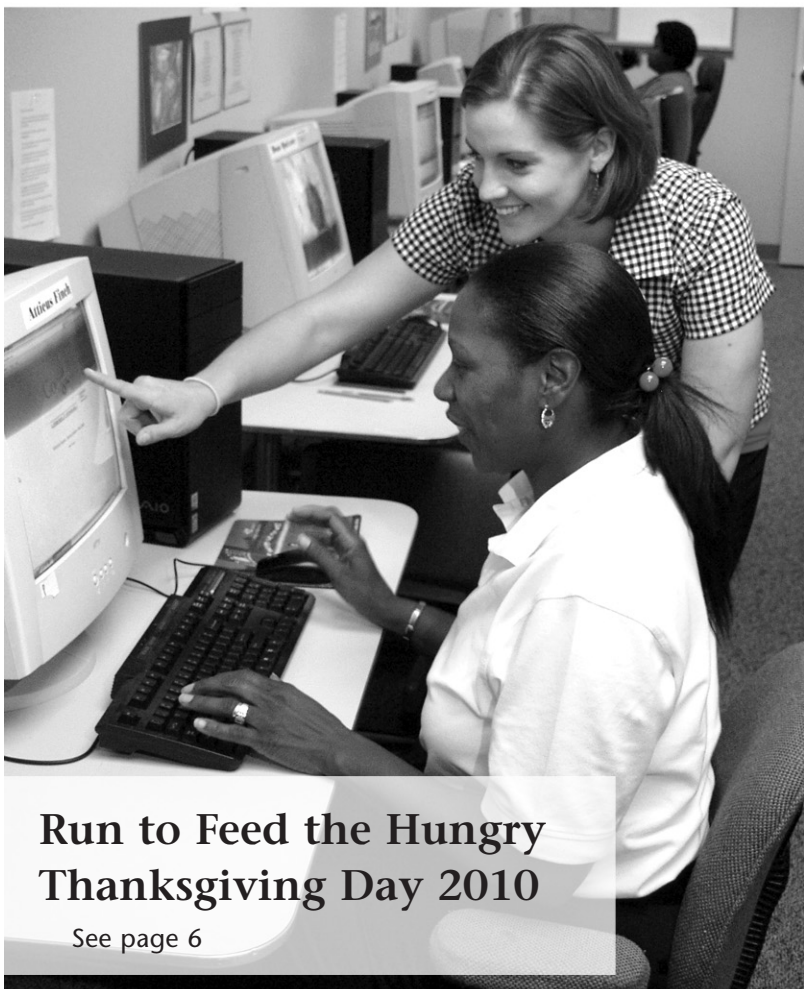


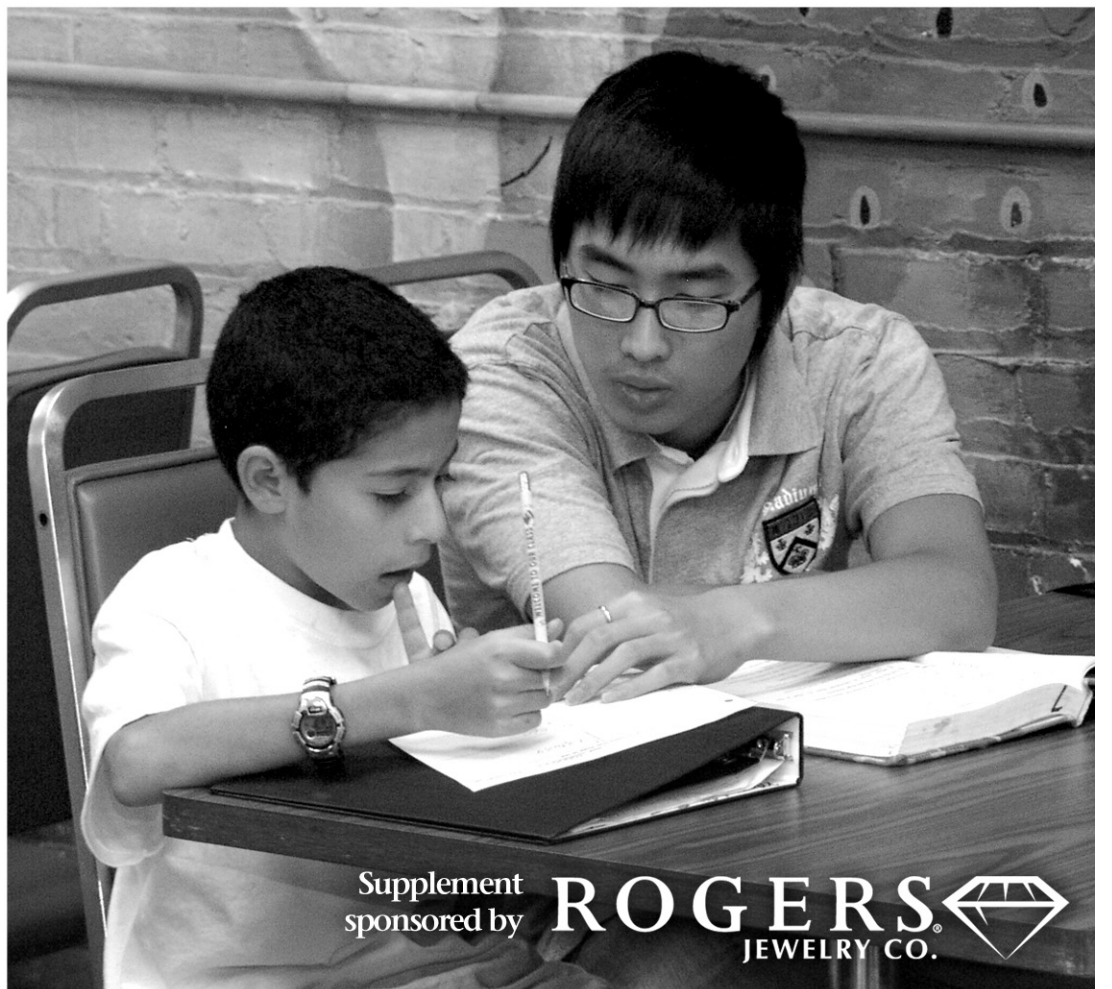


So Much More Than Food...



Run to Feed the Hungry
Thanksgiving Day 2010

See page 6



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Serving since
1976

by Anna Barela

Thirty-four years ago, Father Daniel Madigan began serving food to the Sacramento community out of the basement of the Immaculate Conception Church on Broadway. Pained by so many hungry faces – including small children – on the streets of Sacramento, he founded Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services with the help of a small group of volunteers and church members. Since then, SFBFS has grown and expanded exponentially to meet the ever increasing needs of the community.

SFBFS has grown and expanded exponentially to meet the ever increasing needs of the community

In 1988, the Food Assistance program moved out of the church basement when SFBFS purchased the old Arata Brothers grocery store at 3333 Third Ave. in Oak Park. The 30,000-foot facility became SFBFS' headquarters. Immediately, the Clothing program started and an Adult Education program sprang up the following year. The Mother-Baby program was added a few years later.

Later, programs for children like PlayCare, Youth Academy and Computer Clubhouse were added, as well as the Women's Wisdom Art program. 1,500 volunteers provided support with these programs by 2001. These numbers continued to grow, as did the need for services.

In February 2005, a second center in North Sacramento was built at 2469 Rio Linda Blvd. The new center was dubbed Saca Community Learning Center after the Saca family, who supported SFBFS and served on the board over the years. The facility offers Mother-Baby, Adult Education, PlayCare, and Youth Academy programs.

The operations model for food distribution changed in 2008 to better serve community needs. The focus shifted to healthy food, and mobile distributions began bringing food directly to neighborhoods.

The new approach to food distribution gained recognition and won the Bank of America Neighborhood Excellence Initiative Award in 2009.

SFBFS continues to grow. October 2010 marked the groundbreaking ceremony for a new Education Center and Urban Farm. There are now over 4,000 volunteers keeping Father Madigan's passion for helping those in need alive through eight diverse programs.

Serving more than just food

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services is famous for food distribution. But according to SFBFS Communication and Development Director Kelly Siefkin, most people do not realize there are eight programs: Food Assistance, Clothing, Mother-Baby, Adult Education, Women's Wisdom Art, PlayCare, Youth Academy, and Computer Clubhouse. All of these programs are offered free of charge to residents.

