

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: March 2018



Michelle's Story

"I had nothing when I returned here last year. I had to go back to Louisiana to take care of my father when he was dying. He was 94 years old. I had already buried my mother.

"When I came back to Oakland everything was gone. The house I was staying at didn't take Section 8 anymore. They threw away all my clothes. I had nothing. I stayed at the shelter at St Vincent for 4 months. These shelters are good. I don't care what anyone says. Where would I have gone? St Vincent helped me by showing me what I needed to do to get a place to live. Then they referred me to Crossroads when a place opened there.

"Crossroads is transitional housing so you still live with other people. I wanted my own place. My own key. Crossroads told me what I needed to do to get housing and I did everything. And I mean I did exactly what they said. Did the footwork, got all the documents. Complaining doesn't get you anywhere. I just did everything they said.

"I stayed in Crossroads four months and then they said we have a place and I started crying not from sadness but from happiness. I have my own key. I finally have my own apartment.

"I still come to St. Vincent to use the clothing closet, the podiatry clinic, and sometimes I eat here. I come here to wash clothes. I can save money and everything helps. I use all the services.

"Now I have a little fridge, a microwave, a plate, a fork and spoon. I wish I could get a little hot plate. You are allowed to have that. I am really happy."



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Tuesday, April 3rd, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland. (1st Tuesday).
- Thursday, April 5th, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda. (1st Thursday).
- Monday, April 16th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, April 18th, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am to 11:30 a.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Wednesday, April 18th, **Board of Trustees meeting** – fellowship/meal at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:00 p.m. Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday).
- Tuesday, April 24th, 1:30 p.m., **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday).

Interfaith Council

Blase Bova, SVdP Executive Director, has been elected to the Elected Council of ICAC, the Interfaith Council of Alameda County. Bova began his two-year term in March and is looking forward to more collaboration with faith-based organizations throughout the county. ICAC is led by Rev. Ken Chambers and is supported by more than 100 member congregations and groups. "ICAC connects people of all faiths around the moral imperative to end homelessness," says Bova. "The faith leaders of ICAC collaborate and bring their congregations' clout to work with public officials and other leaders to address the homeless crisis."



News Briefs

- Donating a car or boat to SVdP is easy, through the National SVdP Vehicle Donation Program. Call 877-537-5277 or visit www.donatingiseasy.org
- Want to show the love you feel for SVdP? Come volunteer with us! Play the piano for clients in our Community Center, chop vegetables with Elvis in our kitchen, or help run a craft demo in our Fremont or Livermore stores. There's so much happening here, and most of it goes better with more hands involved. We'd love to train you in a new, rewarding volunteer opportunity. Contact John Sterns for more details. (See back page for contact information.) Your free time can make such a difference in the life of someone in need!
- Legacy gifts, also known as planned gifts, have made a tremendous difference for SVdP and those we serve. Legacy gifts let your charitable giving have a long-term impact reflecting your beliefs, priorities and values. "From general support to job training to our Dining Room and Women's Center, these gifts have literally transformed lives", said Blase Bova, SVdP's Executive Director. For more information about legacy gifts, contact Blase Bova or John Sterns. (See back page for contact.)

Bentley School's Two Day Service in Dining Room

In early March, the Dining Room was happy to welcome seventeen 9th grade students and two teachers from the Bentley Upper School in Lafayette over the course of two days. The Bentley students were participating in a special school program they called "Mini Term," where all Upper School students take two weeks away from traditional schooldays to learn outside of the classroom. Older students participate in more recreational activities, like cooking lessons and biking, while the 9th graders do service projects at various nonprofits, accompanied by a self-reflection essay. To be eligible for graduation, each Upper School student must complete a total of sixty hours of service.



The students helped serve beverages, hand out trays, clean tables, and organize our walk-in refrigerators. The students who were assigned work in the walk-ins were so committed to their work, that they

spent extra time organizing until they were finished with everything. "The students were very focused on their task. They didn't want to leave anything incomplete. They worked hard and did the best they could," said volunteer coordinator, Katie Troy. SVdP always appreciates the dedication of our volunteers; it does not go unnoticed.

SVdP is happy to be involved with helping the students take steps to complete their graduation requirements, especially since sometimes they get more out of their service experience than expected.



