

FOOD For THOUGHT



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024

Communities Unite After Tropical Storm Hilary

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Hilary, FIND Food Bank joined forces with KESQ to launch an extensive disaster relief campaign aimed at providing crucial support to those impacted by the storm. As communities grappled with the effects of the disaster, FIND Food Bank stepped up to the challenge, delivering emergency food assistance to those in dire need.

Through our disaster relief campaign, we were able to swiftly organize and execute emergency food distributions in multiple communities throughout the Coachella Valley. **This rapid response ensured that individuals and families facing food insecurity in the wake of the storm received the essential nourishment they required.**

Elianna Mendiola, a FIND client, shared a heart-wrenching story of how her family of six faced sudden devastation, losing their home, cars, and cherished possessions in mere minutes. “We are a family of 6 and right now we are all separated due to housing, we have been house hopping, hotel hopping, we practically lost everything.” Amidst the challenges, Elianna expresses her gratitude to FIND Food Bank. “I am grateful for FIND, we bought food one day before the storm hit, and it was all lost, but with FIND’s services we were able to get healthy foods during a hard time in our lives.”

The outcome of our collaborations and partnerships not only raised over \$40,000 by our strong partners like KESQ News Channel 3, The Desert’s News Leader,



Amazon, and Target distribution centers, but also amplified the impact of our disaster relief efforts in our communities.

Thank you Amazon for your generous contribution of \$25,000 toward Hilary Relief and KESQ for helping to raise over \$15,000 for our community. When clients had no access to fresh water, Target Distribution Center donated pallets of water to help residents impacted by the storm. We truly appreciate the support from our partners and individuals who generously contributed to the relief efforts last summer. We are so grateful to have their support, which allowed us to extend our reach and aid to even more people in need. As the recovery process continued, FIND remained committed to the long-term well-being of the communities affected by Tropical Storm Hilary. **Our disaster relief campaign exemplified the strength of unity and community support, showcasing the resilience that can emerge even in the face of adversity and a state of emergency.**





Message From CEO Debbie Espinosa

As we celebrate this new year, I want to take a moment to THANK everyone who so generously donated to FIND Food Bank throughout 2023. As always, our donors were remarkably generous with their gifts. Local businesses and community residents were eager to help raise funds and foods that provided thousands of meals for children, families, and seniors during the most challenging times last year. When Tropical Storm Hilary devastated our region, our community responded to our call for help. When the holiday season was upon us, our year-end supporters stepped up to provide our clients with a holiday meal.

We would not be able to continue serving the 120,000 people on average each month without generous donor support, along with dedicated volunteers and strong community partners. With everyone's care and commitment, FIND will continue its mission work of feeding our most vulnerable populations. As the need continues to grow in our region and the number of people served has doubled since the pandemic, our goal remains unchanged: Ending Hunger Today, Tomorrow, and for a Lifetime.

FIND looks forward to building food programs and services that will give our clients the opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency and eventually break the cycles of poverty. We look forward to sharing more on our programmatic framework that will be launched later this year.

Thank you for caring enough to help. I am grateful for this community, which has displayed so much love, compassion and care for our children, seniors and working families.

Debbie Espinosa,
CEO, FIND Food Bank



FIND's 14th Annual Telethon

Tune in for the live television broadcast of FIND Food Bank's 14th Annual Telethon, sponsored by KESQ News Channel 3, on Friday, April 5, 2024. FIND's upcoming Telethon is vital in helping raise critical funds to feed the average of 120,000 people each month throughout the Greater Coachella Valley and Hi-Desert Region. Most of our clients are comprised of fixed income seniors, working families, and vulnerable youth, who rely on FIND's Summer Feeding programs to help those facing food insecurity during the hot desert summer.

To support or donate to FIND's Telethon, call (760) 775-FIND (3663) or visit FindFoodBank.org on April 5th.





Helping Our Agricultural Community: Mercados Campesinos



At FIND Food Bank, we are continually exploring innovative ways to address the unique needs of our community members. One such collaboration that we continue to highlight is our partnership with Mercados Campesinos, a dedicated initiative that bridges both organizations, and focuses on providing fresh fruits, vegetables, and a variety of foods to hardworking farmworkers.

