



----- *FOOD FOR THOUGHT* -----

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1. Neighborhood-Based Outreach Tanya Kaplow

The bilingual Neighborhood-Based Outreach emergency food resource flyers were created for 20 areas in and around Sacramento including areas like Citrus Heights, Galt, Rio Linda and West Sacramento. Continuously updated, they are a resource that local residents can use to locate the closest, most convenient location for their food needs. The food resource flyer helps residents find their local Food Closets, Hot Meal Sites, Farmers' Markets and Community Gardens. It also provides locations for food related services for seniors and the closest Department of Human Assistance. Sacramento Hunger Commissioners and staff of the commission actively take the flyers to the corresponding neighborhoods to places such as libraries, grocery stores, community centers, hot meal sites and food closets. Additional outreach materials such as Food Stamp posters, Summer Lunch posters and WIC brochures are distributed during this time. The Hunger Commission hopes that by having these flyers available within the community, residents can have easier access to knowledge about the available food related resources in their neighborhood.

2. Community Food Assessment in South Sacramento Area Jake Salcone

Last year at this time the Sacramento Hunger Commission proposed to plan and coordinate an action oriented community food assessment of a low-income South Sacramento neighborhood. The report for that proposed assessment, the Avondale/Glen Elder Community Food Assessment, has now been successfully completed.

Avondale/Glen Elder, the area south of Fruitridge Rd. and north of Florin, to the east of 65th Expressway, is a very diverse neighborhood. Nearly 45% of the neighborhood's residents are South-East Asian, almost 25% are Latino, and over 20% are African-American. This neighborhood was chosen for assessment because of its manageable size and because it is relatively well organized, thanks to the presence of the Weed & Seed program. Despite this organization, it was a difficult area to assess because of the great diversity of cultures and languages.

After beginning my term of service as a Hunger Commission VISTA in November 2003, I designed a plan for this assessment, and last winter and spring, Hunger Commission intern (now Program Assistant) Tanya Kaplow and I conducted the research. Each food resource available to neighborhood residents was evaluated to determine its capacity to provide affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food. We surveyed food closet clients, senior home-delivered meal program recipients, and other residents of the community. A steering committee of active neighborhood residents was created to oversee and contribute to the assessment. I have processed and incorporated the collected information into a report that will be used to steer improvements to the food shed in Avondale/Glen Elder, making it a more food-secure Sacramento neighborhood.

The Executive Summary with recommendations will soon be up on the Hunger Commission web site.

3. Community Gardens Blooming in Sacramento Bill Maynard

Community Gardens are growing in numbers in the Sacramento area. The Southside Community Garden at 5th and W St is the first community garden in the City of Sacramento's Park and Recreation Department and many more are being planned in other parts of the City. Two gardens will come on line this fall: the Hazel Straugh Park Community Garden in the Northgate area and the Florin Reservoir Park Community Garden at 53rd and Power Inn Rd.; each will have approximately 25 plots. Be sure to watch for news of their initial start ups as the plots sell out fast. Others are being planned for Elk Grove, Loomis, Rocklin, and Cameron Park.

For more information on starting a community garden or finding out more about them contact Bill at the Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition 916 508-6025 or visit the website at SacCommunityGardens.org

On second Saturdays (and possibly every Saturday) the Southside Community Garden at 5th and W St. in downtown Sacramento will be the site to drop off your excess backyard vegetables and fruit. Canned goods, empty canning jars and accessories also can be dropped off from 8-12 noon. You also can arrange other drop-off times, or pick-up of larger quantities of produce. Produce received will be donated to area food closets that same day. Contact: Bill Maynard (above).

4. The 2nd California Community Food Security Summit: ‘Taking Back the Food System’

Organizing for Food Justice in California Jake Salcone

The Second Annual Community Food Security Summit was held in Los Angeles on the 10th and 11th of June. This event, organized by the Community Food Security Coalition and the California Food and Justice Coalition, aims to elucidate ailing *and* thriving components of the local, as well as global, food system. Over two hundred individuals attended, including food closet directors, public health advocates, family farmers, and anyone else interested and invested in improving California’s food system. These two dynamic days invigorated and inspired groups and individuals who work within the California food-shed to take action!

