



# Food for Thought



ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF HUNGER & MALNUTRITION

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VISIT US AT:

[www.alleviatehunger.org](http://www.alleviatehunger.org)

The alleviation of hunger and malnutrition is a complex issue with many aspects and carries with it many solutions. Please enjoy the articles submitted by our fellow Action Group members and the organizations they represent as our Partners in Service:

## **Rotary First Harvest –A Program of District 5030**

(RFH) began as a project of the University District Rotary Club (Seattle, WA USA) in 1982. It grew quickly becoming District project the very next year. Today, RFH has 26 years of experience in surplus produce procurement, collection and distribution as well as in strategic consensus-building and problem solving among the state's hunger-relief organizations. RFH has collected in excess of 135 million pounds of produce that would otherwise have gone to waste and generally worked to address issues surrounding hunger-relief.

RFH's mission is to:

- Feed the hungry with surplus nutritious food
- Access and improve food distribution and transportation systems
- Develop innovative hunger relief solutions
- Replicate the concept of Rotary First Harvest.

### **Community Role and Experience**

RFH plays a unique and critical role by serving as a non-profit broker, locating surplus produce, coordinating harvesting or packaging if required, identifying an existing food bank or distribution warehouse that has needs and arranging transportation.

RFH's work is highly collaborative. It is an essential part of the

group's philosophy not to duplicate services or resources already available. By employing the collective resources of partner organizations, RFH can gather more food than if it built its own extensive infrastructure. Such coordination enables RFH to avoid duplicated or wasted effort and to keep administrative costs below 1%.

It is widely known that most nutrients required for mental and physical health come from fruits



and vegetables. Eating vegetables and fruits allows children to stay healthy and perform in school as they grow to become productive citizens. Eating vegetables and fruits also enables the elderly to maintain their health, viability and independence. The challenge is to provide produce in a consistent and efficient manner to food banks. RFH is currently launching several new programs to do just that.

Orchards to Food Banks: This project will collect donations of pears, apples and other tree fruits in bulk bins directly from fruit packaging warehouses in Eastern Washington at a cost of less than 5 cents per pound. That small

cost helps to offset some of the costs incurred by growers and packers to have the fruit picked, hauled to a warehouse, sorted, cleaned and stored.

Harvest Against Hunger: RFH is developing a gleaning program to collect the millions of pounds of produce that goes unharvested due to superficial damage and other factors. The goal of its Harvest Against Hunger project is to develop a statewide large-scale gleaning effort to reclaim agricultural resources, thereby helping to feed thousands of people who are currently going hungry.

### Community Gardens:

Under the leadership of RFH-Oregon (a program of District 5110) RFH hopes to develop a community garden model that can be replicated anywhere in the world. This model leverages Rotarian volunteers and Rotary-based connections to plant, grow and harvest vegetables that are then shared with the local community through hunger relief agencies.

RFH stands ready to support any Rotary-based efforts that combat hunger. For additional information about RFH and its programs, please contact them directly.

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## SOS Mentor ShapeUp Program



SOS Mentor  
ShapeUp Program

**IMPORTANT  
NEWS UPDATE:**

*The UN Wire reports that high food prices caused by a worldwide food crisis have dramatically increased food insecurity, pushing the global estimate of the hungry to nearly 1 billion people!*

The American Public Health Association has reported that in the last twenty-five years, the percentage of obese children has doubled, and the percentage of obese adults has tripled. Approximately 17.1% of the nation's youth are now obese, and a disproportionate number of these young people are African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Hispanics. It is a widely held misconception that an obese individual is well-nourished. However, individuals who consume an abundance of calories are often malnourished. Although food may be plentiful—often times it is high in fat, salt, and calories and are not nutrient-rich, which is especially important for a developing child. While an obese child is hardly in danger of starvation, obesity in children can have negative effects on school performance by reducing self-esteem and self-confidence. Obesity also contributes to health conditions such as depression, Type II diabetes, and undiagnosed sleep disorders that result in lower daytime energy levels.

With this alarming information in mind, the Los Angeles Rotary Club (LA5) has formed a Rotary Community Service Committee to implement and support the SOSMentor ShapeUp program in six high schools in greater Los Angeles. LA5 partners with four other Rotary Clubs, and Rotarians from these Clubs act as mentors to high school students in each of the six high schools. After the high school students are trained in the ShapeUp curriculum, they then act as nutrition mentors themselves to elementary students in six neighboring schools using information they learned from their Rotarian mentors.

The SOSMentor ShapeUp Program is an after school nutrition education, physical fitness, and mentoring program and addresses childhood obesity and other health-related issues. Each program workshop incorporates an interactive nutrition lesson plan that includes the participation of both adult mentors and high school students. Students that currently attend the after-school workshops live in low-income neighborhoods and often do not have the re-

sources to live a healthy lifestyle. Many neighborhoods in Los Angeles, for example, do not have convenient supermarkets or green grocers so food is purchased at convenience stores, fast food restaurants, or small neighborhood markets that do not carry a large selection of fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy food choices. In addition, the unsafe neighborhood conditions limit the amount of time that these students spend outside in the parks or other safe play areas.

This program provides high school students with the opportunity to learn how to make

healthy food choices and how to make exercise a part of their daily activity. Program staff facilitates workshops (graduate nutrition students), but it is the adult mentors who make it a truly memorable experience. Community mentors are recruited by Rotarians and include college students, business professionals, and teachers. Mentors work in small groups with the students to provide them with a supportive learning environment. They listen to students' challenges and successes and provide guidance and role modeling to help them live healthier lives. Mentors develop a relationship with the student, which helps to build leadership skills. Students become empowered to make healthier lifestyle choices and then mentor younger students to do the same. Older students become mentors and advocates for adopting healthier lifestyles with their friends and family and in their community.



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**The Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger & Malnutrition is an association of Rotarians, Rotaractors and Rotary partners supporting projects and activities designed to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. Our objective is to create a strong and effective network of Rotarians who are working to end hunger and malnutrition in all corners of our world.**

**\* H & M RAG MEMBERS! CONTACT US AT WWW.ALLEVIATEHUNGER.ORG TO POST YOUR PROJECTS\* THE MEMBERS ONLY PORTAL IS OPEN. CONTACT PRES. BARBARA FEDER FOR YOUR PASSWORD THROUGH THE WEB-SITE**