



“You always have a seat at the table.”

This is how we aspire to treat our customers at the Orcas Island Food Bank.



Thanks to all of you and your generous contributions of time, talent, and treasure, we are creating an ever-expanding welcome. Day in and day out, our staff and volunteers strive not just to welcome everyone to our table, but to engage with them and listen so we can offer the nourishment that is needed. We are reaching out in numerous ways, to hear and respond to the growing needs of our island community. One week in late February we provided food for 234 households, comprising 5 infants, 135 children, 287 adults, and 76 seniors. According to one of our youngest customers, “This place is great! It has all my favorite things.” We’d like everyone who comes to feel that way!

A bag of food is best when it can truly meet the needs of our customers. To that end, we are working hard to diversify the food choices we offer as well as to reach those individuals still underserved and isolated from the Food Bank.

Fifteen to 20 percent of our customers are Latinx or Hispanic. Our team has been consulting with Roxanna Pardo Garcia, an inspiring leader who started Alimentando el Pueblo, a Seattle-based program that collects and distributes culturally relevant and familiar foods to families from Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. We have learned a lot from her, and now we have a specified shelf of foods for our Latinx and Hispanic customers. We are working with local stores to keep these shelves stocked. Amanda is also reaching out to island farmers and gardeners, requesting that they grow some of the items preferred by our Latinx and Hispanic customers in the coming season.

Kids’ Menu

Our efforts to address our diverse customer base also include reaching out to our school-age kids and teens. In collaboration with the public schools, we are working to strengthen the successful Weekend Pack for Kids program. We also hope to create a “Teen Snack Tent” in our parking lot to offer nutritious foods for teens. We hope to include all our island schools in our programs, but at the moment we are focused on our collaboration with our public schools. (See our request in the upcoming Give Orcas campaign for the Weekend Packs for Kids program.) We continue to distribute family bags weekly through Children’s House and Kaleidoscope.



Make it Fresh!

One common desire among our customers is fresh food. Thanks to the collaborative grant between OICF and the local Farm Fund, and the generosity of donors, local farmers and gardeners, we were able to offer more produce in 2020 than ever before. Since May of 2020, local farms and gardens have provided nearly 13,000 lbs. of produce and 820 lbs. of local organic ground beef, pork and lamb. This source of meat alone translates to at least 3300 individual servings of protein. Thanks to our island farmers, Roses bakery, and your ongoing support to help pay for Camp Orkila’s commercial kitchen, this fall we also distributed more than 4800 bowls of island-made soup. Our support of locally grown food helps stabilize our island’s food security for all. And let’s not forget our four-legged friends, whom you have also fed: 960 lbs. of cat food and 2822 lbs. of dog food donated through Pawki’s has been repackaged and distributed through the OIFB in 2020. Thank you Pawki’s team!



Expanding to Meet Demand

With demand rising and space limited, our cupboards are bursting at the seams. Our basic need for storage as well as a commercial kitchen for weekly handling of bulk supplies and soups is clear. We are so grateful for the

generosity of the Community Church for the use of their basement, and to Camp Orkila for allowing us to rent their commercial kitchen and storage space to augment our new Coolbot® and storage containers. To continue serving the growing number of families and individuals, we are keeping our eyes open for other spaces for storage and cooking, so that we can be ready when the Church and Camp Orkila need their spaces again.

Our mighty, hard-working staff—Amanda, Molly, and Becky—continue with generous, creative enthusiasm, attention to important details, and a commitment to be present for the daily ordering, sorting, and storing of hundreds of pounds of product to display or pack. That all takes place before they compassionately greet and engage customers. We would not be who we are today without their dedication, talent, positive nature and hard work. We are now able to welcome customers 18 hours a week, instead of the former 2.5 hours, making it easier for more people to shop while maintaining social distancing and observing other restrictions as we work together to end the spread of Covid-19.



New Volunteers, New Programs

Our staff responsibilities also include outreach, volunteer training, education and mentorship. We are thrilled by the addition of our two new AmeriCorps volunteers, Alison O'Toole and Mary Hydron. Alison, who grew up on Orcas, is a fluent Spanish speaker and brings a passion for social justice and community building. She is working on food equity, specifically reaching out to our Hispanic and Latinx community. She is looking forward to helping create a home and neighborhood food donation program based on the successful Ashland Food Project, which has resulted in donations of tens of thousands of pounds of food in Ashland, 18 other communities in Oregon, five in Washington, and 22 others throughout the U.S. Mary Hydron joins us with a passion for food and nutrition. With a background in restaurant work, she is overflowing with creative ideas around food literacy to share with our customers. She will work to enhance our gleaning project this growing season. A big thank-you to Alison, Mary and all our volunteers.



We know the power of good nutritious food to say, “Everyone is welcome here.” When we consider our many participants—Hunger Heroes, businesses, farmers, bakers, chefs, volunteers, staff, donors, customers—we see the vital and reciprocal web of support that is islanders engaging with each other from our various seats at the table to make contributions for the good of all.

Thanks to you!

The gifts you give nourish all of us with more equitable food, more welcome, more purpose, more joy. We all give thanks! With your support, we will continue to be able to pay the salaries of our wonderful staff, to purchase local food products (like breads, eggs, meats and produce), to support our local businesses and local farmers, to offer our freshly made soup and Rose’s bread to all, to expand our special foods for kids, teens, those with dietary constraints and our Latinx and Hispanic customers, and to address the need for space for ongoing operations.

You may donate to the Orcas Island Food Bank via the enclosed envelope, at www.orcasislandfoodbank.org or through OICF at https://oicf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create?funit_id=1767. Your support enables us to continue to expand our welcome. Follow our daily updates on Facebook at www.facebook.com/orcasislandfoodbank.

The Orcas Island Food Bank Board and Staff:

Board: Bob Morris, Susan McBain, Margie Bangs, Berto Gándara, Mimi Anderson, Tony Ghazel, Erik Koehler, Kevin Ranker and Rick Rhoads.
Staff: Amanda Sparks, Molly Donovan and Becky Hawley.

And Our Awesome Volunteers!

