

#44



**2018 S.L. Gimbel
Foundation Fund Holiday
Food Program Grant
Application**

Internal Use Only:
Grant: 20180981

Organization / Agency Information

Organization/Agency Name: Redwood Empire Food Bank		
Physical Address: 3990 Brickway Blvd.		City/State/Zip: Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Mailing Address: 3990 Brickway Blvd.		City/State/Zip: Santa Rosa, CA 95403
CEO or Director: David Goodman		Title: Chief Executive Officer
Phone: (707) 523 -7900 ext.111	Fax: (707) 523-7901	Email: dgoodman@refb.org
Contact Person: Ashley LaFranchi		Title: Grant Writer
Phone: (707) 523 -7900 ext. 121	Fax: (707) 523-7901	Email: alafranchi@refb.org
Web Site Address: refb.org		Tax ID: 68-0121855

Program / Grant Information

Program/Project Name: Senior Security		Amount of Grant Requested: \$15,000	
Total Organization Budget: \$9,711,600	Per 990, Percentage of Program Service Expenses (Column B/ Column A x 100): 95%	Per 990, Percentage of Management & General Expenses Only (Column C / Column A x 100): 2.25%	Per 990, Percentage of Management & General Expenses and Fundraising (Column C+D / Column A x 100): 5%
Purpose of Grant Request (one sentence): The purpose of this grant request is to support the nutritional needs of vulnerable seniors living on low-fixed-incomes through the Redwood Empire Food Bank's Senior Security hunger-relief initiative, which offers two programs that provide a fortified safety net for at-risk aging adults through 66 monthly food distributions in Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino counties.			
Gimbel Holiday Grants Received: List Year(s) and Award Amount(s) 2017: \$10,000 - School Pantry Program			

Signatures

Board President / Chair: (Print name and Title) BRENDAN KUNKLE, BOARD CHAIR	Signature: 	Date: 11/14/18
Executive Director/President: (Print name and Title) David Goodman, CEO	Signature: 	Date: 11/15/18

I. Organization Background: The mission of the Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) is to end hunger in our community. We define ending hunger as having in place a community response system that makes adequate nutrition assistance available and accessible to anyone in need.

Established in 1987, the REFB is the largest distribution hub and major provider of emergency food serving north coastal California – from Sonoma County to the Oregon border. Our main strategic goal is to deliver and support effective programs that eliminate hunger and improve nutrition for the 82,000 individuals the REFB serves each year. We strive to achieve this goal through 12 established programs operated under three hunger-relief initiatives: Every Child, Every Day, Neighborhood Hunger Network, and Senior Security.

Combating hunger with healthy food and nutrition education offered at more than 200 monthly and weekly direct service distributions in Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino counties, the REFB is also a major source of food for 170 organizations that rely on us to supply the food that fuels human services and hunger-relief programs spanning five counties, including Humboldt and Del Norte. Together, we work to end hunger every day for thousands of low-income children, seniors and individuals through a network of more than 450 food distributions located in underserved pockets of poverty with an identified need.

In our previous fiscal year, with the help of 8,500 volunteers and our dedicated team comprised of seven part-time and 55 full-time employees, the REFB distributed 18 million pounds of healthy food, the equivalent of roughly 15 million meals, to families and individuals struggling to make ends meet. A generous \$15,000 grant from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation will allow us to strengthen and continue providing a critical nutritional safety net for vulnerable seniors living in economically disadvantaged communities throughout our service region.

II. Project Information: North coastal California is rich in agriculture, yet the rising cost of living and fading nutritional value of affordable food continues to drive hunger and poor health among individuals of low-income communities. Inadequate nutrition is a stark reality for thousands of seniors in our service region who struggle with food insecurity or the dual difficulty of managing hunger and diet-related conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes, but fall through the reach of government nutrition assistance.

Low-fixed-incomes, compounded with high health care costs and unexpected illnesses, have the potential to force even more seniors into poverty and food insecurity. According to Area Agency on Aging, Social Security makes up 50% or more of the incomes for 55% of Californians age 65 and older. Comparably, with California's annual Social Security payment averaging \$16,524 in 2017, federal benefits fall short of what the Elder Index concludes to be the minimum income needed to support the primary needs of a single senior renting household, which is roughly \$23,000 in Lake and Mendocino counties, and \$25,380 in Sonoma County.

