

# IMPACT REPORT 2023



MERCY  
BROWN BAG  
PROGRAM  
SENIORS HELPING SENIORS

# COMMITTED TO SERVE FOOD-INSECURE OLDER ADULTS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

## VISION

A community and a society where all seniors have access to healthy food, opportunities for social interaction and physical activities that strengthen them, provide dignity, and enable a sense of purpose.

## MISSION

At Mercy Brown Bag we are passionate about serving food-insecure older adults in Alameda County with nourishing groceries; engaging them where possible with socialization, and providing volunteer opportunities to enjoy a life with dignity and connection.

## VALUES

Integrity,  
Teamwork, Respect,  
Grace, Fun, Innovation, and Accountability



# FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Mercy Brown Bag Supporters,

FY23 was a transformative year for Brown Bag, and we have emerged stronger than ever! Thanks to all who made it possible for Mercy Brown Bag to finish our 41st year successfully!

Enclosed, you will see some of the data we collect to measure our impact on Alameda County. As we morphed operations from one-on-one delivery to 6,000 older adults in need, back to bulk deliveries and farmer's markets twice a month to 67 points across the County, we grew 43% from pre-COVID numbers, with no drop-off in sight.

## *Taking Care of Our Neighbors*

We take our mission, to provide essential services to our elderly Alameda County neighbors in need, to heart. In FY23, we are proud to report we did not cancel a single delivery across our system. Credit for that goes to the dedicated Brown Bag "Team of Ten" who work diligently to deliver food to 8,200 older adults across 13 cities.

## *Thank You, Volunteers*

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of 500+ volunteers who returned en masse in FY23 to help sort, bag, and distribute groceries. I was reminded by leaders in Sacramento last week that many community-based organizations need volunteers desperately, and would envy the commitment of our amazing Brown Bag Volunteer Team!

## *Thank you, Partners*

We also want to acknowledge our partners, especially the Alameda County Community Food Bank,, our partner of four decades, and their contribution to Mercy Brown Bag's capabilities and programs. With their help and in partnership with the US Department of Agriculture and all of you, **Brown Bag distributed 129,150 bags of food, weighing an amazing 2.5 million pounds, that fed 8200 older adults (twice monthly) in FY23!**

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank you, our stalwart supporters! Brown Bag is fully funded by donations and grants, and somehow, you have learned about our impact and chosen to faithfully partner with us and support the services we provide to the most vulnerable of our neighbors.

In a survey we conducted for Alameda County in 2023, 100% of our recipients surveyed told us the food we provide helps to keep them housed. And we know that for over 80% of our recipients, we are the primary or only source of food. This is impact. This is you, and Brown Bag together, in action.

