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Interfaith Sustainable
Food Collaborative

April 2021 Newsletter

Vaccinate Food Access Volunteers NOW!

Food access volunteers are currently eligible to receive the vaccine according to California's COVID-19 vaccination rollout plan! This includes folks that are volunteering with food pantries, on farms gleaning, delivery or distributing food, and more. If you are involved in the food system, even as a volunteer, you are most likely eligible for vaccination. To verify eligibility, visit myturn.ca.gov or call (833) 422-4255. If you confirm eligibility, ***we recommend scheduling an appointment as soon as possible, because on April 15th, vaccine eligibility will expand to include all adults and many teens, which will surely fill the appointment slots even faster.***

Because of limited supply and high demand, each county is setting up their own requirements. To find information that is specific to your county, [click here](#). Another option is to visit vaccinefinder.org. This website provides information about where to find local vaccination sites, and provides links to sign up for an appointment. These are great resources to share with your community so that we can move through this pandemic swiftly and safely.

There is a huge effort being led by Black Americans to expand access to information about the vaccine to communities of color. Check out this [website and video series](#) led by a coalition of black doctors, nurses and scientists, called The Conversation. Their work provides high-level information about how the vaccine works and why it is so important to share information about vaccination, especially to our most vulnerable communities.

[County Specific Information that may be helpful](#)

Contra Costa: Vaccination opportunities at local churches include:

April 7- Easter Hill Methodist Church (10am-2pm) at 510-235-4226

April 8- North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church (10am-2pm) at 510-232-7751

April 16- Greater El Bethel Baptist Church & Parchester First Baptist Church (10am-2pm) at 510-233-2391

Marin: Go to <https://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/vaccine/status> to connect with the Marin County Health and Human Services Office.

Sonoma: For up-to-date information about vaccination locations, please email outreach@leapsolutions.com

Congregational Highlight

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Marin City

Packing in the Produce and Protein

The food pantry at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Marin City has seen an increased demand for food with the ongoing pandemic, especially for low-income families and the homeless population. Every Monday from 10 to 12, approximately 150 to 200 individuals come to the food bank in order to receive food bags that were put together by St. Andrew's volunteers. Clients receive two bags per visit, filled with various types of groceries including oats, rice, beans, and fresh produce from the Marin/SF Food Bank. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church received a mini-grant from Interfaith Food in 2020; they have been able to use this award to purchase food staples with high-protein content such as tuna, soups, peanut and almond butter. This allows people to meet nutritional needs, even if they do not have access to a kitchen. Elizabeth Krakow, a volunteer for St. Andrew's, says that "clients are super grateful [for this food pantry]." We at Interfaith Food are grateful for the effort from everyone working together to meet the need of the food insecure during this challenging time. We are also working with



Photo of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Marin City, CA.

this food pantry to provide local fish to low-income individuals through partnership with Catch Together during the coming weeks.

Assembly Bill Paves Way for Bond for Food and Agriculture Infrastructure Funding

Last month, Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Robert Rivas and a diverse coalition of agriculture, environment, food access and farmworker advocates announced the groundbreaking legislation for a bond measure, Assembly Bill 125, that will support healthy food access. We are pleased that, building on Interfaith Food's advocacy, the Bond is expected to include significant funding to support infrastructure for senior nutrition programs. The bond is designed to accelerate California's economic recovery and improve the state's climate resilience while also increasing healthy food access, protecting our essential food and farm system workers, investing in regional food processing and market infrastructure, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. If the bill passes the Bond would go on the November, 2022 ballot.

Please urge your state-wide faith-based advocacy team to sign-on, and also your local congregation! The following link is to an online form that makes it easy for faith-based organizations and other groups to sign on: <https://bit.ly/ab125signon>.

Deadline is this Friday, April 9th.



Certification Examples for Halal and Kosher products

Halal and Kosher Workshop Follow-up

Since the 1970-1980s, slaughterhouses within the Bay Area have started to close or relocate to other parts of the state. This has not only created a challenge for local livestock producers, but also for consumers looking to purchase whole animals and local meat within their area. We have also seen an increased toll on buyers looking for meat within this niche market. Families seeking halal or kosher dietary laws have driven over 200 miles to make purchases. With support from the USDA, Interfaith Food hosted a workshop in March to explore and establish new relationships between the Halal and Kosher market and local livestock producers. The workshop included a conversation with four panelists discussing the importance of this work and potential future collaborations. Panel members included: Rabbi Mendel Rice of Bay Area Kosher Meats, Schochet Menachem Cohen (a Schochet is a ritual slaughterer), Imam Fasih of the Islamic Center of Marin, and John Roache who is a livestock producer based out of Marin County.

One participant, Yehudah L. Welton of Sunrise Kosher, a kosher certification organization, explained the part of the significance of this ongoing work. He explained that by establishing a collaboration between the kosher and halal communities, it would assist in a more holistic approach to reduce food waste by using as much of an animal as possible while serving various religious communities.