Every month, the REFB ensures that 4,100 low-income seniors living in our community have access to a consistent source of healthy, fresh food – food that supports vitality. Open to adults 60 or older, living at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level, eligible seniors may enroll in our *Senior Basket* or *Diabetes Wellness* programs. Across 66 monthly direct service distributions, both programs help struggling seniors meet their basic nutritional needs through 30-pound provisions of supplemental food, plus 15 pounds of fresh produce, heat-and-serve entrées – handmade in our commercial kitchen with donated ingredients, and nutrition education.

Senior Basket supports vulnerable aging adults through monthly provisions of supplemental groceries, including perishable and non-perishable protein, vitamin-rich fresh produce and frozen entrées.

Diabetes Wellness addresses food insecurity and Type 2 diabetes by leveraging food as medicine. Participants receive diabetic-specific foods, frozen entrées, fresh produce and protein monthly.

Senior Security programs operate year-round on a monthly schedule with distributions taking place in Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino counties, Monday through Saturday depending on the site. Participants must provide income verification to enroll in Senior Security programs, and with Diabetes Wellness, the REFB also requires a medical referral indicating their eligibility. We use accounting and inventory software to track the number of seniors served at each distribution and to monitor the quantity of supplemental food, fresh produce and entrées provided each month. Thank you for your consideration of our application to provide nutritious, protein-dense provisions to vulnerable seniors surviving on low-fixed-incomes.

**2018 S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund
Holiday Grant Application**

III. Project Budget

Please provide a detailed line-item budget for your project by completing the budget form below. **The maximum requested amount is \$15,000 or 25% of your operating budget, whichever is less.** You can request for less than \$15,000. You may delineate your line items requests per examples below:

- 85% of total request for the purchase of food items only. (Ex. Total request of \$15,000; 85% is \$12,750 for food)
- 15% of total request for female hygiene products and/or diapers. (Ex. Total request of \$15,000; 15% is \$2,250 for diapers and female hygiene products)
- 100% of total request for the purchase of food items
- Canned tuna will not be funded.

Food items must be delineated (i.e. canned vegetables, soup, pasta, dried beans, rice, etc.). For each food item, indicate the cost per unit (pound, carton, case, etc.) and the quantity. See attached example.

Line Item	Line Item Description	Requested Amount
Eggs	Medium, 8,200 dozen @ \$1.05/dozen	\$8,600
Chicken Breast	1-pound individual pkg, 4,100 packages @ \$1.57	\$6,400
TOTAL:		\$15,000

IV. Administrative Expenses Percentage

This section calculates how much the organization spent for general management, overhead, indirect items as a percentage of the organization's total expenses. The figures are based on your most current 990 form that you submitted, Part IX Statement of Functional Expenses.

Management & general expenses (Column C only)	/Total expenses (Column A)	= Administrative Percentage
714,102	31,667,736	2.25%

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury

**P. O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH, 45201**

Date: September 9, 2000

Redwood Empire Food Bank
3320 Industrial Dr.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-2056

Person to Contact:
Tonya Martin 31-07387
Customer Service Representative
Toll Free Telephone Number:
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. EST
877-829-5500
Fax Number:
513-263-3756
Federal Identification Number:
68-0121855

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter is in response to your letter dated June 7, 2000, requesting a copy of your organization's determination letter. This letter will take the place of the copy you requested.

Our records indicate that a determination letter issued in November 1991 granted your organization exemption from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. That letter is still in effect.

Based on information subsequently submitted, we classified your organization as one that is not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because it is an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

This classification was based on the assumption that your organization's operations would continue as stated in the application. If your organization's sources of support, or its character, method of operations, or purposes have changed, please let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on the exempt status and foundation status of your organization.

Your organization is required to file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, only if its gross receipts each year are normally more than \$25,000. If a return is required, it must be filed by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the organization's annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$20 a day, up to a maximum of \$10,000, when a return is filed late, unless there is reasonable cause for the delay.

All exempt organizations (unless specifically excluded) are liable for taxes under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (social security taxes) on remuneration of \$100 or more paid to each employee during a calendar year. Your organization is not liable for the tax imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Organizations that are not private foundations are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, these organizations are not automatically exempt from other federal excise taxes.

