

Vol. 1 | Fall 2019

# Ventures

IN-DEPTH UPDATES ON JOINT VENTURE PROGRAMS



## In this issue: Food Recovery

### HOW ONE SEED BLOSSOMED INTO A FOOD RECOVERY SUCCESS STORY

Joint Venture's mission is to foster proactive solutions to issues that challenge the quality of life in Silicon Valley. With its Food Recovery Initiative, Joint Venture has tackled a problem faced by far too many in this affluent area: hunger. It is estimated that one-third of the food produced in America is wasted before reaching a human mouth, with significant environmental, social, and economic implications. While Silicon Valley is noted for abundance, nearly 40 percent of Silicon Valley students ages 5-17 depend on the free or reduced-price meals they receive through their schools. This

dilemma inspired the Joint Venture leadership to act.

In 2016, Joint Venture partnered with Santa Clara County on a plan to connect university and corporate campuses and their abundant, excess food with people who are food insecure. From its inception, the project followed the Joint Venture practice of engaging leaders from across the community, including nonprofits specializing in feeding the hungry, government agencies, and zero-waste professionals. Critical to the effort were board members Eric Houser and John A. Sobrato, and Nancy Fishman, whose work on food issues in Detroit inspired our action.

Launched in September 2018 as a pilot project with Stanford University, Joint Venture's initiative, dubbed A La

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This initiative has shown that the Joint Venture model works.

- *Russell Hancock*

Carte, has become a model for food recovery.

Underpinning the A La Carte initiative and providing incentive for food donors is California Senate Bill 1383, which stipulates that 20 percent of the excess food generated in California needs to be donated for human consumption by Jan 1, 2024

Encountering missteps and learnings along the way, the project blossomed. As the demand for prepared meals grew, so did the support from corporate and university leaders. Food trucks that transport meals from corporate participants to communities in need have been funded by the John A. Sobrato family, and by Facebook, (in partnership with Flagship Facility Services, Inc.) which now has its own truck dedicated to food recovery on its campuses.

“With the food insecure population growing in Silicon Valley, the Sobrato family wanted to be on the forefront of new interventions and innovations in the distribution of recovered food,” said John A. Sobrato. “We hope other Silicon Valley philanthropists will sponsor similar vehicles.”

Facebook has provided meals for A La Carte since Spring 2019 and has donated more than 52,000 meals to date.

Robin Franz Martin, (see sidebar) Executive Director of Joint Venture’s Food Rescue Initiative championed A La Carte from inception through incubation and brokered the partnership that would insure its growth.

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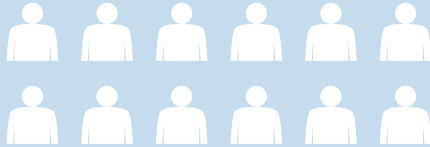
### Food & Poverty Statistics in Silicon Valley



Nearly 40% of Silicon Valley students ages 5-17 receive free or reduced-price school meals



1 out of 13 children live in poverty



# 30%

of all Silicon Valley households do not earn enough to meet basic needs without assistance.



# 115 million

"missing meals" were needed but not provided



1 out of every 10 Silicon Valley residents lacks access, at times, to food and/or food that is nutritionally adequate



### ROBIN FRANZ MARTIN: THE ENERGY BEHIND THE FOOD RECOVERY INITIATIVE

The notion of hunger in Silicon Valley sounds like an oxymoron. Statistics prove otherwise. Robin Franz Martin, Executive Director of the Silicon Valley Food Rescue Initiative, came to Joint Venture in 2017 to pilot a model program for valley residents who are food insecure. Her motivation came from seeing excess food on the campus where her husband worked in tech.

The project "was conceived and incubated at Joint Venture," says Martin. "I have been honored to proudly serve as the lead on the A La Carte project as it moves from idea to pilot project, from one truck and one donor to many. Now that the innovation is ready to be brought to scale, we are so thrilled to be partnering with Loaves & Fishes on the next phase of development."

With 20 years of experience in public health, Martin embodies a commitment to community service. A native of Ohio, she started her career with the NAACP working on urban environmental health issues. She founded a summer camp program for at-risk middle school students that exposed them to sustainable agriculture and healthy food options. Locally, she has led volunteer projects for LifeMoves, an organization committed to ending homelessness.

Martin says her favorite part of working on A La Carte is when recipients ask in disbelief whether the food is indeed free. "I have seen little kids do a happy dance when we have yogurt and bananas," says Martin.

What's next for Martin and Joint Venture now that daily operations of A La Carte have transitioned to Loaves & Fishes? Her role moving forward is that of connector. She offers feedback on operations and is actively engaging new sources of food and finding sites for distribution. She also manages the grants and additional sources of funding for A La Carte. [VQ](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

01

**Q3 Board of Directors Meeting**  
*September 20*

02

**Silicon Valley EDA Conference**  
*November 2019*

03


**State of the Valley Conference**  
*February 14, 2020*

## THE STRENGTH OF JOINT VENTURE

The team at Joint Venture dreams of a more perfect Silicon Valley. For over 25 years, the foundation of our work, research and analysis, has kept us grounded. But our goals today are no less audacious than they were from inception: to help make our region a more healthy, vibrant, and dynamic place to call home. With this quarterly publication, we seek to bring the unique stories of our work to you, our partners. Driven by your investment in our mission, our success is your success. We hope you appreciate and will share these stories as an example of the impact we can create when we work together. That is the strength of Joint Venture.

To enable A La Carte to scale, Joint Venture joined with Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen to manage operations. “We just didn’t have the bandwidth to expand and we never saw ourselves as being in the food business,” said Martin.

Through this new role, Loaves & Fishes will double its meal service capacity from 525,000 meals to over 1,000,000 meals each year, making it the largest provider of prepared meals in the Bay Area.

“We recognize needs in the community and work toward innovative solutions. This initiative has shown that the Joint Venture model works,” said Russell Hancock, Joint Venture President and CEO. 

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With the food insecure population growing in Silicon Valley, the Sobrato family wanted to be on the forefront of new interventions and innovations in the distribution of recovered food.

*- John A. Sobrato*