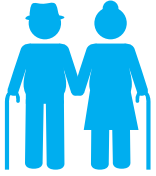
In partnership and appreciation,

*Janice M Roberts*

Janice Roberts  
Mercy Brown Bag Program Director

# SERVING SENIORS

*A Look at Mercy Brown Bag's Impact in 2023*



**Seniors Served:** 8,200



**Distribution Sites:** 67



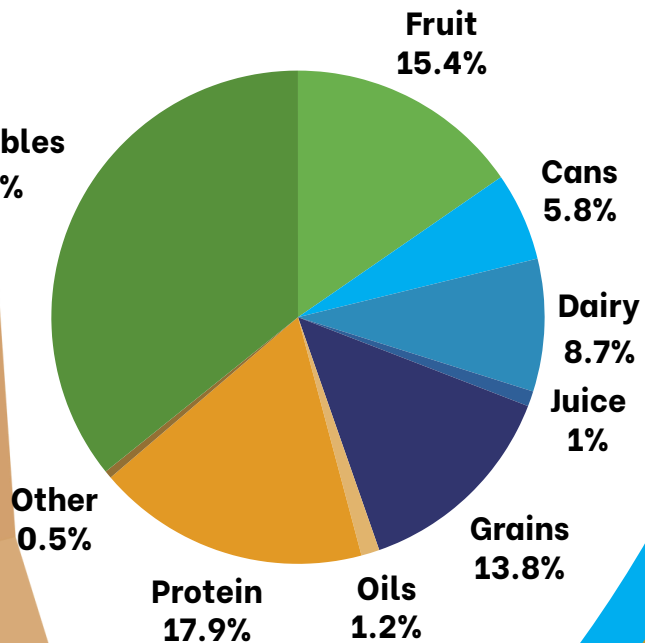
**Bags Distributed:** 129,150



**# of Volunteer Hours:** 11,800

## IN THE BAG

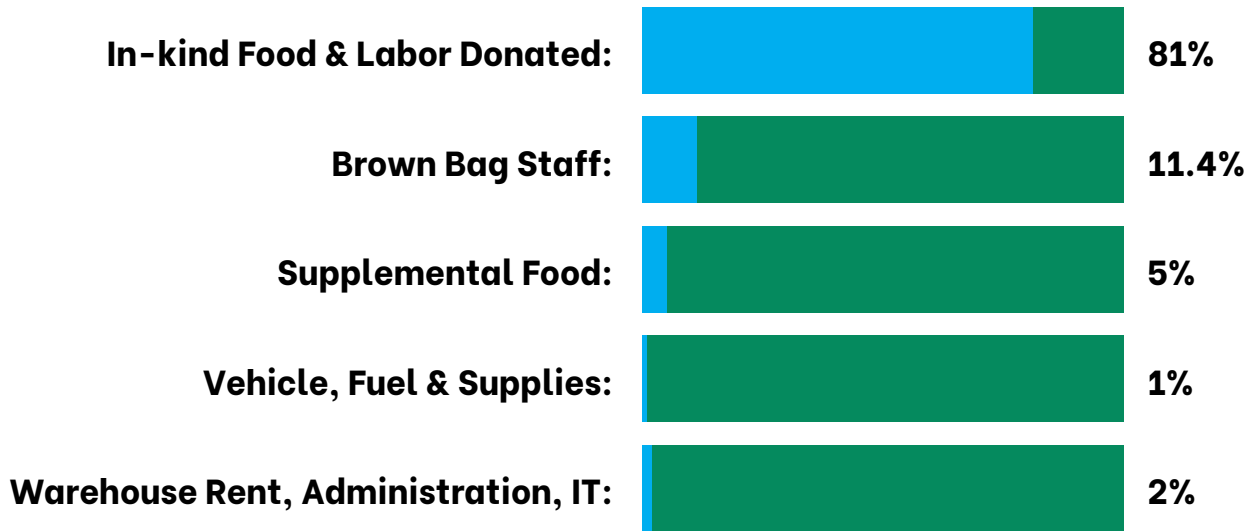
*2,483,975 lbs. of Food, 51.2% of each bag is Fresh Produce*





# BUDGET BREAKDOWN

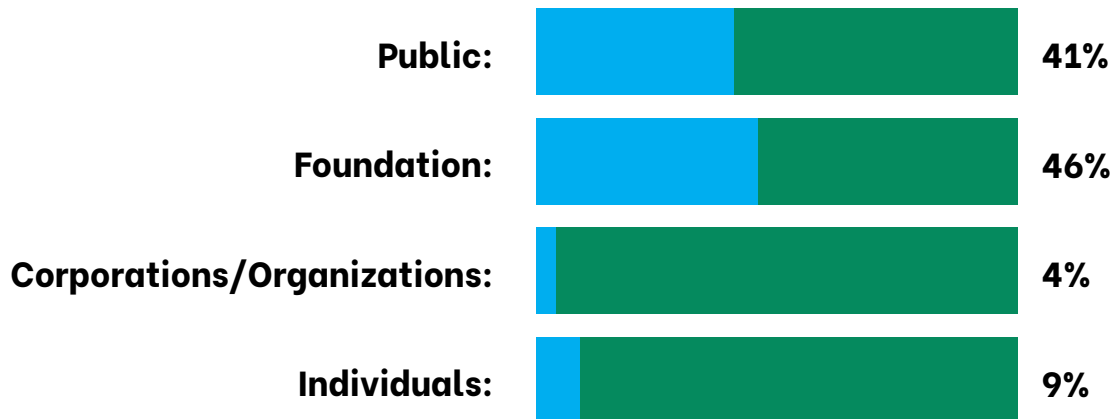
Expenditures for 2022



Total 2023 Mercy Brown Bag Budget: \$5,717,611

# FUNDING BREAKDOWN

Income for 2023



# FRUITVALE ELDERS GRANTED DIGNITY OF CHOOSING NUTRITIOUS FOOD

## *Opening of the CommonSpirit Health Grocery Store*

Following COVID, as Mercy Brown Bag Program returned to our previous business model of bulk distributions to senior centers and low-income senior housing, the team explored solutions that offered greater client dignity and respect, including the ability to choose foods. In April 2022, Brown Bag opened the doors of the CommonSpirit Health Grocery, located at 3431 Foothill Blvd, in the historic Fruitvale district of Oakland.

