

## **Rolling Out Nutrition: Food Truck Helps Bridge the Gap in Food Insecurity**

F10 Creative, a prominent player in the Coachella Valley culinary and hospitality industry, has launched a commendable initiative to combat food insecurity utilizing its state-of-the-art food truck they call Frankie. This initiative goes beyond traditional food service by addressing the crucial role that transportation, a key social determinant of health, plays in accessing nutritious food in underserved communities.

Under the guidance of Tara Lazar, founder of F10 Creative, Frankie the food truck seeks to bridge the gap between high-quality, nutritious food and communities in the East Coachella Valley (ECV) where such resources are scarce. Lazar's vision is grounded in the philosophy that food should be considered medicine, with the truck providing meals tailored to meet specific health needs such as diabetes and hypertension.

Recognizing transportation as a significant social determinant of health in the ECV, F10 Creative has strategically deployed Frankie to locations with limited or non-existent public transportation. This mobile approach ensures that food reaches where it's most needed, effectively circumventing the challenge of food deserts, which are areas devoid of affordable, healthy food options. The result is a well-oiled operation that efficiently delivers nutritious meals to the doorsteps of those in need.

The food truck's operational strategy involves careful planning and community collaboration. By aligning the truck's visits with local food pantries and health-related events, F10 Creative ensures that each deployment reaches a concentrated audience, maximizing impact. These visits are well-publicized through flyers and partnerships with local organizations, ensuring residents are aware and can plan to access the services provided.

"We never show up unannounced; we are very organized, and people know about us," Lazar remarks, emphasizing the importance of planning in the success of their missions. This meticulous approach has allowed them to adjust quickly, even in emergency situations, such as when refugees were unexpectedly dropped off at the Palm Springs Airport without food. "It was really cool. Someone called us and said, 'Can you get them some burritos immediately?' And so it was nice. We have a big catering kitchen so we could get out there," she adds.

F10 Creative's commitment to the initiative is unwavering. The company funds the project independently, covering all associated costs, including the maintenance of the truck, food supplies, and staffing. This level of dedication not only serves the community but actively improves its health and well-being, instilling confidence in the sustainability and long-term success of the initiative.

Moreover, the collaboration with local healthcare providers, such as Eisenhower Health, is instrumental. These partnerships help tailor the food truck's offerings to the community's dietary needs and enable a data-driven approach to measure impact. The collected feedback and health data are vital for effectively adapting and scaling the initiative.

Looking ahead, F10 Creative plans to expand the reach and frequency of the Frankie food truck distributions. "I feel like it's truly my calling. This is what I want my life to turn into once I'm done with restaurants," Lazar shares, revealing her deep personal commitment to the project.

In essence, Frankie the food truck is not just a food distribution service but a mobile beacon of health equity, aiming to deliver food and a stronger, healthier future for the East Coachella Valley.

This initiative serves as a powerful example of how addressing social determinants of health, particularly transportation, can lead to more effective solutions in tackling food insecurity. By making nutritious food accessible where it is most needed, F10 Creative is setting a precedent for how businesses can significantly impact public health.



Frankie the Food Truck in Action