



Loaves and Fishes
OF CONTRA COSTA
Nourishing Lives

2026 Spring NEWSLETTER

Message from executive directors

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we welcome spring, we're reflecting on both the challenges and the progress we've seen in our community. Across Contra Costa County, food insecurity remains a pressing issue — with tens of thousands of neighbors struggling to put food on the table despite working hard and doing their best to make ends meet. At the same time, families across California continue to face high rates of food insecurity, with roughly one in five households experiencing uncertainty about where their next meal will come from.

Every day at Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa (LFCC), we see the real impact of your support. Because of you, we serve hundreds of thousands of nutritious meals each year, provide groceries to families in need, and offer programs like our Culinary Arts Training in partnership with Trinity Center that prepare individuals for meaningful employment in the culinary industry.

We are also excited to share an important step forward for our organization: the development of our new Central Kitchen in Antioch. This facility will significantly expand our capacity, allowing us to prepare and distribute up to three times more meals, improve efficiency, strengthen food rescue efforts, and better meet the growing demand across the county. The Central Kitchen represents a long-term investment in sustainability, equity, and our ability to nourish more lives—today and for years to come.

Your generosity helps ensure that no one in our community goes hungry, and it fuels the wraparound services — from job-readiness coaching to targeted case management — that support long-term stability. As demands continue to grow, and with the evolving landscape of federal food assistance programs, your continued partnership is more crucial than ever.

Thank you for standing with us, for your compassion, and for your belief that everyone deserves access to healthy food and a chance at a brighter future. With gratitude,

Janette Kennedy, Executive Director Development & External Relations
Joleen Lafayette, Executive Director Operations



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Executive Director
Development & External Relations



Joleen Lafayette
Executive Director Operations

Special acknowledgement:

LFCC Names John Pamer as 2026 Impact Award Recipient

LFCC is proud to announce John Pamer, Chief Executive Officer of Diablo Valley Federal Credit Union, as the recipient of the LFCC Impact Award. The award recognizes individuals whose leadership and commitment have made a lasting difference in advancing hunger relief and food security in Contra Costa County.



The LFCC Impact Award honors those who exemplify collaboration, sustainability, and alignment with LFCC's values of compassion, dignity, respect, and equity.

Under Pamer's leadership, Diablo Valley Federal Credit Union has served as the presenting sponsor of the annual Concord Turkey Trot—one of LFCC's most visible community fundraisers—raising more than \$104,700 over four years to support free, hot meals and food distribution countywide.

"John Pamer exemplifies the spirit of the LFCC Impact Award," said Janette Kennedy, Executive Director of Development & External Relations for Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa. "Through partnership, generosity, and vision, John has helped strengthen vital hunger relief services that thousands of our neighbors rely on every day."

"I am honored to receive this recognition from LFCC," said Pamer. "LFCC's work is essential to the health and stability of our community, and I'm proud to support an organization that ensures access to nutritious meals with dignity."

LFCC will formally present the Impact Award to Pamer at the upcoming Rock Out Hunger Gala on March 21, 2026.

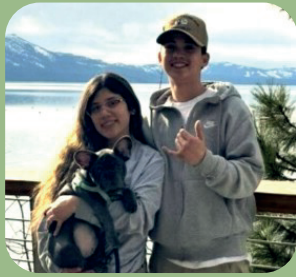
Welcome to new staff members

Welcome Stefanie

Stefanie T. is a fourth-generation Contra Costa County resident, parent, and community advocate with more than 15 years of experience in administrative coordination, event support, and relationship-centered work. As Development Coordinator at Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa County, she supports fundraising and donor engagement, event logistics, and development communications. Stefanie is honored to contribute her skills in support of LFCC's mission to ensure access to nourishing food and essential resources.



Welcome Ken



Ken joined Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa as a driver after overcoming an incredible journey. After leaving the military in Connecticut, he and his partner Jen moved to California in search of new opportunities. The transition to civilian life proved difficult, and the couple experienced a period of homelessness before finding support at our Martinez Dining Room.