Donors may deduct contributions to your organization as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to your organization or for its use are deductible for federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Redwood Empire Food Bank
68-0121855

Your organization is not required to file federal income tax returns unless it is subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If your organization is subject to this tax, it must file an income tax return on the Form 990-T, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return. In this letter, we are not determining whether any of your organization's present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

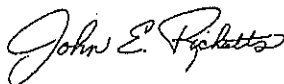
The law requires you to make your organization's annual return available for public inspection without charge for three years after the due date of the return. You are also required to make available for public inspection a copy of your organization's exemption application, any supporting documents and the exemption letter to any individual who requests such documents in person or in writing. You can charge only a reasonable fee for reproduction and actual postage costs for the copied materials. The law does not require you to provide copies of public inspection documents that are widely available, such as by posting them on the Internet (World Wide Web). You may be liable for a penalty of \$20 a day for each day you do not make these documents available for public inspection (up to a maximum of \$10,000 in the case of an annual return).

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your organization's exempt status and foundation status, you should keep it with the organization's permanent records.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.

This letter affirms your organization's exempt status.

Sincerely,



John E. Ricketts, Director, TE/GE
Customer Account Services



REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 15, 2018

First Name	Last Name	Office	Affiliation
Brendan	Kunkle	President	Abbey Law Partner
Pete	Golis	Vice-President	Journalist, Press Democrat Editorial Director, Retired
Viviann	Stapp	Secretary	Jackson Family Enterprises VP, Legal Counsel
Bruce	Kelm	Treasurer	Morgan Stanley Vice President, Financial Advisor
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Gayle	Guynup		Guynup Trusts Judge, Assigned; Trustee
Gary	Hartwick		Exchange Bank President/CEO
Anthony	Hildesheim		Redwood Credit Union Chief Information Officer
Rebecca	La Londe		Kaiser Permanente Area Quality Leader, Retired
Stephanie	Larson		UC Cooperative Extension County Director/Farm Advisor
Steven	Maass		Maass Corporation Owner
Eric	McHenry		City of Santa Rosa Chief Technology Officer
Debbie	Meekins		Poppy Bank President/CEO, Retired
Jeremy	Olsan		Perry, Johnson, Anderson, Miller & Moskowitz, Partner
Marie	Scherf		BPM LLP CPA, Senior Tax Manager
Abigail	Smyth		Crimson Wine Group Export Manager
Pedro	Toledo		Petaluma Health Center, J.D. Chief Administrative Officer

Part IX Statement of Functional Expenses

Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations must complete all columns. All other organizations must complete column (A).

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part IX

Do not include amounts reported on lines 6b, 7b, 8b, 9b, and 10b of Part VIII.	(A) Total expenses	(B) Program service expenses	(C) Management and general expenses	(D) Fundraising expenses
1 Grants and other assistance to domestic organizations and domestic governments. See Part IV, line 21				
2 Grants and other assistance to domestic individuals. See Part IV, line 22				
3 Grants and other assistance to foreign organizations, foreign governments, and foreign individuals. See Part IV, lines 15 and 16				
4 Benefits paid to or for members				
5 Compensation of current officers, directors, trustees, and key employees	306,180.	180,128.	49,507.	76,545.
6 Compensation not included above, to disqualified persons (as defined under section 4958(f)(1)) and persons described in section 4958(c)(3)(B)				
7 Other salaries and wages	2,484,818.	1,739,421.	409,082.	336,315.
8 Pension plan accruals and contributions (include section 401(k) and 403(b) employer contributions)	56,372.	32,950.	13,024.	10,398.
9 Other employee benefits	252,987.	195,018.	26,246.	31,723.
10 Payroll taxes	232,642.	153,819.	43,896.	34,927.
11 Fees for services (non-employees):				
a Management				
b Legal	3,069.		3,069.	
c Accounting	31,000.		31,000.	
d Lobbying				
e Professional fundraising services. See Part IV, line 17				
f Investment management fees				
g Other. (If line 11g amount exceeds 10% of line 25, column (A) amount, list line 11g expenses on Sch O.)	155.		155.	
12 Advertising and promotion	22,341.	1,012.		21,329.
13 Office expenses	377,809.	95,893.	17,196.	264,720.
14 Information technology	85,542.	62,923.	12,308.	10,311.
15 Royalties				
16 Occupancy	261,554.	227,588.	23,850.	10,116.
17 Travel				
18 Payments of travel or entertainment expenses for any federal, state, or local public officials				
19 Conferences, conventions, and meetings	6,386.	4,468.	1,578.	340.
20 Interest				
21 Payments to affiliates				
22 Depreciation, depletion, and amortization	419,142.	315,808.	67,081.	36,253.
23 Insurance	171,280.	149,020.	13,688.	8,572.
24 Other expenses. Itemize expenses not covered above. (List miscellaneous expenses in line 24e. If line 24e amount exceeds 10% of line 25, column (A) amount, list line 24e expenses on Schedule O.)				
a FOOD DISTRIBUTED - DONA	23,500,246.	23,500,246.		
b FOOD DISTRIBUTED - ACQU	3,158,597.	3,158,597.		
c FOOD DISTRIBUTION EXPEN	263,546.	261,177.	2,369.	
d BAD DEBT	18,000.			18,000.
e All other expenses	16,071.	15,475.	53.	543.
25 Total functional expenses. Add lines 1 through 24e	31,667,737.	30,093,543.	714,102.	860,092.
26 Joint costs. Complete this line only if the organization reported in column (B) joint costs from a combined educational campaign and fundraising solicitation.				

