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Tuesday, Mar 05 2013 11:00 PM

## HOWARD HARRIS: Food Bank helping to the tune of 6 million pounds annually

As a 10-year volunteer at the Community Action Partnership of Kern Food Bank, I have witnessed tremendous growth in the organization's ability to serve the people of Bakersfield and Kern County.

The Community Action Partnership Food Bank was established in 1982 to acquire food and other resources to help alleviate hunger, provide food and meet the nutritional needs of economically disadvantaged Kern residents. Under the direction of Ian Anderson and his staff, the Food Bank has instituted a program geared to expand the capability of the Food Bank to continue to better serve these communities.

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The Food Bank reaches many people with a distribution line that feeds anywhere from 200 to 500 households daily. This does not include the network of upward of 65 pantry sites with an associated 36 community sites that receive and distribute food from the Food Bank. Because of the downturn in the economy that started around 2007, the need for the Food Bank's services substantially increased, by 2008, to a requirement for the distribution of more than 3.6 million pounds of food per year. In 2009, that number rose to 4.4 million pounds. Currently, annual distribution is well over 6 million pounds. Including return visits, the number of

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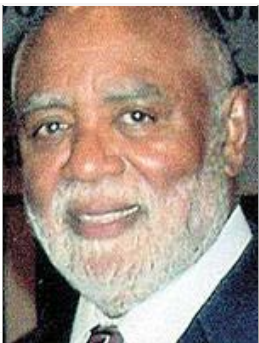
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Howard Harris

households served yearly is well over 33,000 or approximately 463,328 individuals.

According to the 2010 California Food Policy Advocates Report, 40.5 percent of the Kern population is "food insecure." That ranks Kern 53rd out of California's 58 counties. According to that same 2010 report, 40,000 individuals in Kern have Type 2 diabetes, 57 percent of the population is obese and 11.2 percent of the children are overweight for their age group.

The Food Bank fights these problems by providing a nutritionally balanced diet, including healthy fruits and vegetables provided by local farmers and the U.S. Agriculture Department.

In 2011, of the 463,328 individuals served by the Food Bank, 56 percent were female; 44 percent were male; 26 percent were adults; 10 percent were seniors; and 64 percent were youth. The majority were either Hispanic (55 percent) or Caucasian (22 percent). Other ethnicities were African-American (19 percent); and Asian-American (2 percent).

The Food Bank relies on, but is not limited to funding from the Emergency Food Assistance Program, California Community Service Development, United Way of Kern, USDA and California Franchise Tax Board. Donations also come from Vons, WinCo, Target, Wal-Mart, the U.S. postal workers annual food drive, Kern County Fair food drive, KGET-TV 17 food drive, GET food drive and others. In addition, assistance is received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (more popularly known as President Obama's stimulus package) and from other organizations and individuals.

Visit the virtual donation site at [www.capk.org](http://www.capk.org). All donations of any size are welcome and needed. There's more room for your donations, too, now that the Food Bank has expanded freezer space -- enough to hold 150 pallets of product.

The support of our generous contributors and the good people of Bakersfield and Kern County is very much appreciated.

**Howard Harris** of Bakersfield is a retired sales executive.

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from the last 7 days



**Visiting couple alleges police brutality, police say it's case of resisting arrest (27)**

A couple traveling through Bakersfield claim they were the victims of police brutality and a video that captures part of the incident is gaining attention online.



**Bullet train draws a bull's eye on downtown Bakersfield (9)**

California High Speed Rail officials have released a preliminary track alignment through Bakersfield that would steer clear of several notable local sites but would require the bulldozing of others.

**LOIS HENRY: A ranking needs a look, as does an odd comment (7)**

Couple things to share around the water cooler today -- health rankings and my response to being called a "libtard." New national county-by-county health rankings came out last month and guess what?



**RIC LLEWELLYN: Let's be honest about cost of shiny blue recycling bins (5)**

A couple of weeks ago as I was returning home from work, I rolled onto the block and noticed a shiny new blue trash can sitting in the driveway. "We don't do curbside

recycling," I thought.

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