With the help of staff and volunteers, Ken and Jen were able to stabilize their situation and secure temporary housing. Today, Ken is proud to be part of the Loaves and Fishes team, helping deliver meals that make a difference for neighbors in need.

Welcome new board members:

Kristy Lucas

Kristy Lucas is a seasoned business leader and entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience across hospitality, retail, consumer goods, and wellness.



She is the owner of two Spavia Day Spa locations in Contra Costa County and brings deep expertise in operations, brand strategy, and people-centered leadership. Kristy is honored to serve on the Board of Directors of Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa County and is passionate about advancing food security in the community.

Dennis McSweeney

Dennis McSweeney is a seasoned business professional with 33 years of experience in telecommunications, specializing in sales leadership, organizational development, financial oversight, and strategic planning.

Recently retired, he has volunteered weekly in the Martinez Kitchen and Dining Room for nearly two years. Dennis is proud to serve on the Board of Directors of Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa County and support its mission to strengthen communities through dignity and compassion.



New Partnerships

LFCC Selected for Dutch Luv Day of Giving

We're thrilled to share some wonderful news with our community! Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa was honored to be selected as a recipient of Dutch Bros' 2026 Company-Wide Givebacks—Dutch Luv Day of Giving, thanks to a nomination from Dutch Bros and local partner David Rowe.

On February 13, 2026, the Dutch Bros location in Martinez came together to support organizations addressing hunger and food insecurity. For every drink sold that day, \$1 was donated to LFCC, turning countless cups of coffee into meaningful support for our neighbors in need.

This generous giveback will help LFCC continue providing hot, nutritious meals and groceries to seniors, families, veterans, and neighbors experiencing food insecurity throughout Contra Costa County—especially at a time when demand for food assistance continues to rise.

We are deeply grateful to Dutch Bros Coffee, David Rowe, and everyone who participated in Dutch Luv Day of Giving. Your generosity truly helps us nourish lives, one meal at a time.

SOAR (Stand Out, Achieve & Rise)

Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa is proud to partner with the City of Antioch's SOAR program and Rubicon Programs to create meaningful pathways into culinary and food service careers for local young adults.

SOAR (Stand Out, Achieve & Rise) is the City of Antioch's paid youth internship and workforce development program, supporting young adults ages 18–26 as they explore career pathways, gain hands-on experience, and build essential professional and life skills.

Through this partnership, SOAR collaborates with Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa to support a culinary arts-focused cohort, providing exposure to food service operations, commercial kitchen environments, and related career opportunities. Rubicon Programs complements this work by offering wraparound services, including case management, job-readiness support, and individualized coaching.

Together, this collaborative effort connects young people to practical skills, supportive services, and long-term opportunities—helping pave the way to sustainable employment and career advancement.

Volunteer Spotlight: Marge B.

Finding Purpose and Community at Loaves & Fishes

After retiring from a 45-year career as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, Marge B. began looking for meaningful ways to give back. A friend from church, Myron Backhaus, introduced her to Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa—and she was immediately moved.

"I was struck by the obvious need, the genuine kindness, and the gratitude of the people we serve," Marge shares. "I hear more 'thank you's' and 'God bless you's' on the days I volunteer than anywhere else."

Marge has volunteered weekly at the Martinez dining room since October 2023. She values the welcoming environment and thoughtful stewardship of resources, praising Facility Manager Joe Barrera for ensuring safe, efficient food service and a clean, inviting space. "The staff and volunteers are hardworking, kind, and a pleasure to be around," she says.

In addition to volunteering, Marge and her husband have increased their financial support during times of SNAP benefit disruptions. Through her church, Church of the Resurrection in Pleasant Hill, she helped organize a food and gift card drive, and she's also connected LFCC to a yoga instructor who donates class proceeds to charitable causes.

