



SAN FRANCISCO FOOD BANK

Is the Recession Over? Not for San Francisco's Hungry

San Francisco Food Bank's December food distributions up 40% vs. last year

San Francisco, CA (December 29, 2009) – It's been a record-breaking year for the San Francisco Food Bank, with the amount of food distributed to the city's hungry topping previous numbers every month. But those figures were even more sobering during the holidays.

The Food Bank handed out groceries to more than 30,000 households for Thanksgiving – **up 30%** versus last year. “We were determined that everyone in need should be able to have the makings for a wholesome, home-cooked holiday meal,” said Paul Ash, San Francisco Food Bank Executive Director. “This was followed by an even greater need in the month of December.”

During the first two weeks of December, the San Francisco Food Bank's **distributions rose 40%** versus the same time period in 2008. “I'm not sure when this is going to stop,” Ash said. Over the year, he noted, the San Francisco Food Bank has expanded its grocery pantry network to more than 200 locations – including the opening of eight pantries in Marin County. In the first half of December alone, the Food Bank distributed nearly 2 million pounds of food.

The good news is food donations are up. However, they're not rising high enough to meet the demand. For the first two weeks of December, **donated food was up just 14%** versus 2008. The quantity of items the Food Bank was forced to purchase which typically includes staples like rice, beans and pasta was up 17%.

What can San Franciscans do to help their hungry neighbors in the months to come? “We have food donation barrels located throughout the city,” Ash said. “The most-needed items are non-perishable proteins, like canned tuna or peanut butter.” He added that cash donations are welcome, too. “For every \$1 donated, we can distribute \$9 worth of food,” Ash explained, thanks to the Food Bank's efficient operation, which relies on 21,000 volunteers to pack, sort and hand out food to the city's 150,000 hungry.

About the San Francisco Food Bank

Hunger is a serious problem in San Francisco – with 1 in 4 children and 1 in 5 adults at risk of hunger. Every day, the San Francisco Food Bank sources, collects, sorts, inspects and repackages thousands of pounds of food, then distributes it to soup kitchens, neighborhood grocery centers, school programs and seniors in need.

The San Francisco Food Bank serves 22,000 households weekly throughout San Francisco and Marin counties, and will distribute 36.5 million pounds of food to the community this year – enough for 78,000 meals every day. Over half of what is distributed is fresh produce. For more information, visit www.SFFoodBank.org.

Contact: Stacy Newman

Phone: 415-282-1900, ext. 270

Cell: 949-702-6444

snewman@sffb.org