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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Empowering Independence and Combating Food Insecurity: Redwood Empire Food Bank and Earle Baum Center of the Blind Join Forces**

*Santa Rosa, CA – September 7, 2023* – Two leading nonprofit organizations in the Santa Rosa community, the Redwood Empire Food Bank and Earle Baum Center of the Blind are proud to announce their partnership in an effort to empower individuals with disabilities and address the critical issue of food insecurity in the community. This collaboration aims to bring forth positive change through the Food for Independence pilot program, an initiative designed to provide essential food resources and support to those facing unique challenges.

The Food for Independence pilot program, launched by the Redwood Empire Food Bank, acknowledges the hurdles that individuals with disabilities often encounter, particularly in securing employment opportunities. The resulting financial hardships contribute to a higher risk of food insecurity and hunger. Through this program, the Redwood Empire Food Bank aims to alleviate these burdens by offering tailored, nutritious groceries, allowing individuals to concentrate on personal growth and well-being.

“Our partnership with Earle Baum Center of the Blind is a significant step towards creating a more inclusive community where everyone, regardless of their abilities, has the opportunity to thrive,” said David Goodman, Hunger Relief Worker and CEO of the Redwood Empire Food Bank. “Our joint efforts underline the commitment to eradicating hunger and food insecurity resulting from barriers related to disabilities.”

Earle Baum Center, a prominent nonprofit regional community center, has been serving individuals with low vision, sight loss and who are blind on its 17-acre campus in Santa Rosa for over two decades.

“This wonderful initiative not only fulfills the basic needs of individuals with disabilities who struggle with food insecurity but also extends EBC’s reach to many more deserving community members,” stated Bob Sonnenberg, CEO of the Earle Baum Center. Our collaboration with the Redwood Empire Food Bank is a remarkable way to

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serve and uplift the community, while showcasing the heartwarming dedication of staff and volunteers from both our organizations.”

The partnership, which began with a successful food distribution event at the Earle Baum Center in July 2023, will expand with regular visits from the Redwood Empire Food Bank starting in September. These visits will provide valuable opportunities for both organizations to gather insights from participants and fine-tune the Food for Independence pilot program to cater to the unique needs of the community. “We believe that by joining forces, we can make a significant impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities, ensuring everyone can have access to the resources they need to lead fulfilling and independent lives,” added Goodman.

To support this collaborative effort and contribute to the Food for Independence pilot program, community members are encouraged to share their ideas, offer financial assistance, and volunteer their time. Together, the Redwood Empire Food Bank and Earle Baum Center are determined to create a more compassionate and equitable future for all.

For more information about the Redwood Empire Food Bank and Earle Baum Center, please visit their respective websites at [www.refb.org](http://www.refb.org) and [www.earlebaum.org](http://www.earlebaum.org).

### **About the Redwood Empire Food Bank**

The Redwood Empire Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief organization serving Northern California. Since 1987, the Redwood Empire Food Bank has provided food and nourishment to those facing hunger—serving more than 100,000 children, families, and seniors in Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties. With over 350 direct service distributions and 150 partnerships with local human service organizations, all residents facing food insecurity have regular access to weekly and monthly food distribution sites across the five counties.

### **To learn more about the Redwood Empire Food Bank, please visit:**

**Website:** <https://refb.org/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/redwoodempirefoodbank/>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/redwoodempirefoodbank>

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### **About Earle Baum Center**

Earle Baum Center is a Santa Rosa nonprofit celebrating 24 years serving people with sight loss and people who are blind in Sonoma, Napa, Lake, and Mendocino counties by improving their personal, social, and economic lives. Earle Baum Center is an innovative community providing programs and services such as mobility training, assistive technology training, low vision clinics and peer support groups that empower individuals to maintain independence and participate in their community. People served by EBC and their families regain confidence, master new skills, and engage with technology and others to make vital, lifelong connections to lead happy, safe, productive lives.

**To learn more about Earle Baum Center, please visit:**

**Website:** <https://earlebaum.org/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/EarleBaumCenter>

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