



## **San Francisco Food Bank Welcomes Volunteers to Participate in National Day of Service to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

*Year round, Food Bank volunteers are a critical link to helping the Food Bank distribute food to thousands living at risk of hunger*

**San Francisco, CA** (January 14, 2011) – With 1 in 5 children and 1 in 5 adults at risk of hunger, the San Francisco Food Bank, a non-profit organization dedicated to ending hunger in San Francisco is welcoming volunteers to mark Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day by volunteering in their communities. Though enacted in 1994, the MLK Day of Service reached a record level of participation in 2009 when President Barack Obama called for widespread volunteerism.

Volunteers are a critical link to helping the Food Bank move more than 400 tons of food through the warehouse every week. Volunteers help sort and pack fresh produce, attach labels to unlabeled cans (known as "shiners"), assemble food boxes for seniors, and perform many other tasks that help the food bank provide \$6 of food for every \$1 donated. Without the support of volunteers fresh produce brought in through the Farm to Family program would languish in the warehouse and deliveries of nutritious food would be delayed to our clients.

Last year more than 22,000 people volunteered at the San Francisco Food Bank, logging more than 114,000 hours of service and doing the work of what would be more than 55 full-time employees. Oftentimes, thanks to the work provided by the volunteers, the produce that our clients receive at our weekly farmer's market style pantries is fresher than what can be found at local grocery stores.

With food requests up 32 percent over this time last year and eighteen consecutive months of more than 3 million pounds of food distributed, the number of those turning to the San Francisco Food Bank continues to increase. The San Francisco Food Bank is responding to needs of those in the community and volunteers are needed throughout the year to help meet this demand. With volunteer shifts every day of the week, including some evenings, the San Francisco Food Bank makes it easy to fit service into a busy life. Families are welcome to volunteer together on weekends, and children as young as four years of age can volunteer on Sundays.

“The National Day of Service is a great opportunity for people to get involved in their community but it is important to recognize that the need for volunteers exists year round.

We encourage people to get involved with the San Francisco Food Bank throughout the year.” said Paul Ash, Executive Director of the San Francisco Food Bank.

On the National Day of Service, people of all ages and backgrounds will come together to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and move our nation closer to the “Beloved Community” that Dr. King had envisioned. Dr. Martin Luther King devoted his life’s work to causes of equality and social justice. He taught that through nonviolence and service to one another, problems such as hunger and homelessness, prejudice and discrimination can be overcome. Dr. King’s teachings can continue to guide us in addressing our nation’s most pressing needs.

Members of the media are encouraged to visit the San Francisco Food Bank warehouse at 900 Pennsylvania Avenue in San Francisco on Monday, January 17 to meet with volunteers who will be working in shifts from 9:00 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**About San Francisco Food Bank and Marin Food Bank**

Hunger is a serious problem in our community – with 1 in 5 children and 1 in 5 adults at risk of hunger in San Francisco and Marin. Every day, the Food Banks source, collect, sort, inspect and repackage thousands of pounds of food, then distribute it to soup kitchens, neighborhood grocery centers, school programs and seniors in need.

The San Francisco Food Bank and the Marin Food Bank combined serve over 200,000 people per year, and will distribute 43.5 million pounds of food to the community this year – enough for at least 88,000 meals every day. 60% of what is distributed is fresh fruits and vegetables. For more information, visit [www.SFFoodBank.org](http://www.SFFoodBank.org)

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