Food Assistance Director Marshal Graves said, "A lot of people think the people who come to us are homeless, have addiction problems and have mental health issues. We get people who look like you and me – people who had jobs and could take care of their families. They have lost their jobs, they have lost their house. It is difficult for some of those people to ask for help, but they do."

With locations in Oak Park and North Sacramento, these diverse programs come together to prepare those in need for greater self-sufficiency and create healthier communities.

PlayCare offers fun learning

From the time young children can walk, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services' PlayCare program sparks an early interest in learning. While parents attend Adult Education classes at SFBFS, PlayCare provides a safe, fun and educational place for toddlers. The cooperative program keeps parents involved in their children's care.

A typical day in the program includes a snack, art projects, group circle time, games, reading and other activities. Aurelia Garcia, Program Manager of the Oak Park location, carefully designs activities



that will enhance emotional, cognitive and motor skill development. She hopes these activities will prepare youngsters for kindergarten.

"We teach our little ones their colors, shapes, numbers and ABCs," Garcia said. "We also provide our 3+ children with homework packets to take home, allowing parent to take an active role in helping their kids succeed."

Parents also help in the PlayCare classroom, volunteering once a week to assist with reading to the children during circle time, preparing snacks and helping children with art projects.

"This helps our parents to see how we interact with the children and provides them with the opportunity to practice their English skills and improve their parenting techniques," Garcia said. "It is an honor to work with all of our families and see their love and commitment to improving their family's future, understanding that education is the key to their success."

PlayCare is not a licensed daycare. The Oak Park and North Sacramento facilities offer care for children at least 1 year old and walking up to age 5 whose parents are attending Adult Education or Mother-Baby classes. PlayCare allows parents to focus on their learning. The educational setting engages children, stimulating growth and preparing them for preschool and kindergarten.

Raising healthy and happy babies

A very special program at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services is the Mother-Baby program. Volunteers and staff help guide and empower new mothers to give their babies bright and healthy futures.

In preparation for baby's arrival, support begins with packages for pregnant mothers in their eighth month. After birth, mom can bring her new bundle of joy with her to the Mother-Baby program. Mom will receive emotional support in a group setting and individual mentoring. Many mothers like group support because they find other moms experiencing the same parenting challenges.

Individual mentoring sessions assess the needs of each family and refer necessary community resources. Volunteers sit down with new parents and discuss anything they may be facing and provide guidance along the way. Parents in need receive emergency supplies of formula, baby food, clothing and diapers.

In exchange for free services, parents are required to attend at least one monthly family life workshop. All parents are invited to attend as many workshops as they like. These include family budgeting, health and hygiene, child development, communication, stress management, and nutrition. There are also fun classes like story time, playgroup and yoga. Although most of the students are moms, a few brave dads attend.

Oak Park Program Manager Lorena Carranza promises her clients, "I will welcome you with open arms and all my heart. I am committed to listen to you and to support you."

Mother-Baby services are offered until children reach two years of age. Once babies become toddlers, PlayCare is provided while parents attend classes. Staff and volunteers work with parents to help create stronger and healthier families.

Mireya Estrella, the Mother-Baby Program Manager in North Sacramento said, "The program is here to positively impact the lives of parents and children by providing tools and resources to promote happy and healthy homes."

Supporting youth

Elementary school children thrive at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services' Youth Academy. Enrolled students attend five days a week for tutoring, homework help, exciting games, activities and field trips. Dedicated volunteers help students succeed in their scholastic and personal development.

Students enrolled in first through sixth are required to attend every weekday. During this time, volunteer tutors work one on one with students to complete their homework and develop their academic skills.

But it's not just academics that help children thrive. Through partnerships with REI and Sierra Club Inner City Outings, SFBFS is able to provide educational field trips. These trips focus on teaching children about taking care of the environment and giving back to the community.

Field trips range from exploring the Monterey Bay Aquarium and hiking in Muir Woods to climbing at the REI Cal Expo store. Students have joined community service projects such as cleaning Lake Natoma at the CSUS Aquatic Center, clearing trails and helping clean the Yolo Wildlife reserve area. They visited gold mines and experienced history. In the spirit of fun, they also went bowling and had a chance to bring their families along to a dance performance at the Crest Theatre.

"Our students work hard for the things they receive from our program," Garcia said.

"They work hard to earn good grades and show respect towards their peers, our staff and volunteers."

