

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: June 2018



Gloria's Story

Gloria is a regular guest in the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room. She also uses the services we provide in our Women's and Children's Visitation Center, including laundry, showers and clothing. Her life is hard and lonely, and it is often unsafe and frightening.

"I sleep on the streets. Last night a man came over and stood right by my feet. It woke me up. It was scary. It was past 12 o'clock. I asked him to please go over on the other side. I am not used to living like that.

"I want go back to North Carolina, but all my ID was stolen. I am waiting on my replacement. I am a Vietnam veteran and I was a civil service worker downtown."

Gloria is well-known by SVdP volunteers and staff, but we don't always know what we can do to help her and the many, many others who are homeless in our communities. Homelessness has reached a crisis point in Oakland, as well as in communities throughout the East Bay. Financial desperation, mental

illness, addiction, domestic violence – these are just parts of the many stories we hear from those we serve.

The SVdP motto is "neighbors helping neighbors." Join us and become part of the caring response to homeless women, children and men who are neighbors in need for all of us.

Visit svdp-alameda.org/volunteer to learn more about how you can join us as a volunteer at our West Oakland direct service campus, or connect with a SVdP volunteer group (called a "conference") at your local Catholic parish. Help us to help others.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Tuesday, June 5th, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Thursday, June 7th, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda. (1st Thursday).
- Monday, June 11th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, June 20th, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am to 11:30 a.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday).
- Wednesday, June 20th, **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, June 26th, 1:30 p.m., **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday).

Shelter Rests Until Next Year



After seven months, the Winter Shelter is taking a rest until next year. During any given month, SVdP would host between 200-300 individuals in our spaces in the dining room and community

center, which held 65-100 beds. Each night, dedicated staff and volunteers ensure that they provide a safe, clean space for guests. "Hosting the winter shelter takes a lot of work that is very rewarding. I'm glad to see another successful end to a great season," said Leslie Thomas, Homeless Services Manager.

In the months where SVdP does not host a shelter, we would like to ask our neighbors to reflect on how you can continue to ensure that our neighbors have basic needs and how you can provide others with comfort and protection. Thank you to everyone involved with making the shelter a success, and we look forward to reopening next year.

News Briefs

- 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
- 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!
- Legacy gifts, also known as planned gifts, have made a tremendous difference for SVdP and those we serve. Legacy gifts let your charitable giving have a long-term 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. For more information about legacy gifts, contact Blase Bova or John Sterns. (See back page for contact.)

The Gift of Literature: Stories of Second-Hand Treasures

By Juli Jugan and Jessica Mott, Saint Mary's College of California

Stories are an important way for Saint Vincent de Paul to connect to the community by showcasing our clients, staff, programs and volunteers. For two of our star volunteers, their stories are greatly influenced by books. Renee Matsumoto and Marne Chapin Schreiber are San Leandro natives who have graciously dedicated their time to organizing the book department of the Fremont thrift store. Renee came across the thrift store due to her passion for reading. She says, "I love to read, and when I worked in Fremont, I found the SVdP thrift store. When I retired, I wanted to volunteer at SVdP, but I really only wanted to work in the book department." Renee's wishes came true and she began volunteering in 2015, when the book department was much smaller and, though enjoyable, it was too much work for her alone.

Fortunately, last year, Renee's "prayers were answered" and Marne joined the team. Marne has had a life full of book-related jobs, and the two became fast friends. Marne was looking to volunteer at the Fremont Library upon retirement, but they weren't looking for volunteers at the time. According to Marne, "[...] when God shut that door, he opened another one for me directly...into the Saint Vincent de Paul thrift store in Fremont and their thousands of books!" Marne fell in love with the opportunity to work in her own "private library."

Together this team is unbeatable. They both agree that one of the best parts is meeting and working with each other. Renee comments, "Marne loves books as much as I do. We make a good team." Marne returns the sentiment, saying, "We think so much alike and get along so well. It is a privilege to volunteer alongside her." Presently, Marne and Renee only volunteer one day a week, but they are hoping to expand to two in the near future. The love and passion for this thrift store is apparent. Marne tenderly refers to the store as "our happy place."

The SVdP thrift stores are a wonderful way to shop at reasonable prices, and contribute to SVdP programs and the mission of neighbors helping neighbors. Consider checking out one of the thrift stores (located in Fremont and Livermore) on your next shopping trip, and consider donating gently used items to the thrift stores; your old books could become someone else's next treasured story.



Celebrating Eight Standout Volunteers

St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County awarded Top Hat and Vincentian Service Awards to eight longtime volunteers and members of the organization, called Vincentians. Janet Graham from St. Michael in Livermore and Steve Tedesco from St. Bede in Hayward were awarded the organization's highest honor, the Top Hat Award, to signify their service in their parish and local communities and following the organization's motto, "neighbors helping neighbors."

Six other Vincentians, Chuck Deckert



TOP HAT AWARD WINNER JANET GRAHAM RECEIVES THE SOCIETY'S HIGHEST HONOR ON MAY 18TH.