That first day, three visitors registered with Brown Bag and shopped. Although the space measures less than 300 square feet, all 5 major food groups are always represented, with choices including lean protein, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and low-fat dairy products. With the help of USDA we often add to that selection whole nuts like almonds or walnuts, and oils. Word spread and by the end of April we had served 150 shoppers.

## *Pilot Program Takes Flight*

In Fall 2022, the experiment was going strong and we served over 1,200 shoppers each month. By the end of fiscal year 2023, in June, we surpassed 2000 shoppers in a single month for the first time.

Transforming from a pilot program to a successful long-term solution has required support from the East Bay community;

SAFE (Senior Assistance Foundation Eastbay) has stepped up to help take us to the next level with support for a grocery clerk, store manager and warehouse support. In 2024 we hope to identify a second private donor or foundation to support grocery purchases.

## *The Brown Bag Shopper*

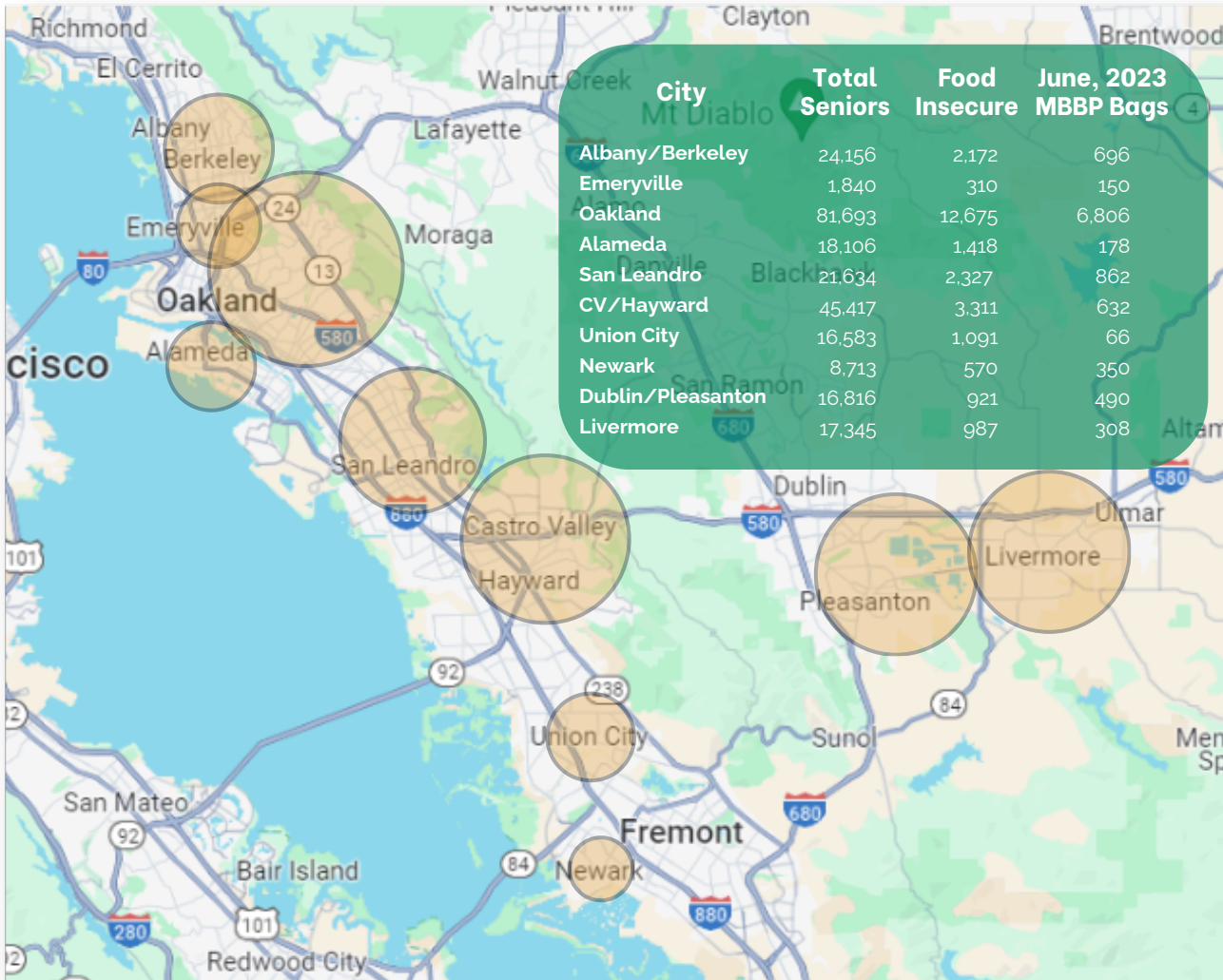
The profile of our store shopper is a bit different from the average recipient across the county. Most are able to walk to the store, on average, at 72 years of age. That said, their average income is actually lower per month than the \$960/month the UCSF Homelessness project found to be the average monthly income of seniors who became unhoused. We believe, and were told by survey respondents in the Fall, that receiving Mercy Brown Bag groceries actually helps keeps our clients housed, enabling them to take grocery dollars and put those towards rents, utilities, medical needs and other necessities.