The workshop highlighted some of the commonalities between the Islamic and Jewish faith in terms of animal treatment and consumption. Both the halal and kosher communities are interested in on-

farm slaughter options, the humane treatment of animals prior to consumption, organic and sustainable farming efforts, and connections between the animal and the divine, amongst others. Roache explained that one of the biggest challenges of this work is "...being able to connect with people [from faith communities] and see what their wishes are." He recommends that faith group begin working with producers about a year in advance to ensure they will have livestock with the desired age and weight. An example of this is Muslims regularly seek young goats and sheep for the holiday of Eid al-Adha. In Islam, date of holidays are determined by the lunar calendar and the sighting of the moon, meaning the date for Eid on the secular calendar changes each year. Without proper planning and an established relationship with a local producer, this can create issues with not having the proper amounts of meat needed for a celebration.

What's next for Interfaith Food regards to connecting faith-based consumers with livestock producers? We are compiling a list of producers seeking to marketing relationships with local faith-based consumers in advance of Eid al-Adha coming this July. We are also hoping to connect faith-based food justice groups like Islamic Relief in accessing local Halal lamb. We are hoping to continue facilitating these conversations with local producers, including hosting a workshop addressing this topic as part of our conference this Fall. We are also working with secular advocates looking to support direct marketing of live animals; and on-farm slaughter. In the past we supported federal food aid programs including halal and kosher products. If you are interested in this work please contact our office.

Veggie Seedling Giveaway

Respond by April 10th!

April is National Garden Month!



Cabbage starts!

Spring has arrived and it is time to get our gardens growing! Interfaith Food is offering free veggie starts to our faith-based partners in the Bay Area this year. By mid-April, we will be ready to deliver 100's of starts, including: basil, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers, snap peas, kale and broccoli. Our distribution reach includes Alameda, Sonoma, Contra Costa, Solano, San Francisco and Marin counties. If you are interested in receiving veggie starts for your garden, please contact Abby Runte at abby@interfaithfood.org. We will reserve the plants on a first come, first serve basis. Please get in touch by April 10th!

Where might this project lead? For an example of a dynamic, revenue-generating seedling program at a faith-based site visit Harvest for the Hungry's Spring Plant Sale (Details below).

Community Fridge Movement

Providing Food Access 24/7

Giving food to people in need can be as easy as opening a refrigerator door! Much like the rise of the little library "movement, the community fridge builds off a 'mutual aid network' model. "Fridges are set up and run by the people, for the people, and they serve as a solution for both food insecurity and food waste" as stated by Marin Community Fridges. The International movement of community supported fridges has made its way to the Bay Area with locations in Oakland, San Rafael, and San Francisco.

Ways faith groups can be involved include:

- Hosting an outdoor fridge site on the property.
- Stocking a fridge with fresh produce.*
- Volunteering to maintain a fridge by cleaning and coordinating food donations.
- Donating: money, refrigerators, sanitation supplies, weatherproof shelter materials, food.
- Promoting the use of the fridges.
- Temporarily storing fridges for Marin Community fridges until they find a permanent home.

If your congregation is interested in supplementing your food justice programming in this way, go to [Marin Community Fridges](#) for Marin County. For other areas, Check out [Freedge](#) to find and join a community supported fridge network near you!

Congregation Rodef Sholom is hosting a Marin Community Fridge in partnership with the Venetia Valley School and Old Gallinas Childcare Center with support from Seed Releaf and Extra Food.

"We at Rodef Sholom first learned about Marin Community Fridges through the Marin Interfaith Council", explained Rabbi Elana Rosen-Brown. We knew that we wanted to launch this in partnership with our neighborhood so "We began the conversation with our neighborhood community partners to assess need, interest, cultural sensitivity issues, and make collaborative decisions." Through many conversations with our community partners they decided to launch the project on a trial basis with mutually agreed upon tasks and goals. "Whatever the outcome, we know we've laid the groundwork for a smooth process of collaboration and reflection in partnership," says Rabbi Rosen-Brown.

Marin Community Fridges runs two other fridges in San Rafael and a dry pantry in Novato, but is looking to expand to more sites in Marin. If you think your faith group would be interested in hosting a community fridge on site, please contact Marin Community Fridges at marincommunityfridges@gmail.com.

*Donated food is generally protected by the Good Samaritan Food Law. However, as with any project, consider local regulations and potential legal liability before committing.



Marin Community Fridges Volunteers in San Rafael

Mark Your Calendar!

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events!

April 21: Virtual Interfaith Ramadan Celebration hosted by the Pacifica Institute @7pm, click [here](#) for more details.

April 22nd: Center For Food Faith and Justice Earth Day Virtual Symposium- "Heal the Earth, Heal the People" (see details below).

April 24th: Harvest for Hungry Plant Sale (see details below).



Interfaith Food is Hiring!

Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative will be hiring a Communications and Reporting Associate, based in Sebastopol. We are also hiring a policy intern. For more information about these professional positions, please contact our Executive Director, Steve Schwartz, at steve@interfaithfood.org.

CFFJ Earth Day Symposium

Join the Center for Food, Faith and Justice in a conversation about agroecology, justice and activism at this 3-hour virtual event on April 22 from 11am-2pm. For details about registering for the event, email Abby at abby@interfaithfood.org

Harvest for the Hungry Plant Sale

Check out local garden Harvest for the Hungry's spring plant sale on Saturday, April 24 from 8am-5pm. This volunteer-led community garden donates thousands of pounds of vegetables to local food pantries every year. Please support their fundraising efforts and get some great veggie starts for your garden by stopping by their sale. The address is in Santa Rosa.

Find more details [here](#).

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