

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: January 2018



Kitchen of Champions

With Graduation of Cohort 55...

Kitchen of Champions Cohort 55 graduated on December 21st surrounded by family and community, including SVdP staff and volunteers. Each graduate prepared a favorite meal to share with all attendees and the turnout was strong. All of the students had landed employment (or been offered jobs) before they graduated, making this team an extremely successful one.



The next steps for the workforce program involve following up with each trainee/graduate and incorporating more professional development training offered by volunteers to all past and current KoC participants. Thanks to Carmen Brick and Ava Gambero for their work with KoC cohort 55 and for facilitating workshops with other KoC alumni.



...Cohort 56 Begins

A new group of Kitchen of Champions trainees - Cohort 56 - started with SVdP in January. The group is embarking on a nine-week program to learn culinary arts skills provided through SVdP's Kitchen and Free Dining Room.

The KoC program covers all of the skills needed for a successful start in the culinary and hospitality fields. These

include creating and following recipes, working with kitchen equipment, knife skills and developing meal plans. As the cohort progresses through the program, they will have an immediate impact by helping to prepare the meals served in SVdP's Free Dining Room. In addition to the kitchen skills gained through the program, the KoC cohort will receive training on topics ranging from job searches and resume writing to interview skills and conflict resolution. "KoC is a program that embodies the Vincentian spirit of giving a hand up to those looking to change their lives," says Blase Bova, SVdP executive director.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Monday, January 15th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, January 17th, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am t 11:30 a.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Wednesday, January 17th, **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, January 23rd, 1:30 p.m., **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday).
- Saturday, January 27th, **Ozanam Enrichment** - All Saints, Hayward - Mass at 8:30 a.m. - followed by the workshop.
- Thursday, February 1st, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda. (1st Thursday).
- Tuesday, February 6th, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland. (1st Tuesday).

Thank You Fremont Bank

The Fremont Bank Foundation made another generous gift to SVdP to support our holiday programs. "We deeply appreciate our ongoing relationship with Fremont Bank," says SVdP executive director Blase Bova. "The foundation's generosity makes a big difference for those we serve during the holidays." The foundation's gift was delivered by David Lawrence, private banking manager with the bank. The Fremont Bank Foundation was established in 1995 and is an independent, private grant-making foundation, providing financial assistance to nonprofit organizations for the implementation of services and programs that enhance the quality of life throughout our community.



News Briefs

■ There's so much happening at our direct service campus in West Oakland, and most of it goes better with more hands involved. We need regular help in the Dining Room, Community Center, Men's and Women's Centers, Job Training Programs, and in the Phone (and Admin) Center. 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 St. Vincent de Paul, our programs and those we serve. Legacy gifts are a way for your charitable giving to keep having an 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. 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, contact Blase Bova or John Sterns. (See back page for contact.)



Meet John Jones, Workforce Coordinator



As SVdP's new workforce development coordinator, John Jones brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to his role. John's background includes professional and academic time in Chicago, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, most recently working with youth in Chicago schools. When he returned to Oakland from Chicago he was immediately hit with the growing homeless population throughout the Bay Area and the real issues that required attention in order to

help those in need. SVdP is a "perfect spot" for John to put his skills to work because of the range of programs we offer and the diverse solutions we apply to assist those we serve. "I am someone who wants to be the nexus, the connection point, for providing all of the services our clients need," says John. "I wake up every day knowing that I am doing exactly what I want to do."

Gift Drive a Huge Success. Thank You!



Thank you to everyone who donated to our annual gift drive and coat drive. With your consistent support, SVdP wrapped up 2017 with some impressive numbers. We have collected more than 300 coats with 21 bin locations throughout Alameda County. More than 400 toy donations were collected in time for our successful Christmas Open House in mid-December. 100% of the new toys came from conferences and community partners throughout the Oakland diocese, with a special mention to two conferences in Contra Costa County that donated as well. We are thrilled with the

outpouring of support and hope 2018 continues with an abundance of generosity in spirit. Our One Warm Coat drive is still in full swing! Should you want to donate a gently-used warm coat or host a collection bin at your place of employment, please contact John Sterns at js Sterns@svdp-alameda.org.



Christmas Open House

SVdP held its annual Christmas Open House on Saturday December 16th. Seventy-five families and nearly 250 children attended the event, which would not have been possible without the generous contributions we received for toys, clothing and grocery gift cards, and the selfless donation of time and materials offered by our volunteers.



“We couldn’t do any of this without our donors and volunteers,” says John Sterns, SVdP’s community engagement manager.



“They make this event a bright spot for our children and families.”

The time for celebration and gift giving continued after the event as more toys and clothing were distributed to families and children on our waiting list. In total, we provided gifts to 302 children and 88 families.





Every child received a gift and every family was given a gift card for groceries.

"Because of our generous donors," comments Blase Bova, SVdP executive director, "we were able to extend our giving beyond the event itself. It was truly a special holiday for those we serve."

