



Stepping Up!

Spring 2018

Meet our New CEO: Debbie Espinosa



Debbie Espinosa speaking at a national conference.

FIND's new CEO, Deborah Espinosa, started her tenure with FIND in mid-February. She moved to the desert from the Bay Area, where she most recently served as the Associate Executive Director of the Oakland YMCA.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your background:

A: I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, the youngest of three in a newly immigrated family from the Philippines. I knew from my earliest years that I had a passion for helping people. Because of this, my education and work has always centered around people and communities. My educational background is in comparative religion, sociology (BA), and community and economic development (MA). And I've spent over 20 years as a professional in the nonprofit sector starting in youth development and moving into hunger. I am also very involved in nonprofit leadership development and education at the national level.

Q: Why is food banking so important to you?

A: A person having access to multiple resources can make an exponential difference in breaking their cycle of poverty. Food and nutrition are at the root of all of these needed

resources. With it, a person has a better chance of taking advantage of all opportunities available to them. For example, if a child is constantly hungry, then imagine how difficult it would be for them to pass a test in math. Or, if father had not eaten in 3 days, his ability to interview well for a stable job could be severely diminished. Food banking not only ensures that people have access to food, it helps to ensure they have the ability to take advantage of the other opportunities that can help them achieve self-sufficiency.

Q: What has inspired you most in your food-banking career?

A: I am consistently inspired by the passion of our staff and other food banks around the country to help others. Over the years, I've been fortunate to visit more than half of the food banks in the Feeding America network. At every stop, I met people who are creative and innovative in serving their communities, always willing to share what they know with others doing similar work so we can rise together as a country through ending hunger.

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New CEO, Debbie Espinosa, center, with her daughter and CBS-2 Reporter Kelley Moody at FIND's 2018 Telethon.

HUNGER does not discriminate
HUNGER knows no age limits
HUNGER knows no boundaries
We know HUNGER

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!



Bank of America volunteers were out in force for FIND's 2018 Telethon, including Jessica Lundquist and her family.

"My favorite thing about volunteering at FIND is the efficiency of the operation and the dedication and enthusiasm of those who work there. I feel welcomed and appreciated and know that I'm having a real impact."

— Vicky Harrison, FIND Volunteer for 6 years



Joining us for their first time at Telethon, Desert Oasis Healthcare stepped up to the plate in a big way.

"There is such a need for getting good, fresh food to hungry children and seniors living on limited incomes. Volunteering at FIND makes me feel like I'm doing something good for those folks."

— Geraldine Harmina, FIND Volunteer for 4 years

Volunteers are the lifeblood of FIND Food Bank. We are not exaggerating when we say we could not do what we do to serve the community without the thousands of people who share their time with us every year. During fiscal year 2016-17, more than 4,500 volunteers donated in excess of 15,500 hours to FIND, which is the equivalent of 7+ additional, full-time employees. Clearly, all that time adds up to a critical mass that helps serve the community.

"Feeding people who are food-insecure makes me feel like I am helping, not just going through the motions of 'what looks good' to friends."

— Carol Peyton, FIND Volunteer for 6 years

FIND's Telethon is our annual volunteer extravaganza! Groups and individuals from across the Coachella Valley gather for after-work shifts on a Friday evening — televised live, of course! They sort food drive and other recent donations, pack bags of USDA commodities, work fresh produce down into smaller, easier-to-handle containers, and answer phone calls from donors.

"Volunteering at FIND is a meaningful way to give back. I also help with a food distribution on Wednesdays in Mecca, so I actually get to see where the food we work ends up."

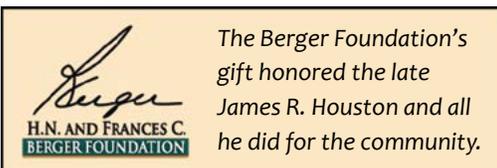
— Gary Montavon, FIND Volunteer for 4 years

Not only do we get a lot of work done during our annual Telethon, we're also raising awareness and much needed dollars to keep our work going. It also gives us the opportunity to offer our gratitude to the legions of volunteers and donors that make it all possible. *Thank You!*



FIND's 2018 Telethon Phone Bank

THANK YOU Telethon 2018 Sponsors!



“The camaraderie among staff and teams of volunteers is amazing. And every time I am here, I am repeatedly thanked for my efforts — these folks really know how to make a volunteer feel important!”