Check here if following SOP 98-2 (ASC 958-720)



Detailed Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2019	
Budget Line Items	Total Program Budget
EXPENSES	
<u>Employee Compensation</u>	
Salaries & Wages	\$3,460,250
Benefits @ 22.6%	\$780,570
Total Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$4,240,820
<u>Food Acquisition</u>	
Produce and Donated Food Acquisition	\$1,425,000
Supplemental Food Purchase	\$2,169,400
Total Food Acquisition	\$3,594,400
<u>Program Operating Costs</u>	
Printing, Postage and Shipping Expenses	\$196,100
Program and Warehouse Supplies	\$179,500
Technology	\$87,400
Total Program Operating Costs	\$463,000
Departmental Expenses	\$376,030
Transportation	\$185,900
Occupancy	\$267,000
Insurance	\$69,850
Depreciation	\$514,600
Total Operating Budget	\$9,711,600

Questions 1-16 are required and must be completed

1. Name of your organization:

Redwood Empire Food Bank

2. Grant #

20170965

3. Grant Period

December 12, 2017 to June 12, 2018

4. Location of your organization (City / State)

Santa Rosa, California

5. Name / Title of person completing evaluation.

Ashley LaFranchi – Grant Writer

6. Phone Number:

(707) 523-7900 ext. 121

7. Email address:

alafranchi@refb.org

8. Total number of clients served through this grant funding:

1,251 Sonoma County families, including 2,752 children.

9. Approximate volume of food purchased with grant funds?

3,143 cartons, one dozen eggs

3,761 half gallon, 1% fresh milk

10. Describe the project's key outcomes and results based on your goals and objectives:

The REFB evaluates and measures the success of School Pantry by the amount (pounds) of healthy food distributed and the number of families and children served throughout the school year. School Pantry aims to provide 25-30 pounds of vitamin-rich, fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy proteins and nutritious staples, including various wholesome breakfast foods to a weekly average of 900 families, including 2,250 children throughout the school year.

Our School Pantry program demonstrated success in the quantity and quality of food distributed to high-need children and their families. During the 2017-18 school year, School Pantry distributed 719,522 pounds of nourishing food, the equivalent of nearly 600,000 meals, to roughly 2,500 low-income families at ten high-need elementary schools in our service region. In response to the 2017 North Bay fires, the REFB received a significant amount of donated food that allowed us to exceed our objective of distributing 25-30 pounds of food to participating families each week. Throughout the school year, the REFB provided families with a weekly average of 33 pounds of nourishing food, including vitamin-rich fresh produce, dairy, protein and a balanced assortment of donated shelf-stable items such as whole grain pasta, cereal and non-perishable protein.

