

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: November 2017



Guest Chef Erik Roen

Guest Chef Erik Roen gave a demo on making one of his favorite vinaigrette recipes with the KoC trainees. An invitation from Chef William, an old friend from his culinary school days, brought the enthusiastic chef to SVdP's direct service campus.

Chef Erik spent time teaching how important it is to develop one's own palette and to be unafraid of making mistakes in the kitchen. Sharing what he got from the experience, Chef Erik was moved by the KoC program: "Seeing what Will is doing for the trainees is awesome. Will has an indispensable amount of knowledge in this field. He's a great resource and for him to give me the chance to pass on what I've learned just feels good. It was powerful to see how much the trainees absorbed, to see them writing notes and paying attention and then to see how they felt about themselves after putting



in the work. I'm just showing them how simple food can be. I know when I first started the word chef felt really intimidating. But we're people too. Yeah, we're chefs, but we got this title because of experiences gained and we're here to pass it on. It doesn't have to be so scary."

Chef Erik splits his time between working in Alaska and traveling to the Philippines, where he volunteers and works for an NGO, and is about to embark on a new venture in chocolate making.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Wednesday, November 15th, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am to 11:30 am, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Wednesday, November 15th, **Board of Trustees meeting** - Direct Service Campus - classroom 2, 5:30 p.m. - fellowship/meal at 5:30 p.m. followed by meeting at 6:00 p.m. Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Tuesday, November 28th, **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday of the month).
- Monday, December 4th, **Development Committee**, 1:00 pm, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (1st Monday of the month).
- Tuesday, December 5th, **Special Works Committee Meeting** - (one meeting for both November and December), Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday of the month).- 1:30 p.m.
- Saturday, December 16th, **Christmas Open House**, Direct Service Campus 10:00 a.m to 1:00 p.m.
- Saturday, January 27th, 2018: **Ozanam Enrichment** - All Saints, Hayward - mass at 8:33 a.m. - followed by the workshop.

LOCAL BUSINESSES GIVE THEIR TIME

Check Centers returned to volunteer in the SVdP kitchen and dining room. Two groups of five volunteers visited our campus on two



consecutive days, showing off their flexibility as they helped where they were needed most. We look forward to their twice-yearly visits and hope this tradition continues. Thank you, Check Centers!

News Briefs

■ The year 2018 is approaching and many of us are reviewing our plans for year-end giving. Nonprofit organizations receive nearly half of their contributions during November and December. We invite you to consider a gift to St. Vincent de Paul to help put our mission into action by serving the impoverished living in Oakland and throughout Alameda County. Our work is especially important at this time as more and more families and individuals face housing and health care costs that are rising at an alarming rate. Homelessness, mental illness, hunger, joblessness, addiction - these are just a few of the challenges faced by those we serve. Your generous gifts sustain the essential services we provide. We couldn't do our work without you. Thanks for thinking of the families we serve.

■ The Clothing Closet provides women and men with clothing, shoes and accessories. Our guests would love to have your help as a volunteer, or your gift of gently used clothing from your closet.

Juanita: Home Insecure but Stable

I first came here 25 years ago and St. Vincent de Paul helped me with my kids and with the domestic violence that I had been dealing with. They helped me get information on organizations to help me get to a safe house.

I don't know what would've happened to me and my children without SVdP. Now I come here to get food. I'm still a little home-insecure but it is stable. I thank SVdP for helping me throughout my life and for helping my children. I tell other homeless people to go to SVdP so they can eat and find out about other services to help them.



Curtis at 79



I was born in San Francisco and lived all over the city. I am 79 years old. I have a bad hip that put me in the wheel chair. I get to eat here at SVdP.

Now and then I get a free haircut here. I eat here most every day. I have a place to live but the rents are so high. I pay \$625.00 a month. That is too high for a single person.

I have only one sister left and my kids are all over. I lost my brother last year. That was really hard. I was a school teacher, I worked in a foundry, I was a custodian supervisor and I shined shoes for a long time. St. Vincent de Paul helps a lot.



Ed Frakes Honored with Top Hat Award

Longtime Vincentian Ed Frakes from Corpus Christi Conference in Fremont received the Society's Top Hat Award in recognition for his dedicated service to helping those in greatest need. The award was presented at an event on November 3rd at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fremont. Board of Trustee Gary Flinders, himself a recipient of the Top Hat Award, conveyed the honor.

"Ed is a kind, generous and gifted man," says Blase Bova, SVdP's Executive Director. "There is no one more worthy than Ed to receive this award."



During the past 23 years, Ed has been involved in many programs for St. Vincent de Paul. He was president of the Corpus Christi conference for six years.

Ed served on the district council board and was board president of the district council from 2012 to 2015. Many pieces of Ed's artwork grace our SVdP locations, including crosses and paintings at our office in West Oakland. Ed continues to be a member of the Corpus Christi conference and serves as spiritual advisor. He is also active in the Meals of Mercy program.

The event also presented the opportunity for SVdP to host its first event in South County and we are



especially grateful to Duarte Monteiro, President of the Holy Spirit Conference, and Carol Snyder, President of the Corpus Christi Conference, for bringing together so many people to honor Ed.