**Continued
on page 4**

Sandra Redmon: Growing with Mother-Baby

After her fourth baby was born, Sandra Redmon heard about the Mother-Baby program at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services. She came seeking help with structure and discipline for her four children, and Mother-Baby welcomed her with personal mentoring and group support.

Redmon and her husband Tim live in Sacramento and have been married for 18 years. Their oldest daughter, Dallas, is 16, and their sons, Timothy and Bryan, are 12 and 9. The baby, Cheyenne, is now a year and a half. Redmon enjoys staying home with her children, but she looks forward to getting out of the house with Cheyenne to attend Mother-Baby support groups.

"We just sit and talk," she said. "There are a lot of you there, and you get different inputs of what people are going through. You can relate, and nothing goes out of the room. Everything stays private."

As Cheyenne began crawling, they attended play groups and story time activities. Mother and baby attended together, playing, listening to stories, singing songs and coloring. Redmon also began advocating for cloth diapering in the Mother-Baby program.

Cheyenne's pediatrician recommended using cloth diapers temporarily when she was five months old to address a rash that wouldn't heal. Redmon liked using cloth so much that she stuck with them. She quickly connected with other moms getting the cloth diaper classes at the Mother-Baby program.

"I brought samples of diapers in and showed people how they use them, how beneficial they were to save you money, and how easy it is!" she said. Redmon feels the Mother-Baby program has helped with all her children. Her baby received a boost in social skills though playtime with other children. Redmon gleaned advice on helping her teenage daughter pursue jobs and how to help her son who has ADD.

"I've been able to talk to my kids in more of a positive manner," she said. "It was nice to be able to find somebody to talk to."

When Cheyenne is older, Redmon is considering taking classes in the Adult Education program at SFBFS. She loves being around children and eventually hopes to take early childhood education classes so she can work in a daycare center when Cheyenne goes to kindergarten.



PHOTO BY
RYAN DONAHUE

Steff Echeverria: Becoming an artist

The Women's Wisdom Art program at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services brought Steff Echeverria from the darkness of mental disorder into health and stability. Her role in the program has evolved with her, and she finally allows herself the title of "artist."

Echeverria grew up in a family that encouraged intellectual pursuits over creativity. She first connected with Women's Wisdom Art in 1996 while staying at St. John's Shelter. She had just come to Sacramento to start over after losing everything during a down cycle in her bipolar syndrome. Her interest in art grew when she met her best friend, Jenny.

"She said there aren't any mistakes," Echeverria recalled. "It really was her that opened the door. I felt like I could do art and didn't have to judge myself so harshly."

She returned to Women's Wisdom Art as a client again in 2003, making jewelry and fabric arts. "I went as long as I could. Because I was at a critical point with my bipolar cycle, I stopped going and ended up getting hospitalized."

SFBFS has brought Steff Echeverria from the darkness of mental disorder into health and stability

As she recovered, Echeverria studied at Sacramento City College, receiving her associate's degree. She was seeking internships and found out Women's Wisdom Art in need of volunteers. She found herself at home with Women's Wisdom Art once again.

"I feel like it was the perfect place and perfect time for me to get reconnected, and have been there ever since," she said. "It's been an amazing growth for me to get back into art."

Echeverria feels like she has found her niche with Women's Wisdom Art. In addition to her volunteer work, she facilitates a class one day a week. She enjoys just being with the ladies in the program, describing them as a community of sisters.

Throughout her teaching and volunteer work, Echeverria continues her own art. She entered two pieces in the Art Bra show in September, a breast cancer awareness fundraiser. Her favorite art forms are ceramics and jewelry-making, but she also enjoys painting.

"SFBFS is such a perfect fit," Echeverria said. "I want to be an expressive arts therapist, so this is a perfect opportunity to work in this environment. I feel like I am in a place where I get to do artwork, and that artwork helps me reframe where I am at. It helped me with my self-esteem and confidence. I finally feel like an artist." Steff is currently pursuing a degree in Expressive Art Therapy at CSUS.



PHOTO BY RYAN DONAHUE

Continued from page 3

Building skills through technology

The Computer Clubhouse at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services brings exciting technological experiences to Oak Park junior high and high school students. Through partnership with Intel, Computer Clubhouse provides students with advanced technology and sophisticated software, as well as homework help, team building and life skills.

