

## **Straight Talk with PG&E: Maria Ballesteros**

### **Season 2, Episode 2: Simplified Savings Program**

- Welcome back to "Real Talk with PG&E." I'm your host, Tatihana Manning, and I support our Voice of a Customer team here at PG&E. Today, we're gonna talk about a program that helped the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin make some big improvements to their business and why you should probably connect with your local energy advisor. In studio, I have Maria Ballesteros, Customer Relationship Manager for PG&E. How are you doing today, Maria?

- I am doing excellent. Thank you so much for having me here today.

- So, Maria, I want you to give us some background on the emergency food bank that you worked with, and tell us how you supported them.

- The Emergency Food Bank of Stockton has been around for over 56 years. Last year, the food bank served more than 800,000 people, and PG&E helped them enroll into our Simplified Savings Program where we helped them do energy efficiency upgrades on equipment to help them with costs and save on their electric bill.

- What kind of retrofits and upgrades did the emergency food bank get help with from PG&E?

- Their lighting was completely upgraded. That alone makes a big difference on their bill. Just making the switches from fluorescent lighting to LED lighting helps save so much electricity. We also provided them with smart power strips and air purifiers. If they would have paid out of pocket, it would have cost them thousands of dollars.

- That's amazing. So not only are we saving customers on the backend in regards to energy efficiency, which translates over to their bill, but we also save them from being able to have to actually pull out their wallet to begin with.

- Exactly.

- So, Maria, how does your role as an energy advisor help the emergency food bank identify cost savings programs?

- My role as an energy advisor helps the customer by having that direct contact with them and working hand in hand, helping educate them on the programs and resources that we offer for them. Because a lot of people, a lot of customers, a lot of businesses aren't aware of everything that PG&E has to offer to help them save on their energy bill.

- Maria, I just wanna take a step back and really give you some kudos 'cause it sounds like you went above and beyond for this customer. You made sure that they were aware of a program that they would benefit from, and it sounds like they definitely got the benefit out of that. And then you also took it a step further and ran a rate analysis. Can you tell us a little bit more about how you helped the food bank switch to a more optimal rate?

- Yeah, of course. I helped them by running a rate analysis, and this is a tool that all our customers, small, medium, large customers, can do on their own when they log onto their PG&E account

online. I ran the rate analysis for the emergency food bank, and, based on their usage history, they were not on the best rate plan. So I simply made the right change. And it's very, very important that, when you connect with your energy advisor, you run a rate analysis just to make sure that you are on the most optimal rate plan based on your business needs.

- In regards to the food bank, how much money were you able to save them annually?

- By just making a simple rate change at no cost, it was a \$2,500 annual savings.

- So \$2,500. That's definitely a lot of savings. And that's in addition to the actual retrofitting that PG&E was able to give them.

- Yes. It's very important to help our customers save as much as we can help them save, and they can use that to reinvest it into their customers, their employees, and it just helps them overall because our small business customers are the backbone of our communities.

- I can definitely agree to that. If you are interested in supporting the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton, you can do so by donating funds, you can volunteer your time, or if you need a meal and you live in the Stockton area, you can go to [stocktonfoodbank.org](http://stocktonfoodbank.org) for more information. Well, thank you, Maria, so much for being in studio with me today.

- Thank you for having me and having me spread the word regarding our programs and our tools and resources that we have to offer for our customers.

- We definitely appreciate you giving all this information to our listeners. For the folks out there listening, be sure to visit [pge.com/realtalk](http://pge.com/realtalk) to listen to more episodes and find more resources. Talk to you all soon.