The two-day summit was comprised of presentations and speeches about California’s food system, breakout sessions which focused on more specific issues, meals prepared from locally grown, farm-fresh produce, and tours of urban farming sites in Los Angeles. The Summit emphasized that food security is a systemic issue, and that the current food system is broken. For example, the loss of family farms in the U.S. was highlighted:

“This is the new face of U.S. Agriculture: In 1930 25% of U.S. population lived on farms; in 2000 it was 2%.” Farming is no longer considered an occupation by the US census bureau. Fresno and Tulare counties are both the most agricultural and most food insecure counties in the State of California.

This ‘broken food system’ was given a large measure of responsibility for the U.S. obesity epidemic:

“Obesity is linked to poverty: Areas with lowest income and greatest incidence of food insecurity are the same areas that have the greatest incidence of obesity.

Another key point presented at the Summit was the take-over of the food system by multinational corporations: “Four companies control 40% of the U.S. food distribution market.” This led to an elucidation of the now commonplace term, ‘sustainable.’ Attendees left with an understanding that a ‘sustainable’ food system was one that is “ecological, economical, and socially just.”

As you can tell from these quotations, the Community Food Security Summit focuses on food security as an issue of social justice. For California to have hungry people in the most agricultural counties, family farms disappearing at an alarming rate, epidemics of obesity and diet-related diabetes, and children who believe food comes “from the grocery store” and not farms and

gardens, the food system must be seriously broken. That is why these two hundred plus people gathered in LA – to learn how they can work to repair and *take back* the food system. Next year's summit promises to gather even more steam; and we should all hope that it does, because food insecurity affects all of us, and is NOT acceptable in a socially just California.

5. Pinpointing Strategies to End Hunger Ken Carter

In December 2003, 13 organizations that comprise the National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO) issued their Millennium Declaration to End Hunger in America, www.frac.org/html/news/120803declaration.htm. That document discusses the root causes of hunger and poverty, and it presents general principles for action.

Based on the principles outlined in the Declaration, NAHO issued on June 3, 2004 “A Blueprint to End Hunger”. By outlining strategies to improve access to, and adequacy of anti-hunger programs, the Blueprint points the way to the goal of halving hunger and food insecurity by 2010 and eliminating both by 2015. The document has been widely applauded by anti-hunger authorities, and we encourage readers who haven't already done so, to read the entire document at [www.frac.org/Blueprint to End Hunger.pdf](http://www.frac.org/Blueprint%20to%20End%20Hunger.pdf).

The Blueprint is aimed at 1) federal government, 2) state and local government, 3) schools and community organizations, 4) nonprofit groups, 5) labor and industry, and 6) individuals. It specifies roles for each of these entities in pursuit of:

- Improving the quality of food assistance programs on federal, state, and local levels.
- Enhancing access to these programs at all levels.
- Increasing educational efforts regarding nutrition and nutrition programs.
- Advocating for anti-hunger policies and legislation.
- Monitoring performance of nutrition programs.
- Donating human and material resources to anti-hunger efforts.

As the Blueprint says, it's about steps that can be taken today—not the fundamental, more long-range solutions articulated in the Millennium Declaration: an adequate minimum wage, public provision of jobs and job training, increased assets for the poor, other provisions that make employment practical at the low end of the economic scale, etc. But until the happy day when we're wise enough to tackle these root causes of hunger, the Blueprint constitutes a useful step—a guide to immediate, concrete efforts to move us toward ending hunger.

6. Recognition

- The Sacramento Hunger Commission is very proud to be funded again by the California Nutrition Network in FY04-05 to develop and expand its edible landscaping project.

- Sacramento Hunger Commissioner Bill Maynard was recognized by the Sacramento Bee for his work on behalf of community gardens. The citation appeared in the Bee's "Above and Beyond: Weekly Look at Unsung Heroes" column on July 4.

7. Transitions

- We welcomed Erin Thelen as the Hunger Commission's newest Americorps VISTA on July 31. Erin recently graduated from Denison University in Ohio, where she lived for almost two years in a cooperative living community, the Homestead. In Sacramento she will focus on supporting school and community gardens, and eventually become involved in a new youth mentoring/edible landscaping nursery project.

8. Upcoming Events

- October 7, 2004, 8:30 to 4:00, Robertson Community Center: "Hunger Hits Home: Sacramento's First Planning Conference for Long-term Community Solutions"
- October 21, 2004, 6:00, Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church: The 6th Annual Hope Awards will be a dinner event for the first time.
- September 21, 2004, 11:30 to 1:00, SETA Head Start, 925 Del Paso Blvd: the next regular monthly meeting of the Sacramento Hunger Commission.

For more information about any of these events, please call the Hunger Commission office at 447-7063, x 335 or email: proark@communitycouncil.org

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