Generous funding support from the S.L. Gimbel Holiday Food Grant helps the REFB provide Sonoma County's low-income families with increased access to essential breakfast food, ensuring vulnerable children have the nourishment necessary for a healthy start. During the grant period, the REFB distributed 469,135 pounds of wholesome, fresh produce and healthy groceries, the equivalent of approximately 390,945 meals at nine elementary schools throughout Sonoma County. Because of your considerate grant, nearly 68,000 pounds of the food distributed during the grant period accounted for fresh 1% milk and eggs.

11. Please describe any challenges/obstacles the organization encountered in attaining stated goals & Objectives.

The most significant challenge during this reporting period followed the tragic occurrence of the 2017 North Bay firestorm, which began on October 8th. The REFB's emergency response, Station 3990, was activated immediately. Our initial focus was on supplying food to evacuation centers, shelters and partner organizations, while maintaining the flow of food to our regular distributions sites, where available, and within five days, our drive-through emergency distributions began.

Just six weeks into the school year, the firestorm devastated several Santa Rosa neighborhoods, resulting in school closures. It took over two weeks to contain the fires and even longer to ensure the air quality inside and outside was safe for children. For this reason, fewer distributions were offered through our School Pantry program than originally anticipated. Fortunately, none of our school sites were lost, but many remained closed for up to four weeks during October. Due to the closures, we saw significant fluctuations in our participation numbers during the initial months of the grant period.

Additionally, due to the high volume of donated food we received in response to the North Bay fires, the REFB was met with logistical and operational challenges. As we continued to accumulate donated items, our distribution facility was quickly filled to capacity, prompting the need for extra space and additional assistance in collecting, sorting, distributing and storing products.

12. How did you overcome and/or address the challenges and obstacles?

The REFB was fortunate to receive an outpouring of support from our community in donations and volunteerism after the catastrophic wildfires in October. The REFB responded by opening Station 3990 distributions in areas where the need continues to be high, adding School Pantry locations to reach families with children in areas impacted by the fires, and referring anyone in need to our other hunger-relief programs and partners.

We launched two new School Pantry sites in high-need, fire impacted areas of Santa Rosa and Sonoma. The new Santa Rosa site serves elementary and junior high students on the same campus, and in the city of Sonoma, we opened the first School Pantry program in this community where there is significant need among children of low-income families.

By November, with the fires contained and Sonoma County schools reopened, School Pantry distributions occurred each week, with the exception of scheduled school closures and holidays. We suspect that the inconsistent participation numbers are a result of the displacement and relocation brought on by the disaster. Despite the closures caused by the fires, we continue to see the fundamental need for our School Pantry program evidently through the increase in families served across all sites each month subsequent to the disaster. As families settle into new communities and ways of life, we expect participation to climb steadily with many of our programs during the upcoming fiscal year.

Eight months into this continuing catastrophe, we are still seeing a substantially increased number of families without adequate food and housing situations, making REFB programs and program support more significant than ever. In addition to our neighbors that are newly in need of food assistance, the REFB continues to provide food stability to the families who rely on the REFB each week to help fill meal gaps. With School Pantry, we saw a renewed sense of cooperation and willingness to help among neighbors, which allowed us to build a solid team of volunteers at each site.

Our community's volunteer efforts were inspiring and essential to our capacity to respond to the needs of our neighbors affected by the fires, as well as the thousands who were in need prior to the disaster. Alongside our hardworking volunteers, REFB staff developed innovative processes to receive, store and distribute the increased volume of food. To accommodate the large amount of donated items, we acquired an additional storage warehouse, which was utilized into May of 2018.

13. Describe any unintended positive outcomes as a result of the efforts supported by this grant.

The S.L. Gimbel Holiday Food Grant allowed the REFB to provide 1% milk and fresh eggs to children who may otherwise go hungry. Dedicated funders are instrumental in helping to sustain our existing School Pantry sites, allowing the REFB to remain agile and adapt to the changing needs of at-risk youth in our community. As the REFB expands this vital program to reach a greater number of food insecure families throughout Sonoma County, your support ensures that vulnerable children have nutritional safety net each week of the school year.

During our 2018 fiscal year, the REFB implemented two new School Pantry sites in Santa Rosa and Sonoma immediately following the fires, one of the sites being located on a campus that hosts two schools expanding the ages of children served to include middle school students. Furthermore, the REFB piloted distributions at three new elementary schools, March through May. These schools have committed to offering our full School Pantry program beginning in the upcoming school year.

