

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: March 2017



Remembering Billy

On a Wednesday morning in late February, one of our Winter Shelter guests suffered a heart attack and subsequently passed away. Billy was a regular in both the Community Center and the Dining Room, and always had a smile and a positive attitude, despite his challenging life situation. Most of us who work or volunteer on this campus knew Billy, and have fond memories of him. His death was a blow to all of us.



BILLY, WITH HIS SON NOEL

Ryan Uyehara gathered our staff and volunteers on the morning of Billy's death for a brief but very touching memorial in our Dining Room/Shelter, where many of us shared our memories of Billy. Billy's son Noel was able to join us, and he greatly appreciated what he heard about his dad.

Incidents like these remind us of how fleeting life can be on this earth, especially for those we serve. It's been gratifying and bittersweet to hear from

so many of our staff and volunteers who had developed a personal friendship with Billy. Despite our sadness, we as staff, volunteers, and Vincentians can feel good about two things.

One, because Billy's heart attack happened while he was in our shelter, and not on a cold street, he had as good a chance of survival as any of us who are more financially comfortable would have had. Even though he didn't pull through, he at least had an opportunity for a death with

dignity, among friends.

Secondly, we who do this work each week can know that we touch people's lives in lasting and positive ways, whether we're handing someone a plate of food, or paying the light bill to keep us open another month. What St. Vincent de Paul does so well, that person to person connection and support, is what brings out the best in human beings, from all walks of life.





Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Save the Date!
Spring Fundraising Breakfast
Friday, April 28, 2017
Cathedral of Christ the Light, Event Center
2121 Harrison Street, Oakland

For more information please call (510) 638-7600.
 Make your tax-deductible donation at the event. Check or credit cards accepted.

St. Vincent de Paul ALAMEDA COUNTY ~ svdp-alameda.org

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, March 2nd and March 16th, 11:00 am, Free haircuts by Angel, Community Center, Downtown Campus.
- Monday, March 6th, 2:00 pm, Development Committee, Downtown Campus (Normally 1st Monday of the month).
- Tuesday, March 7th & Thursday, March 16th, Community Collaborations - Alternative Spring Break students from all over the country join SVdP Dining Room, Downtown Campus.
- Saturday, March 11th, District Council Meeting, Mass at 9:00 am, meeting at 10:00 am, 3433 Somerset Ave, Castro Valley, CA, 94546.
- Monday, March 13th, Finance Committee, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland, 4:00 pm (just before Board Meeting).
- Tuesday, March 14th, 11:30 am, Property Committee, Conference Call (2nd Tuesday of the month. Contact Blase for more information.)
- Wednesday, March 15th, Board of Trustees Meeting: fellowship/meal at 5:30 pm followed by meeting at 6:00 pm, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland. (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Friday, March 17th, 7:30 pm, Christ the Light Conference hosts the Winter Shelter Movie Night with corned beef and cabbage dinner, Community Center, Downtown Campus.
- Monday, March 27th through Friday, March 31st, Santa Clara University returns for its 5th Immersion Week at SVdP, Downtown Campus.
- Tuesday, March 28th, 1:30 pm, Special Works Committee, Downtown Campus (4th Tuesday of month).

News Briefs

■ St. Vincent de Paul is preparing to host our 4th annual Easter Open House for local children and their families on Saturday, April 8th from 10 am to 1 pm. This year we'll be hosting 200 children ages 1 month to 16 years. Children will get to build their own Easter baskets, work on crafts, visit with the Easter Bunny, and have lunch in our family dining room. Each family will receive a food gift card. At noon we'll be raffling gift cards, children's toys and a giant basket filled with Easter dinner for a family of five!

Your support makes it possible to create fun, safe, family-friendly events like this! If you would like to contribute to this year's event, please contact Muna Texier. Donations are needed by Saturday, April 1st at our direct service campus. Please call Flo Larkin at 510-393-4259 to coordinate dropping off your donations. Supplies Needed by April 1st:

- 100 medium-size Easter baskets (unassembled)
- Individually Packaged Snacks (bunny crackers or cookies)
- \$25 grocery store gift cards
- New or very gently used children's books
- Assorted Easter candy (individually wrapped)
- Easter-themed activity and/or coloring books



News Briefs

■ On his commute to work one Tuesday in February, our Executive Director Blase Bova found a cell phone on his BART train in San Francisco. He asked two of our volunteers to see if they could track down the owner, which they happily and cleverly did. The owner came to Oakland to pick up her phone, and was so grateful, she made a \$100 cash donation on the spot.

■ 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

■ April 28th marks our Spring Fundraising Breakfast. If you would like to attend this event or even bring others you know, contact Muna Texier, whose contact info is on the last page.

■ Your online purchases can benefit SVdP. Amazon.com will donate 1/2% of anything you spend on their site, once you sign up. Just visit smile.amazon.com, and choose "Society St Vincent De Paul Alameda" as your charity. Once you're set up, every purchase you make yields a donation to SVdP. Thanks for making St. Vincent de Paul your charity of choice!