When students come to the Clubhouse after school, the first priority is homework. They can use computers and printers, which many students do not have at home. After homework, students have the opportunity to explore exciting technological projects like computer animation, web development, sound editing and photography and videography programs with SFBFS staff and volunteers.

Four-year volunteer Greg Hoyt, who is retired from Intel, recalls one project when students built robots. "We had a volunteer expert on robots come in and have the kids build them out of Legos, actually motorize them, and run them by remote control," he said. These projects give students a healthy avenue for expression and constructive learning that they enjoy.

With the guidance and support of volunteers and staff, youth receive quality mentorship, resources, skills and experiences that help shape their future. Computer Clubhouse gives students a chance to learn and thrive.



Meeting clothing needs

An exciting shopping experience awaits families in need at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services' Clothing program. Even those who cannot afford clothes can browse racks and feel the thrill of finding that special outfit for school or the perfect suit to nail a job interview. Program manager Tasha Bryant displays clothing sorted on racks, providing 450,000 articles of clothing per year to individuals in need throughout Sacramento.

"We want people to feel like they're in a store," Bryant said. "We really want to keep their dignity intact. I personally feel like society makes people who are in need feel like they have done something wrong. In the Clothing program we work hard to dispel that and just create a shopping experience for people that need clothing."

Many of Bryant's clients are working people with limited funds. They need business attire for job interviews or to maintain employment. She gets

frequent requests for black pants and white shirts because many jobs require a uniform.

The biggest need is for children's clothing. Parents come in because they cannot afford school uniforms or sports attire. Recently, Halloween costumes were on display for kids who otherwise wouldn't have a costume. The focus is on providing items that allow children to participate in activities they should not miss due to economic status.

There is a separate section with trendy teen clothes because teens are often embarrassed and not aggressive shoppers. Men's and women's clothes are also kept separate. Bryant reports difficulty keeping popular items such as big-and-tall for men and plus-sizes for women on the shelves. All the clothes are donated and given free to customers up to once a month.

"We want to meet specific needs because everybody has a different need," Bryant said. We have really fabulous donors, so we are able to meet some very specific needs here."



Women's art program paints brighter futures

Twenty years ago, Sister Laura Ann noticed that when she gave small art projects to homeless, addicted and abused female clients, their self-esteem increased and they recovered more quickly. Today, the healing power of art is open to women from all walks of life through Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services' Women's Wisdom Art program.

Sister Laura Ann started Women's Wisdom Art in a storefront on 24th Street with funding from The Sisters of Mercy. SFBFS President/CEO Blake Young, along with founder Father Madigan, built a classroom and rescued Women's Wisdom Art in 2000 when Sister Laura Ann lost her funding. They made Women's Wisdom Art part of SFBFS' family and expanded services to all women.

The program attracts students with a variety of backgrounds. Some have illnesses like fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome. Some are stroke or cancer survivors, widows, or caregivers. Others spent years raising children and are trying to redefine themselves. Some just love art!

"This eclectic mix of women is using the power of art to heal and strengthen their minds, hearts and souls," Program Manager Helen Plenert said. "The bond they form while creating in the classroom is truly a work of art."

Plenert believes artistic exploration naturally brings greater self-knowledge. Opportunities for creativity include drawing, textiles, clay, mixed media, poetry, creative writing and painting with acrylics and watercolors, with all supplies provided at no cost. Classes are taught by professional artists, and lunch is provided. No experience is needed, and the informal setting allows artists to set their own pace.

"I've seen the healing power of the arts transform these women one at a time," Plenert said. "We've created a community where the women can thrive. When they walk out of the classroom, they leave uplifted."

Food Assistance delivers health

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services revolutionized emergency food distribution through their Food Assistance program a few years ago. SFBFS targets areas of greatest need, partnering with community churches to bring healthy food and nutrition education directly to Sacramento neighborhoods through mobile distributions.

"It's essentially mini farmers markets," Food Assistance Director Marshall Graves said. "It solves the problem of food deserts. People who can't get to a grocery store can come here."

Graves describes food deserts as urban areas with no grocery stores nearby for those without transportation. He says residents resort to consuming food they can procure at corner liquor stores, which is often processed food, unhealthy snacks and meager produce that is not very fresh. With the mobile food distribution concept, developed by SFBFS President CEO Blake Young, SFBFS brings healthy food to these areas first.