14. Briefly describe the impact this grant has had on your organization.

The mission of the Redwood Empire Food Bank is to *end hunger in our community*.

As part of our Every Child, Every Day initiative, the School Pantry program is one of four programs specifically targeted at ending childhood hunger by filling the meal gaps when school nutrition programs are not available. School Pantry is an essential part of our hunger-relief efforts and positively impacts our community by reducing experiences of hunger for at-risk children and increasing food stability for the entire family. Eliminating hunger from entire households gives parents a greater opportunity to afford other basic necessities such as transportation, clothing and medical care, helping to stabilize their lives and break the cycle of hunger.

The significant S.L. Gimbel Holiday Food Grant helped provide nourishing food at nine critical School Pantry distributions, offering a nutritional lifeline for low-income families with young children throughout Sonoma County. Your support helps ensure that vulnerable children have the nourishment necessary for a healthy breakfast, giving them a greater ability to focus in school and lead an active life, free from the effects of hunger. Together, we are increasing access to nutritious, protein-dense eggs and fresh milk, and providing children with the varied diet they need to grow strong and live a healthy life well into the future.

15. Please provide a brief narrative on how the funds were used to fulfill grant objectives.

The S.L. Gimbel Foundation's significant grant has been fully expended on the acquisition of half-gallon 1% fresh milk and one dozen cartons of fresh eggs. Your generous \$10,000 gift allowed the REFB to purchase 3,143 cartons of one dozen eggs at \$1.30 per carton for a total cost of \$4,095 and 3,761 half-gallons of 1% milk at \$1.57 for a total cost of \$5,905. Dedicated funding from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation help the REFB ensure that low-income families have equal access to nourishing breakfast foods that may otherwise be too costly to purchase.

The Redwood Empire Food Bank is grateful for the S.L. Gimbel Foundation's commitment to addressing the nutritional needs of vulnerable Sonoma County children, and for your support of our mission to end hunger in our community.

16. Please relate a success story.

Tammy, a Teacher's Assistant at Comstock, has three children; her teenager attends the school. As a school employee, a volunteer at the distribution and a program participant, she was eager to share how the program has helped her provide for her children. Although she loves her job and helping kids, as a single parent working in the school system as an assistant, her income does not adequately cover the cost of living for her family and she falls short when trying to offer nutritious food to her children. When speaking about the program, she started by raving about the produce, "The variety and quality of produce we've received so far has been unbelievable. I thought we would get some canned food, like soup and vegetables, but every week the food is so fresh and very healthy. The cereal, milk and eggs make a really filling breakfast." She also said, "I can't express enough how AWESOME this program is! The food we get here is food that I would not be able to afford. I want my kids to be healthy and now they eat food that is good for them because we have it in the house."

Celia has a very large family, a total of ten in her household. Two of her older daughters both have two children for whom she is the main caregiver, and she also has triplets age 13, twins age 7 and a 16 year old. Glowing with joy, she spoke about the love for her family, but she then mentioned the stress she experiences when trying to plan balanced meals for her children. Celia stated, "Because of this program, I have fruit and vegetables in the house; most of the time, I cannot afford to buy produce. Now we eat oranges, cauliflower, pears and we've tried some new things like kiwi and butternut squash. Last week, we got frozen, ground chicken, tomatoes and tortillas that I made into a healthy dinner. And this week I see that we will be getting milk and eggs with even more produce. I don't know what I would do without this program."

Rosalind, a mother of two children participating in School Pantry, is one of the many parent volunteers who is also a recipient of the program. While speaking with her at a distribution, Rosalind expressed her gratitude for the program and how the food helps her children lead healthier lives, saying "My children eat more vegetables, they eat the protein that helps them grow, they try different things, and it's good. My kids love having milk at breakfast. I'm not sure that our family would eat as healthy without the fruits and vegetables we take home. I'm so glad that you offer this program and I'm very happy that you are helping all of us."

On behalf of all the low-income families who rely on our School Pantry program, thank you for your considerate gift. Generous supporters, such as the S.L. Gimbel Foundation, truly make a difference in the lives of our community's most vulnerable children by allowing the REFB to offer nutrient-dense, life-sustaining nourishment for children to grow healthy and strong.