

Somewhere back around '85 when I joined the Lions, George Fernandez was a primary driver of the Thanksgiving Food Basket program. At that time he, and maybe others, identified three, four or six families in need and we would buy about a shopping cart of food for each of them. Two or three Lions would then load their cars and deliver the food to the addresses we had. I remember a couple of times the address we had was a vacant lot or just didn't exist so that food was given to a church or community center. I ended up with a couple of non-deliverable families' food one year, and as luck would have it, I was parked beside a nun's car in front of Longs Drug Store, now CVS Pharmacy, with a trunk full of food. I asked the nuns if they knew of someone in need and of course they did. They were pretty blown away when I gave them enough food for two families for probably two months.

As this program grew, we ended up with a wagon train of probably 15 – 20 shopping carts at Pak 'n Save, where they would open a register just for us. I think it was sometime after the KOME starter party clothing-and-toiletries drive for the homeless that we hooked up with a school and expanded the drive to actually setting up the begging station at Pak 'n Save. A seemingly homeless woman was looking over our display thinking the foods were on sale. When I told her we were collecting for the needy she rummaged through her purse and said: 'I don't have any money, but may I donate some of my coupons?' A guy that looked like me, long-haired, rough, anti-social, told me when I asked if he'd like to donate: 'Sure, I'll be back!' Right. I blew him off as I had done so many times before to so many other shoppers. That dude pulled up in front of our tables a couple of hours later, opened the back doors of his van and proceeded to unload case after case after case of Costco bulk foods until there was no room left on the sidewalk. You just never know. A man with his 4 year old daughter took our list and went inside. Much later they came out, her in his arms, with an overflowing cart. He told his daughter 'get your cookies'. She picked up her cookies from the top of the heap. Dad said: 'What do you say?' She said to me: 'Thank you!' Dad then left the cart with me and off they went.

I was at the Fish Market one day, maybe in the bar, and a woman asked me if I was still doing the food drive. I didn't recognize her but said 'Yes – at Lucky's now, because Pak 'n Save had closed'. She opened her purse, pulled out some cash, handed it to me and asked: 'Is it too late for this? I've been carrying it with me hoping to find you guys!' You just never know. It may have been the first or maybe the second year of the expanded food drive and I was storing the food at my house with Simone and her two

young boys. By midday, Sunday, they had built a city of canned foods that completely covered the living room floor. We moved the storage & packing to Jim & Eleanor Sherman's 3 car driveway soon after that and ended up making 6 rows of boxes that ran all the way down his driveway. This is where Barb Knox took over the packing control and refined it to where it is today. We had to move again and Don Lang came through with the Odd Fellows Hall. Dan & Yvonne Fimby had joined the Club during this period and stepped in with not only taking over the packing leadership but got their car club to donate food, cash and volunteers. This has been a huge boost to both the management and increase in cash & foods.

I'm not certain it was because of us, but the year after we delivered somewhere around 30 turkeys plus a bunch of other food to the Sunnyvale Community Center they had a bank of refrigerators in their warehouse.

From serving three or four or six families to supporting 165 over 30 years? Pretty good!

Then, distribution in the driveway:



Now, distribution at the Odd Fellows:



Jim at work:

