

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: February 2018



New Look for the Community Center

A generous donor has made a gift to install a new floor in SVdP's Community Center at our West Oakland campus. This contribution will provide 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 have a respite from street life and come together in fellowship.



The donor, Lillian Trillo, wants to know that her gift "will be visible and make a difference." Her intention is for the gift to benefit SVdP's clients in the long term.

"Our hope is that the new floor will add to the Community Center's appeal and make it a more inviting place for clients who come to the Center to be off the streets and access our services," 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 new floor will be a wood laminate that will extend throughout the Community Center's area. The current floor, which has not been updated since the building was built in 1976, is filled with holes and bumps and, in general, is 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."

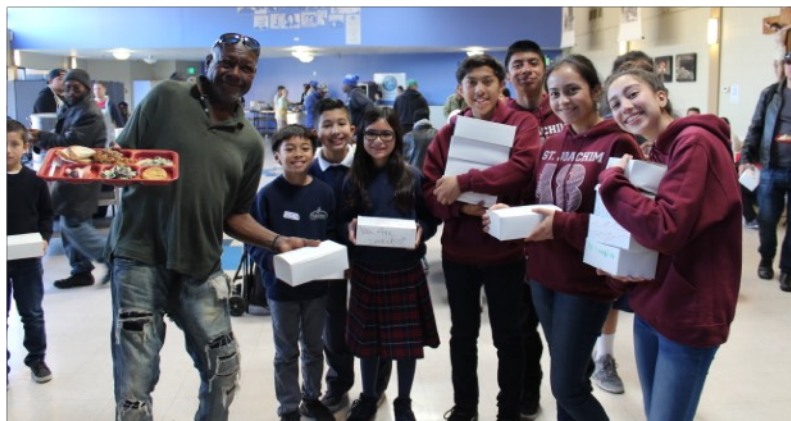
The installation of the new floor is scheduled to begin later this month.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Monday, February 19th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, February 21st, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am to 11:30 a.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Wednesday, February 21st, **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, February 27th, 1:30 p.m., **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday).
- Thursday, March 1st, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda. (1st Thursday).
- Tuesday, March 6th, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland. (1st Tuesday).

More Photos from St. Joachim *(See Page 6)*



News Briefs

■ This winter has proven to be a cold and wet one for our neighbors in need. SVdP's Clothing Closet needs more men's pants of all sizes and large men's coats and jackets.

■ 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

■ Continued Warm Coat Drive: It's still cold and raining, and SVdP is still distributing sturdy coats to men, women and children who visit our Community Center. Donate your gently used winter coats to us, and help warm someone's heart (and body)!

■ 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!

Kitchen of Champions Cohort 56 Moving On



Kitchen of Champions cohort 56 is progressing through the job training program and learning hands-on what it takes to have a career in the culinary field.

“This group is moving along very well,” says Ryan Uyehara, SVdP’s special works manager. “We’ve been able to build cooking and kitchen skills along with professional development training to create a comprehensive program.”

The KoC program covers all of the skills needed for a successful start in the culinary and hospitality fields. This includes creating and following recipes, working with kitchen equipment, knife skills and developing meal plans. The nine-week program embodies the Vincentian spirit of giving a hand up to those looking to change their lives. An added bonus is that the cohort has an immediate impact by helping to prepare the meals served in our Free Dining Room.

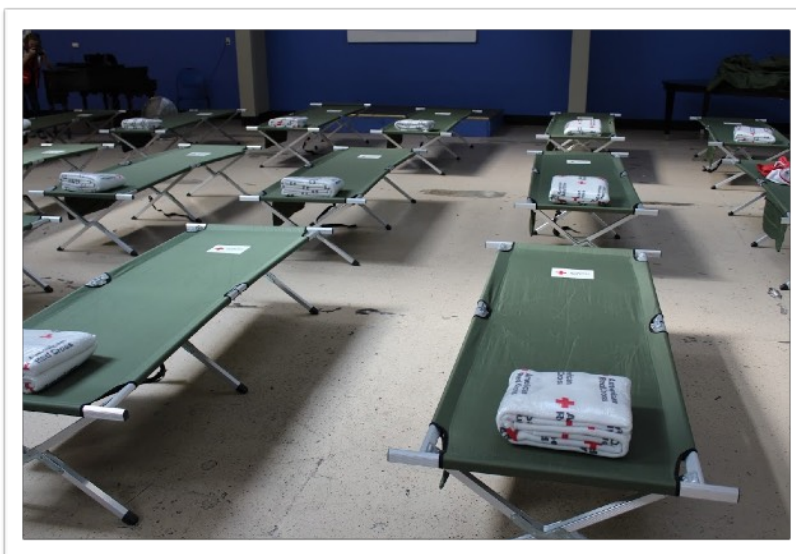
Clif Bar Visits Free Dining Room

For the first time in two years, representatives from Clif Bar returned to the free dining room for a day of service. This time, an all-new group of employees came to work in the prep room, serve the meal, clean tables, and more. The group was arranged by Jill Hammond, who chose SVdP because they had previously worked at the SVdP warehouses in San Francisco, and our Oakland location is close to their Emeryville offices. SVdP aligns with their company values, which include giving back to their community and to the planet. Jill hopes to bring Clif Bar groups here again, and sees the value in direct service and "knowing that we're participating positively in people's lives." SVdP is glad to continue to foster a relationship with a meaningful community partner.



Winter Shelter Expands

The SVdP Winter Shelter, which operates from mid-November through mid-April, has expanded to a second room that adds 35 more beds for clients. The Shelter now includes SVdP's Community Center space, bringing the total number of beds offered to 100. The program, offered in partnership with the City of Oakland, is the largest temporary shelter in Oakland.



"Homelessness is an issue on everyone's mind," says SVdP executive director Blase Bova. "Rising rents and a shortage of housing have fueled a crisis. More and more people are displaced with nowhere to go."

The program has also been able to expand its services to clients with the help of volunteers. On Tuesday evenings, a couple of volunteers lead art projects and new volunteers are beginning to help with the setup and check-in processes. If you are interested in volunteering in the Winter Shelter, contact John Sterns (see back for contact information).



Remembering Sachi Capilla

Sachi Capilla, a longtime Vincentian and president of the All Saints conference, passed away in January. Sachi was a devout Catholic who embodied the Gospel through her Vincentian ministry.

"Sachi really lived her faith through her service to help those less fortunate in life. She loved her parish and conference communities," says Lu Cuevas, SVdP's Spirituality, Formation and Extension coordinator. "The All Saints conference and those it serves will miss her for a long time."

Speakers at Sachi's funeral Mass remembered her for her deep faith and commitment to service. "Sachi always saw the face of Christ in those she met," says Cuevas. "Few of us will have that type of blessing in our lives and Sachi remains as an example for us all."

"On behalf of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County, I offer our condolences to Sachi's family and the All Saints community," says Blase Bova, SVdP executive director.





Memorial Gifts Aid Dining Room

Brendan Pedder was a long-time volunteer in SVdP's Free Dining Room. When Brendan passed away, his sister, Shannon Pedder, decided to raise funds in Brendan's memory to aid the program. Over the years, this effort has generated more than \$35,000 in gifts to benefit the Dining Room and has made a tremendous difference for the program and those we serve.

"Our relationship with Shannon and the donors to the Brendan Pedder Memorial Fund is a special one that we deeply appreciate," says SVdP executive director

Blase Bova. "Brendan was a wonderful volunteer and we are grateful for the gifts that add to his legacy."

The Free Dining Room continues to serve about 550 meals a day, Tuesday - Saturday. It is the largest such program in Alameda County. If you are interested in volunteer in the Dining Room or Kitchen, contact John Sterns (see back for contact information).

Barber Service Adds Another Day

Joyce, the barber who offers her services to clients on Tuesdays in the Community Center, provides such a popular and much-needed service that she has added a second day - Friday - to her volunteer work.

"This project has really taken off," says Ryan Uyehara, SVdP's special works manager. "Joyce has a wonderful rapport with her clients and her work makes a big difference for those we serve."

Getting a haircut is a relatively simple thing, but it has a strong ripple effect for those who receive them. When people feel good about how they look it translates into feeling more optimistic and better about other parts of their lives.

"Joyce's volunteer work is a great example of how we strive to offer services that touch our clients in personal, meaningful ways," says Blase Bova, SVdP's executive director. "We want our clients to know that their well-being matters to us and Joyce offers a terrific service that conveys that message."



St. Joachim's Sandwiches

At the end of January, student representatives, parents, and faculty from St. Joachim's School brought 400 boxed lunches to SVdP's Dining Room, where they passed out the food by hand to each guest. The students also received a tour of our Dining Room and Kitchen area and got to walk into our large industrial refrigerators and



see the type of food we store there. The entire school participated in the lunch making process, with each grade level responsible for one food element, like bread, chips, and fruit. Then, at an all school assembly, every student helped put together the lunches. The students also added a special touch to each lunch by writing uplifting messages and coloring pictures on the lunch boxes. This is a very thoughtful gesture that can help make someone's day a little bit brighter. Two students from each class are chosen to come to our dining room to hand out the lunch to our guests, who were eager to receive another lunch at SVdP.



