



**FOOD**  
For Lane County

# FOOD *for* THOUGHT

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER



CAMAS SWALE FARM

## FOOD FOR LANE COUNTY

770 Bailey Hill Road  
Eugene, OR 97402  
(541) 343-2822

## MISSION

*To reduce hunger by engaging our community to create access to food*

We accomplish our mission by soliciting, collecting, rescuing, growing, preparing and packaging food for distribution through a countywide network of social service agencies and programs, and through public awareness, education and community advocacy.

## VISION

*To end hunger in Lane County*

Editor: Denise Wendt

Design: Amy Renée Design

## FROM FARM TO FOOD BANK GRANT INVESTS IN LOCAL FARMS WHILE INCREASING FOOD SECURITY

Camas Swale Farm is one of nine small farms FFLC is working with on a five-year project funded by Lane Community Health Council Food Systems aimed at increasing food security in Lane County. Grant funds allow FFLC to purchase produce and other goods from the farms and distribute that food through FFLC pantries.

Amber Lippert and Jonah Bloch own and operate Camas Swale Farm, a 16-acre family-run organic farm two miles north of Coburg where they grow vegetables, herbs and berries for a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and wholesale customers.

“I love doing the purposeful work of farming,” Amber said. “I like moving my body and being outside and eating good food.”

Growing food and being part of the solution also gives her a personal feeling of security. She remembers her childhood in Michigan when her family did not always have enough to eat.

“My dad worked at a factory that shut down periodically,” she said. “There was a church in our town, and that’s where we would get food boxes. My dad and I would stand in line. I am super grateful for the generosity that I received as a child from community programs like that.”

*FFLC is grateful for this generous funding and the opportunity to support small farms like Camas Swale. Watch for more stories about this ongoing project in future newsletters.*

## PARTNERING WITH HEALTH CLINICS TO PROVIDE FRESH FRUITS AND VEGGIES

A healthy diet is about much more than calories. We need a wide range of nutrient-dense foods to get all the vitamins and minerals essential for good health. Fresh fruits and veggies can provide those vitamins and minerals, but fresh produce is often not affordable. FFLC's Produce Plus program, a partnership with Trillium Community Health Plan, brings fresh fruits and vegetables to people free of charge.

FFLC distributes fresh produce at five health clinics — Orchard Health in Veneta, Oakridge and McKenzie; Ko-Kwel Wellness Center in Eugene; and PeaceHealth Senior Health & Wellness Center in Eugene. Together, these clinics distributed more than 48,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables last fiscal year.

Clinical Social Worker David Warmbier organizes the distribution of produce at PeaceHealth Senior Health & Wellness Center on Barger Drive in Eugene. Every Tuesday morning, he picks up fresh produce at FFLC's warehouse on West Broadway. Back at the clinic, his team sorts the food into paper sacks — fresh strawberries, crisp cucumbers, ripe tomatoes, potatoes, squash and corn — whatever David is able to pick up that morning.

“

*Fresh produce is a luxury for many because of the cost. Most of our people are on fixed, limited incomes. The ability to afford fresh produce is frequently out of reach.*

Here the program is geared toward people 60 and older, but all are welcome. Most are patients at the clinic. About 130 people benefit from a bag of fresh produce every week thanks to David's team.

“The need for fresh fruits and veggies in an underserved population cannot be overstated,” David said. “Access and affordability are challenging. There are a lot of people struggling to pay their bills. Most of our people are on fixed, limited incomes. The ability to afford fresh produce is frequently out of reach.”

While people wait for their box, they share personal stories about the challenges they face paying for groceries and medications and how the produce they get here helps.



TRILLIUM PRODUCE PLUS

“I'm just very grateful,” said Froydis, age 74. “This food makes a huge difference in my budget.”

Penny is 79. Her husband is 87. She is grateful because the food she gets takes some of the burden off their already tight budget. “Our medications have gotten so expensive. Together we're dealing with Type 2 diabetes, heart issues, high blood pressure. I have neuropathy. He's got back problems. Just a combination of things.”

“This program really helps to supplement what we need,” Penny adds. “We get more vegetables and fresh things. It's been a godsend.”

“We know we are making a great difference in the lives of our people,” David said. “We hear every week about how grateful they are.”

It's not a long wait. David's team is organized. When their number is called, each person is given a sack full of groceries. They leave with a smile and a bag of nutrient-rich food for the week.

