

SUMMER 2023

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT FOOD BANK

Volunteer profile: Meet Jud Richards

When did you start volunteering at the Food Bank?

I did volunteer orientation in October 2019 and started working in January or February of 2020, so a little over three years working Mondays and Thursdays each week. After only a month or two of volunteering the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown happened. During the pandemic I continued to volunteer two shifts a week like many other volunteers and we all kept it going, we had no disruption to food delivery. If the food bank was open, I was there.

What are your typical volunteer responsibilities?

I help with grocery rescue, back of house, and packing supplies for fami-

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INSIDE: Find out how to get your seat at the Take a Bite Out of Hunger Auction. Page 3

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Rising costs and demand are slamming our food budget



Joe Gruber

Dear Friends,

I'll be frank: We need your support now more than ever. Whether as a donor or a volunteer, we need your help to build a hunger-free Northeast Seattle.

Why now more than before you might wonder? Allow me to (briefly) explain.

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University District Food Bank assists low-income individuals residing within Zip Codes 98102, 98103, 98105, 98112, 98115, and 98125.

Food for Thought is published quarterly by University District Food Bank for our volunteers, donors, and public at large.

University District Food Bank is a program of the University District Service League, a registered 501 (c) (3).

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From the director: We need your support now more than ever

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Our fiscal year is July 1 to June 30, so one budget year just ended for us and a new one has begun. Last year, we planned to spend about \$650K purchasing food and we spent about \$900K. This year, if things go to plan, we will spend about \$1.25M. About twice what we budgeted for all of last year.

Not surprisingly, food donations are down from our non-profit and business partners. By our estimates, these donations are off by at least 15 percent from recent years. Sourcing challenges still exist in the food system (remember how scarce eggs were just a few months ago?) and food costs continue to rise, so the pressure for businesses to operate with less waste is real. Not to mention, we've seen two grocery store partners close in the past year. As a result, we are receiving less food donated from our usual sources.

Also, in 2023, we are 55 percent busier across all our programs. We are busier because we have taken over services previously operated by other partners (home delivery for participants at our North Seattle College pantry is one example) and because our current services are seeing more customers. Changes in Medicaid, a loss of SNAP benefits,

the end of the school year, and continued inflation are some of the many factors making our lines longer.

Your renewed support will ensure in the year ahead that our shelves remain full and our customers supported. We have reserves to help meet our food purchasing

needs in the short term but your investments will sustain us.

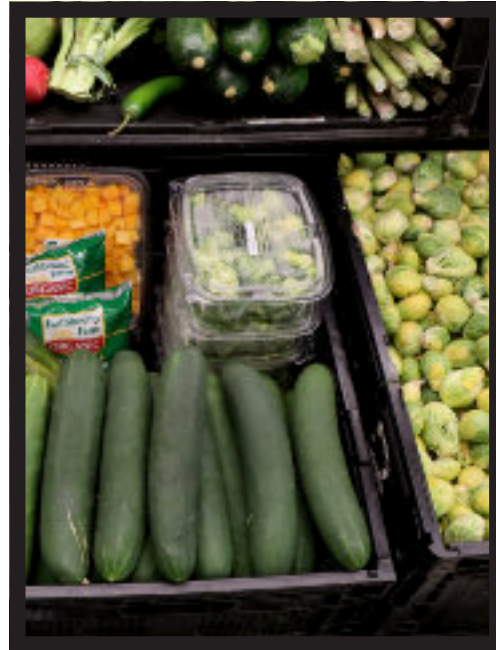
As a volunteer, you will help us serve with dignity and kindness. You'll make sure even during our busiest service hours that customers find abundant shelves, ample produce and a friendly environment.

As a donor, your investment

pooled with so many others will let us source the produce, dairy, eggs and pantry items that keep our pantry and warehouse full. Small gifts have the power to make a big difference. Your gift will allow our neighbors to find healthy, culturally familiar food every time they come to shop.

Our customer levels are much busier than during the peak pandemic. We have seen the rise in need and are asking your help in meeting it. Together, we can ensure that food is available for everyone in our community.

In peace,
Joe



Auction benefit tickets are on sale now!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the University District Food Bank and the 28th year of our annual “Take A Bite Out of Hunger” auction benefit!

Purchase tickets today to join us on Saturday, October 7, at St. Demetrios in Montlake for dinner, drinks, live and silent auctions, and more to raise vital funds for our food purchasing budget which is facing a 50 percent increase in 2024.

- Individual ticket: \$115
- Table of 8: \$920
- Patron ticket: \$175
- Patron table of 8: \$1,200

Note: The general ticket price will increase from \$115 to \$135 per ticket and the general table price will increase from \$920 to \$1,000 on September 8. Patron ticket and table costs will not increase.

