

# Fuller Theological Seminary's Food Distribution Program

The Food Distribution Program is a service available for qualifying low-income students and families of Pasadena. The program was started in 1987 by international students attending Fuller to assist fellow international students experiencing difficulty with the cost of living and studying in California. The program has grown over the years and is now open to any individual or family in the Pasadena community who qualifies as low-income.<sup>i</sup>

Fuller is a registered distribution agency with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Through the LA Food Bank, Fuller is able to purchase a wide variety of grocery items in bulk at a highly discounted rate. Fuller is also part of a government program call EFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program). With this program, the US Government provides basic non-perishable grocery items to Fuller (and other participating food bank agencies) via the LA Food Bank. Additionally, the Whole Foods Market store in Pasadena donates day old grocery items such as bread, pastries, produce, snacks, and baking goods to the Fuller Food Distribution Program.

In the first quarter of 2008, the LA Food Bank began warning agencies to prepare for an increase in participants to their programs due to an anticipated economic shortfall. In preparation for a larger client base and overall greater need in the Pasadena community, Fuller moved from a semi-monthly food distribution to a weekly distribution. As expected, the number of people participating in the program has grown rapidly. In 2008 the Food Distribution Program saw a 50% increase in the average number of families who come to pick up food. By year end, 2008, Fuller was serving approximately 400 households per month. Due to the current state of the US economy, many of the newcomers are those who have lost their jobs after many years of service to their companies and are now unable to afford the essential needs of their families.

The Food Distribution Program has also experienced a large growth in the number of homeless residents participating in the program. For the homeless, the Food Distribution Program is an open door to the Fuller community. Because of the service they receive and the relationships they develop with the students, they know Fuller as a warm, friendly, welcoming, and non-judgmental place. Several of the homeless clients are so grateful for the service they receive that they volunteer their time to help set up and assist with the Wednesday distributions.

Such as it is, the Food Distribution Program is a direct application of Fuller's desire to be a shining light and positive influence in our community. It is in line with Fuller's mission statement to seek peace and justice in the world, accomplished in part by "support[ing] basic solutions to human hunger in our world."<sup>ii</sup>

There is, however, a growing responsibility as the Fuller community opens and shares herself with the larger community of Pasadena and beyond. Currently, there is need for funding, non-food items, equipment, and volunteers. The program also has much potential for future growth in areas of advocacy, empowerment, and rehabilitation. Most importantly, there is always need for new and innovative ways of dealing with economic inequality and the distribution of wealth and resources.

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<sup>i</sup> "Low-Income" is defined by the US Government for EFAP as one and one-half times the current HHS Poverty Guidelines. More information available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/08poverty.shtml>

<sup>ii</sup> Mission Beyond the Mission, "[http://documents.fuller.edu/news/html/mission\\_beyond\\_mission.asp](http://documents.fuller.edu/news/html/mission_beyond_mission.asp)."

# Gift Ideas for the Fuller Food Distribution

## Financial Gifts

The greatest need is for ongoing operating funds. Please donate online at [www.fuller.edu/foodbank](http://www.fuller.edu/foodbank) or by check payable to Fuller Theological Seminary (write "Food Distribution Program" in the memo).

## Non-Food Items

- Toiletries
  - toothbrush
  - toothpaste
  - deodorant
  - hand sanitizer
  - bar soap
  - shampoo
  - conditioner
  - shaving cream
  - disposable razors
- Multivitamins
- New socks
- New t-shirts
- New Sweatshirts
- Warm hats
- Can openers
- New blankets
- Hand towels
- Reusable grocery bags
- Hand carts
- Sun glasses
- Diapers (any size)
- Formula
- Other baby items
- Target gift cards
- Restaurant gift cards

