

The Brown Bag Bite

A quarterly newsletter from the Mercy Brown Bag Program

Volume 2: Issue 1

November 2024



From the Director's Desk

Dear Brown Bag Supporters,

Brown Bag is off to a roaring start in FY25! We wanted to bring you up to speed on some of the exciting activities with this newsletter.

As our longtime Brown Bag followers know, we could not do what we do without the aid of our many (over 500!) volunteers, most of which are seniors themselves. Earlier this year we honored their contributions with an on-site celebration here at Mercy Retirement.

There we met volunteers who have devoted 10, 15, even 20+ years to Brown Bag community service! We are so appreciative of their contributions. This newsletter puts a special focus on our volunteers - we invite you to join them if you are looking to make a heartfelt contribution.

The holidays are fast approaching, and we are focused on "a chicken in every pot". If you want to participate with a holiday gift to Brown Bag, you can scan the QR code on the back page. Thank you for all you do to help our elderly neighbors!

Yours in community,

Janice



PROGRAM UPDATE

Food Packing with



In October, we were excited to host members of the Transforming Age Executive Team, who joined us for a team-building exercise to sort, bag, and package 3,000 healthy rice and bean bags for our recipients. For the ingredients, we collaborated with The Outreach Program, an incredible organization dedicated to providing safe water, food, medical care, and education to children and those in need both in the U.S. and abroad.

Brown Bag by the Numbers



2,355,140

Pounds of Food distributed FY24

826

New Recipients
Jan-Jun '24

122K

Bags Distributed
in FY24

80

Distribution Sites
as of FY25

The Brown Bag Bite


HEAR FROM OUR SENIORS:

"Giving and sharing generates many smiles"

– Marsha Fogarty, West Lake Christian Terrace


"I am proud to be a senior helping other seniors"

– Judith Charbuck, West Lake Christian Terrace



"The people that were giving out the food were so nice and what a selection of things. You guys really knocked my socks off, to say the least! The selection: all the veggies, the fruits, the nuts, the rice, the eggs, the cheese. The Catfish! I don't know how long it's been since I've had catfish! The greens!"

–Roberta, new Hayward recipient



EVENT HIGHLIGHT

Voting Education!

In preparation for the election, a dedicated group of Brown Bag volunteers and residents from Mercy Retirement and Care Center bundled 2,000 non-partisan voter guides. These guides aim to empower our recipients and give them essential information to inform their vote. The guides have been assembled in English, Spanish, and Chinese and were distributed with our food deliveries over the past month!



The Brown Bag Bite

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Mills Community Farm

We are thrilled to have a fantastic local partnership with Mills Community Farms, a 2.5-acre organic urban agriculture program affiliated with Northeastern University.

They generously donate freshly harvested, nutrient-rich produce to MBBP on the very same day it's picked.

Some of the delightful items we've received include vibrant green beans, crisp butter lettuce, squash, rainbow chard, and a variety of other fresh greens. Once we collect these items, they are immediately placed in the CSH Store, allowing our recipients to enjoy farm-fresh produce in their homes on the same day it's harvested.

It's truly farm-to-table at its finest!



Fall Recipe!

- Brussels Sprouts
- Olive Oil
- Parmesan Cheese
- Seasonings of Choice

(garlic, salt, pepper, paprika recommended)



Preheat the oven to 400°. Slice the Brussels sprouts into even slices, coat in olive oil and seasonings, and transfer to a baking sheet. Sprinkle with parmesan and roast in the oven for 20-25 minutes!

The Brown Bag Bite



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Working with **TARGET**

In September and October, we had the pleasure of welcoming a new corporate volunteer group from Target. Employees from their headquarters and various Bay Area stores, including Berkeley, Albany, Pinole, Hayward, and Emeryville, came together with enthusiasm to help pack food, making a significant contribution. It was wonderful to see their bright red shirts light up our Chapman Warehouse, and we can't wait to see them again soon!

Hear from a volunteer! **Mary Roberts**



To read more of the interview, visit our blog at <https://mercybrownbag.org/blog/>

How long have you volunteered at MBBP?

I started volunteering during the early dark days of COVID—Spring 2020—so 4-plus years as an MBBP volunteer.

What inspired you to start volunteering with us?

My Mom spent her last days at Mercy's rehab center in late 2019. During our visits, I often would see an MBBP truck in the vicinity, so I became aware of the program. I always appreciated the kindness and good care Mom received at Mercy, so volunteering at Mercy seemed preordained.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with MBBP?

I enjoy being part of a team that shares a worthwhile purpose: providing nutritious food to seniors of limited means. Mercy's signup system makes it easy to coordinate volunteering with other commitments, which I appreciate.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a volunteer?

Volunteering is good for the soul, and the workout is better than going to a gym. If you're fortunate enough to be physically able to volunteer—and given the "seniors helping seniors" premise, there may come a time when the spirit is still willing, but the flesh can't hack it—please don't hesitate to join the team! Do it now, while you can!