## THE DINING ROOM'S SECRET INGREDIENT IS KINDNESS

The Dining Room in downtown Eugene serves free, hot meals four days a week to 800 or more guests. But The Dining Room also does so much more. For guests, many of whom are without housing and among the most vulnerable people FFLC serves, The Dining Room offers mental and emotional security.

Staff and volunteers know they are providing more than a meal. Diners are treated with dignity and respect. Meals are served with kindness. Diners are seen and acknowledged. And while they are at The Dining Room, if only for an hour, they are safe — safety that is not always guaranteed on the street.

“Everyone that works here seems like they like us,” one guest told program manager Josie McCarthy. “It is worth the long walk over, even in bad weather with all of my gear, because I feel safe and I can relax compared to all the dangers out here being homeless.”

The important role The Dining Room plays in the community has not gone unnoticed. Retired City of Eugene Chief of Police Pete Kerns said

in an interview, “Folks who eat at The Dining Room make better choices and decisions in their daily life. They come in hungry, get fed and are treated with dignity. It is a no brainer.”

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*It is worth the long walk over, even  
in bad weather with all of my gear,  
because I feel safe.*

Tim Vacek provided safety and hospitality at The Dining Room. “Many times diners told me they feel welcome here, like they belong somewhere,” Tim said.

“One of our guests said that our secret ingredient is kindness,” Josie said.



THE DINING ROOM

# MEAL KITS PROVIDE EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR A HEALTHY MEAL

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Centers and FFLC are partnering on a project to provide meals for families.

“We are excited to collaborate with PeaceHealth through our shared understanding that access to wholesome, nutritious food supports positive health outcomes,” FFLC Education and Programs Director Carrie Copeland said.

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*Helping patients and families access healthy food is important for supporting growth and development in children and preventing childhood obesity.*

PeaceHealth volunteers assemble non-perishable meal kits at FFLC and deliver those kits to three PeaceHealth pediatric clinics in Eugene and Springfield. Anyone who is screened at one of these clinics to be food insecure is offered a meal kit. Each kit includes all the ingredients needed to prepare a healthy meal for a family of four.

Recipe cards included with the food boxes are written in English and Spanish. Vegan meal options are available. Recipe cards have a link with information about FFLC distribution sites for access to additional fresh and shelf-stable groceries.

The meal kits and connection with FFLC are part of a broader 5-2-1-0 national childhood development program. The goal is for children to have at least five servings of fruits and vegetables, two or fewer hours of screen time, one hour of physical activity and zero sweetened drinks each day.

“Helping patients and families access healthy food is important for supporting growth and development in children and preventing childhood obesity,” PeaceHealth Children’s Service Line Medical Director Dr. Serena Black said. “Our goal in primary care is to help families access food for today and to connect them with sustainable resources in the community for food for the future.”

## PEACEHEALTH MEAL KITS



## WAYS TO DONATE



### DONATE ONLINE

[foodforlanecounty.org/donate](https://foodforlanecounty.org/donate)



### MAIL GIFTS

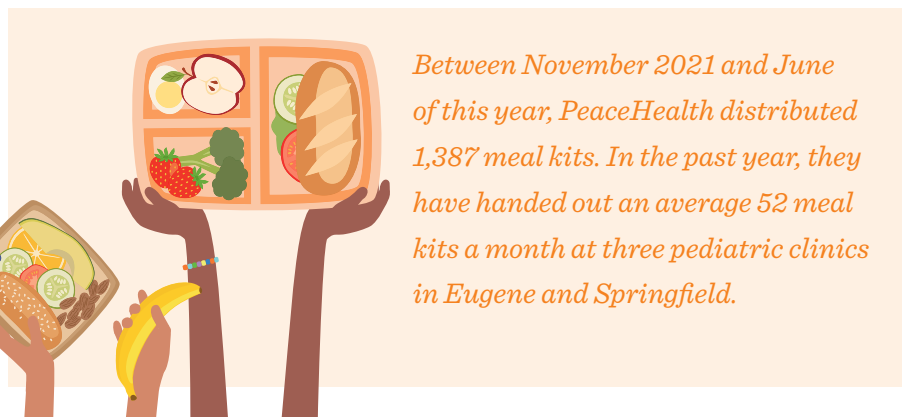
770 Bailey Hill Road  
Eugene, Oregon 97402



### CALL

(541) 343-2822

## FOLLOW US



*Between November 2021 and June of this year, PeaceHealth distributed 1,387 meal kits. In the past year, they have handed out an average 52 meal kits a month at three pediatric clinics in Eugene and Springfield.*

## OUR PARTNERS



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# AUCTION CHAIRS SHARE THEIR "WHY" FOR SUPPORTING FFLC

We celebrated our 21st Annual Empty Bowls Dinner and Auction at the Lane Events Center on Saturday, September 28. We are so grateful for the generous support we received from auction chairs Dr. Ami Bear and Dr. David Bear. We spoke with them before the event about why they support FFLC and why ending hunger in Lane County is important to them.

**FFLC:** Why is supporting FFLC important to your family?

**David:** As parents, we are aware that many children go hungry when so many of us have more than we need. Healthy kids require energy and the felt security of knowing there will be enough to thrive, and we want to support that any way we can. We also want our own kids to be aware of the serious needs in our community and to see how they can begin making a difference, even in their youth.

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*Growing strong families and children starts with ensuring each of them has their basic needs consistently met.*

**FFLC:** What ties do you see between food insecurity and your work as physicians?

**Ami:** As a developmental pediatrician, I know that environmental stability and consistency is a bedrock for thriving children. Consistent sources of healthy foods ensure that children learn better in school, sleep better at night and have more energy to run and play, which are core developmental tasks that serve to ensure proper growth across all arenas of development. Growing strong families and children starts with ensuring each of them has their basic needs consistently met. When physical needs are met in homes, caregivers of children are more free to focus on the ever-important emotional, behavioral and cognitive needs of the children in their homes. Children living with food insecurity have less consistent ability to learn, play and grow compared to peers living with secure food sources.

**David:** As an orthopedic surgeon, I am acutely aware of the importance of nutrition in healing. Unfortunately, food insecurity frequently leads to malnutrition, which in turn delays or prevents the body's response to healing. This leads to simple injuries that would

normally not be a big deal to turn into chronic wounds or lead to an infection. Inadequate nutrition also leads to delayed bone healing and inability to heal after surgery. FOOD For Lane County is critical for providing nutritious meals for these patients.

**FFLC:** What FFLC programs do you find particularly innovative or exciting, and why?

**Ami:** One of the most amazing things we have learned while preparing for the Empty Bowls Dinner and Auction is just how many amazing programs FOOD For Lane County has to offer. I have met many young people who have gained important skills at the Youth Farm, all while promoting confidence, learning about nutrition and understanding community needs. The Dining Room, where families can come together and enjoy a freshly prepared meal, is truly amazing. We were particularly excited about the Summer Food Program, which provides nearly 30,000 meals to children over the summer.

**FFLC:** Thank you so much, Ami and David, for your generous support!



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Food is a vital part of the foundation for a healthy life. Access to nutritious food, especially fruits and vegetables, is essential for supporting good health and preventing chronic diseases. Fresh produce provides vitamins and minerals that help keep our bodies strong, energized and resilient. When we prioritize nutritious foods, we are investing in the long-term wellness of our community.

Our understanding that food is medicine emphasizes the powerful role that the food we eat plays in our overall well-being. Nutritious food can aid in healing, prevent illness and improve quality of life. For children, access to fresh fruits and vegetables is even more critical. During their formative years, balanced nutrition supports physical growth, cognitive

development and emotional well-being. A healthy start in life sets children up for success in school and beyond.

At FFLC, we are committed to ensuring that every family in Lane County has access to the nutritious food they need to thrive. Through innovative partnerships with healthcare organizations and local farms we are working hard to meet that need. With your ongoing support, we can continue to provide fresh, healthy options to those who need it most, creating a community where everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy, fulfilling life.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Stein, Executive Director



*starry night*

21st Annual Empty Bowls Dinner & Auction

## EMPTY BOWLS AUCTION RAISES 774,000 MEALS

On Saturday, September 28, we celebrated our 21st Annual Empty Bowls Dinner and Auction, presented by King Estate. The evening raised enough funds to provide 774,000 meals for local families and individuals experiencing hunger. Thank you to auction chairs Dr. Ami Bear and Dr. David Bear, to our guests, to our volunteers and to these sponsors for their generous support.

Visit [tinyurl.com/FFLCAuction2024](https://tinyurl.com/FFLCAuction2024) to see photos of the event.



Fred Meyer Jewelers