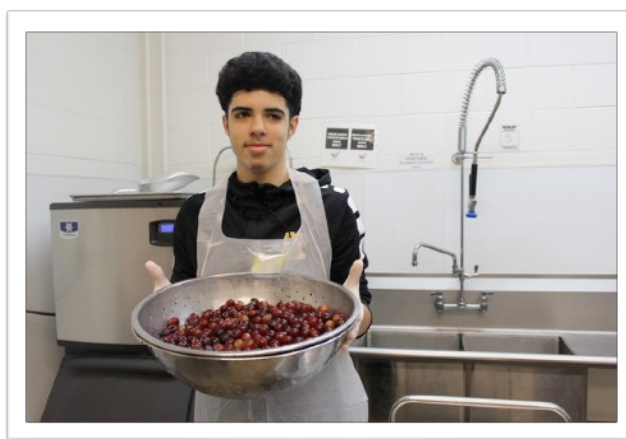


Junior Varsity Boys Basketball Achieve Tall Marks



After a successful visit from Alameda High School's frosh boys' basketball team in early December, the much taller boys' junior varsity team arrived to SVdP on the first Saturday of 2018. Coaches Quinn Evans and Kris Duncan provided leadership off the court, checking in on students who were chopping, cleaning, and organizing throughout the kitchen, prep room, and dining room.

Fifteen players in uniform warm-ups made for an impressive sight as volunteers across the dining room floor were taken with the players' height and zest for completing the tasks at hand. Coach Quinn Evans declared the day a success by end of service: "I've already got some of the students asking me when they can come back! Thank you so much for the opportunity to help out here. It's been a great day."



Five Reasons to Shop 2nd Hand

Second-hand items have a story. There's something much more rewarding about choosing a one-of-a-kind sweater or skirt rather than a generic piece from your fashion big box store. Second hand just creates stories – from where they've been and what you make with them, to what you tell others about their journey. **Saving (yours and the earth's) resources and reducing waste.** There is already enough stuff in the world, and every time you buy new you feed the consumer demand cycle for creation of new goods. Buying thrift is better for the environment, and let's not forget about the \$\$ resources you save. **It's more community-friendly.** Chain department stores rely on global supply chains and overseas manufacturing ordering huge

quantities to keep costs low. Second-hand stores are mostly independent and local, hire local and often have a great community around the store that know the employees and each other. **It means stepping off the consumer treadmill.** For many, shopping can be a type of entertainment that means buying stuff that you didn't even know you needed until stepping into a store. Being more deliberate about the choices we make puts us back in control of our lifestyle – and our pocketbook. **Shop nonprofit and you serve people in your community.** St. Vincent de Paul's thrift stores exist to fund our mission of helping our neighbors in need. This includes food assistance, an emergency shelter, and job training to provide a path to full-time employment. Choose a nonprofit and make your shopping decisions count.



Solar Mosaic

December brought a new community partner to SVdP's direct service campus. Solar Mosaic, an Oakland based company, provides affordable solar loans to homeowners across the United States, bringing clean, safe solar energy accessible to as many as possible. Mission-driven and ready to work, this group fit right in during kitchen prep and lunch



service with our regular volunteers. Seventeen Solar Mosaic employees volunteered over two days and the experience inspired Nakayla to do more: "Volunteering at SVdP with some of my colleagues from Solar Mosaic was so heart-warming that I want to do more. I have a bin full of women's shoes, boy's shoes, and gently-used clothing to donate to SVdP." We are grateful for Nakayla and her work mates for a great first visit to SVdP.

Betty Jo Reuben and her Sisters in Red

Betty Jo Reuben has been a regular Saturday volunteer for over 30 years and in late December she brought some dear friends with her. These Ladies in Red brought charm, style, and Christmas spirit to the SVdP dining room. Each Lady wore a personalized apron and handed out candy canes to our guests.

Betty shared the group's rich history with our staff:

"We've known each other for over 30 years. My neighbor Mary and I started hosting what we called hen parties. We'd host, and everyone would bring a dish, socialize and we'd get to know one another as neighbors, mothers, and friends. Over time we grew into a support system for each other. We celebrate birthdays together, our children's weddings, funerals and when health challenges come up, we are there for one another, offering support when it's really needed. It's been wonderful, and I can't say it enough how important it is to have a community to rely on."



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
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John Sterns	Community Engagement Manager	(510) 719-0774	jssterns@svdp-alameda.org
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Wesley Palmquist	Facilities/Tenant Services Manager	(650) 796-7349	wpalmquist@svdp-alameda.org
Volunteer Team	Volunteer Coordinator	(510) 877-9252	volunteer@svdp-alameda.org

In His Own Words: R.C.

When I first came here I was out on the streets and usually when you are out on the streets you are only looking in one direction and that is to stay out in the dark. I was in jail and on drugs and alcohol.

In 2005 I turned my life around. I used to come down here and eat [in the SVdP Free Dining Room] but in 2005 I went to the [SVdP] Community Center and a man

helped me fill out the application to get into a senior citizens building and I have been there for 10 years. That was big huge step in helping me stay rooted.

Everything changed. I see all these tents and I know if it wasn't for St. Vincent I could be there. I live on a month to month basis but I am very careful. I am not looking back, I am looking forward. After I cleaned up I reunited with my family! We were estranged for 20 years! But now all of that has changed. I have grandchildren and even a great grandchild. They are in my life again. I am really happy.