Katie Troy said, "New volunteers provide a new energy to our regular volunteers. It was nice for them to be able to work with and talk to some of the more seasoned volunteers and get a different perspective. I think some of them got along really well." We look forward to welcoming more Bentley students in the future and are grateful for their good work for SVdP.





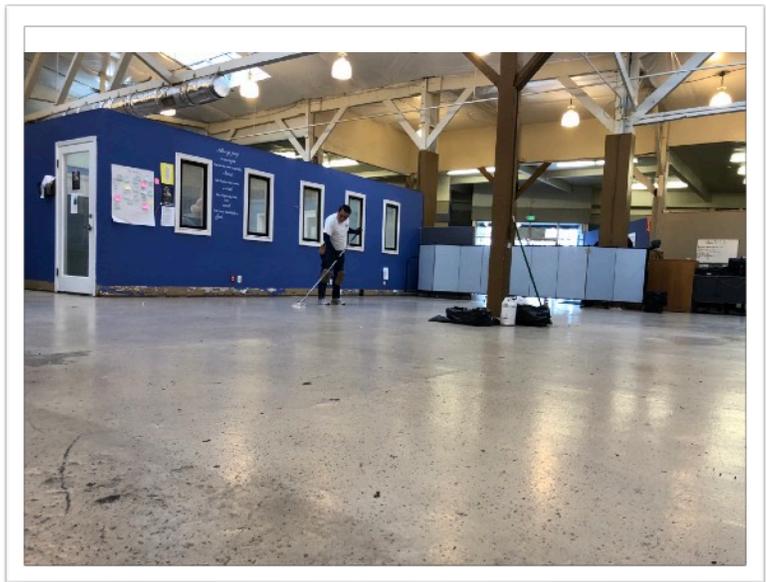
Community Center Floor Finished

SVdP's Downtown Campus kicked off the month of March with a brand new floor in the community center. The project took 4 days to complete and was made possible by the efforts of facilities manager Wesley Palmquist, the staff of SVdP, our generous donor Lillian Trillo, and the crew at French Bros Flooring America. This

contribution provides a warmer feel for the room, which is used by thousands of individuals and families each year. The Community Center is open Tuesday through Saturday and is a space for clients to come together in fellowship.

Since its completion, SVdP's Community Center has celebrated St. Patrick's Day, the Kitchen of Champions Graduation, and Easter. The new wood laminate floor makes the space feel more welcoming and new. "Our hope is that the new floor will add to the Community Center's appeal and make it a more inviting place for clients," says Blase Bova, SVdP's executive director. "It is part of our effort to continue to focus on serving clients, and on improving and increasing the services we offer."

The previous floor, which has not been updated since the building was built in 1976, was filled with holes and bumps and, in general, was not an inviting feature for the room. In addition to the improvement to the Community's Center's look, the new floor will also provide a safer environment for our clients and entail easier maintenance going forward. "We are very grateful for this gift, which will have a long-lasting impact for our clients and our services," says Bova. "We want our clients to know how important they are to us and how much we want to improve the setting in which we offer our services." Feel free to stop by our West Oakland campus and see our new and improved community center!



Welcome Chef Armando

Chef Armando Corpus began his service at SVdP as a volunteer in our kitchen prep room in summer 2017. After living in Oakland for many years, Corpus decided he wanted to "help homeless people and be a part of serving their needs," and began his new role as Kitchen Manager late January. Since then, he has worked with two Kitchen of Champions cohorts, leading four individuals to graduation in



December, and now leads a new group of cooks in the kitchen to make 500 meals per day in our free dining room.

Corpus has previously worked at Thunder Road as a teen drug and alcohol treatment counselor and supervisor, where he started a culinary program for recovering youth. Has been teaching cooking for 15 years and working in

drug and alcohol treatment since 1987. Corpus has acquired valuable experience in the kitchen and in helping people transform their lives and thinks of his position as kitchen manager as similar to being a party host. "You want a good meal, good company, everyone being entertained and having a good time. I want everyone to walk away feeling like this was time well spent," Corpus said. "[My job as kitchen manager] is a great situation for me to help a lot of people have a good time."

