



# Food for Thought

FIGHTING HUNGER

FEEDING HOPE

## More Than a Dinner

At the beginning of 2010, Esperanza came by the Food Bank and was desperate for some help. In talking with her, we discovered that her husband of 43 years had been diagnosed with cancer and would soon be undergoing treatment. Unable to work, their situation had become very difficult.

We all came to know Esperanza and could see from her face, before she could give a report, how her husband was doing – some weeks better than others. Thanksgiving was fast approaching and we wanted to help her and her husband, so we made certain she got a turkey and all the trimmings to ensure they both would enjoy a great holiday meal.

Not many days after Thanksgiving she appeared and, on making eye contact, burst into tears. After an extended hug she blurted out, “He’s gone, he’s gone.” No words can fill that pain and sense of loss. We sat and talked about the many years the two had shared together. Then she shared how, in the week before his death, they had enjoyed the best Thanksgiving dinner ever and how she will

keep that memory for the rest of her life. The joy on his face and the time the two of them were able to share – giving thanks for all they were able to do together had become priceless.

So as we prepare for the holidays to come, we can reminisce and know that we are able to give in ways that go well beyond just a dinner.



# The cupboards are kind of stocked, but...

The biggest period of overindulgence of the entire year is nearly upon us. With only a few months until year-end, many of us may find that our jeans fit a little tighter and our dietary rules will get a little lax. It is the perfect time to take inventory of what is in the cupboard and give thought to how you can help support the many new recipients the Food Bank will have this year.

Gearing up for the holidays is not only an American tradition, but also a family tradition. For many, it is the one season out of the year to have dinners together in the same place, enjoy each other's company, and of course, give thanks.

So we are busy getting ready for this special time of the year. The food supply is on par with last year, but the demands have increased with the prolonged



sagging economy and the extended unemployment of so many here in the local community. We are hoping to prepare several hundred holiday food boxes to give out during the Thanksgiving holiday.

The needs are simple – all the same items that you would prepare or expect on your plate come Thanksgiving. We had hoped for several hundred turkeys from a past donor, but they decided this year the priority would be given to organizations that prepare food for holiday meals, rather than food banks and pantries for distribution to individual families. So, the hunt is on for several hundred turkeys. As of the time of this writing, there is not one turkey in the freezer.

Please help spread the word to your friends, co-workers and family that the Valley Food Bank needs all the fixings for holiday food boxes.

## For your heart, shake the salt habit

How much sodium do you really consume? A registered dietitian from our volunteer group from Kaiser Permanente reveals simple ways to take in less salt. Carole Bartolotto, MA, RD, shares great advice on salt consumption:

The 2010 U S Dietary Guidelines recommend only 1,500 milligrams of salt a day for those who have high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, people over 50 years old, and African-Americans. For everyone else, including children, up to 2,300 milligrams a day should be the maximum. This is less



than 1 teaspoon. Yet the average individual consumes between 3,500 and 5,000 milligrams of sodium a day. And, sea salt is no healthier than table salt. As part of a healthy lifestyle, reducing the sodium you consume can lower your blood pressure in just weeks.

Follow these suggestions for a healthier, low-salt diet:

- Season food with lemon juice, herbs, and spices instead of salt.
- Eat fewer processed, packaged, and canned foods.
- Cook at home more and eat out less often. Restaurant foods often hide high levels of salt.
- Eat more fresh foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, peas, and lentils.
- Prepare fish, chicken, and meats without salt.

Even a small decrease in sodium can lower your risk for heart attack or stroke. And don't worry: Your taste buds will get used to less sodium in just a few weeks.