Mercados Campesinos, translated as “Farmers Markets,” is a vital initiative that caters specifically to the nutritional needs of farmworkers. Our collaboration with Mercados Campesinos allows us to provide farmworkers with increased access to healthy and nutritious foods. This not only promotes their well-being, but also acknowledges the vital role the farmworker community plays in sustaining our local agriculture. We work closely to tailor food distributions that meet the unique dietary preferences and nutritional needs of farmworkers. This personalized approach ensures that our support aligns with the specific challenges faced by this essential workforce.

Jesus Esqueda and David Figueroa are dedicated foremen committed to the well-being of their farmworkers. “We constantly hear feedback, they always let us know how much they enjoy the food FIND provides and are always grateful with what they are given.” They provide 250 employees on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to ensure their team’s nourishment, and take pride in sharing the source of this support. In their own words, ‘FIND Food Bank is the heart behind the meals for their families.’ The partnership extends beyond food distribution, and engages with the farmworker community to understand their evolving needs. This collaborative dialogue ensures that our efforts are responsive and that we adapt to best serve those who contribute so significantly to our region’s agricultural prosperity.

Our collaboration with Mercados Campesinos symbolizes a commitment to building a stronger, more resilient community. By meeting the distinct needs of our farmworkers, we contribute to the overall well-being of the entire community.

FIND Success — Empowering Higher Education Students

FIND Success is more than just a program, it is a commitment to empowering the next generation of leaders and professionals. As many students embark on their college journey, they often face challenges that extend beyond the classroom. Recognizing this, FIND Food Bank has created a holistic program designed to provide support and resources tailored to the unique needs of higher education students.

We understand the importance of proper nutrition for academic success. FIND Success ensures that higher education students have access to nutritious food, prompting their overall well-being and providing a foundation for academic excellence. The program assists students in developing the skills and resources needed for a successful career launch. From resume building to interview preparation, we aim to empower students to enter the workforce confidently.

Higher education can be challenging, but no student should face these challenges alone. FIND Success fosters a sense of community among students, providing a supportive network that encourages collaboration and shared success. By investing in higher education students, FIND is contributing to the development of a more resilient and empowered community. **The FIND Success program is not just about academic achievement, it’s about preparing students with the tools and knowledge they need to lead successful, fulfilling lives beyond their college years.**





Residents at Griffin Ranch Join the Fight Against Hunger

Volunteerism is an essential function of FIND's operation and very much needed to support our mission to end hunger in the desert region. Our work relies heavily on volunteers to serve the average of 120,000 people monthly.

Each month, a dedicated group of residents from the Griffin Ranch La Quinta residential community volunteer at FIND's warehouse. These hunger fighting residents spend their morning sorting, packing, and boxing items that are immediately pushed out to various distribution sites. This caring group is extremely committed to ending hunger in our region and continues to support FIND's programs that help feed seniors, children, and families. "We have found our volunteer time at FIND Food Bank very rewarding; not only do we have the opportunity to help our community, but we also appreciate the comradery of spending several mornings a month together and with the amazing FIND staff," shares Ellen A., on behalf of the residents of Griffin Ranch.



With nearly 150 sites each month, FIND would not be able to mobilize food to our clients as quickly as we do now if we did not have the help from these residents. We are tremendously grateful to all the Griffin Ranch residents for generously giving to FIND. It is through reliable volunteers like Griffin Ranch residents that allow FIND to distribute 18 million pounds of food to those who need it most.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, please visit www.findfoodbank.org/volunteer or call (760) 775-3663.

The American Express Community Service Day

This year's American Express PGA Tour kicked off with a Community Service Day at FIND Food Bank. The American Express and PGA Tour staff and executives, along with Impact Through Golf Foundation Board members, took time out of their busy tournament duties to volunteer their time at FIND Food Bank! Participants started their day learning about the work of FIND, followed by a warehouse and facility tour, and ended with a volunteer activity: packing senior boxes and dry bags for distribution that week. In just 45 minutes, the group packed 109 senior boxes and 250 dry relief bags! **It's amazing to see the great impact when collective efforts are made!**

The organization's commitment and dedication to hunger relief in our community is truly remarkable. In addition to volunteering their time and talent, The American Express presented FIND with a generous donation of **\$50,000** to help fight hunger in the communities we serve. Their support will provide thousands of meals to those who may not know where their next meal is coming from.

Thank You, American Express, for your care and unwavering support that ensures our children, families, and seniors will have access to a healthy and nutritious meal.

Support FIND Food Bank, and you too can help feed the 150,000 adults, children, and seniors we provide with food assistance across the desert region every month.

Follow us on:   

FINDFoodBank.org

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