Patron ticket purchasers will be entered into a raffle for \$300 dinner at a local restaurant.

VIRTUAL EVENT

The Virtual Fund-A-Need and Silent Auctions open at noon on Saturday, October 1, and close at 3 p.m. on Monday, October 9.

LIVE IN-PERSON EVENT

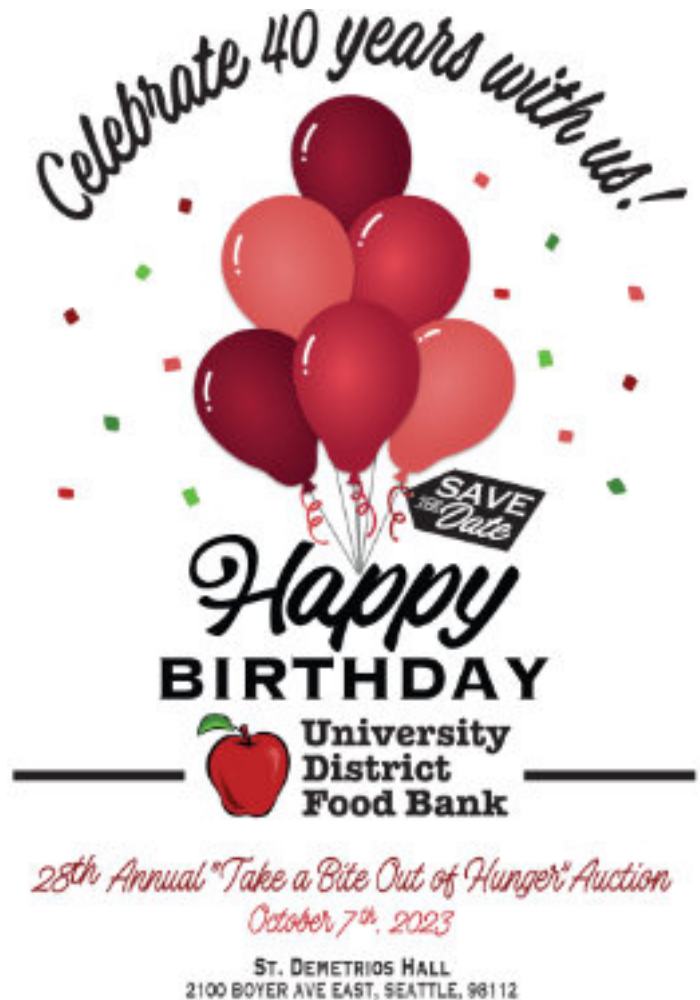
Doors open at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 7, for Silent and Live auctions. All tickets include dinner by Cameron Catering and beverages.

The need in Northeast Seattle is stronger than ever right now. Invite your friends, family and neighbors to help us make it a record year. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Purchase tickets at: udistrictfoodbank.org

AUCTION ITEM HIGHLIGHTS

- Mojito Rum Multi-Course Pairing Dinner for 10



Buy your tickets and register for the auction by going to udistrictfoodbank.ejoinme.org/tickets

- Sleight of Hand Winery 80s themed party (celebrating 1983 when we opened our doors!)
- Seattle Interiors donated Toto Drake® WASHLET®+ S550E Two-Piece Toilet With Bidet

AUCTION DONATIONS

We have some incredible packages and items to bid on this year! We're always looking for additional items including sports tickets, vacation packages, airline tickets, experiences and more. Interested in donating some of these items? Please contact Paul Yunker paul@udistrictfoodbank.org.