Cohort 55 Now in Session



On October 17, Kitchen of Champions Cohort 55 began their nine-week culinary training program.

Cohort 55 started with four and has grown to seven members. Trainees have enjoyed the welcoming environment SVdP provides. Rita, a member of Cohort 55 said, "The people here are so pleasant. Everyone greets you with a smile and a hello and that's a good start to the day." All members will earn their ServSafe certificate so they can go on to work in a restaurant with proper certification.

Rita, like many trainees, has dreams to own her own business: "It's been great to work alongside the chefs. I'm looking to expand my culinary knowledge since I want to start my own business one day." Trainee Davora shares her end goal: "Leaving from here I'll

probably go back to school for culinary arts. It's good that I have my food handlers certificate because I can work in a restaurant now. But down the road I'd like to have my own southern restaurant. That's my biggest dream."

While sharpening their skills in our commercial kitchen, trainees help SVdP by providing the free meal in our dining room which serves, on average, 550 meals each day. Trainees gain insight into what it is like to provide a

high volume of meals to our guests. "Chef Ryan and Chef Will taught me how to feed a lot of people. I like volunteering and I like helping people," said Davora.

Special Works Manager and Chef Ryan Uyehara says he wants to see trainees learn "SMART goals and a good work ethic" before graduation. Cohort 55's graduation will be held on December 21.



Fluid Returns to SVdP - This Time in the Kitchen

Oakland-based e-commerce design and software company Fluid joined us again at our direct service campus in early November. After a successful visit last year, returning Fluid volunteers Taly and Kaye rallied their co-workers for a micro-shift service project at SVdP.

Originally scheduled to sort clothes for the SVdP Clothing Closet, the group of six was flexible and eager to accommodate Chef William's request for a kitchen project. Without hesitation, Fluid's team cleaned out an entire walk-in cooler and impressed Chef William with their positive attitude and efficiency: "This was a great group. They were driven to really help where we needed it and I could sleep in that walk-in right now, that's how clean it is!"



Kaiser Buy to Pay Returns to Dining Room

Serving at SVdP has become a tradition for Kaiser's Buy to Pay Supply Chain crew. For the past four years, these Kaiser employees have joined us in the kitchen and dining room on an annual basis. Most noteworthy was the distance traveled by some of the Kaiser team members. Joyce and Krisel came all the way from Pasadena, CA for a work meeting and stayed in town to volunteer. Staying in Oakland was an easy choice for Joyce: "The trip was worth it. It's a very humbling experience to do this and it feels great to be able to do something for the community here. I would travel

again!" Joe, one of the team's newcomers, was pleasantly surprised to learn of SVdP's food reclamation program: "I think it's cool that all these businesses contribute all the good food that is prepared here that would otherwise go to waste. It's a great program and it just makes good sense." The group of six were enthusiastic and ready to work, making them a great addition to our volunteer family.



Greg and Greg Jr. Stock the Clothing Closet

Board member Greg Govan and son Greg Jr. pose with a recent large White Elephant Sale donation of women's and men's clothing. Greg Senior sifts through White Elephant Sale surplus clothing for quality warm clothes and brings them to SVdP on a regular basis. We are grateful to both Gregs for continuing the good work, while beaming some impressive Govan smiles.



Toys and Warm Coats

During the holiday season, SVdP hosts two drives for those we serve. One is for toys and the other is for warm coats.

The toy drive collects new, unwrapped toys for children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years old.

- In addition to new toys, we also collect and distribute games, books and other age-appropriate gifts.
- You can help with this drive by donating gift cards (e.g., Target, Walmart, etc.).
- If you prefer to make a monetary donation, checks should be made payable to St. Vincent de Paul with "Christmas 2017" in the memo line (see back page for mailing information).

Donations can be made at our West Oakland direct service campus (675 23rd Street) until Monday December 4th. If you would like to host a toy drive in your business, school or other type of organization, please contact John Sterns, our community engagement manager (see back page for information).

The warm coat drive collects and distributes new and gently worn warm coats. These gifts are especially important at this time of year.

Donations are accepted at our West Oakland direct service campus (675 23rd Street). If you would like to host a warm coat drive in your organization, please contact John Sterns, our community engagement manager (see back page for information).



For More Information Contact

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Volunteer Team	Volunteer Coordinator	(510) 877-9252	volunteer@svdp-alameda.org

St. Philip Neri Students Donate 1000 Pairs of Socks

Mr. Solomon and his 4th grade class rallied to heed SVdP's call for needed socks. The students stood up at mass and asked their community to donate, specifying they did not want dirty yucky socks but nice new ones! Julia Catania, SVdP's Administration Manager, visited St. Philip Neri of Alameda to collect an impressive donation of 1,287 pairs of socks and shared her memorable

experience: "28 children gathered with Father Robert on the playground after their regular morning schoolwide assembly and I thanked them and gave them all personal certificates which proclaims they are now 'Vinnies'. Mr. Solomon was wonderful and asked about more opportunities to partner in the future and Father Robert was very pleased with the entire

experience. He told me it was a very nice way to partner with the parish."

A special thank you to Marianne Schonone for creating a wonderful moment for the students and to the 4th grade class at St. Philip Neri: SVdP welcomes you as Vinnies with open arms!

