

NewsFeed

ENDING HUNGER THROUGH FOOD RESCUE

**SPECIAL
SPRING MATCH**

Donations Doubled
in April 2025



PAGE 03

An update on the critical School
Pantry Program expansion

A publication by



April is Earth Month!

SO IS EVERY MONTH AT FEEDING SAN DIEGO

Since its founding in 2007, Feeding San Diego's primary model for sourcing food has been food rescue. By diverting more than 31 million pounds of high-quality food from the landfill each year, we keep food in communities where it can help our neighbors facing food insecurity AND reduce the harmful environmental impacts caused by food waste.

Our food rescue program helps people and the planet, making every month Earth Month at Feeding San Diego!

Even better, during the month of April, **any gift you give, up to \$100,000, will be matched by an anonymous donor** helping rescue twice as much food and provide twice as many meals to San Diegans experiencing hunger. Typically, every dollar you donate to Feeding San Diego helps provide two meals. During Earth Month, your donation will double, meaning every dollar you give will help provide four meals to San Diegans facing hunger.



Did you know that 31% of the food produced in the United States goes to waste? This amounts to 120 billion meals worth of food!*

Picture it: millions of pounds of perfectly good surplus food rotting in landfills when it could have gone to people who need it. Here in San Diego County, Feeding San Diego rescues food so it doesn't become food waste and your donations help make this a reality.

Let's feed people, not landfills.

**2025 ReFED U.S. Food Waste Report*

Pictured left: A senior picks up groceries rescued from nearby grocery stores at her mobile home complex in San Marcos.

Pictured above: A college student receives food at a food distribution at Mesa College.

Fun Facts About Our Food Rescue Program



Our food rescue drivers and agency partners do over **900 pickups** from grocery stores every single week. This usually yields over **360,000 pounds of food** per week.



Our top five grocery food donors by volume are: **Albertsons, Costco, Target, Sprouts, Walmart and Trader Joe's.** Thank one of their team members for donating food to us the next time you see them.



In January 2025, a team of 44 staff and volunteers rescued over **28,000 pounds of food from UNFI**, a specialty foods showcase, at the San Diego Convention Center. Whoa!



Local hard kombucha brand **Boochcraft** often donates surplus produce from production runs.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR Chief Operations Officer

Dear Friends of Feeding San Diego,

April is Earth Month and at Feeding San Diego we are proud to celebrate by highlighting the positive impact of food rescue on our environment. Through our dedicated efforts supported by you, 92% of the food we distribute is rescued, making a significant contribution toward reducing food waste and conserving our planet's precious resources.

At the same time, we get food to people who need it. Here in San Diego County, there are many people who need food assistance. We support seniors, college students, kids, military families, veterans, and more. The impacts of hunger on individuals and communities are devastating and far reaching.

To think that edible food would be wasted is, quite simply, unacceptable. That's why food rescue is at the heart of our mission. Every meal we provide starts with a partnership, whether it's with grocery stores, restaurants, farms, or other community organizations. By rescuing food that would otherwise go to waste, we not only fight hunger, but we also help lower carbon emissions and reduce the strain on landfills.

“
Food rescue is at the heart of our mission.
”

Our hunger-relief and sustainability efforts are possible thanks to your unwavering support. Your donations enable us to continue rescuing food, reaching those in need, and protecting our environment for future generations. Together, we are making a meaningful difference — reducing waste and nourishing families throughout San Diego County.

As we mark Earth Month, we thank you for your continued generosity and commitment to building a more sustainable future. With your help, we will continue to sustain our food rescue programs, adapt to the ever-evolving hunger-relief landscape, and make a lasting impact on both hunger and our environment.



With deepest gratitude,

Patty O'Connor
Chief Operations Officer
Feeding San Diego

KEEPING UP WITH OUR Corporate & Foundation Partners

Feeding San Diego's Corporate and Foundation Philanthropy Program recognizes companies and community groups that help end hunger through volunteerism, food donations, and annual contributions.



Bill Vivian and his restaurant, Regents Pizzeria, made a generous holiday gift of \$15,000. Then, in the wake of the LA wildfires, they donated an additional \$10,000 that helped our efforts to support the LA Regional Food Bank.