Dana Bayer, the Vice Principal, has been bringing her students to SVdP for 20 years because, "It helps them (the students) live their faith and learn what it means to be Catholic, or a follower of Christ, and to help those in need." Since SVdP serves a large amount of guests each day, Dana believes that bringing students here allows them to see and understand the bigger picture of what SVdP does, and how many lives we have the ability to positively impact.

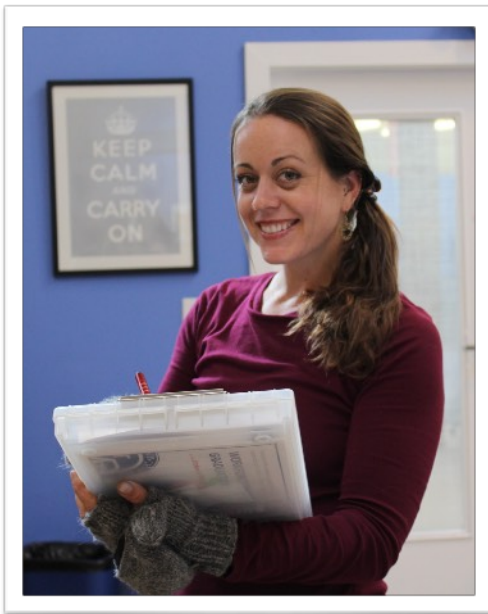
According to Dana, this school-wide

project is a way we can "understand how small contributions can come together to make a difference and help others." Though St. Joachim's is a small school, they made a big impact on our dining room guests who received a hand packed lunch, and a little art piece made by elementary school students. We always appreciate the creativity of our volunteers, and look forward to next year when the students return.



Marin Academy

On January 30, a group of 16 students and two teachers from Marin Academy in San Rafael volunteered in the Dining Room. The students are learning about grant writing as a part of their sophomore English courses. They have been researching local organizations and writing practice need statements to learn about the process of funding nonprofits, large and small. English teacher Mary Collie said, "It is important for us to look at organizations that are empowering insecure populations and trying to change the cycle of poverty." The students will use this local perspective to supplement their final class project, where they will debate the helpful and hindering elements of international service and aid. SVdP was a glimpse into local community empowerment efforts, and we hope their experience here will continue to enrich their academic and personal lives.



Welcome Katie Troy

SVdP is happy to welcome our new volunteer coordinator, Katie Troy. Katie has a wealth of service experience from multiple international and domestic relief efforts over the past ten years in Peru, Philippines, Nepal, Dominica, and Texas through an organization called All Hands. Upon her return to Oakland, her hometown, Katie saw how the city's homeless population had grown, creating a more visible gap between the poor and the wealthy, and knew she wanted to do something about it. "I didn't feel correct not doing something to help out. And this organization has the capacity to bring people together in an amazing way," she said. Katie is also a certified yoga teacher, and hopes to eventually teach classes at SVdP. Katie wishes to engage with and recruit young adult volunteers from Oakland to give residents a chance to "help their community." We are glad that Katie is able to give back to her community through her work at SVdP.



For More Information Contact

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Julia Hancock	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jhancock@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	ruehara@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

Are We Involved in Politics?

By Giulio Grecchi, SVdP Tucson Council

From time to time, it is appropriate to remind all readers of the position of the Society with respect to our work for social justice in favor of the people we serve. Part 7 of the Rule, Relationship with Civil Society – Work for Social Justice, describes well the principles that we follow. We invite Vincentians not familiar with Part 7 of the Rule to take the time to review it.

Our action has nothing to do with ideologies or political parties’ agendas. What dictates our action are the concrete needs of the people we serve, who very often experience injustice and inequality. The Rule recommends that, besides giving immediate help, Vincentians “identify the root causes of poverty and contribute to their elimination” (7.1). “Where injustice, inequality, poverty or exclusion are due to unjust economic, political or social structures or to inadequate or unjust legislation, the Society should speak out clearly against the situation” (7.6).

We expect all Vincentians and Catholics in general, to understand the moral principle that involvement in public life is both a virtue and a moral obligation. As Catholics, we cannot remain neutral in situations of injustice, or we become accomplices of the injustice.

The Rule also recommends that we help the poor and disadvantaged to speak for themselves (7.5). The Rule foresaw Systemic Change even before that term was coined. As we help people move out of poverty through Systemic Change, we see many indeed ready to be part of our advocacy, especially on local issues, such as bus rates and routes, predatory lending, etc.

Coincidentally, Pope Francis echoes the wisdom of our Rule. “When the cries of so many go ignored,” Pope Francis said, “not only do we deny their God-given rights and worth, but we also reject their wisdom and prevent them from offering their talents, traditions and cultures to the world.”

