

# “Benny” is the Mobile Food Pantry Serving 400 Hollister Families

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“Benny” joined the Community Food Bank of San Benito County in early 2021. Many residents of Hollister will recognize Benny, but he’s not a staff member or volunteer...he’s the Ford Transit truck that’s home to the Food Bank’s Mobile Food Pantry.

The food bank’s overall mission is to provide food in a dignified way. The Mobile Food Pantry helps fulfill that mission by increasing residents’ access to fresh, healthy food and meeting them where they’re at. With well-worn miles already on him, Benny makes **two stops per day, Monday through Thursday**.

“The food bank is a little out of the way, and it may be difficult for a mom to get her kids in the car and come all the way out here,” said Sarah Nordwick, the Community Food Bank’s CEO and Executive Director. “If we can meet her at a park, she can get food for the family while the kids play.”

Additionally, the Mobile Food Pantry decreases the barriers to access those in need may face. “We recognize that when people come through our doors, they might be feeling down and out for one reason or another,” Nordwick said. “And we don’t want that to be a reason for them to feel shame or fear or not come and get food. So, to be able to offer the power of choice and food access right in their neighborhood, is a stoppingstone for them to visit the truck, come to **the Marketplace**, get food, and leave happier than when they walked in. If we can be a little part of their day that is bright, then that’s our mission of serving people with dignity.”

Nordwick recalled taking the Mobile Food Pantry out for the first time and arriving at a park. A homeless man approached the truck as they were opening the large side door, revealing an abundance of food. The man started crying and said this was the first time he’d seen food in a couple of weeks. The bonus was when he accessed food from the Mobile Food Pantry and then went to a picnic table and shared a meal with other people, a testament to the power of food and community.

A wide range of individuals access the Mobile Food Pantry and the food bank’s services, though. Eighty-five percent of the food bank’s clients have jobs. Many are working people who just can’t make ends meet.

The Mobile Food Pantry – Benny – helps the Food Bank reach an additional 380-400 families each week. It was also the first “food truck” of its kind on the road in California. It costs approximately \$10,000 per month to run and Nordwick would love to add another truck to serve San Benito County’s more rural communities. When supporters **donate to the food bank**, they support this kind of innovative approach to building a community in which no resident suffers from hunger.

Residents can meet the Mobile Food Pantry at the times and locations below. “No questions asked,” Nordwick said. “If you need the food, just come and get it.”

#### Monday:

Central & Willow – 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
San Juan Rd & Rajkovich – 2:00 p.m. – 3 p.m.

#### Tuesday:

Park & Sherwood – 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Memorial Drive (Across from the skate park) – 2:00 p.m. – 3 p.m.

#### Wednesday:

Nash Road & River Parkway – 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Dunne Park – 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

#### Thursday:

McCarthy Park – 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
3rd Street & San Benito Street – 2:00 p.m. – 3 p.m.



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