SFBFS currently operates 10 mobile food distributions – seven in North Sacramento and three in Central Sacramento. SFBFS plans to increase this number and bring more food directly to neighborhoods in need. This growth is timely – Graves reports a 30 percent demand increase in the last two years due to local economic problems.

SFBFS emphasizes healthy food, raising funds to buy the freshest produce possible and teaching clients how to cook it. Volunteer chefs set up at every mobile distribution to demonstrate very simple and delicious recipes, giving out samples and recipes cards. Recipes focus on the fresh food being distributed that day.

Mobile food sites also feature health screenings. Nurses from the UC Davis School of Nursing and other volunteer nurses screen clients for health problems. High-risk clients receive advice on improving health problems like high blood pressure and high glucose through proper nutrition.

Graves feels food is the most essential service provided by SFBFS. Without food, the human body stops functioning. Support beyond simply providing food to eat, like learning to cook and live healthy, facilitates clients' journeys toward independence.

Learning gets personal

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services' Adult Education program provides free education to adults. Taught by volunteers, classes offer unique opportunities for a personalized learning experience.

Adults receive one-on-one help with reading, writing, math and GED preparation. Oak Park program manager Carrie Black explains that some students have a learning disability or changed schools frequently growing up.

"All of this translates into gaps in their education, which is why they can't make it in a classroom setting," Black said. "We find their gaps, fill them, and then they can become successes."

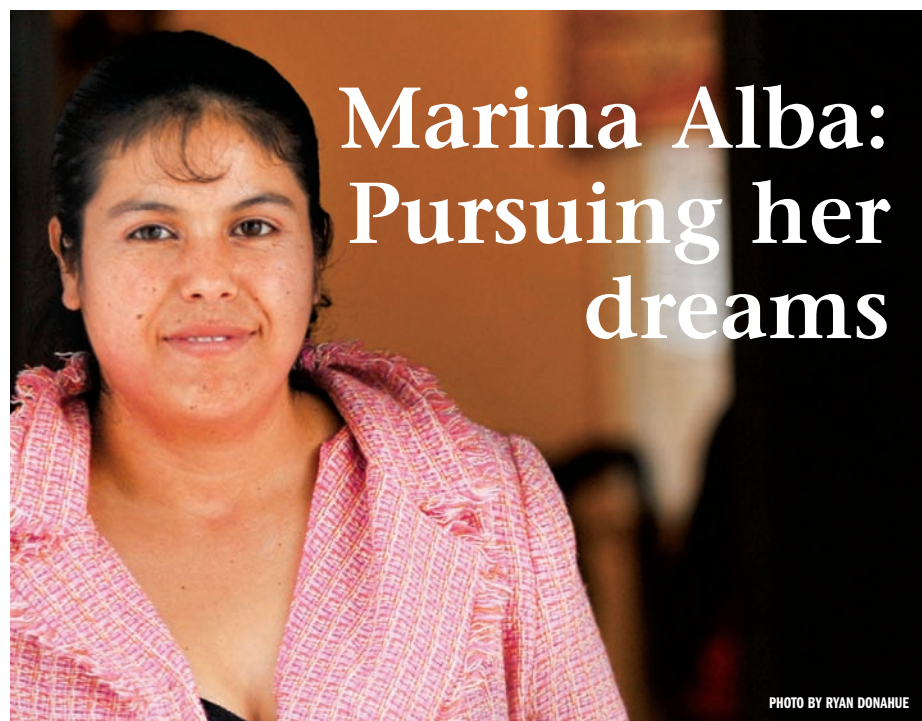
Growing numbers of unemployed and dislocated workers come to SFBFS seeking job skills training. Classes offer help with job searches, résumé building and computer skills. There's even a specialized course to help students navigate the CalJOBS website.

Many seniors enjoy computer classes at SFBFS. Some have lost their retirement and need to re-enter the workforce, but they have never used a computer before. Others just want to learn how to send an e-mail to their grandkids.

English as a Second Language classes are also offered in the Adult Education program. In contrast to traditional ESL courses, students have ample opportunity to speak English in the classroom regularly. Using language in conversation is the key to interacting on a social and professional level.

Across subjects, the learning experience is highly personal, supportive and non-judgmental. SFBFS' Adult Education program is the only program in the community offering one-on-one tutoring for free. All classes allow students to work at their own pace, and even offer additional resources such as telephones, fax machines and copiers.

