Growing with a Mission:
How the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank Feeds the Community

BY LAURA I. WINN | PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE ORANGEVALE-FAIR OAKS FOOD BANK





THE CORNER OF Main and Orangevale Avenues was once an eyesore of weeds. But through the sweat, muscle and dedication of volunteers, the 1-acre lot in Orangevale has transformed into a flourishing farm that nourishes the community and supports the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank. Each year, the lovingly tended land grows thousands of pounds of food, including aromatic tomatoes and peppers, colorful carrots and beets, and versatile potatoes and peas. The farm is a unique feature of the food bank, which serves 1,500 families – or more than 4,000 individuals – each month.

"The goal of the farm is for 50% to be donated to the food bank clients and 50% to be sold to help fund the project," explained Andrea Scollay. Director of the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank.

To achieve that target balance, the nonprofit group behind the food bank, the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Community Foundation, created a weekly farm stand. Every Saturday, freshly picked veggies, herbs and flowers fill crates and shelves at the stand for a hyper-local farm-to-fork shopping experience.

Located adjacent to the Food Bank Farm, the Farmstand opened in June of 2025 thanks to a $250,000 grant from Republic Services and Rebuilding Together Sacramento. The grant money also funded farm expansion and art murals from local artists, making that formerly vacant lot a vibrant spot to visit.

Proceeds from the Farmstand directly support the food bank's mission to ensure no neighbor goes hungry. The food bank serves clients residing in Orangevale, Fair Oaks, Folsom and Citrus Heights. According to Scollay, approximately 40% are seniors on fixed incomes.

Neighbors in need are eligible to receive food twice per month through the food bank's drive-through distribution system. Supplies vary, but generally include dry goods, dairy items, meats, breads and produce. A team of volunteers operates the distribution every

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"Our volunteer pool is very strong, but we love having new faces each month," Scollay said.

Currently, the food bank has around 180 volunteers each month, with 20 to 35 volunteers per shift. Volunteers sort, pack and distribute food bags, direct traffic, take client information and clean up after the last car leaves the lot.

In November, volunteers gather for a special task that echoes back to the food bank's earliest concept in 2011 – assembling 500 Thanksgiving boxes that include everything a family needs for a holiday feast, down to gravy for the supplied turkey and pie crust and filling for dessert. "Thanksgiving dinner has been the heart of the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank since the beginning," Scollay said. "It's one of our favorite days of the year."



In the 15 years since the food bank first started providing meals at the holidays, the organization has grown and adapted through challenges, including the government shutdown that paused the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in November 2025. During this time, Scollay said they saw a large increase in clients, jumping from an average of 90 to 140 per shift. "Our distribution model can handle this type of increase, but it made for some long distribution days," she stated. "We are lucky to have had such a great response from our community with food donations, so our pantry staple items were stocked and ready."

It takes a combination of donations from the Food Bank Farm, local grocery stores, food drives and individuals to make the work of the food bank possible.

"We are grateful to the communities of Fair Oaks and Orangevale for all the support through donations and volunteering," Scollay said. "It's because of you that we are able to help feed our neighbors in need." ■

For more information on the Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank and the Food Bank Farm, visit www.ovfofb.org and www.foodbank.farm. The Farmstand is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for general hours and from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. for summer hours.



