



All of us **taking care of** all of us

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **More than a grocery store, Whole Foods Markets uplifts lives.**

On Thursday, October 17, seven Contra Costa Whole Foods Markets, including the 365 by Whole Foods, donated 5% of their net sales, or \$31,000, on that day to White Pony Express (WPE). WPE is a mostly-volunteer powered organization headquartered in Pleasant Hill which helps people move from the margins to the mainstream by providing free food and clothing.

The Whole Foods Markets that participated in the “5% Day” included stores in Dublin, Fremont, San Ramon, Lafayette, and two in Walnut Creek (Newell Avenue and Ygnacio Valley Road), plus 365 by Whole Foods in Concord.

“We are so pleased to have raised these funds from our seven stores to support White Pony Express,” remarked Amber Parker, Marketing Manager—Community Engagement & Events for Whole Foods Market. “I think this shows the community’s support for White Pony Express and the amazing work that they do in Contra Costa County. Our shoppers all live here and it is very evident with this support that they choose to give here as well.”

WPE operates a Food Rescue program that every day picks up over 7,000 lb. of surplus food from grocery stores, produce markets, and restaurants. WPE then distributes that food to over 70 nonprofit organizations that provide it to the hungry throughout Contra Costa County.

“Whole Foods’ stores, WPE’s largest food donor, provides an average of 2,200 pounds of fresh food daily, which plays a major role in helping WPE to aid 80,000 people, which is 70% of the population in Contra Costa County living in poverty,” said Erica Brooks, WPE’s Director of Strategic Partnerships. “It was such an honor when Whole Foods provided us with the opportunity to share our story within their stores. We are immensely grateful to benefit from the 5% Day as we come together and work to uplift lives.”

**ABOUT WPE:** WPE is a 501(c)3 organization, headquartered in Pleasant Hill, CA, which serves those in need in our communities by providing them with food and clothing with love and respect.

Dr. Carol Weyland Conner founded WPE in September 2013 when she was troubled that in a county of such abundance, thousands were going hungry, while at the same time, food retailers were throwing out huge quantities of healthy, fresh food. Out of this insight, the Food Rescue Program was born.

The Food Rescue Program picks up quality surplus food each day from supermarkets, restaurants, and farmers markets and then sorts and delivers that food to shelters, churches and other facilities that feed the hungry in our communities. All of this is done free of charge. In a little over 6 years, WPE has rescued and delivered more than 9,900,000 pounds (equivalent to about 8,250,000 meals) of fresh, nutritious food that would otherwise go to waste.

In 2014 the General Store (GS) was added to provide high quality clothing, toys, and books in a respectful, loving manner to the underserved in our communities--all free of charge.

For more on WPE, visit [www.whiteponyexpress.org](http://www.whiteponyexpress.org).

**WPE's AWARDS AND HONORS:** WPE was chosen by State Senator Steve Glazer as a 2018 California Non-Profit of the Year. In 2015, out of over 300 non-profit organizations being considered, WPE received the prestigious The San Francisco Foundation's *John R. Bray Innovation Award*. WPE has also been awarded the East Bay Leadership Council's *Outstanding Collaborative Project Award*, the Sustainable Contra Costa's *Innovation in Food Systems Award* and the Silver Spoon Award, by Diablo Valley Dietetic Association in honor of its work in supporting the health of those in need by providing them healthy, nutritious food. WPE Founder Dr. Conner, was given the 2019 California AARP "Andrus" award, named a *Local Hero* by the Contra Costa Times, named a "Visionary" in the Diablo Magazine *Threads of Hope issue*, and received the *Jefferson Award* from KPIX Television.

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