



# FOOD4THOUGHT

MAY 2016



FIGHTING HUNGER  
**FEEDING HOPE**

## GIVING BACK TO YOURSELF

We have hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who pass through, giving their time for a few hours or a full day. But there are only a handful of loyal and special people who volunteer on a committed basis...one of those people is Richard Berg.

Richard is one of our exceptional volunteers for the past three years. He is a semi-retired social services therapist and says he gets back more than what he gives. "When you give to the community, you are giving back to yourself; you cannot help but feel better about yourself." Berg looks forward to the days when he volunteers at the Food Bank. "I have had my own demons and depression and going to the Food Bank alleviates my depression. Being a volunteer gives you a sense of purpose." It is a fact there are people in need more than ever, especially here in the Valley. "We could not manage without people like Rich giving faithfully of their time and talents so that others can have some relief in time of crisis," said Director, Will Hernandez. The Valley Food Bank offers, not just the usual non-perishable items, but also dairy, fresh fruits, vegetables, and often many of people's favorite foods. Berg adds these are the types of products recipients would not normally be able to afford. Being a volunteer, you both walk away



feeling like a winner. Berg likes the Food Bank for many reasons. One reason is they provide food to many food pantries around the Valley. A second reason is Director, Will Hernandez, Berg says he was instantly drawn to Will when they met. "Meeting such a caring and authentic person makes you want to help as much as possible." Berg states volunteering at the Food Bank is one of the better things that has happened to him in the past ten years, "the best cure for loneliness is to volunteer and help others."

## INCREDIBLE PARTNERS



The Rotary E-Club of The Greater San Fernando Valley, one of Valley Food Bank's partners in service to the community, stopped by the warehouse to deliver the gift of two benches for our volunteers and staff. The benches also convert to picnic tables.

Since July of 2013, this Rotary Club has conducted quarterly public food drives that have gathered nearly 15,000 pounds of non-perishables to help us serve the food-insecure all around the Valley. Neither the Rotarians nor the Food Bank ever sits still for very long, but these benches will give us all a chance to take a load off for a few minutes, and think of our positive partnership in service while we do.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“I volunteer because I enjoy it and because it is the right thing to do,” says Dwayne Trujillo, Valley Food Bank volunteer. “We live in a world of plenty in Los Angeles and yet there are so many people in need,” he says. Unfortunately there is huge disconnect and that is one reason why Dwayne volunteers. If everyone gave a helping hand, in whatever capacity, that would make a huge difference in the community, maybe even all the difference. Dwayne has served here for two and a half years. He volunteers in writing success stories, edits our “Food for Thought” newsletter, promotes our work on social media, and creates marketing efforts to increase the Food Bank’s overall visibility. He also supports the Director, Will Hernandez with various fundraising and outreach implementations. “I believe in Will, the Food Bank, and their mission, and I have seen their success stories first hand.” Dwayne further notes that, more than ever, there are people struggling to make ends meet and, too often, that can mean people are short on groceries or need to skip a meal. “Food is a basic necessity and it is everyone’s necessity. If you want to make a difference in our community and truly make a positive social contribution, take that step to volunteer.”



## LIFE’S GREATEST LESSONS



Husband, father, businessman, civic leader, community activist, and political consultant – all of these could describe Candido, but would fall short of his true description. Candido is a giver. He regularly volunteers his time, energy, and talents at the Valley Food Bank, not for lack of having something to do, but because he believes

giving for the benefit of others is far greater than striving to earn more money, acquire more material goods, or impress others with titles or position. Candido is a humble giant – always searching for ways to help others, networking to ensure resources are made available to those in need, and never seeking recognition for himself.

Candido, sometimes referred to as the “Candy-man,” has an incredible heart to serve the underserved. Whether at his place of worship, a kid’s community center, or at a civic organization, Candido is always extending a hand to help.

Most Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays you can find him bagging bread, boxing pastries, or just cleaning up. He has a pleasant countenance and makes friends easily, which is a great asset at the food bank. He is often called upon to train others in the various tasks. Candido always gives of himself for the benefit of others and is a joy to have helping at the Valley Food Bank.