Lent: A Time for Reflection, Service and Charity

Wednesday March 1st was Ash Wednesday, which marks the start of the Lenten season that leads to the celebration of Easter Sunday on April 16th.

Many Christian denominations celebrate Lent and common to many traditions is the emphasis on Lent as being a time for prayer and reflection, service for others and charitable works. Here at St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County, we offer a number of opportunities for our Vincentians, friends, volunteers and those we serve to deepen their commitment to our work.

This year, Lent will mark the final six weeks of our Winter Shelter program. Embodying the lenten principles, volunteers from the Cathedral of Christ the Light parish made it a special movie night for our shelter guests on Friday, February 24.

In addition to watching "Medea's Family Reunion," the volunteers provided guests with a full movie-style experience that included pizza from Round Table, salad, bread sticks, popcorn, chips, candy and soda.

The volunteers also had raffles for the guests. Door prizes included gift cards from Subway and Starbucks. The grand prize was a new backpack.

This is just one example of how friends of SVdP embody the themes of Lent and turn them into charitable works that serve those in greatest need.



Sutter Health Donates to the Podiatry Clinic

The monthly Podiatry Clinic jointly run by the Order of Malta and SVdP received a generous donation from Sutter Health in early February. The



gift of two exam tables in SVdP blue have spruced up the clinic exam rooms, making our guests' visits more inviting and comfortable. Janet Waring and Betty Wolverton, two dedicated, long-term volunteer nurses, set up the rooms with care and posed with Executive Director Blase Bova. Practical and thoughtful donations like this go a long way to help existing programs thrive at SVdP. Thank you to Sutter Health and to the volunteers for their monthly commitment in serving our guests in the Podiatry Clinic. The Podiatry Clinic is open on the third Wednesday of every month from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Please contact us if you'd like a tour!

Pandora is Back

After two successful visits in January,

Pandora returned to the SVdP Kitchen and Dining Room ready to work.

This group of seven was the second half of the Pandora Sales team that joined SVdP in mid-January.

Michael, one of the Sales team, shared his experience with SVdP staff: "We heard a lot about our coworkers' visit last month and since



they had a great time, we decided to continue the service. We walked over here. It took us ten minutes. It's so easy for us to be here and it's a great opportunity." Neighbors helping neighbors, indeed.



St. Vincent de Paul is Family



After six years as a regular SVdP guest, eating in the Dining Room and connecting with staff and volunteers, Joe decided he wanted to volunteer. He liked SVdP's inclusive community, full of compassion and kindness.

He remembers meeting Mario, a former staff member who had been at SVdP for 33 years before his retirement, as well as his first conversation with Oscar, our janitor who will celebrate his 27th year with SVdP this spring.

It struck Joe as remarkable that this community not only attracted nice people, but that it also kept staff and volunteers around for decades! He wanted to be around this positive energy. Before long, he found himself coming to volunteer on a weekly basis, mainly in the Dish Room where a budding camaraderie with other regulars soon blossomed into delightful long-standing friendships. What attracts Joe to volunteerism is the same for many of us. Volunteering is a heart-centered endeavor. It's deeply satisfying to be

part of a group whose shared values lead to meaningful social action. Many of us look for a sense of belonging to feel fulfilled and to lead a life of purpose, and volunteering gives us that.

What began as a simple choice to enjoy more positivity in Joe's life eventually grew to become a long-term lifestyle change. He is now a regular fixture at our direct service campus, and he picks up additional seasonal work with us when he is in-between jobs.

He considers the SVdP community his true family, and while he is not shy to talk about the amazing qualities of other members in this family, it's clear that Joe's descriptions serve as a mirror of his own exceptional kindness and love of volunteering.

Your Gift Transforms Lives

Your support for St. Vincent de Paul ensures that our critical services help those in greatest need. Our Free Dining Room provides hot, nutritious meals to thousands. Our Winter Shelter gives refuge from cold and rainy weather to hundreds of men and women.

- For \$1,000 you can give 50 packages of diapers, formula and family hygiene products in our Women's Center.
- For \$500 you can provide 120 sets of new socks and underwear for people sleeping in the cold and rain.
- For \$250 you can serve 100 hot, nutritious meals in our Free Dining Room.
- For \$100 you can wash a week of bedding for our Winter Shelter.

Please consider a gift to St. Vincent de Paul. Contact Blase Bova or Muna Texier (see last page) to learn more. If you prefer to donate online, please visit www.svdP-alameda.org/donate



Winter Shelter Offers a Haven



If you visit the SVdP Community Center during the week you may notice Cameron helping staff sort the mail and Sherry making use of the computer lab. They have also been helping the Winter Shelter staff every evening. Cameron helps set up the cots, while Sherry assists with checking in guests for the night. They are not typical volunteers, rather helpful guests in the Community Center during the day and overnight guests in SVdP's Winter Shelter.

They plan on staying in the shelter until its seasonal closing in mid-April. The Winter Shelter and SVdP's direct service campus has afforded Sherry and Cameron some time and space to figure out their next move.

