

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: August 2017



A New Curriculum from SMC

What do you get when sixteen professional minds work together to serve an organization they believe in? You get a very impressive work product. Saint Mary's College students from an innovative Leadership and Organizational Studies program for working professionals presented the results of their end-of-term project in early July. The project involved investigating the needs of SVdP's workforce job training programs, as well as researching local best practices. Using internal interviews and questionnaires, as well as external research on other successful workforce models, the students compiled and presented their findings at our direct service campus. Their project resulted in curriculum that will help structure existing and future workforce programming. Our board members, staff and volunteers were impressed and inspired by the students' presentation.

Special thank you to SMC faculty member Barbara McLaughlin, Ed.D for choosing SVdP for her students' project, and to Natalya Ferdinandi,



our AmeriCorps VISTA, for facilitating this partnership between Saint Mary's College and SVdP. This presentation served as a bittersweet ending both to Barbara's tenure as an adjunct with the BALOS course and to Natalya's year-long VISTA service with SVdP. Barbara McLaughlin has taught at Saint Mary's College for 15 years and in the BALOS program since its inception. Natalya Ferdinandi will move on to law school in the coming weeks, leaving big shoes to fill for our incoming Saint Mary's AmeriCorps VISTA. Thank you to all who gave of their time and talents toward improving and expanding the scope of SVdP's Workforce program. This curriculum will be useful to so many and we are proud of the hard-working professionals who are responsible for its presence on our direct service campus.

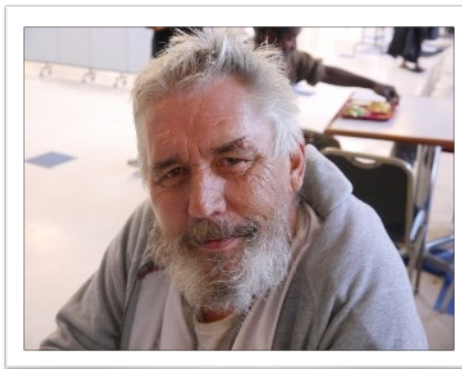


Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, August 3rd and August 17th, **Free haircuts by Angel**, 11:00 am, Community Center, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Saturday, August 12th, 9:00 am, **District Council Meetings**, various locations.
- Saturday, August 12th, **Back to School Open House**, 10:00 am, Community Center, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Monday, August 14th, **Finance Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland, 4:00 pm (Monday before Board Meeting).
- Wednesday, August 16th, **Board of Trustees Meeting**: fellowship/meal at 5:30 pm followed by meeting at 6:00 pm, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Wednesday, August 16th, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am to 11:30 am, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Tuesday, August 22nd, 1:30 pm, **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus (4th Tuesday of month).
- Monday, September 4th, 1:00 pm, **Development Committee**, Downtown Campus (1st Monday of the month).
- Saturday, September 9th, **District Council General Membership Meeting**, Mass at 8:30 am, meeting at 9:30 am, location TBD.

GUEST PROFILE: CLIFF

"I got involved with some bad drugs as a kid. It has been up and down for me. I have been off Methadone for 15 months. I really appreciate the vegetables and salads and fruits they serve here at St.Vincent de Paul. I get my blood pressure checked and go to the foot clinic here. And they treat everyone well. "At Thanksgiving they had music. I really appreciate that. I am a musician. I have two years music theory from Laney College. I used to teach kids and now I work as much as I can. Me and my neighbor do salvage work. We work hard and sometimes we only make \$30."



News Briefs

■ Our Women's Center needs an infusion of gently worn children's clothes in all sizes for both girls and boys. Everyone knows that kids grow out of their clothes in about a minute – why not donate those surplus children's clothes to SVdP?

Our families will be so appreciative, and so will the volunteers who have been staring at the dwindling level of clothes in the bins and feeling pretty discouraged! Want to make a lot of people happy? Call our main phone number and schedule a day to drop off those clean, gently-worn extra kids clothes. Holidays excepted, we accept donations at our direct service campus Monday through Saturday between 10 am and 3 pm.



Not a pretty picture, huh?



