

Food Hospitality: Waste Not, Want Not

San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church is nestled in the beautiful San Geronimo valley surrounded by the lush green hills and productive farms of Marin County. The church commits to worship God, grow in spirit, and bring love, compassion and justice to the community and the world. The church exemplifies love in action with their food hospitality program.



Pastor Kate Clayton, plus dedicated members Cloe Cook and Margaret Krauss noticed that people in the community were struggling for their next meal in the isolated valley. In January of 2014, the church, lead by Margaret Krauss decided to offer food that would have been otherwise thrown out by partnering with ExtraFood.org, a food recovery project that picks up excess fresh food and delivers it to nonprofits serving Marin's most vulnerable children, adults, and families. ExtraFood.org delivers to the church surplus food prepared by grocery stores, delicatessens and

commercial bakeries, plus fresh fruits and vegetables. People in need are welcome to self select items for free. The doors are open Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm, and Sunday mornings with up to 400 people receiving healthy food throughout the week. The church and members are in alignment with their environmental values by providing healthy, organic options whenever possible.

Pastor Kate Clayton attributes the success of the program to the 'servant attitude' of the members especially the ExtraFood Coordinator, Margaret Krauss who has put in the hours to coordinate all the food drops and volunteers. Pastor Kate said, "Margaret is indispensable in her community orientation and it's quite a headache when she goes on vacation." Margaret and her husband Kit, received rigorous training from the Institute of Cultural Affairs to gain the necessary skills be effective and gracious community organizers. Margaret said, "the food program aims to make people feel welcome and is very low key since it doesn't require proof of income status in order to receive the food."

Marin, with one of the highest per-capita incomes of any county in the U.S., is home to more than 49,000 people who don't have a secure food supply. The heartbreak of people being hungry coupled with so much fresh, nutritious food going to waste, inspired the church to partner with ExtraFood.org to implement their innovative approach to solving the hunger problem in Marin. The Natural Resources Defence Council found that 40% of all edible food in the U.S. is wasted. According to the 2012 [*Marin County Food System Assessment Project*](#), "there is more than



enough healthy food to end hunger in Marin County...It is a distribution and re-purposing challenge — not a supply issue”.

The church is also a delivery point for Council on Aging of West Marin Senior Services, where dedicated church members are volunteer drivers. Good Earth Natural Food provides the delicious, healthy organic food for these seniors. Interfaith Food welcomes collaboration with the church, seniors and low income people to connect farmers to religious people and full their bellies with farm fresh produce.