Due to a long-standing hip injury, Cameron has been unable to work full-time, and he's currently undergoing medical tests to determine if surgery is his best option. His time at SVdP has given him the chance to slow down, heal some, and calm his active mind from stressful overthinking.

For Sherry, staying at SVdP has allowed her to attend College of Alameda, and she speaks of

SVdP as a sanctuary where they can plan their next steps. With family in Missouri and more job prospects there as well, they are considering making the Midwest their future home. Until then, they are grateful for a safe place to sleep, warm showers to wash the day away, and laundry facilities to get their things in order.

As Cameron summarizes: "Foundation. That is what I am working on here. I'm building back up my foundation: a roof over my head, some food in my belly, so I can make some good decisions."

Sherry is confident that they will be back on their feet when April comes: "I know that no matter what, we will get through this, homeless or not. We've had our good times of being in a house and having our own place. I know we can do it again. This is just a stepping stone to get back to that. I feel taken care of here. SVdP has been a haven and I am thankful for that."

Legacy Gifts Make Lasting Impact

Legacy gifts, also known as planned gifts, have made a tremendous difference for St. Vincent de Paul, our programs and those we serve. Legacy gifts offer a way for donors to ensure that their charitable giving continues to have an impact that reflects their beliefs, priorities and values. "Legacies have allowed us to continue and, in some cases, to expand the services we offer," says Blase Bova, SVdP's Executive Director. "From general support to job training to our Dining Room and Women's Center, these gifts have literally transformed lives."

If you are considering making a planned gift for SVdP, we recommend you consult with a legal or financial advisor. For more information about legacy gifts for SVdP, contact Blase Bova or Muna Texier. (See back page for contact.)



Betty Jo Celebrates 30 Years as SVdP Volunteer

For the past thirty years, Betty Jo has been a regular presence in the SVdP Dining Room. Almost every Saturday you'll find her handing out trays of food to her neighbors on the "front line". Her smile lights up the place, and she's not

afraid to be no nonsense when the situation calls for it. When sharing her volunteering history with us, Betty Jo describes her first involvement with SVdP as a simple case of being in the right place at the right time. She had been asked to accompany a dear friend to the annual Volunteer



Appreciation Luncheon to model the friend's fashion clothing that day. Before she knew it, Saturday became her regular Dining Room shift, and she kept coming back. Luckily for the SVdP family, Betty Jo plans on remaining a regular volunteer for years to come. Born and raised in

Oakland, she is proud to say that she has stayed in town. A happily retired foster care professional and full-time grandmother, Betty Jo looks forward to Saturdays, where she now models her colorful aprons, accessorized with her beaming smile.

Rivi: Super Fan and Volunteer

In the truest sense of commitment to the community we serve, Rivi is willing to volunteer wherever she is needed on any given day. From scrubbing pans in the dish room, to chatting with the folks we serve on her way to campus, it's clear that Rivi has a strong sense of service and a genuine affinity for helping others. Rivi (in photo at left, with Marie), proudly wears her inspiration to volunteer on her t-shirt. Her volunteer uniform includes her Cubs baseball cap and her "try not to suck" t-shirt. The quote comes from beloved Cubs baseball manager, Joe Maddon. Rivi was compelled to volunteer



because of Maddon's idea of *Thanksmas*, his belief that when a cause matters to you, it's important to act and serve for the cause throughout the year, not just during the holiday season. Sports also help Rivi connect with the people we serve at SVdP. Sharing jokes

about the Cubs is an easy way to start a conversation that can go deeper. "I love being here," states Rivi, as evidenced by the 100 hours of volunteer service she has completed in a mere two months. Rivi feels a sense of belonging here, which makes it easy for her to keep coming back. These days new volunteers approach *her* for guidance and Rivi is more than happy to help!



For More Information Contact

Name	Position	Phone	Email
St. Vincent de Paul 2272 San Pablo Ave Oakland, CA 94612	Main Phone Number/Call Center	(510) 638-7600	callcenter@svdp-alameda.org
Blase Bova	Executive Director	(510) 435-2625	bbova@svdp-alameda.org
Carmen Jones-Weaks	Human Resources Manager	(510) 385-8934	cjonesweaks@svdp-alameda.org
Julia Catania	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jcatania@svdp-alameda.org
Muna Texier	Community Engagement Manager	(510) 719-0774	mtexier@svdp-alameda.org
Patty Breslin	Social Enterprise (Retail) Manager	(510) 289-3891	pbreslin@svdp-alameda.org
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

Handmade by WINGS

Women in God’s Spirit is a Catholic ministry for women who seek to deepen their relationship to God and one another. D.D. van Loben Sels, who has been a supporter and connector for SVdP for

many years, brought members of her WINGS group to SVdP for a tour of our facilities and to deliver their handmade fleece blankets and baby clothes to the Women’s Center in person. Not

long after this initial visit, WINGS stopped by again to deliver another round of donated goodies, this time in the form of warm scarves and socks for our guests’ winter needs.

If you are interested in learning more about our campus and its services, please contact us - we’d love the opportunity to show you around!

