



COLLEGE *of the* DESERT

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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College of the Desert teams with FIND Food Bank to feed students

PALM DESERT, CA — College of the Desert (COD) has teamed up with FIND (Food In Need of Distribution) Food Bank to provide a twice-monthly food truck that offers free food to students who are in need.

FIND made its first visit to COD's Palm Desert campus on Feb. 14, with FIND and COD student volunteers serving various fruits, vegetables and nonperishable goods to 286 students. More students are expected to take advantage of the food truck during its next Palm Desert visit on March 14 and its inaugural Indio Campus visit on March 22.

Indio Councilman Troy Strange, a COD alumnus who played football at the school in the late 1980s, said student-athletes sometimes struggled financially and couldn't afford food at certain times each month as their money began running out.

"I remember myself in that position," said Strange, who works as the planning and public works director for the Desert Recreation District.

About a year ago, Strange approached COD and FIND to see if there was a way to help provide the college's athletes with extra food occasionally. FIND noted there was a much larger need across the Coachella Valley and that many more students could benefit from such an effort.

About 90 percent of degree-seeking students at COD qualify for financial aid of some sort. About 7.6 percent of Coachella Valley residents received food from a food assistance group at some point in the past 12 months, according to a 2016 survey by Health Assessment and Research for Communities (HARC). The group is based at UC Riverside's Palm Desert Campus.

So it made sense for the idea to morph into a food truck that can supply all of the college's students in need rather than just a group.

"We had talked about it for a while," said Strange, who's also helped FIND with its telethon, the next one of which is April 7. "I'm glad to hear it's up and running."

The FIND food truck's COD visits will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the following days this spring:

- **Palm Desert Campus:** Tuesdays, March 14; April 4; May 9.
- **Indio Campus:** Wednesdays, March 22; April 26; May 24.

The goal will be to serve about 500 students during each Palm Desert visit and about 200 students during each Indio visit, said Carlos Maldonado, interim dean of Enrollment Services at COD.

In addition, the EDGE program will host a workshop from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, titled "Nutrition and Fitness as a College Student." FIND will share tips on how to make healthy food choices while staying on budget and Marc Payan, Creator of Payan X, will discuss his success in staying in shape. Participating students could win gift cards for Ralph's or Fresh Juice Bar. The workshop will be in the Cravens Building Multipurpose Room. RSVP at EDGE@CollegeoftheDesert.edu or 760.636.6970.

For more information about FIND, please visit www.FindFoodBank.org or call 760.775.FOOD (3663).

About College of the Desert:

Established in 1958, College of the Desert (COD), located in Palm Desert, is an accredited community college serving eastern Riverside County, California. The College leads the region in providing quality, higher education, technical training and lifelong learning opportunities, in response to the dynamic needs of our diverse community. The College serves more than 14,000 credit students and 1,000 non-credit students each year and is the number one source of transfer students to California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus. For more information, visit www.collegeofthedesert.edu.

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