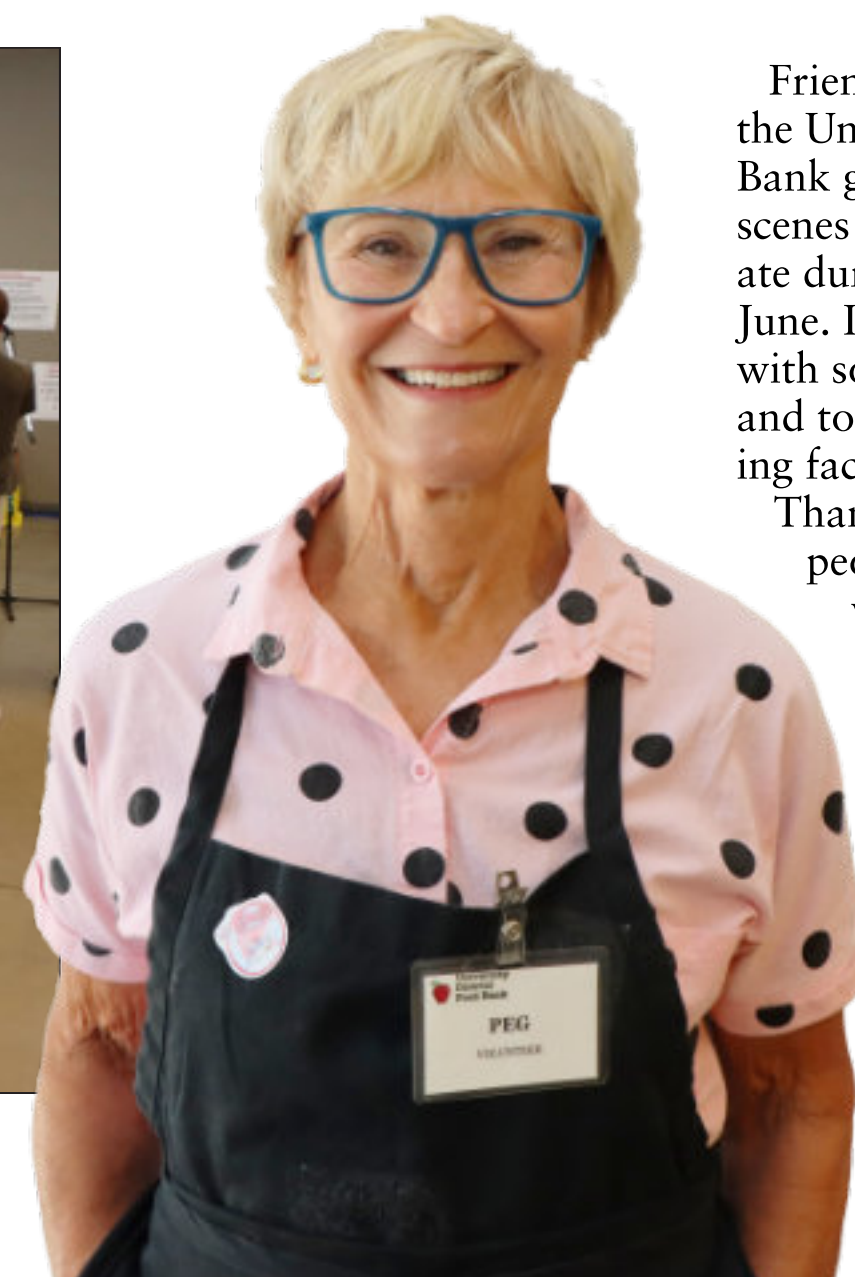
At right: Volunteer Arjun Bakshi answers questions from visitors during the open house. At far right: Fruit trees in our rooftop farm space drew the attention of visitors.



Food Bank welcomes supporters during our June open house



University District Food Bank supporters toured our store and learned how the Food Bank works during our open house. Volunteer Peg Balachowski, right, greeted visitors at the door.



Friends and supporters of the University District Food Bank got a behind-the-scenes look at how we operate during an open house in June. It was great to connect with so many friendly faces and to show you our amazing facility.

Thank you to the many people who signed up to volunteer at the Food Bank and to everyone for attending!

Photos by Curt Milton

Christine Bagley: Development Coordinator (left)

1. Your hometown: Seattle
2. First concert: Janet Jackson at Key Arena
3. Coffee or Tea: COFFEE
4. Favorite Pizza Topping/s: pepperoni, onions and mushrooms
5. Favorite Place to take out-of-towners in Seattle: Olympic Sculpture Park
6. What are you most looking forward to in your new role at the Food Bank? I'm looking forward to spreading the word we do at UDFB to more members of the community and working with the auction committee to procure some exciting new items for our event. October 7th. Save the date!

Chey Costello: Pantry Assistant (middle)

1. Your hometown: Dallas, TX
2. First concert: The Spice Girls at Starplex in 1998
3. Coffee or Tea: Earl Grey with honey and soy milk, followed by several cups of coffee/soy lattes
4. Favorite Pizza Topping/s: Mushrooms!!!
5. Favorite Place to take out-of-towners in Seattle: Gas Works for a sunset picnic
6. What are you most looking forward to in your new role at the Food Bank? Making new friends and participating in my community!



New Food Bank team members are, from left, Christine Bagley, Thomas Bernardi, Chey Costello and Kirsten Ourada.

Say hello to our newest team members

Kirsten Ourada: Pantry Assistant (right)

1. Your hometown: Spokane
2. First concert: Radiohead
3. Coffee or Tea: Coffee
4. Favorite Pizza Topping/s: jalapeno and pineapple
5. Favorite Place to take out-of-towners in Seattle: swimming by the arboretum, to the rooftop bar at the Graduate for the 360 degree mountain and city views (!) or to a show.
6. What are you most looking forward to in your new role at the Food Bank: getting to know the community of staff, volunteers and customers, and the sense of place that comes with that.