— Lynn Worley, FIND Volunteer for 15 years

**WITH YOUR HELP
EVERY \$1
= 7 MEALS**

Cross-Country Volunteer Jess Kurti & Her ‘Beast of Burden’ Challenge

Jess Kurti’s interest in volunteering at food banks started back in 2013 when she participated in an information session at Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida. Having recently lost her job, she was looking for a way to live a “purpose-driven life,” and getting involved with food banking fit the bill.

“Knowing that so many people struggle with hunger, I believe each person can make a difference for neighbors in need, by volunteering, donating food, or donating money,” says Kurti. She herself got creative in her fight.

Her mission is to raise awareness of our nation’s charitable food system and the fight against hunger and poverty, which she calls the “Beast of Burden Challenge.” Her awareness-building tour started with running marathons in all 50 states, and along the way, she’s been volunteering at each of Feeding America’s 200 member food banks, including her stop at FIND in March.

“I also run to raise awareness about the connection between health and hunger. There are definite parallels

between marathons and food banks: both require passionate and dedicated volunteers, both foster a sense of community, and no group understands the importance of nutrition more than runners,” she says.

If you would like to support the Beast of Burden Challenge, please follow the link below. We can all raise the bar on creating healthy communities and feeding our neighbors in need.



Jess Kurti, right, volunteering at FIND Food Bank in March.

Support the Beast of Burden Challenge:

<https://www.crowdrise.com/beast-of-burden-challenge>



FIND team members Jesus and Mario



CEO Scott White & other volunteers from GPSCVB



Sean & Gillian Robinson representing FIND's founding family



- AMP – Academy
- Bank of America
- Champion Income Tax
- CV Photo Booth
- Desert Wraps
- Houston Family Foundation
- ICON Presentations
- JFS Women’s Auxiliary

- Keller Williams Realty
- Koffi
- La Hacienda Nursery
- Moxie Restaurant Bar
- Renaissance Indian Wells Hotel
- Tee-riffic PGA West Golf Group
- United Rentals



Bank of America’s volunteer team included some young helpers, too!

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Q: What do you hope to accomplish at FIND?

A: I want FIND to have a sustainable future, including the ability to do the best work we can in the communities we serve, day in and day out. We don't want people to worry where their next meal is coming from — we want them to know FIND is here for them. With enough resources to support our work, the Coachella Valley will eventually be the hunger-free zone we know is possible.

Q: What are some of the changes you've seen in the hunger landscape in the last 20 years?

A: Communities across the country have started to realize that hunger is not isolated within certain, often stereotyped populations — it's pervasive, indiscriminating, and crosses all boundaries. As more people understand, more are willing to join and get active in fighting hunger everywhere it exists.

Q: What are the most important challenges and opportunities in food banking today?

A: One of our greatest, ongoing challenges is making sure all people in our community understand the true level of need for food assistance in our valley and the importance of meeting that need through the food bank's work. The flip side of that challenge is also a tremendous opportunity to find new people to join the fight against hunger — and those people help us find MORE people and MORE ways to get involved in the work.

Q: Could you talk about your most important food-banking accomplishment?

A: During my years at Feeding America, I co-led a project that highlighted 20 of the most innovative food-banking practices across the network. The project helped us expand the narrative of how food banks are involved in their communities, that our collective work goes beyond delivery trucks and distribution lines. By sharing these innovative best practices with other food banks, it helped them look at how we can expanded services to communities to not only feed those in need, but to also help them move toward self-sufficiency through innovative programming and community collaborations.



Palm Springs Life's Michael Mathews, left, and Paulina Larson, right, with FIND's CEO, Debbie Espinosa, center.

IPD: Going the Extra Mile to Help Those in Need

Indio Police Department's "Quality of Life Team" specializes in working with homeless residents. They recently found a family of four "living" in an abandoned parking lot. Deputies Jose Ibarra and Brandon Haworth didn't stop helping after finding the family emergency shelter, however.

Instead, they went the extra mile. They came to FIND to get food for the family and delivered the boxes personally. This team knows that helping families in need requires a plan, in addition to finding emergency shelter. FIND's Outreach Team was quick to step up, not only with food, but also with resource connections to help this family get back on their feet.



Indio Police Department Quality of Life Team members, Dep. Jose Ibarra, left, and Dep. Brandon Haworth.

"Working together is the only way we can really help people facing challenges that are this complex," says FIND's Program Director, Delia Lechuga. "We are proud to work with the City of Indio to help make that happen."

Support **FIND Food Bank** and you help 85,000 men, women, children, seniors, and families across the Coachella Valley every month.

FIND Food Bank is Food In Need of Distribution, Inc. Established 1983.

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