Local Gelson's Market locations came together to raise money for Feeding San Diego during their Give a Little, Feed a Lot: Holiday Food Drive Campaign. One of their cashiers, Donna (pictured above in blue), singlehandedly raised almost \$10,000 of the total \$14,000 for her store.



The Switchfoot Bro-Am Foundation made a multi-year pledge to sponsor Feeding San Diego's new school pantry at Libby Elementary in Oceanside, ensuring that kids and their families have access to healthy groceries.

To become a Corporate and Foundation Philanthropy partner, email Clay Alexander, Assistant Manager, Corporate Partnerships, at calexander@feedingsandiego.org.

Your gift provides **TWICE** as many nutritious meals thanks to a generous match!

April 2025 | give.feedingsandiego.org/freshfood



The School Pantry Program Alleviates Hunger on Campuses Across the County

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP TO EXPAND THIS VITAL PROGRAM TO SUPPORT LOCAL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Principal Joe Prosapio, “Mr. P” to his students at Berry Elementary School, knows how critical nutrition is for the kids in his community.

“Kids often have the fastest meals, the dollar mac and cheese, and then they’re coming to school without energy, or their brains aren’t functioning properly. When the kids have nutritious food, then they come ready to learn,” he tells us.

But the reality for so many parents in San Diego is that healthy food simply costs too much.

“Right now, the only thing that we can afford is either junk food or something not that healthy,” said Jessica, a mother with two kids at Berry.



Jessica receives potatoes at the Berry Elementary school pantry distribution.

“It’s just a relief to have someone that cares.”

Addressing a County-Wide Issue

According to Feeding America, more than 100,000 children in San Diego County are food insecure. To help reduce childhood hunger, Feeding San Diego has committed to operating 100 school pantries in the county by 2030. We’re more than halfway there, but there are still about 30 schools on our waitlist, and that number continues to grow.

Feeding San Diego’s School Pantry program brings nutritious food directly to where families with children already gather — their local schools. On distribution days, school spaces transform into free farmers’ markets. Parents can pick up nutritious ingredients, like fresh produce and pantry staples, empowering them to create meals that support their children’s growth and development.

Building Student Success

Principal Irene Hightower of Hancock Elementary, a Title 1 school in Tierrasanta, was relieved when her school was selected to open a school pantry in 2024.

“Part of the community school’s requirement is that we do a needs and assets survey. We were shocked to find out that so many families were looking for additional food because their pay rate doesn’t always allow them to have food security for the entire month,” she explains.

The student population at Hancock is approximately 98% military families and 71% of the families qualify for free and reduced lunch. For Principal Hightower, having the distribution is a critical part of the school’s goal to foster a thriving community.

“Students cannot function if they do not have proper food or proper clothing or proper health resources. So, if a parent can walk to the school and find the resources they need quickly, it makes me feel like the student can be here and be academically, socially, and emotionally successful at school.”

“Students cannot function if they do not have proper food.”

Feeding San Diego recently conducted a survey of schools currently participating in the School Pantry Program. 58% of the parents surveyed said their child’s grades have improved, 59% said that their child’s attendance had improved, and 80% said that their family is eating more fruits and vegetables since receiving food from Feeding San Diego.

To learn more about funding the School Pantry Program expansion, please contact Sandy Rabourne, Director of Development, Major Gifts, at 858.283.8978 or srabourne@feedingsandiego.org.



A child is handed a watermelon at the school pantry at Hancock Elementary.

How to Support Local Kids and Their Families

Each school on our waitlist has a story like Hancock Elementary’s. If we could, we would open pantries at all 30+ schools on the waitlist today. But opening a new school pantry is a logistical feat, requiring substantial investment and ongoing support. We are still seeking sponsors to help fund the remaining schools on the waitlist.

Mr. P knows the generosity is out there. “For someone to step up and say, ‘We’ll provide the money it takes to make sure children get good food.’ That’s really what our world needs — more of that.”



Principal Prosapio and volunteers hand out food to parents and neighbors at Berry Elementary’s school pantry distribution.

In October 2024, the Berry Elementary School Pantry opened as part of Feeding San Diego’s school pantry expansion, one of 17 new school pantries launched at K-12 schools throughout the county last year. Jessica attended the first distribution at Berry and left with fresh fruits and vegetables.

