



# Food for Thought

FIGHTING HUNGER

FEEDING HOPE

## *I Still Hang on to Hope*

If there were no Food Bank, I don't know what I would do. And if the pantries did not distribute food to families in need, it would be pure misery. I have a family with grandkids and great-grandkids.



*"I wish I could meet you personally just to tell you how much I appreciate your kindness to me during these difficult times."*

That's lots of mouths to feed at a time when money is scarce and it's hard to put food on the table. The recession is hitting us hard — and there are families who are a whole lot worse off than we are. That's why I'm so grateful for all the food we receive here.

The reality is, we're all in this together. That's why I try to do what I can to help others. I've always had a tender heart toward others. And when times are tough, my heart gets

even softer, I guess. I met a lady the other day without enough clothes for her family. I told her I had lots of clothes. I felt good sharing them with her. Isn't that what being a good neighbor is all about? Treating others like you'd like to be treated?

I was raised poor, but I never felt poor. As kids, we were always taught to share. I'm glad we stretched a dollar like you wouldn't believe. Now, I have to do the same thing. If we didn't receive food from the Valley Food Bank, life would be tough beyond belief. I know the food doesn't just show up here. Donors give food to the food bank, and give money to buy even more.

I wonder if you really know how great you are as a donor. So, if no one's ever told you, I'm telling you now: you are the best, most caring person to do what you do to reach out to others. Thank you. I wish I could meet you personally just to tell you how much I appreciate your kindness to me during these difficult times.

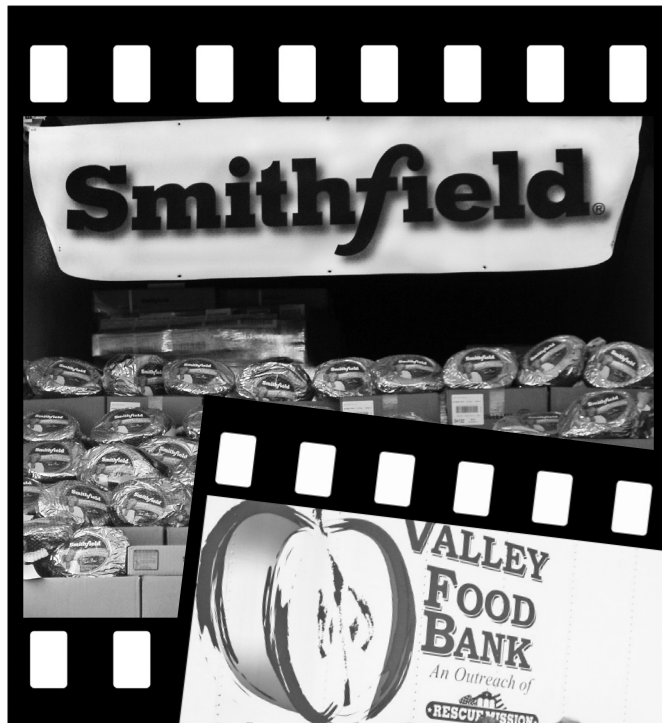
If we didn't receive food from the food bank, it would be tough beyond belief. ~ Judy

*D*uring times of economic uncertainty, charitable giving can be challenging. It is human nature for us to turn inward and only respond to our own needs. After all, the recession is hitting everyone. Retirement plans are being put on the shelf. Many retirement plans are not living up to their promise. You are an eyewitness to the higher cost for food, rising fuel costs, the loss of employment for yourself or a family member, and the plummeting of property values. When an economic crisis of this magnitude happens, everyone suffers. No one is immune. And those who already suffer simply suffer more. These are the men, women, and children the Valley Food Bank serves faithfully week after week. Thank you for being a "Hero" to folks in need during these difficult times. Thank you for keeping hope alive for people who are hungry.

# THE BAG LADY WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL

Paula Deen was a homemaker and bank teller who was left with only \$200 and her two teenage sons after a divorce. She was considered a good Southern cook, so she started a small catering company called *The Bag Lady*. She made sandwiches and other meals, and her sons would deliver them. Paula avoided going out because she suffered from agoraphobia, a fear of public places. *The Bag Lady* was very successful and soon outgrew her kitchen.

Paula was then hired by a hotel in Savannah. She worked there five years before opening her own restaurant, *The Lady and Sons*. Paula was able to overcome her agoraphobia through constant contact with guests. The restaurant was a success.



Paula Deen, Will Hernandez, and Michael Groover

Paula began her relationship with the Food Network in 1999 and finally got her own show in 2003, *Paula's Home Cooking*. Paula appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show in 2002. Her appearance brought hundreds of letters from women who took control of their lives after watching Paula tell her story of despair and lack of self-esteem. Paula is married to Michael Groover – Riverboat captain, and is a restaurant owner, cooking show host, and author of multiple cookbooks.

Paula was the 2011 Tournament of Roses Grand Marshall. Ms. Deen, working with Dennis Pittman, Director of Public Affairs for Smithfield of Virginia, selected the Valley Food Bank to be the recipient of meat give-away here in Southern California. Smithfield donated over 11,000 pounds of various hams and pork products for re-distribution into the community to needy individuals.

## Hope Alive in Difficult Times

In the valley where massive layoffs are the order of the day, a well-dressed man enters the door of a food pantry and takes a number to pick up food for his family. The man has a job as a car salesman. The trouble is, he has not sold a car for a month. Commission business is heartless. No sales, no salary. Without his usual income, the man dressed in business casual attire

does what was once unthinkable: he asks for food provided by the food bank. Such stories go on and on... and so does the pain, the worry, and the fear of the future. As you continue to stand with us, you keep providing hope for people in need: for hungry children, seniors, the new poor, the disabled and the sick among us. Thank you for your unflinching support.



Taking a number to feed his family.

for more Valley Food Bank news log on to [www.valleyfoodbank.org](http://www.valleyfoodbank.org)

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