

Food Banks

# Valley churches united to push for food bank

CF - Help 4/2/86

By Susan James

Ten area churches agree the Valley needs a permanent food bank to help those who are hungry.

Imagine you're a Boulder Creek resident, elderly and in failing health. You're proud but in need of some help.

Besides not being so fast on your feet any longer, maybe your memory isn't as sharp as it used to be.

First, you sit down to decipher the bus schedule down to Santa Cruz. You dress carefully, wearing your most presentable suit of clothes. It's 8 a.m., and you start walking the few blocks to the nearest bus stop. The sky is growing darker, and you wonder if you should return home for your umbrella.

You climb aboard the bus, asking the driver how to get to the Human Resource Agency on Emeline Avenue. You ride the number 35 bus to the Metro Center, and switch to the number 8 County Hospital bus.

After filling out the necessary paperwork to prove your eligibility for various programs, you sit through a lengthy interview process. Then, you are issued an emergency voucher for food.

According to Annette Marcum, outreach chairman for St. Andrews Episcopal Church, a person seeking

food assistance may have to wait in this office for several hours before he or she receives the voucher.

After securing the required paper, you wander out towards the bus stop. You notice it has been drizzling. Did you leave the umbrella in the agency office or at home? Where did that lady tell you to go?

You return to the office. No, no umbrella. Right, you need to go over to the Emergency Food Bank on Ocean Street to get a "three-day-emergency" food bag. You catch the number 8 bus, and now it's really raining.

You shuffle as fast as you can, but by now your Sunday suit is soggy. You find the office and receive your bag.

Now, you've got to catch the number 8, transfer again at the Metro Center and you're home free.

Riding home you think about the day. You've got some food, but you're wet, tired and and maybe even a little humiliated. Was it worth it?

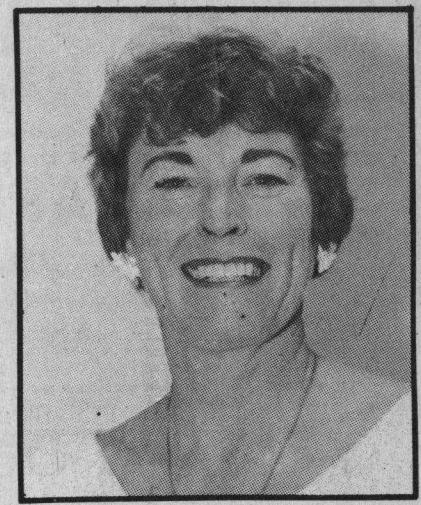
Marcum said the above scenario is quite common for many needy area residents. And for this reason Marcum, along with the recently formed "Valley Churches United," is attempting to establish a permanent food bank in the Valley.

Last month, 10 Valley churches formalized an agreement to work together to assist residents in need.

Marcum is the coordinator of the organization. And Bob Yount, who is secretary for Redwood Christian Center (while studying for the ministry), is chairman. The two held a press conference around Marcum's dining room table last week to discuss the group's progress thus far.

"I came from that March 5 meeting and I cried, it was so beautiful," Marcum said.

Initially, she said three churches began working together on



Annette Marcum

establishing a monthly food bank in the Valley.

"For the first three months we held it at different locations, but that led to some confusion," Marcum said.

The food bank, held every third Friday of the month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., is currently located at Redwood Christian Center, 6869 Highway 9, Felton. Yount and Marcum said the churches take turns each month running the bank.

"This month we serviced about 85 people at the bank," said Yount.

The 10 participating churches are St. John's, Presbyterian United, Christian Science, First Baptist of San Lorenzo Valley, Evangelical Free and Redwood Christian Center (all of Felton); St. Peter's and Paul's Evangelical Orthodox, St. Andrew's Episcopal (both of Ben

Lomond); and United Methodist and St. Michael's (both of Boulder Creek).

Although the organization is pleased with the temporary bank, its dreams don't stop there.

Valley Churches United is looking for a permanent, store-front location that could be open daily. The group is seeking a central location, preferably somewhere

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**—Annette Marcum**

between Felton and Ben Lomond. Each of the churches will attempt to budget a small portion of the seed money required, but the organization hopes generous individuals will donate rent money or a suitable location.