“This is a really great help,” she said. “It’s just a relief to have someone that cares about people that are struggling to make it on their own day by day.”



Support K-12 students at Feeding San Diego school pantries across the county.

Every green pin on this map represents students and their families who have nutritious food for weekends and nights thanks to the support of generous donors.

- Existing school pantry sites
- Schools currently on the waitlist*



HELP FEED STUDENTS
feedingsandiego.org/100by2030



*As of February 2025

Donating Time... and A Kidney

A CHANCE CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO VOLUNTEERS LEADS TO AN ORGAN DONATION THAT SAVED LIVES

It happened while they were gleaning green bell peppers together in February 2024. Two strangers, both with a shared purpose of volunteering their time, were working side by side and got to talking.



Meredithe and Craig at the Grossmont Produce Pantry distribution, where they first met.

Craig Holt, a 63-year-old Army veteran, mentioned to Meredith Mainquist, a volunteer with over 1,300 hours at Feeding San Diego, that he needed a kidney. Surprising herself, she responded, "If I'm a match, you can have mine." That simple answer led to a life-changing, lifesaving donation. After the food distribution, Craig got in his car and cried.

"For her to help me with [a kidney] is unbelievable," he shares. "It's just still unbelievable that somebody would give this to you."



Meredithe with Craig and his wife, Barbara, on the day he was released from the hospital after his transplant surgery.

Later that year, after a long medical journey, Craig received a kidney transplant thanks to Meredith's donation. Though he didn't receive her kidney, her generosity moved him to the top of the list, and her kidney was donated to someone in Virginia.

"Craig had been on dialysis for four years when we met," Meredith shares, "They said he could be on the list 10, 15, 20 years. It was just a natural choice. I want to keep Craig giving back to the community."

“ I want to keep Craig giving back to the community. ”

Fate has a way of working when you least expect it. Meredith didn't usually volunteer at the Produce Pantry at Grossmont College, held on the fourth Friday of every month for about 200 households, but woke up that day with nothing to do and decided to go. Her selfless act is just one incredible story in the legacy of Feeding San Diego's outstanding volunteers, who show up for Feeding San Diego and each other day in and day out.

Volunteer to support our neighbors in need!

Feeding San Diego is always in need of volunteers. Sign up today to be part of our amazing volunteer community!



Visit feedingsandiego.org or scan the QR code to learn more.



Thank You

TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS WHO GAVE \$10,000 OR MORE BETWEEN JULY 1 AND DECEMBER 31, 2024.

\$1,000,000 and above

Aqualia International Foundation LTD*
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*Donors who have supported our School Pantry Expansion Campaign.

For a list of all individual donors who gave \$1,000 or more during this time period, please scan here:



With Gratitude

TO OUR INSPIRE LEVEL CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, AND FOOD RESCUE PARTNERS WHO GAVE BETWEEN JULY 1 AND DECEMBER 31, 2024.

Feeding San Diego Inspire Partners are recognized for their generous contributions of \$25,000 and above or 250,000 lbs. of food and above or combined gifts of \$15,000 and 150,000 lbs. of food.



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Give Back This Spring



Double Your Impact

This April, any gift made to Feeding San Diego will be **DOUBLED** by an anonymous donor. Every \$10 donated will help provide 40 meals and rescue 40 pounds of food.

Shop the Feeding San Diego Store

When you order from the Feeding San Diego merch store, you are helping to end hunger through food rescue with every purchase. From hoodies to hats to water bottles, we have something for everyone. Visit shop.feedingsandiego.org to start shopping.

Become A Feed 365 Member

Join our community of monthly donors to make a difference in the lives of San Diegans facing hunger year-round. A monthly donation of any size helps provide consistent support that helps us plan ahead.

Spring Reading

The Hunger Action Heroes Unite! comic book is just the resource you need to educate young readers about the impacts of hunger and food waste, eliminate the stigma around food assistance, and inspire them to be a part of the solution. Learn more at hungeractionheroes.org.

GET INVOLVED

feedingsandiego.org/get-involved



HUNGRY FOR MORE?



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Sign up at feedingsandiego.org/stay-inspired.



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9477 Waples St., Ste. 100
San Diego, CA 92121

Mailing address:
PO Box 720010
San Diego, CA 92172-0010



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