# BROWN BAG ACROSS ALAMEDA COUNTY

*Focused on serving low-income, food insecure adults, aged 60+*



## ANNUAL TOTALS ACROSS ALAMEDA COUNTY

Total Seniors: **252,303**  
 Food Insecure Seniors: **25,782**  
 Average Bags Distributed Each Month: **10,538**

\*2021 United State Census Bureau <https://api.census.gov/data/2021/acs/acs5/subject>  
 \*\*Mercy Brown Bag Site Report June 2023



# OUR PARTNERS IN PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SERVICES

## *Government Funding*

- Alameda County Area Agency on Aging
- City of Hayward
- City of Newark
- City of Oakland
- City of Oakland - Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax Fund
- County of Alameda - District 1
- East Bay Foundation on Aging
- FEMA - Emergency Food and Shelter Program
- USDA Commodities
- Young Ladies Institute, District 2

## *Religious Organizations*

- Christian Brothers Joseph Alemany Community
- Mercy Ministries
- Sisters of Mercy
- Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur, US East-West Province
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Fund
- Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
- St. Mary Magdalen Church
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Oakland
- United Lutheran Church of Oakland

## *Private Funding*

- Albany Community Foundation
- Alameda County Community Food Bank
- Amazon
- Anonymous
- Apple
- Ardea Fund
- Best Home Care and Referral Services Inc.
- Chevron
- Crescent, Porter, Hale Foundation
- East Bay Foundation on Aging
- Edward & Elizabeth Kozel Foundation
- Fremont Bank Foundation
- Friends of the Emeryville Senior Center
- Genetech
- May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
- Newark Rotary Foundation
- Red Oak Opportunity Foundation
- United Way
- Warner Design
- West Davis & Bergard Foundation
- Y&H Soda Foundation



# THANK YOU DONORS

## *Wellness Warriors: \$10K - \$49K*

*Lillian Cadenasso*

## *Community Visionaries: \$5k - \$9,999*

*Maureen Lyons, CSJ*

## *Elder Champion: \$1,000 - \$4,999*

- *Steven Powers Burke*
- *Mark Hayes*
- *John King*
- *Tiplada Kunakemakorn*
- *James J. Marchiano*
- *Ellicia Newcomer*
- *Donald V. Potter*
- *George P. Sabatte Jr.*
- *Sean & Ellen Rhatigan*
- *Lucille Charmaine Serwa*
- *Nancy L. Sorenson*
- *Christine M. Whelan*
- *Matthew D. Werner*
- *Tim Williams*
- *Monica A. Weekes Honaker*

## *Dignity Heros: \$500 - \$999*

- *Christopher P. Cherney*
- *Grace O. Connell*
- *Carlos M. De Luz*
- *Genevieve Duboscq and Lynn Prime*
- *Janet Lockwood Garin*
- *Madeline M. Giachetto*
- *Mary M. Giachetto*
- *Paul Paul Golding*
- *Jacqueline O. Jackson*
- *Richard G. Logan*
- *Raymond R. Marchetti*
- *Judith L. Martin-Holland*
- *David A. McCosker*
- *Joy Moore*
- *Mary Ellen Prime*
- *Doris N. Seyranian*
- *Dorothy Stack*
- *Kent Taylor*

# THANK YOU DONORS

## *Nutrition Defender: \$250 - \$499*

- *Cora & Wayne Coleman*
- *John J. Mara*
- *Wayne D. Mara*
- *Jeannette M. O'Sullivan*
- *Natalie Osterweil*

