
Food

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the pandemic era,” Crosby said. “We are stretching every dollar, every dollar counts.”

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, the food bank served a weekly average of 56,000 households, including 6,000 households in Marin County, Hopkins said. Eight million pounds of food were provided to Marin County residents in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

More than 235 pantries are supported by the food bank, Hopkins said. Forty-four are in Marin County.

North Marin Community Services, a nonprofit that runs on a \$6.9 million budget and offers safety net services to more than 10,000 residents, received 335,000 pounds of food from the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank over the past year, chief executive officer Cheryl Paddock said.

The nonprofit offers a Tuesday food pantry at the Novato Boulevard center, which had to cap its food assistance to 250 households a week and now has a waiting list. Paddock said it also has a closet of non-perishable foods it needs to open five days a week in order to meet demand.

“A lot of people who are turning to us have unexpected expenses in the household or job layoffs or people who can’t work due to illness,” she said.

Paddock said that 95% of the clients come from low-income households. She said that the need for assistance won’t change in 2024.

“The more people that can donate locally this year will help basic needs for low-income households in Marin County, so we definitely encourage people to keep their philanthropy lo-



SHERRY LAVARS — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

Trevor Doyle of the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank works at the nonprofit’s warehouse in San Rafael on Wednesday.

cal this year,” she said.

The nonprofit has hosted a pantry for the food bank for more than 20 years.

“We definitely want to support them in meeting their goals so they can provide food for all of the host sites next year,” Paddock said.

Another operation supported by the food bank is hosted by the San Geronimo Valley Community Center, which started a drive-thru pantry operation at the former San Geronimo golf course in 2020. Alexa Davidson, the executive director, said it serves an average of 750 people.

“We thought the number would go down since the pandemic, but people are still recovering financially, and the food pantry remains super important,” she said.

Davidson said that more than 50% of the nonprofit’s clients are over age 60, but it also provides food assistance to families living and working on local ranches.

Her staff is keeping an eye on potential cuts in

support from the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank.

“It’ll definitely be a big hit to our community if we have to trim back services,” Davidson said. “Right now, based on our conversations with the food bank, they recognize that the geographical location of ours is so central and so actively used that they are committed to keeping our pantry open.”

The community center had more than \$2 million in revenues, including \$537,000 in contributions, in the 2022-23 fiscal year, according to its annual report.

Seniors who live on a fixed income and need food security are supported by Vivalon, the local nonprofit serving older residents that is opening its \$57 million “healthy aging campus” in downtown San Rafael next week.

Stephanie McNally, chief programs officer, said the organization provides food assistance as well as social connections and transportation services to more than 8,000 people.

She said the food bank supplies fresh food to Vivalon’s pantry every week and also distributes dry goods for seniors to take home once a month. Vivalon also has a weekday cafe. McNally said the organization is also looking for ways to raise money and gain more volunteers.

“We’re doing OK, but it’s a challenge and we know in going forward that we need to continue to focus on raising funds to address food insecurity for older adults in Marin County,” she said.

Vivalon created a partnership with the food bank before the pandemic and the staff expects them to continue their services for them.

“At this point, there is no plan to cut services for us, McNally said.

Donors can contribute to the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank at sfmfoodbank.org; the San Geronimo Valley Community Center at sgvcc.org; North Marin Community Services at northmarincs.org; and Vivalon at vivalon.org