

Published November 25th, 2020

Rotary Clubs unite to present big payday for local food bank

Submitted by Thomas Black



One of two \$25,000 checks jointly presented to the Food Bank by two Rotary clubs - Lamorinda Sunrise and Clayton Valley Concord. From left: Joel Sjostrom, president and CEO of Food Bank Contra Costa and Solano Counties; Jovi Comfort, 5; Vicki Sexton, president of Clayton Valley Concord Rotary; Ellie Comfort, 9; and Michael Chapin, regional core account manager for Copart Auto Auctions. The auction house partners with the two Rotary clubs in processing vehicles for resale. The two girls are grandchildren of Sexton. Photo provided

Two Rotary clubs - Lamorinda Sunrise and Clayton Valley-Concord Sunrise - have stepped up to the plate by donating a total of \$50,000 to the Food Bank of Contra Costa Counties.

The money derived from a novel fundraising initiative in which the two clubs participate, called Cars2ndChance, recycles privately donated motor vehicles by reconditioning them and reselling them to the public. Begun in 2008, C2C has generated to date a remarkable \$1,203,924 in gross revenue, or approximately \$100,000 per year. (Although all proceeds are currently earmarked for the Food Bank, there are other beneficiaries.)

Dave Kemnitz, credited with launching the initiative 12 years ago, rehabs vehicles as needed at his auto repair shop, D&H Enterprises, in Concord.

The \$50,000 Rotary donation came in the form of two giant-sized checks of \$25,000 each. A show-and-tell photo op surrounded each presentation.

Cars2ndChance accepts for donation any motor vehicle - automobile, truck, RV, motorcycle, watercraft - that has a title. It need not be in running condition, although "more warmly welcomed," said Kemnitz, if it is. "We plan to keep C2C running till the cows come home," he added.

Vehicles may be donated via the website - www.cars2ndchance.com or by phoning (925) 326-5868. Donations are tax deductible as provided by law.

Because of the coronavirus and the consequent spike in unemployment, the Food Bank is experiencing unprecedented demand. According to Joel Sjostrom, president and CEO, the demand has increased by 65% in recent months. "A year ago we were feeding about 178,000 needy people in the two counties. Today it is up to 230,000 and counting," he said.

Every dollar donated equates to two meals. The \$50,000 donated by the Rotary clubs will feed 100,000 mouths. In addition to dollar donations, the Food Bank is looking for volunteers. To volunteer, call (925) 676-7543 or visit www.foodbankccs.org. Measures are in place to ensure the safety of volunteers.

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