Due Diligence & Team Building with Wells Fargo



our stories in this life.” Guillermo Sanchez, a fellow Wells Fargo employee, also spoke of the power of connection: “My dad was a boxer and I found myself having this in-depth conversation with a man who knew his boxing! We saw first-hand today how far a smile and eye-contact can go to connect with people we may never talk to on a given day. Brianna told us about this in the morning orientation and I appreciate the

Lenka Leon and her Wells Fargo’s Due Diligence team spent a day in the SVdP Dining Room as volunteers. For close to a decade, Lenka has organized her colleagues to volunteer at SF-based food banks and service organizations. Since relocating to Oakland for a new role with Wells Fargo, Lenka was eager to find a new local organization to support. As expected from a Due Diligence expert, Lenka researched thoroughly to find SVdP and quickly inquired to learn more about volunteer opportunities for her team. Lenka spoke of their busy day of service: “Everyone enjoyed this experience. Some people recognized our Wells Fargo t-shirts and immediately wanted to talk to us. Acknowledging people’s stories and history is a powerful way to connect with others. We all have

advice she gave us to sit down and have a chat with someone who may have some things to



say.” Lenka chimed in with hopes to return to SVdP soon: “The dining room is so well-run and everyone is dedicated and passionate about the work they’re doing. We all enjoyed the experience and I know that we’ll be back again!”



SVdP as First Responder

The 4-alarm construction fire on July 7th at Grand and Valdez displaced more than 100 Oakland residents. SVdP was a key part of the first response team, working closely with the City of Oakland and the American Red Cross. It's a sign of SVdP's greater visibility in the local civic

community that we were included in the meeting with the Mayor, city department heads, and County officials that was called the morning of the fire.

On the day of the fire and over the next days, SVdP provided food and clothing to those in need, and we hosted an emergency shelter for two nights. We brought 100 sandwiches and salads to Christ the Light Cathedral, which served as the immediate crisis response center for victims and community organizers. City briefing meetings to update those displaced by the fire were also held in the SVdP Community Center.

Our very visible and quick response to this latest fire garnered us quite a bit of media coverage, including KTVU-TV and the San Francisco Chronicle. And the posts of our response on our own social media pages garnered a high



readership and about \$1,000 in online gifts to help us better serve those in need.

Fr. Jay from the Cathedral of Christ the Light, and Fr. Jayson from St. Benedict (and Oakland Fire Department Chaplain) were very appreciative of our quick and compassionate response, as was Bishop Barber's staff.



We are proud that our agility and our mission to feed, clothe, house, and heal those in need helps define us as the go-to charity to provide such basic needs in emergency situations.



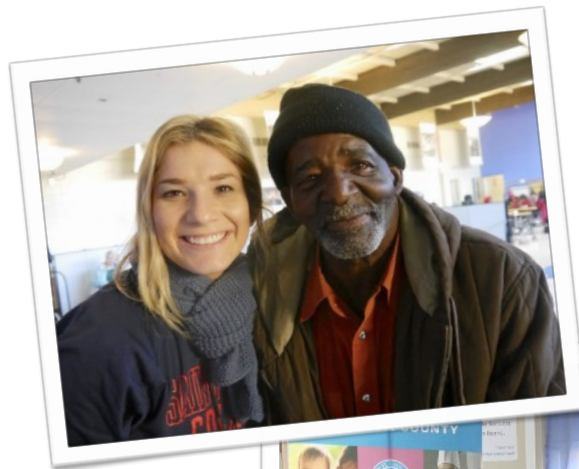
Natalya's VISTA Story: Reflections on my SVdP Year



am not the same person I was when I first arrived on August 8, 2016. It was easily the most difficult year of my life, as I grew up privileged and had never seen suffering like that which affects the daily lives of many of our SVdP guests. Before this past year, I had no real perspective on the issues surrounding homelessness, food insecurity, addiction, mental illness, domestic abuse, and sexual abuse. My passion for social justice has grown and I am excited to be pursuing a law degree so that one day I can make a difference, working for justice as a lawyer.

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service to America) was founded in 1965 as a national service program to help eradicate poverty in the United States. I am one of 8,000 Americans who supported community efforts to overcome poverty this year.

For my VISTA assignment, I got to be a part of the SVdP family, helping our organization run a little smoother in our efforts to clothe, feed, and prepare more people in our community for employment. I helped SVdP guests use our resources to overcome poverty and in the process this experience has given me much more than any accomplishment I leave behind. Something has changed within me for the better. I



Getting the chance to work with the Kitchen of Champions culinary program has been the most memorable part of my experience at St. Vincent de Paul. I believe in this workforce program and feel it is an important asset to the community. I met so many individuals who have gone through the training, and their stories of strength and

perseverance will always bring tears to my eyes and hope to my heart. SVdP is a special place, a home to all who enter its doors, whether as guest, volunteer, or staff member. I've never believed so much in a place, and I know we are making the world a better one by being here in West Oakland.



GUEST PROFILE

Bill

Bill lost both his legs in Vietnam when he was 19 years old. He uses a wheelchair since a prosthesis was never made for him. What he wants most is to walk again.