The Brown Bag Bite

Thank you to our generous donors! (07/01/24 – 09/30/24)

Your contributions enable us to regularly feed over 8000 low-income seniors in the East Bay – twice a month with fresh, nutritious groceries!

We cannot do this without you.

Individuals

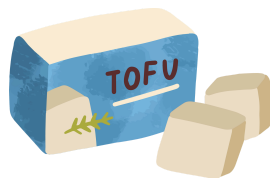
- Asonti Barfield
- Aulani Cler
- Burton J. Rigley
- Carmen Rodriguez, RSM
- Ceil Roberts Tilney
- Constance Callahan
- Cynthia A.W. Puppione
- Cynthia Darbo
- Dale D. Wong
- Diane C. Lawrence
- Hae-Sil Grace Kim
- Janice Roberts
- Jesse Bean
- Lovella Aldridge-Barney
- Mary Louise Zernicke
- Michele Dana
- Mindy Creson
- Miranda Melone
- Misha McKinney
- Paul Wuerstle
- Pegeen Brosnan
- Sharon Sharon Flower
- Simon Mazzola
- Vicki Scott
- Wayne D. Mara
- William M. Blair
- Anita Dolores Marquez

Organizations

- County of Alameda
- Easy Bay Foundation on Aging
- Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
- The Alameda County Community Food Bank
- Y & H Soda Foundation
- Sisters of St. Joseph's Carondelet
- Target

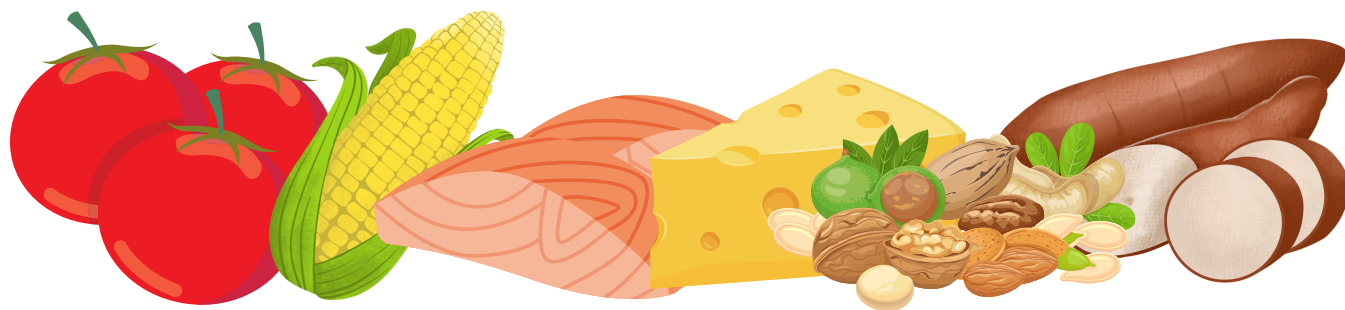
PROGRAM UPDATE

New Nutrition Cards



We're excited to introduce our new Mercy Brown Bag Nutrition Cards! Each month, we'll spotlight different items from our bags, sharing details about their health benefits, preparation tips, and more—specifically tailored for our senior recipients. These cards are being created in partnership with Eli Cruz, MS Lifespan, Nutrition and Dietetics, and are being shared on our social media, at our CSH store in Fruitvale, and with coordinators at our 80 distribution sites. We currently have translations being shared in 7 languages: Amharic, Chinese, English, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese!

The Brown Bag Bite



HELP US OUT!

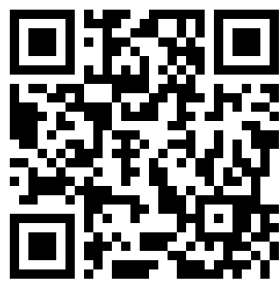
Volunteering with the Mercy Brown Bag Program is a fun, rewarding way to make a real difference. We are always in need of generous people who want to help in our CommonSpirit Grocery Store, sort groceries, assist at a growing number of sites throughout Alameda County or offer other skills to help our program thrive. Sign up for a shift today at mercybrownbag.org/volunteer/

For questions about volunteer opportunities, **call us today at 510-269-9640**

Be part of the solution...

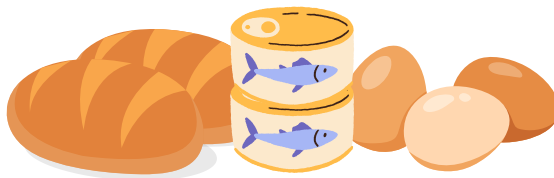
Your Support Saves Lives!

Donate today and become a part of a greater mission to fight senior hunger! Consider setting up a recurring donation to help keep our service consistent for thousands of Alameda County seniors.



Send checks to:

Mercy Brown Bag
Program
3431 Foothill Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94601



GET IN TOUCH



510-296-9640



MercyBrownBag.org



3431 Foothill Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94601

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