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Davis Enterprise, The (CA)

Hunger is humanity's everyday catastrophe

William F. French

Special to The Enterprise

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Disaster. The dictionary defines it as "a calamitous event, especially one occurring suddenly and causing great loss of life, damage or hardship." Thanks, in part, to global media coverage, we've become all too familiar with the sight of the devastation of hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and so on.

While it's true that natural calamities often paint a vivid and dramatic portrait, there is another sort of disaster that warrants mentioning — one that is faced by thousands in Yolo County on a daily basis: hunger. One need only ask a working family facing foreclosure, a furloughed government employee or one of the thousands of unemployed jobseekers, and they'll resoundingly affirm that our current economic climate is nothing short of disastrous. And with no end to this man-made debacle in the foreseeable future, to where may our neighbors turn in their time of desperation?

For 40 years, the Food Bank has worked to fulfill its mission "to alleviate hunger and malnutrition in Yolo County." We successfully distributed over 2.3 million pounds of food to the hungry in this county in 2009, and all estimates indicate that we will eclipse that number, by far, this year. And, as is the case with any disaster relief effort, it will take a collaborative approach if we are to be successful in meeting the current demand.

Yolo County is fortunate in that it has been decades since a catastrophic disaster has impacted our region. Yet, in one's time of need, any measure of loss can prove overwhelming, as was evidenced by the recent fire that destroyed part of West Sacramento's Broderick Christian Center. As one of our valued member agencies, the Food Bank was quick to respond to the Broderick Christian Center crisis; and, through a collaborative effort with California Foodlink, we facilitated the donation of more than 10,000 pounds of food which has already been distributed to hundreds of West Sacramento's neediest residents.

It has been said that, in times of disaster, we witness either the best or the very worst of what a community has to offer. Here, at the Food Bank, with fingers crossed, we're hoping for the very best. In the wake of the common trauma we're now experiencing, is it fair of us to expect our neighbors and friends to unite in the common causes of feeding and supporting one another? We think so. The Food Bank's very existence is a testament to the spirits of community and unparalleled philanthropy that persist in Yolo County; and, during these extremely difficult days, it will take a renewed commitment to that spirit to ensure our community's future survival.

For more information about how you can help, call the Food Bank of Yolo County at (530) 668-0690.

— **William F. French** is the food resource development manager for the Food Bank of Yolo County

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