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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY SUPERVISORS ANNOUNCE WINNERS IN "STONE SOUP" COMPETITION;  
5 TONS OF FOOD DONATED FOR ANNUAL HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors today celebrated the winners of the County's first Stone Soup Holiday Food Drive and Design Competition, which raised an estimated 5 tons in food donations and \$4,000 in cash for the Alameda County Community Food Bank.

The Food Drive included some inspired displays made entirely with boxes and cans of nonperishable food. The imaginative creations - which include a Bay Bridge montage, a computer work station and a 3-D depiction of Alameda County replete with landmarks such as Mission Peak and the Altamont windmills - are currently on display in several County buildings. The total donations this year mark a more than 3-fold increase over last year's County Food Drive totals.

The Stone Soup competition is a new spin on what is an annual rite for Alameda County - a holiday food drive in which County employees pitch in to help families and individuals in need through donations of food and cash to Alameda County Community Food Bank.

But by injecting friendly competition and new levels of inspiration into the tradition, Alameda County this year was able to dramatically expand its total donations.

The theme of this year's food drive is the story of Stone Soup, an old fable celebrating individual generosity and collaboration amid difficult times. It involves a group of hungry soldiers who wish to make a meal but find they have only water and stones for their soup. They turn to the people of a village for nutritious contributions to their soup and find that when each person offers a small amount of food, they have enough ingredients to make soup to feed themselves and the entire village as well.

The winners of the Stone Soup Food Drive and Design Contest, announced by County Supervisors on Tuesday morning, were:

- Most Innovative - The Alameda County Registrar of Voters Office. The Registrar's display includes several dozen cans of soup and other nonperishable food suspended with fishing line to create the word, "Vote." Cans, boxes and sacks of food also were used to create a model of the

new Bay Bridge, which in this case connects that Alameda County Courthouse with Treasure Island. The Registrar's office donated 502 pounds of food.

- Most Creative – the County Department of Child Support Services, which used cans and other food containers to create an image of a soldier standing over a simmering pot of soup – depicting the Stone Soup fable that is the Food Drive's theme. The Department donated a total of 1,018 pounds of food.
- Chef's Award – the Information Technology Department. ITD created a large 21<sup>st</sup> Century workspace, replete with computer, desk, chair, filing cabinets and other office items composed of donated food containers. The Department donated 3,130 pounds of food.
- Best Recipe award – the County Counsel's Office, for its display, "Tipping the Scales of Hunger." The display includes a model of the County Courthouse, as well as an attorney's work station and several attorney briefcases packed with food. The County Counsel donated 1,380 pounds of food.

In addition to food donations, Alameda County raised about \$4,000 in cash for the Food Drive. The Food Bank says it can distribute \$4 of food for every \$1 in cash that is donated.

"The level of creativity, determination and community spirit shown by our County employees exceeded our expectations," said Susan S. Muranishi, County Administrator. "Not only have they brought in record numbers of donations through this effort, they also have created some powerful displays that drive home the message about hunger right here in our community."

Several factors prompted Alameda County to call for an expanded Holiday Food Drive this year. These include the recent run of tough economic times, as well as a reduction in federal food assistance benefits that took effect on November 1. These factors add to the challenge faced by the Food Bank as it seeks to ensure that all hungry families and individuals in our community are fed.

"This project demonstrates the strong ties between County departments, County employees, community organizations and the community that we serve," said Keith Carson, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. "At a time when many individuals and families are still struggling to put food on the table, County employees have responded by increasing their commitment to combatting hunger through the annual Holiday Food Drive."

The displays will likely remain in County facilities through next week. Then all the donated food will be picked up by the Alameda County Community Food Bank, which provides hunger relief for 49,000 people in our community each week – two-thirds of whom are children and seniors.

"Alameda County is an incredible partner in our work to end hunger," said Suzan Bateson, executive director of Alameda County Community Food Bank. "We applaud their effort to come up with this clever way to both expand the reach of their annual Holiday Food Drive and deliver the message to the public about how difficult it continues to be for some of our residents just to put food on the table."