, Martha’s Village & Kitchen prepares and distributes 1,000 bags of groceries for local families who run out of food. And during the holidays, 2,000 local families receive holiday meal baskets to make the season a little brighter.

Martha’s Village & Kitchen is the largest provider of residential services for the homeless in Riverside County. Through compassion, respect, empathy, empowerment and dignity, Martha’s Village & Kitchen provides the tools needed for our Coachella Valley residents to thrive in society.

The Community Foundation—through its S.L. Gimble Foundation Advised Fund, is proud to provide grant funding to this worthy organization.
Create your charitable legacy

The Community Foundation is uniquely qualified to provide support to you and your counsel in creating a meaningful gift that will perpetuate the charitable interests of you and your family for generations to come.

One of the most flexible forms of legacy gifts is the Charitable Remainder Unitrust. It may be created during your lifetime or through your Will or Living Trust. Most such trusts are funded with appreciated securities, cash, real estate, or a combination of different assets. (Gifts of real estate to a unitrust need not be income producing.) The donor selects the rate of return, and income is paid to the donor and/or beneficiary, generally on a quarterly basis, for their lifetimes. There is a substantial charitable deduction permitted based on the fair market value of the gift and the rate of return selected by the donor. At the conclusion of the trust, the assets revert to The Community Foundation to be utilized in strict accordance with the charitable vision of the donor.

There are several other means of creating your legacy. To discuss your individual needs in confidence, please contact Tom Stephenson, Vice President of Philanthropic Services or members of his team at 951.241.7777.

Give BIG

A Successful Project of The Community Foundation and Our Community Partners

Give BIG is a 24-hour online giving day intended to raise funds and awareness for nonprofits in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and stands as an exemplary example of collaboration and community volunteerism.

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 8, 2014
Give BIG San Bernardino County

The County of San Bernardino, in partnership with The Community Foundation, is offering donors an opportunity to support San Bernardino nonprofits and the people they serve at www.givebigsbco.org beginning at 7 am and continuing until 7 am on May 9, 2014. Nonprofits interested in participating can register at www.thecommunityfoundation.net. The deadline is April 18.

Working together, we can build the capacity of the nonprofit organizations in the region.

SAVE THE DATE
November 13, 2014
Give BIG Riverside County

This year, Give BIG is expanding into the entire county. We hope to build the skill-set of nonprofits countywide and expect our third year to be the biggest one ever. The taskforce is currently convening to plan and expand the campaign. Volunteers are needed—please contact the Foundation if you are interested in helping: 951.241.7777 or info@thecommunityfoundation.net.
Inland Southern California residents, nonprofi ts, and government agencies are all working to end hunger in our community. Two individual funds at The Community Foundation are focusing their giving to address food insecurity in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

S.L. Gimbel Foundation Advised Fund
The S.L. Gimbel Foundation Advised Fund at The Community Foundation is named for Susan Gimbel who sadly lost her battle with ovarian cancer in May 2006.

Susan was passionate about a variety of causes including the arts, education, cancer research and human dignity issues. Her foundation now supports nonprofits working in these areas, and other charitable purposes.

Over the years, the S.L. Gimbel Foundation Advised Fund has granted dollars to a wide range of agencies—most recently to food banks in our two-county region (and throughout the United States). Through its Holiday Food Program in December 2013, the fund made $10,000 grants to agencies in communities such as Mecca, Blue Jay, Menifee, Blythe, San Bernardino and Palm Springs, for a total of over $95,000 in our region alone. This support helped fund the increased need during the holidays that many food banks experience.

The Arbor Fund
The Arbor Fund was established in 2003 for broad, general charitable uses and purposes. Last year alone, the Arbor Fund gave to 97 agencies feeding the hungry and has averaged over $106,000 per year in support of food programs over the last three years.
Scholarships

The Community Foundation originated in Riverside as a scholarship fund from the Brouse family in 1941. Many years have past since then, yet our commitment to scholarships to deserving students throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties remains strong.

Featured Scholarship Funds

The James Buchner Memorial Scholarship Fund
This fund was established in 2013 as an endowed scholarship by Dora Buchner to honor the memory of her husband, James Buchner, in perpetuity. The scholarships will provide college financial assistance to outstanding Hispanic graduating seniors from Cathedral City High School. Applicants must be pursuing a four-year college/university, a community college or trade school with a multi-year program, resulting in a certificate or degree.

The Rosemarie Cionni - Mary Pastore Educational Trust Scholarship Fund
This fund was established in 2013 to provide scholarships to deserving students who have graduated from Elsinore High School. It provides $3,000 in college financial assistance to a female outstanding graduating senior pursuing a college education at an accredited community college, state college, Catholic college or university.

Together with our donors, The Community Foundation recently awarded $1.5 million dollars in scholarships and educational grants to colleges and universities.