



SLO FOOD BANK

County Partnership *for* Hunger Relief



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 5, 2021

SLO County Organizations Promote Health Benefits of California Grown Produce

Efforts will increase local produce access and education in underserved communities and local school districts.

San Luis Obispo, CA – May 5, 2021 – SLO Food Bank, Slow Money San Luis Obispo (Slow Money SLO), and the Promotores Collaborative of San Luis Obispo County are working together to improve the health of underserved Central Coast communities while expanding demand for California grown and locally produced fruits and vegetables. The three organizations will provide nutrition education through SLO Food Bank programs and expand local produce offerings at area school districts.

The project will increase SLO Food Bank clients' familiarity with CA grown fruits and vegetables and promote participation in programs like Market Match, which maximizes CalFresh benefits at local Farmers' Markets. Promotores, trained bilingual health educators, will connect with community members at SLO Food Bank distributions and via cooking classes. "Two of the leading chronic health conditions in the Latino population in the US are heart disease and type 2 diabetes, so we are focusing on providing nutritional resources in order to have a healthier life and to help prevent these chronic diseases," says Fernanda Lucas, Promotores Collaborative Program Coordinator. "During the pandemic, Promotores have demonstrated the passion to provide up-to-date information that serves our Latino community, and we look forward to continuing this effort through this partnership."

Let's Feed SLO County. *Together.*

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SLOfoodbank.org

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SLO Food Bank staff will increase nutrition education outreach at additional program sites, including those that serve children and older adults. “We are grateful for this opportunity to improve the health of our community while supporting the extensive agricultural network that is present in SLO County. The goals of this project have been close to the heart of our nutrition education program for years, and we now have the chance to grow and enhance our efforts,” said Tara Davis, Nutrition and Children’s Programs Manager at SLO Food Bank.

Slow Money SLO will engage three local school districts in expanding specialty crop purchases from at least six local California farmers, supporting purchases with farmer visits and tastings to increase the number of students consuming California grown fruits and vegetables. “Even through COVID-19, we continue to recognize the importance and nutritional benefits of incorporating local food into school food service programs. We are excited to expand the program to additional districts and many more students by increasing the outreach and implementation efforts of Farm to School Central Coast,” said Jeff Wade, Founder and Executive Director at Slow Money SLO.

Nutrition education efforts are projected to reach at least 2,600 children and 2,200 adults, while school district purchasing is projected to impact 4,000 additional children by April 2023. “We are thrilled to partner with SLO Food Bank on this incredible project! We look forward to further strengthening our Farm to School efforts in collaboration with Slow Money SLO,” notes Erin Primer, Food Services Director at San Luis Coastal Unified School District.

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About the SLO Food Bank: The SLO Food Bank is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, serving all of San Luis Obispo County through its direct food programs and network of agency partners. The SLO Food Bank’s mission is to alleviate hunger in San Luis Obispo County and build a healthier community. The SLO Food Bank distributes an average of 4 million pounds of food per year to help our neighbors struggling with

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hunger. Nearly half of the distributed food is fresh produce, including produce harvested locally by the GleanSLO program. To learn more about the work done by the SLO Food Bank throughout San Luis Obispo County, please visit www.slofoodbank.org.

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About Promotores Collaborative, a program of Center for Family Strengthening:

Center for Family Strengthening (CFS) is dedicated to strengthening families through education and advocacy. CFS manages primary prevention programs for families that provide **parent education, community outreach, and healing services** for child abuse victims. In addition, CFS partners closely with family support organizations in SLO County to provide resources to families in need, protect children from abuse and neglect, and ensure that strong families are a community priority. To learn more, please visit www.cfsslo.org/promotoreslo

About Slow Money SLO: Slow Money SLO supports the sustainable growth of small food, beverage and farm businesses through coaching business development, promotional events, and facilitating local lending opportunities for those not yet qualified for traditional lending. The success of these food and farm businesses enhances the local food economy, as well as the health of SLO County residents.

Additionally, Slow Money SLO runs the Farm to School Central Coast program which is focused on supporting the survival and growth of small farms. Among the components of the program are a Google communication group to link local small farmers, a scholarship fund for farmer educational support, and coordinating an increase of farm fresh food in school food programs by connecting local farmers to school district buyers.

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Slow Money is a National movement and the local non-profit chapter, Slow Money SLO, was formed in 2012 to bring the principles and benefits of this movement to San Luis Obispo County. For more information visit www.slowmoneyslo.org.

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