"We are the school of last resort for a lot of people," Black said. "Our programs are open to the public, and we don't charge for any service. We are a really nice and friendly location!"



Marina Alba: Pursuing her dreams

PHOTO BY RYAN DONAHUE

Marina Alba wanted to learn to speak English so she could understand those around her, function in daily life in her new surroundings, and pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. She enrolled in the Adult Education program at Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services the summer of 2009 with "hello" as the only English word she could speak. Today, Alba is the only person in her family who can read, write and speak English fluently.

Alba moved to Sacramento from Guanajuato, Mexico, in 1997 to join her husband Benito. For several years, Alba stayed home to raise their three children. Alba found it difficult to function day to day not being able to understand English. She also dreamt of a career in nursing, but the language barrier kept her out of college. She had taken other English classes, mastering reading and writing in English, but still could not speak the language.

Today, Alba is the only person in her family who can read, write and speak English fluently

Alba recalls her difficulty in previous classes. "I didn't have the opportunity to speak," she said. She describes large classes in which she could only talk once or twice in a given week. In contrast, the English as a Second Language classes Alba takes at SFBFS allow ample opportunities for her to practice speaking.

"It is very different at [SFBFS]," she said. "You can practice with speaking more than other schools. I like to go because they are so friendly. When you need help, they can help you."

She attends class four times per week, receives one-on-one tutoring, and is committed to learning English as a means of improving her life. While she attends classes, Alba drops her 5-year-old daughter, Soledad, at SFBFS' PlayCare program, where Soledad is learning her shapes, colors and how to write her name. Her older children, Jerman and Benito Jr., ages 11 and 13, are enrolled in SFBFS' Youth Academy. Alba says since enrolling, they are doing better in school.

Alba is grateful for her new language skills. "It has changed my life," she said. "I know now how to make an appointment for a doctor. I can talk with people who speak English."

Alba plans to enroll in a nursing program at Sacramento City College once she is finished with ESL. "It's my dream to become a nurse," she said. "What I am learning at [SFBFS] will help me apply to college in January."



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Breaking new ground

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services is committed to assisting those in need by alleviating their immediate pain and problems and moving them toward self-sufficiency and financial independence. As community needs grow and expand, SFBFS strives to grow and expand services – even into new buildings! Along with excited staff, volunteers and clients, SFBFS broke ground this October for a new building that will allow for expanded services through a new Education Center, Urban Farm and Recreation Area.

The groundbreaking ceremony marked the kickoff to construction of a 22,000-square-foot building, which nearly doubles SFBFS' current campus. It is expected to be completed fall 2011 and will house existing education programs in a greater capacity. Across the street from the existing Oak Park building, more space means more individuals will be served.

SFBFS President/CEO Blake Young said, "We are honored to have the opportunity to expand our capacity to provide quality programs for the community."

Expansion of the Adult Education program will allow growing numbers of unemployed and dislocated workers to receive job skills training and computer education. The Computer

Clubhouse program will offer more neighborhood teens a chance to join the exciting technology-based, after-school program. The Youth Academy program will encourage academic success, character building and social development for more youth. Crucial help for parents to raise healthy children will receive a boost with expansion of the Mother-Baby program.

More space also means room for additional programs. A new Urban Farm will offer fresh produce and provide adult and youth students the opportunity to get their hands in the

food distribution efforts, providing food access and nutrition education to larger, under-served populations.

Volunteer Steff Echeverria is excited for the new Education Center. "This will allow more people to get the services they need," she said. "By word of mouth, more will come."

Bobby Poe, SFBFS Adult Education client, agrees. "A new building will help more people, generate excitement, and generate business," he said. "I don't know where I would be without [SFBFS]. We need more of this in our community."

Expansion of Adult Education will allow growing numbers of unemployed and dislocated workers to receive job skills training and computer education

dirt while they learn value and enjoyment of healthy living. The food produced by the farm will supplement the Food Assistance program, enabling SFBFS to expand mobile

The \$3.5 million project will be funded primarily through a gift from the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento and one-time government grants. With the help of building partners Jackson Construction, Comstock Johnson Architects, The HLA Group, and other landscapers, architects and planners, no individual donor funds will be used for construction. Continued generous community donations will be critical to operate all the programs, in both the existing and new space.