## *Friends of Brown Bag: Up to \$249*

- *Barbara Ageno*
- *Denise Allen*
- *Kim Aquino*
- *Cora & Wayne Coleman*
- *Lillian Cadenasso*
- *Grace O. Connell*
- *Carlos M. De Luz*
- *Genevieve Duboscq and Lynn Prime*
- *Katie Derrig*
- *Christopher P. Cherney*
- *Frederic R. Marschner*
- *Janet Lockwood Garin*
- *Mary M. Giachetto*
- *Madeline M. Giachetto*
- *Paul Paul Golding*
- *Hendrika Hoogenbosch*
- *Mark Hayes*
- *Raymond R. Marchetti*
- *James J. Marchiano*
- *Steven J. Meyer*
- *John J. Mara*
- *Judith L. Martin-Holland*
- *Richard G. Logan*
- *Maureen Lyons, CSJ*
- *Adriene M. Iverson*
- *George P. Sabatte Jr.*
- *Joy Moore*
- *Lucille Charmaine Serwa*
- *Frank G. Nicewicz*
- *Ellicia Newcomer*
- *Natalie Osterweil*
- *Doug Owen*
- *Pamela Burke*
- *Pamela Sogge*
- *Nancy L. Sorenson*
- *Dorothy Stack*
- *Sean & Ellen Rhatigan*
- *John King*
- *Mary Ellen Prime*
- *Charles P. & Patricia A. Trepinski*
- *Donald V. Potter*
- *Lakshmipaty Penumarthy*
- *Monica A. Weekes Honaker*
- *Tim Williams*



# BROWN BAG IN ACTION

## *Food As Medicine for Cherrie*

Cherrie H. comes to the CommonSpirit Health Store for the fresh, nutritious fruits and veggies. Her goal was to take off 25 pounds healthfully, and to live the highest quality of life. Strategically, we view Food as Medicine, and are pursuing a future of "food prescriptions", a goal we share with Cherrie, who wants to continue to dance!



## *Making the Holidays Special*

At Thanksgiving we provided whole chickens or cornish hens and all of the fixins' for a holiday feast to over 8,000+ Brown Bag recipients! Then, in conjunction with our partners at the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, we provided food for the special distribution of holiday boxes, pictured here. This program enabled recipients to feel special at the holidays and use their money in other ways.



## *Brown Bag Helps Helen Stay in her Home*

Two bad hips and the need for a cane do not stop 91-year-old Helen Lampkin! "I'm like the 'battery bunny,' she tells the Brown Bag rep, who finds her raking leaves when they arrive with a bag filled with sweet potatoes, celery, onion, eggs, rice and chicken. "I'm going to make chicken and rice and eat every bite of it. Nothing will go to waste from this bag!"

A Mercy Brown Bag recipient for a little over a year, Helen depends on this food to live; it enables her to use her scarce resources instead to pay for the place she has called home for 44 years. Since her husband died last year, Helen first depended on the church: "They were kind to me, but that doesn't last so long. All of my money from Social Security goes to pay PG&E, the water bill and property tax. "Neighbors mow my yard. I can't afford food, too."

Like many other seniors, she wants to remain in her home as long as possible. Mercy Brown Bag helps enable that today.



# VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



## *Bringing Families Together*

Volunteering at Brown Bag is often a family affair. Here, Kim Barsi and son Ryan join forces in the CommonSpirit Health Store. From here, they are packing two bags they are taking to homebound elders unable to come into the store to shop themselves.

## *Card Writing Team Spreads Cheer*

Mercy Brown Bag's Card Crafting Team, led by the dedicated Patricia Klock, is truly a labor of love. This group of six volunteers, spanning across different states, comes together to create beautiful seasonal cards that spread joy and kindness. With over 200 hours of hard work, they craft beautiful, handmade cards in three different languages - English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese. The team's efforts result in a personalized touch that is appreciated by those who receive the cards, whether they are distributed at sites or in the organization's store.

The Card Crafting Team is committed to brightening the days of our elders, particularly those who are seemingly forgotten and isolated. By offering a touch of personalization and spreading positivity through their cards, this team plays a significant role in bringing smiles to those who receive them!



*Thank you to all our volunteers who are the heart of the Mercy Brown Bag Program!*



# STAKEHOLDERS SPEAK OUT

*"It's been a great joy giving back to people and meeting new friends through the program. It's wonderful to get out of the house, be with other seniors, and have experiences together."*

-Savina, volunteer/ recipient

*"I love coming to Brown Bag and look forward to it every week. I believe I am really helping others and it feels very positive at Mercy Brown Bag."*

- Empowerment Volunteer

*"Shopping in the Brown Bag store is very helpful because I am able to come to pick up groceries after my dialysis appointment. It is a big help in supplementing my groceries for the month."*

- Ms. Jones, Oakland recipient

*"Mercy Brown Bag is my lifeline. I couldn't make it without."*

- Jessie, 96-year-old recipient from Allen Temple Church

# THANK YOU



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