Thomas Bernardi: Pantry Assistant (in

front)

1. Your hometown: Snohomish, WA
2. First concert: Stevie Wonder
3. Coffee or Tea: Coffee for sure
4. Favorite Pizza Topping/s: Ricotta, Sautéed Arugula
5. Favorite Place to take out-of-towners in Seattle: Volunteer Park
6. What are you most looking forward to in your new role at the Food Bank? I am most looking forward to learning how to make the food bank an even better space where everyone involved feels welcome and connected to the community.

Food Bank volunteer's favorite part? 'It's the people'

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lies at Seattle Children's hospital.

Grocery rescue is all about food security and reducing food waste. I rescue food from PCC in Green Lake regularly and when needed I will fill in for other volunteers or staff and pick up from Trader Joe's in the U-District, among other retailers.

It's amazing to see how many pounds of groceries are donated from PCC and Trader Joe's. It really helps to fill our shelves with additional produce, bread, frozen items, canned goods and more. I'll pick up the food then we sort it, check expiration dates and stock it on the shelves. We also pick up baked goods from local bakeries like Madison Park Bakery, which is nice to offer shoppers locally baked items.

Most of our grocery partners take it very seriously, PCC and Trader Joe's are both in that camp and they make sure to give us quality items.

For back of the house, I work on stocking the shelves, making sure they are full and ready for shoppers, I help keep our back-stock full and organized, and sort produce and grocery rescue items. I'll also operate the pallet jack as needed, and the cardboard baler to compact all the cardboard boxes and keep the space clean.

Then once a week I work on grocery packs for Seattle Chil-



dren's hospital. We'll provide several days' worth of food for patients and families in long term care. They get a list of grocery items we offer and choose what they'd like for the week. We work to have culturally relevant foods as well as offering halal or kosher foods. We've served families of up to 8 people with these packs and it can go a long way to help stretch grocery budgets while their children are receiving care at the hospital.

What is your favorite part about volunteering?

It's the people – the volunteers and the customers. The people I've met here have great stories and interesting backgrounds, and it makes returning twice a week something I look forward to.

My background is in tech which is a privileged community of people and I really enjoy the diversity at the Food Bank. I also feel compelled to give back and help others, it's a good feeling and a big part of why I personally keep volunteering.

Why should others volunteer at the Food Bank?

Food security is critical these days with a lot of unmet needs in our community. We can all do our part to ensure those needs are met as best we can, and you get to meet some great people along the way.

What else do you want people to know about the Food Bank community?

The food bank is really a hub for other services that the city offers, it's focused on food security but there are vaccine drives, access to literature about available resources, an office phone that customers can use to make calls to family or check in with local agencies. The Food Bank is doing everything within its means to help people. They work hard in good faith and make every attempt to meet someone's needs.

"I feel compelled to give back and help others, it's a good feeling and a big part of why I personally keep volunteering."

Jud Richards

Food Bank volunteer

Community supporter spotlight: Amerigroup



Carmen Marquez-Mendez, marketing and community relations representative at Amerigroup, right, was shown around the Food Bank by floor manager Arra Ebersten.

A big thank you to Amerigroup for being our presenting sponsor for our 2023 “Take A Bite Out of Hunger” benefit auction!

Amerigroup Washington has been an ongoing sponsor of the University District Food Bank's annual auction and we are thrilled that they are once again supporting this incredibly important event.

Amerigroup offers Medicaid and Medicare insurance plans to families and individuals and is focused on achieving health and wellness for the entire family. Amerigroup's financial support helps our Food Bank shoppers in so many ways!

“As someone who grew up in poverty, I understand many of the struggles experienced by Amerigroup members and patrons of University District Food Bank. I see their stories in my life experiences, and this fuels my dedication to further Amerigroup Washington’s mission, which is not only to make healthcare simple and accessible, but to also improve lives and entire communities.

“Through our collaboration with valued community partners, like University District Food Bank, we are succeeding in our mission. We listen first, and then innovate meaningful solutions that make a lasting, positive impact. We address and remove barriers that prevent people from living their best life, and together, we are succeeding in creating healthier communities as well as laying the foundation for a better, stronger future.”

Anthony E. Woods
President & CEO,
Amerigroup Washington, Inc.

Volunteer this August and September

Did you know we can use extra volunteer help in the summer months?!

August and September are our lowest months for volunteers due to travel and back to school, but we can really use the help.

Add volunteering at the University District Food Bank into your summer plans — schedule it now to help out and enlist a partner or friend to join you!

To volunteer, select the Get Involved tab on udistrictfoodbank.org and fill out the new volunteer application.



Jess Tai, treasurer of our board, gathers an order for a Food Bank customer.