The new building is just part of SFBFS' goal to move people in need toward self-sufficiency and financial independence.

How you can help

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services counts on community support for programs and services. From financial contributions and in-kind support to community involvement in fundraising events, everyone can be part of making Sacramento a better place.

Every \$1 donated to SFBFS translates into \$10 of goods and services. Great partnerships with local vendors and thousands of volunteers enable SFBFS to leverage funds to make a greater impact on the community. Cash donations are used directly to purchase items – like healthy groceries, infant formula and computers – and provide services to individuals in need.

SFBFS makes financial contributions easy. Donations are accepted online at sacramentofoodbank.org. A donation of \$10 can even be made securely by texting "**SACFOOD**" to **20222**. Text donations will be conveniently added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance.*

SFBFS also accepts in-kind donations. Gently used clothing, school materials and baby supplies can be dropped off at 3333 Third Ave. Businesses and neighborhoods can also lead a donation drive by requesting a donation barrel for food, clothing or toy drives.

The gift of time provides critical support. SFBFS relies on thousands of volunteers each year to help deliver services, as well as participants signing up for exciting fundraising events. Simply walking or running in the annual Run to Feed the Hungry or scavenging in Race for the Rock has a huge impact on the community through raised funds and increased awareness. Events are great ways to support SFBFS while having fun.

Donors can feel confident in supporting unique and innovative services that evolve to meet changing community needs. Programs run parallel to each other, working together toward the common goal of preparing individuals for greater self-sufficiency. President/CEO Blake Young along with SFBFS' Board of Directors developed a long-term strategic plan to improve the community, setting aside funds in good economic times to support their vision of growth.

This vision comes together now, at a time when the need is greatest. Because these services receive little, if any government funding, they are sustainable in a tough economy. Nearly 60 percent of all funding is received from private donors.

Without community support, SFBFS would not be able to deliver the diverse programs and services that improve lives every day in the community of Sacramento.



Race for the Ring supports SFBFS

Every year, teams of two race through Sacramento on bike, scooter, skateboard, rollerblade and foot for a chance to win diamonds in Race for the Ring. Race for the Ring is an exciting text message-based scavenger hunt hosted by Rogers Jewelry, Co. and benefits SFBFS.



"We've been in business in Sacramento for nearly 70 years," Rogers Marketing Director Calvin Curtin said. "When you are a part of a community that long, we feel like we owe it to the community to give back in some way. People are struggling right now – a lot of people who never thought they would be in a situation that they would need help are needing it."

Curtin wanted to create something fun and interactive getting people out of the house to have a great time while doing something good for the community. He was approached by a Boston-based company called SCVNGR that was experimenting with geo-based, real-time gaming. They came up with an idea for a text message-based scavenger hunt, and Race for the Ring was born.

Rogers partnered with SFBFS so the race would support the community. "There are lots of good charities in Sacramento," Curtin said. "The reason we chose [SFBFS] is their experience with Run to Feed the Hungry – they had the experience of doing a large event. Also because they turn every dollar we raise into \$10 of goods and services and return them right back to Sacramento."

The third annual Race for the Ring will be held May 21, 2011 to coincide with Bike Month. The \$40 team registration fee includes two race shirts, entrance to the after-party and lunch, with 100 percent of proceeds benefiting programs at SFBFS. Curtin expects the event to be bigger than last year and promises a prize pool just as big – over \$35,000 worth of jewelry. Last year the grand prize was a Hearts on Fire® diamond ring. Other prizes included diamond earrings, diamond necklaces, rings and watches. City Bicycle Works even donated two beach cruiser bicycles.

Mayor Kevin Johnson traditionally sends the first text message. Each team receives a different challenge question sent via text message to their cell phone and 2,000 participants scatter to different locations. The team that answers the most questions correctly and quickly scores enough points, wins the grand prize.

According to Kelly Siefkin of SFBFS, "The very best part is, while participants will have fun and win amazing prizes, we're raising awareness about programs and services at SFBFS."

"I'm hoping it will grow year by year," Curtin said. "I would like to see it be an ongoing event as long as everybody's having fun and as long as we can raise money for [SFBFS]. It's one of the most fun things that I personally am involved with all year long."

Registration information can be found online at raceforthering.com.



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