For Marge, volunteering means helping ensure access to nutritious food in a safe, welcoming setting. "Some people come just for the company," she notes. "I love the interaction and hearing the occasional success story."

We're grateful to Marge for the compassion and dedication she brings to Loaves & Fishes and to our community every week.



Client spotlight

Lea's Story: Finding Strength, Giving Back

For over 20 years, Lea has battled homelessness and the mental health challenges that have made it difficult for her to maintain steady employment. Her life has been a long, uphill journey, marked by instability, isolation, and the constant struggle to meet her most basic needs.

When Lea first heard about Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa from friends in the community, she was in desperate need of support. She began visiting our daily hot meal program, which quickly became her main and often only source of nutritious food. At a time when she felt forgotten by the world, Loaves and Fishes offered her dignity, consistency, and nourishment.

"For as long as I can remember, Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa has been my main source of healthy meals. Sometimes it's the only place I could get food, and it would be my only meal of the day. I am so grateful they are here. Without Loaves and Fishes, myself and so many others in Contra Costa would go hungry. Everyone has the right to eat." - Lea

Now, as she works her way through a sober living program, Lea has begun volunteering at our Antioch dining room. Her days are fuller, and her heart is lighter. Giving back to the very community that once supported her brings her joy, purpose, and a renewed sense of hope.

Lea's journey is a powerful reminder that healing and transformation are possible—with compassion, resources, and a community that cares. Every day, hundreds of individuals in Contra Costa face hunger and homelessness. With your support, we can continue providing hot, healthy meals, life-changing resources, and a place of belonging for people like Lea.



To learn more about the Martinez Refining Company, visit www.martinezrefiningcompany.com.





Loaves and Fishes
OF CONTRA COSTA

Nourishing Lives

835 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA 94553

Tax ID# 68-0018077

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
DONATE**

Write a check or donate online at
www.loavesfishescc.org

We also accept food donations

Generously Printed By: **Prestige**
Printing & Graphics
FULL COMMERCIAL PRINTING

LOAVES AND FISHES OPERATED DINING ROOMS/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

ANTIOCH

American Legion Hall
403 W. 6th Street

MARTINEZ

Dining Room/
Admin Offices
835 Ferry Street

PITTSBURG

Central Kitchen
510 Garcia Ave, Unit H

PITTSBURG

St. Vincent de Paul
1415 Simpson Court

OAKLEY

Red Man-Pocahontas Hall
1403 Main Street

WALNUT CREEK

Trinity Center
1888 Trinity Ave.

SAVE THE DATES!

13TH ANNUAL DRIVE OUT HUNGER GOLF TOURNAMENT

Benefitting Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa

Rossmoor Golf Clubs / Monday, June 8

Registration: 10:00 AM / Shot Gun Start: 12:00 PM



THE BIG LA BOCCE 2026 Bocce Ball Tournament

**SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 19TH**

**Martinez Bocce
Federation
Joe DiMaggio Way
Martinez, CA**

Go to LFCC Website for more information. <https://loavesfishescc.org/events/upcoming-events/>

LOAVES AND FISHES OPERATED DINING ROOMS/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

This past quarter, Loaves & Fishes of Contra Costa is proud to partner with Trinity Center to offer a Culinary Arts Training Program that creates meaningful pathways to employment in Contra Costa County. The program provides hands-on training in safe commercial kitchen operations, food preparation, basic nutrition, and essential job-readiness skills—preparing participants for entry-level culinary careers.

In addition to technical instruction, participants receive coaching in interviewing and job retention. Through this partnership, Loaves & Fishes also provides warm, nutritious evening meals every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for Trinity Center's Evening Program, supporting unhoused neighbors with food, targeted case management, and a safe, dry place to sleep during the winter months.

Upcoming Sessions:

April 14 - July 7, 2026 (Martinez)

September 1 - November 19, 2026 (Martinez)

info@loavesfishescc.org

