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**ALAMEDA COUNTY FIGHTS HUNGER, INSPIRES GIVING THROUGH “STONE SOUP” FOOD DRIVE**

Alameda County employees are finding creative ways to inspire the spirit of giving this holiday season by building imaginative displays constructed with cans, boxes and bags of donated food. The displays, which focus on the themes of hunger and helping others, are being showcased in many County buildings over the next few weeks.

The displays are the focus of Alameda County's Fifth Annual Stone Soup Holiday Food Drive and Design Competition, which sparked a flurry of giving by County employees who donated more than 10 tons of non-perishable food and \$11,000 in cash to assist the Alameda County Community Food Bank in its effort to ensure that tasty, nutritious meals are available to everyone during the holidays.

"The creativity, generosity and community spirit shown by our County employees is truly inspiring," said Susan S. Muranishi, County Administrator. "In addition to being remarkably creative, these displays send important messages about supporting others in the community."

Displays this year include the "Garden of Hope" and "Tree of Promise" built by the Probation Department, which involved youth from the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center in creating a thoughtful display incorporating food packages, live herbs, flowers and other plants. Also among many remarkable displays is a "Pac-Man"-themed creation by the Information Technology Department and a pair of showpieces thanking first responders for their recent heroism in fighting the Napa/Sonoma wine country wildfires. On December 19, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors will present awards for the most creative displays and most donations raised.

**Alameda County invites reporters and photographers to visit the displays and view their inspired messages about helping the community's less fortunate. The employee-built creations will be on display until Tuesday, December 19, when they will be dismantled so their nutritious building blocks can be provided to the Food Bank. For more information, call Guy Ashley at (510) 272-6569.**

In 2012, Alameda County used the old fable of Stone Soup – which celebrates generosity and collaboration in difficult times – to create a new spin on its annual holiday food drive to support the Food Bank through employee donations of food and cash. By encouraging friendly competition within Alameda County's 9,600-plus person workforce, Stone Soup helped the County to more than triple its total holiday donations in the first year alone. And the numbers continue to grow, with this year's total food donations surpassing the record of 9 tons recorded last year.

Alameda County is well positioned to engage in the battle against hunger at holiday time. Many employees are already involved in the All-In Alameda County initiative, a multi-agency/community collaborative launched by Wilma Chan, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, to fight poverty in the community. One of All-In's central goals is to end hunger in Alameda County by 2020.

"The Stone Soup food drive is a great example of our County employees working together and thinking outside the box to be part of the community-wide solution to the problem of hunger in Alameda County," Supervisor Chan said.

While the employee-built displays are drawing broad attention, so do the generous cash donations generated by the Stone Soup drive. The cash donations are especially valuable to the Food Bank, which distributes \$6 worth of food for every \$1 donated.

The Alameda County Community Food Bank is accepting donations through the holidays and beyond to help the less fortunate in our community. To donate, go to <http://www.accfb.org/>