"I have pain and I have flashbacks. There is nothing I can do about it, so I just let it be. St Vincent de Paul gives me a place to come to when I'm hungry. But if a person doesn't help himself, who will help? But I do get help here. It's a real ride though. As the five blind boys said: I'm coming up the rough side of the mountain.

"SVdP helps the vets and we appreciate everything. And there are a lot of disabled vets



around here. There are not that many places to go. And we are trying to give back to our community too. I know people a lot worse off than me. No arms, no legs. I don't complain. When you start walking, first you crawl then you learn to stand. Don't let them keep you from having courage. Like a child learning to walk, it takes many steps. You have to fall to learn to walk.

"If my floors need cleaning, I don't have help. I get the bucket and get down on my knees and clean my own floors. We are not handicapped. We are disabled veterans. That's all. Sometimes it is hard, but I can't give up."

*I'm comin' up on the rough side of the mountain,
I must hold to God, His powerful hand.*

*I'm comin' up on the rough side of the mountain,
I'm doin' my best to make it in.*



St. Benedict's Ladies Auxiliary of St. Peter Claver



For over four years, members of St. Benedict's Ladies Auxiliary of St. Peter Claver have been monthly volunteers in SVdP's kitchen and dining room. Coming from the heart of East Oakland, these ladies serve throughout the city, supporting organizations whose missions align with those of St. Peter Claver. Wallita Sykes-Bush has been a member of the group for close to twenty years and explains why SVdP is a go-to service site: "St. Peter Claver is the patron saint of slaves

and ministry to African Americans. Feeding people is an easy way we can serve the needs of our community. SVdP is here with food and volunteers who care. Serving the less fortunate is important and there isn't one of us who can say with certainty that we may never need this help ourselves one day."



Cost Plus World Market

Three cheers for our Cost Plus World Market volunteers who, in addition to helping out in the Dining Room, also filled bags of school supplies for our upcoming Back to School open house. A few of these ladies will be back to participate in the August 12th celebration and backpack distribution on our direct service campus. That's dedication for you! We are close to our goal of meeting the needs of 200 children, but we're not there yet! Please consider donating today!

American Diabetes Association Donates

Here's a shout-out to SVdP's neighbors right up the street, the American Diabetes Association, who donated six boxes of athletic t-shirts to us. The t-shirts will get distributed to men and women through the Clothing Closet at our West Oakland Community Center.

Special thanks to Ivette for coordinating the donation and to Leah for helping Ivette unload the goodies.



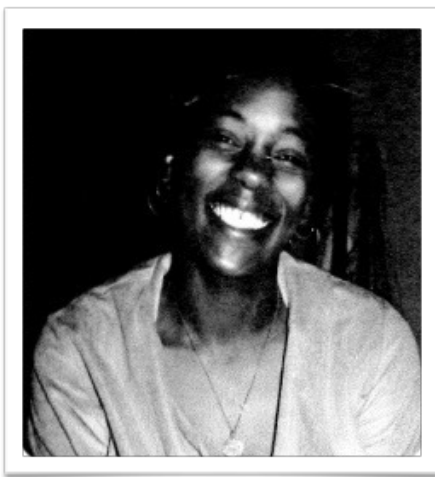
For More Information Contact

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John Sterns	Community Engagement Manager	(510) 719-0774	jssterns@svdp-alameda.org
Julia Catania	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jcatania@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

Saying Goodbye to Two Wonderful Women

Our St. Vincent de Paul family lost two long-time volunteers early this summer. Ruth Frerichs and Anita Kitson were leading members of SVdP's Friday crew, and each gave over a decade of dedicated service to our dining room.

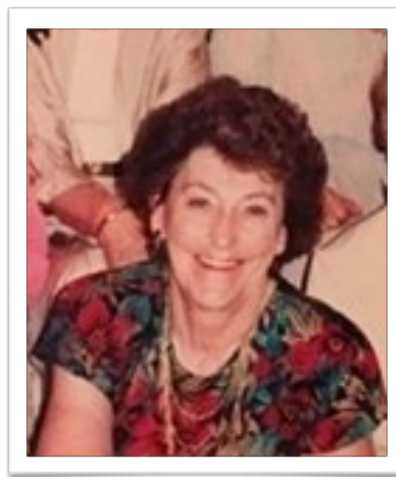
92 years young, Ruth was affectionately known as the authority of the family room, where guests and volunteers followed her directives with respect,



Anita

knowing she meant business.

Anita ran the front line in the main dining room where her years as a probation officer along with a 26-year long career in the Internal Revenue Service made her an effective and no-nonsense



Ruth

task-master. Fridays haven't been the same without Anita and Ruth and we send our condolences, along with our love and admiration, to their families and friends.

