



For Immediate Release

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Every Day is Earth Day at the Food Bank Coalition

San Luis Obispo County (April 12, 2010)--While celebrating Mother Earth once a year is a grand idea, one local non-profit agency is committed to protecting her year round. The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County feeds the hungry in our community, 5 million pounds a year, in fact, but it does so with a keen focus on nurturing the environment. Its efforts even earned the organization a 2009 Green Award from the SLO Chamber of Commerce. And for a nonprofit that is always short of funds, it is finding an environmentally-friendly approach also can save its financial resources – more green in the tiller, so to speak.

The Food Bank Coalition already uses an electric vehicle for local delivery routes, has installed skylights and solar panels on its warehouses to save energy, and has revised delivery schedules to eliminate unnecessary travel. It uses reusable shopping bags donated by local businesses, and it provides local pig and chicken farmers with spoiled produce.

But its latest effort to reduce operational impact on the Earth is two-fold:

- Replacing its BackPack program, which distributes food to low-income students through the schools, with a greener “Healthy Food for Local Families” project
- Using technology to reduce its use of paper

The BackPack Program provided weekly backpacks full of food attractive to youngsters in more than a dozen elementary schools throughout SLO County. But the Food Bank saw that the program was not as healthy or green as it could be because it consumed packaging materials, the food traveled long distances, and it used processed food – not the healthiest alternative. So it has shifted to piloting the Healthy Food for Local Families school-based distribution program twice monthly in San Miguel, Paso Robles, Atascadero and Oceano; once a month at the 25-student Carrisa Plans Elementary. Half of the food given away is produce, much of it locally grown, and it is feeding entire families instead of individuals.

The Food Bank’s second most recent effort to reduce its impact on the Earth centers on modernizing its database so that it can reach donors by email, thus saving paper, envelopes and the cost of each thank you letter, tax receipt and general information.

Committed to its mission of providing nutritious food for people in need from San Miguel to Nipomo. Committed to the environment. That’s the Food Bank Coalition of SLO County – doing well by doing good.

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About the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County: The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County opened in 1989. Today, the organization is the only countywide source of large quantity donated and low-cost food for low-income families, seniors, children, veterans and the disabled. Through direct programs like Senior Brown Bag, and in partnership with over 200 agencies, the Food Bank will provide more than five million pounds of food for the tables of about 15% of the county's residents in 2010.

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