Yount said a freezer has already been donated by the Evangelical Free Church. The freezer can be filled with food purchased for 12 cents per pound from Food and Nutrition Services. Also, he added that it is possible to trade this food with other banks in exchange for excess fresh fruit and vegetables gleaned from farmer's fields. Dented cans, donated from markets, are also available for trade.

He said these foods would help provide a better balanced diet for those now receiving mainly cheese, butter, flour and rice at the temporary bank.

Yount said the organization will address other Valley problems in the near future.

"We started talking about food, and it spread to other topics such as the homeless and kids with problems in the Valley. There are a lot of people who have problems in the Valley," he said.

The organization is backing the Citizens Committee for the Homeless (of which Marcum is chairman) and the Homeless Task Force for Santa Cruz County (also

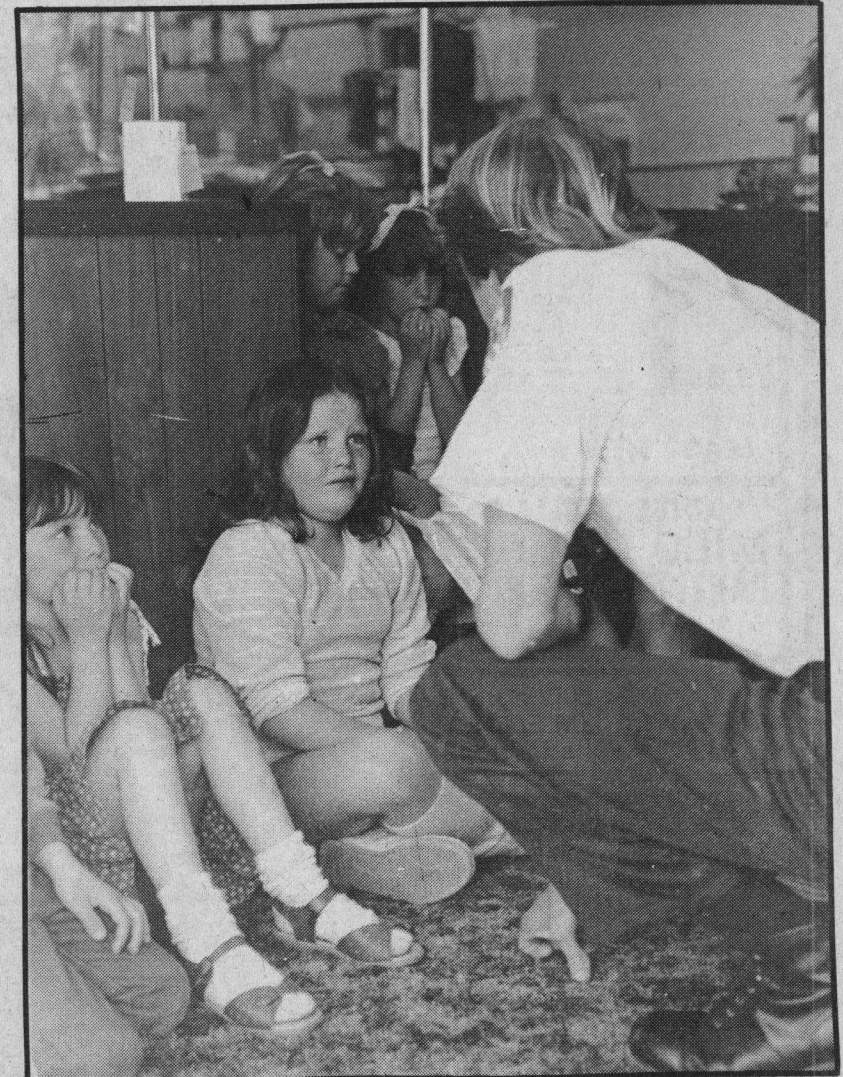
under the direction of Marcum) in an attempt to find a new Santa Cruz shelter site to replace the temporary one which recently lost its home on Cedar Street. But both Marcum and Yount agreed the Valley is in need of its own shelter.

Donations for the food bank project should be sent care of the

Evangelical Free Church (earmarked for the Valley Churches United Fund), Box E-1, Felton, 95018. Also an open meeting will be held 1 p.m. Wednesday at Redwood Christian Center.

Anyone with questions regarding eligibility for the food bank program may call 662-0487.

## Comforting frightened children



A paramedic comforts frightened children following an accident north of Felton on Highway 9 Thursday which left a 10-month-old baby injured but left five other children unharmed. Story page three.