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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

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For Immediate Release Press Release



Food Bank Advocacy and Education Associate Ecaterina Burton, Supervisor Keith Carson, Food Bank Board member Winifred Day, Food Bank Executive Director Susan Bateson and Senior Legislative Aide to Supervisor Carson Aisha Brown tour the Community Engagement Center at the Alameda County Community Food Bank.



Volunteers process and package carrots at the new Community Engagement Center at the Alameda County Community Food Bank.

Supervisor Keith Carson Tours New Community Engagement Center at Alameda County Community Food Bank

Oakland—Shortly after lunchtime on a weekday afternoon this week, a dozen volunteers filtered out of the break room at the Alameda County Community Food Bank warehouse in Oakland and started sorting and packaging fresh carrots. With over 20 million pounds of dry goods and produce to process each year, the Alameda County Community Food Bank is undergoing a large-scale expansion of its capacity to host community and corporate volunteer groups.

In a tour with Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson this week, Food Bank Executive Director Susan Bateson and staff showed off the newly refurbished Community Engagement Center and described plans to enlist hundreds of new volunteers to meet the rising demand for emergency food in Alameda County.

“The Alameda County Community Food Bank plays a crucial role in identifying people in need and connecting them with support services in the community,” Supervisor Carson noted. “This new Center opens up exciting possibilities for the Food Bank to multiply its impact and involve a wide range of community members in its day-to-day operations.”

Supervisor Keith Carson is a strong advocate for constituents who rely upon the County safety net for essential services from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the federal food stamps program which is called CalFresh here in California. Demand for CalFresh assistance is at an all-time high in Alameda County, with over 40,000 cases as of December 2010 compared to 8,500 cases in March 2003. The Food Bank is an important partner and assists callers to their Helpline in applying for the CalFresh program.

Rising food costs due to the high price of oil are affecting both families and service providers in the County. In 2010, the Food Bank served more than 49,000 unduplicated individuals each week, a 23% increase from 2006. Last year, the Food Bank handed out 20 million pounds of food, 10 million pounds of which was fresh fruit and vegetables.

Before the new Community Engagement Center opened in early February 2011, the Food Bank was able to accommodate 6,600 volunteers per year. The new center will allow the Food Bank to increase that number to 7,500 people per year. Whereas previously the facility could only host 60 volunteers at a time, now the center can accept 150 volunteers.

The Food Bank facilitates virtual food drives, school projects and summer lunch programs. For more information about their programs, please visit <http://www.accfb.org/index.html>. For more information about Supervisor Carson and Alameda County's SNAP program, please visit <http://www.acgov.org/board/district5/> and http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/food_assistance/index.cfm.

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Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods).