

# FOOD SECURITY

***All persons having access to culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate food through local non-emergency sources at all times.<sup>1</sup>***

“Community food security” is a part of the language that has been formulated in a variety of social service and policy arenas to address issues of hunger, nutrition, and health.

Hunger and malnutrition are indications of food insecurity. The definition above specifies some conditions that contribute to a food-secure community: food is available to everyone, (grocery stores are accessible, healthy food is available). All consumers have the financial freedom to choose what foods to eat and how much. No one is forced to seek emergency food assistance on a regular basis. This definition also recognizes that food is more than a necessity; it is a part of a human’s culture, comfort and identify.

Hope Partners moves back and forth between a mission of providing emergency relief to the poor and a complementary, yet more challenging mission of initiating long-term change in the lives of the marginalized. The transition of the Hunger Program to a Food Security program reflects this complex mission and the ongoing development and enrichment of our services.

The clients we serve at the three sites (Beta, Sova and San Dimas), are often the “working poor”, those residents that are employed but underpaid, and struggle to make ends meet. They are facing hunger and malnutrition, signs of a food-insecure community. It is our desire to help them access sustainable, high-quality food resources. This may mean seeking higher wages, applying for food stamps or other assistance, receiving advice on family meal planning, healthy recipes, and general nutrition, or securing transportation to a local grocery store or farmer’s market. The food stamp screenings that we have been conducting at Beta and at the Farmer’s Market are an example of these efforts.

Some similar projects in California include:

- 1) Farm-to-School (ex: local farmer provides salad bar for school cafeteria;
- 2) Community Mapping Studies (ex: mapping grocery stores in a high-income vs. low-income area)

By considering the current inadequacies in our public system of food production, distribution and consumption, and by partnering with other agencies, coalitions, and projects that address the complexity of food security, we are better equipped

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<sup>1</sup> “Weaving the Food Web: Community food Security in California” Community Food Security Coalition, 2002

to serve the needs of the clients that come through the doors of Beta, Sova and San Dimas.