

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Partnership Launches Mobile Food Program for Low-Income Veterans

Named After Dodgers Baseball Legend, Benefiting Veterans Unable to Buy Food on Fixed Income

Gold Coast Veterans Foundation - April 5, 2024 Leading businesses and foundations in Ventura County have joined forces to address a newly emerging crisis threatening older veterans on fixed income. Gold Coast Veterans Foundation (GCVF), the region's leading veteran services nonprofit, has partnered with Manna Food Bank of Conejo Valley, Paradise Chevrolet of Ventura, The Port of Hueneme, Sherwood Cares Foundation, Rotary Club, AMGEN, JSL Technologies, and Westlake Athletic Club to launch an innovative mobile food bank program.

"Most of the veterans in this program are not homeless, and don't meet the Federal threshold for poverty," says GCVF's Executive Director Bob Harris; "they were never identified as being at risk." As Harris explains, "The cost of rent, utilities, and food has now exceeded their fixed income, and they're running out of food on the third week of every month. These veterans did everything Uncle Sam asked, they went to war, came back, got a job, paid their taxes... now they're not going to survive without help." A Continuum of Care report estimates that 3,000 veterans in Ventura County are at risk of "food insecurity".

The program will facilitate low-income veterans' access to Manna's food bank. But a large number of the organization's elderly veterans don't drive, don't own a car, or are home-bound. Not being able to get to a store or food bank represents another risk to their survival. Thanks to vehicle donations by Sherwood Cares Foundation and Rotary Club of Thousand Oaks, the program will now be fully mobile, with food brought to the veterans, or veterans brought to the food bank.

GCVF's original food program was launched with one box of canned food in 2019, growing to 11,000 lbs. in 2023. The newly mobile program has a goal of distributing 25,000 lbs. in 2024, which required bringing in powerful partners. The Port of Hueneme will provide access to its large infrastructure, storage, and logistics capacity. Paradise Chevrolet in Ventura, JSL Technologies in Oxnard, AMGEN in Thousand Oaks, and Westlake Athletic Club in Westlake Village will serve as collection centers for non-perishable food donations, allowing individuals and small businesses to donate non-perishable food to veterans.

The icing on the cake, says Harris, is that the entire mobile food program is named after a national treasure; "Dodgers baseball legend and proud Navy veteran Vin Scully made it his last great mission to prevent suffering for those who served. A beloved icon came out of retirement at 93 to be the voice of caring for American veterans. This critically important mobile food program is now called **VIN LIVES: Vehicle-Integrated Nutrition, Logistics & Infrastructure for VETERAN Survival.**"

With unabashed reverence for Scully, whose PSA's are still airing on KHAY radio years after his passing, Harris chuckles, "His mission to prevent suffering for American veterans will live on!"

About Gold Coast Veterans Foundation – GCVF provides everything to prevent or eliminate suffering and homelessness for American veterans, and has rescued 300 veterans & family members from homelessness.

The organization's no rules, *whatever it takes* approach to 'serving those who served us' is legendary in the veteran services community. All services are free of charge. <http://www.gcvf.org> (805) 482-6550