The Impact You Make

St. Vincent de Paul depends on the generosity of our donors to meet the needs of those we serve. We see ourselves doing work that fulfills our donors' - your - passions and interests. We try to match your giving preferences with practical methods for achieving your vision of how your gift works to help others. One way is to ask for small, monthly donations on an ongoing basis. For as little as \$10 a month - the price of two vente drinks at Starbucks - you can support 60 meals a month in our Free Dining Room. To make a contribution, go to www.svdP-alameda.org/donate and make a gift to help our neighbors in need. Thank you.



Kitchen of Champions Cohort 56 Graduation



On March 22, four members of our Kitchen of Champions (KoC) culinary arts training program celebrated their graduation. With family, friends, and SVdP board members and staff in attendance, cohort 56 had a rousing send-off to cap their completion of the nine-week training program.

During the program, the students learned the full range of kitchen skills needed to gain employment in the restaurant and hospitality

industries. In addition to the all-important knife skills, the group learned how to develop meal plans, follow recipes and how to cook in a commercial kitchen with its wide range of equipment. In addition to the culinary skills they learned, the students also benefitted from professional development training that ranged from interviewing and resume writing to communication and interpersonal skills.

Michele Byrd, Director of Housing and Community Development for the City of



Oakland, gave the keynote address, congratulating the students on their successful completion of the program and encouraging them to use the knowledge and skills they acquired to follow their dreams professionally and personally.

As with all KoC cohorts, cohort 56 made immediate contributions to SVdP and our programs. The students helped prepare the meals offered in our Free Dining Room, which serves 500 meals daily to our guests. For the graduation event, the graduates prepared a four-course Mexican meal that was enjoyed by all.

Congratulations to our graduates our best wishes for their future success!



Easter Open House

SVdP hosted its annual Easter Open House on Saturday March 17. Thirty-eight families and 146 children attended the event, which was a big success thanks to our wonderful and dedicated volunteers and staff members. Each family received a grocery gift card and a ticket for our raffle. The children received an Easter basket with candy, an



Easter egg and a plush toy. Volunteers helped families choose age-appropriate books for each child and the three crafts tables were very popular. Children could choose to make an Easter bunny, a baby chick or a collage with stickers. The Easter bunny made an appearance for photos with children and families. We thank all our volunteers and donors who made this day a bright spot for our families.

Wings Flies Again

Members of the Women In God's Spirit (WINGS) ministry from St. Theresa's Church in Oakland made a much-needed donation to our West Oakland direct service site. The group, which is a longtime donor to SVdP, brought handmade blankets, scarves and baby clothes to distribute to our clients. These gifts were especially welcome because of the recent period of cold weather.

"WINGS is a wonderful example of how local groups can make a real contribution to those we serve," says Blasé Bova, SVdP's executive director. "We depend on these types of partnership and really appreciate what groups like WINGS can do for our clients."

In addition to dropping off their donation, WINGS members stayed for a tour of our West Oakland campus and saw where and how their items will be distributed. Thank you WINGS for all you do for those we serve!



For More Information Contact

Name	Position	Phone	Email
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John Sterns	Community Engagement Manager	(925) 323-5848	jsterns@svdp-alameda.org
Julia Hancock	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jhancock@svdp-alameda.org
Leslie Thomas	Homeless Services Manager	(510) 719-1000	lthomas@svdp-alameda.org
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Ryan Uyehara	Special Works (Programs) Manager	(510) 593-4120	ruyehara@svdp-alameda.org
Wesley Palmquist	Facilities/Tenant Services Manager	(650) 796-7349	wpalmquist@svdp-alameda.org
Volunteer Team	Volunteer Coordinator	(510) 877-9252	volunteer@svdp-alameda.org

City Service Mission Volunteers in Dining Room



A group of twelve representatives from City Service Mission at the First Presbyterian Church were able to put their faith into action by volunteering in the Dining Hall earlier this month. CSM is "a generation of God's people equipped to lead, compelled to serve, and committed for a lifetime to the often-forgotten in their communities." Similar to St. Vincent de Paul, CSM's goal is to give attention to those who are

marginalized. This youth group was in charge of serving meals, cleaning, and serving drinks in the dining room.

The dining room often hosts volunteer groups through CSM who travel from Washington state and more on their mission

trips. The group from First Presbyterian Church received guidance as future leaders of the church through programs like CSM, youth formation programs, adult mentorship programs, and opportunities to be acolytes and worship leaders in front of the entire congregation at mass. We are always happy to see young people being called to serve their communities.