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from Catholic Community of Pleasanton, Rod Andrade from St. Raymond in Dublin, Ken Goode from St. Joachim in Hayward, Louie Barranco from St. John the Baptist in San Lorenzo, Trish Ferrari from Our Lady of Grace in Castro Valley, and Nancy Hollister from Church of the Transfiguration in Castro Valley, were awarded the Vincentian Service Award, marking their ongoing commitment to spirituality, fellowship and service.

Awardees devote countless hours

to leadership roles within their parishes' Vincentian Conferences, conducting home visits to neighbors in need, and volunteering at the St. Vincent de Paul direct service campus in West Oakland. The awards were given at a celebration at the Church of the Transfiguration in Castro Valley on May 18.

Refreshments were freshly prepared by the current Kitchen of Champions cohort.

The gathering also coincided with SVdP's 80th anniversary of service in Alameda County.



RECIPIENTS OF THE VINCENTIAN SERVICE AWARD (LEFT COLUMN): NANCY HOLLISTER FROM CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION, CHUCK DECKERT FROM CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF PLEASANTON, KEN GOODE FROM ST. JOACHIM IN HAYWARD. (RIGHT COLUMN): TRISH FERRARI FROM OUR LADY OF GRACE, ROD ANDRADE FROM ST. RAYMOND IN DUBLIN, LOUIE BARRANCO FROM ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN SAN LORENZO.



Celebrating Cohort 57

Another successful Kitchen of Champions cohort has completed nine weeks of intensive culinary training and was celebrated at a graduation ceremony on May 10 at the SVdP downtown community center.

Workforce Coordinator, John Jones, arranged for two stellar keynote speakers to inspire the graduates in the next stage of their lives. First, Mayor Libby Schaaf addressed the group with a message about taking risks and supporting your community. "I wanted Mayor Schaaf to speak at graduation because she seems to have the ability to bring people together," Jones said. The next speaker, Dr. Harry Edwards, is a prominent social activist and esteemed academic. His speech cited many civil and women's rights activists whose work shapes the world today. "We are always looking for any opportunity to welcome someone like Dr. Edwards to talk to anyone who's going to the next stage of their life. He has so much educational achievement that is important to bestow upon our trainees," Jones said. Dr. Edwards also had an impact on our staff, and many were able to meet one of their role models and take pictures together.

After the speeches, each graduate was presented with a ServSafe food handler's certificate, a certificate of completion, and a special leadership award. Each graduate also had the opportunity to give a short speech upon accepting their awards, where many thank their family, friends, and mentors for supporting their journeys. Everyone was able to watch a commemorative video to mark their journey with SVdP. "This cohort really bonded together and I hope they stay that way," Jones said. The cohort



prepared a full dinner menu for the reception, their last project as a group.

In the future, the Kitchen of Champions program hopes to expand recruitment to as many areas as possible, and to engage more with the surrounding community through field trips and social enterprise ventures.



Cohort 58 Asserts its Will Power

Despite having similar names, two Kitchen of Champions trainees bring their own unique skills and dynamic to the SVdP kitchen. Wilton Stephens is a veteran who worked in the army kitchen for six years. Stephens, who is called "Will," enjoys the opportunity to socialize with old friends he made from his time as a guest of SVdP, and "is always making new friends." One of these friends is Willie Reeves, another member of cohort 58. Reeves has known about SVdP since the 1980s, when he saw a sign outside the building advertising the free dining room. "We had enchiladas and rice. I couldn't believe that it was all



free," Reeves said. Reeves now sees firsthand the hard work that is done to create the meals he loved at SVdP. "You think you can cook a little bit, but when you step into this kitchen, that all changes," Reeves said.

Serving 500 meals per day is no small feat, and Reeves and Stephens are always learning from Chef Armando Corpus, Kitchen Manager. "This cohort brings a lot of experience in the kitchen, they work well together, and they have positive attitudes." Corpus said.

The Berkeley School Learns Lifelong Lesson

What seemed like a regular SVdP morning in mid-May turned into a bright spot when a group of 30 second-grade students and chaperones from The Berkeley School filled our Community Center with smiles as they hand delivered packed lunches and hygiene items to our guests. Though SVdP provides free hot meals five days per week, our guests still need to rely on other food sources to ensure their



needs are being met. Providing boxed lunches gave the students insight into the needs of their neighbors. "This trip was so meaningful for the kids. It made all the difference to our learning and thinking about folks experiencing homelessness," Kate Klaire, Director of Student Life at The Berkeley School, said.

You can make a difference in someone else's life at any age. If you'd like to learn more about creative ways to give, back, contact our volunteer coordinator (See back page for contact).



For More Information Contact

Name	Position	Phone	Email
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Ryan Uyehara	Special Works (Programs) Manager	(510) 593-4120	ruyehara@svdp-alameda.org
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Volunteer Team	Volunteer Coordinator	(510) 877-9252	volunteer@svdp-alameda.org

Donor Spotlight: Strive for Change Foundation

St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County has been the grateful recipient of several annual grants from the Strive for Change Foundation. The foundation focuses its support on workforce development programs throughout the East Bay. SVdP’s job training work includes our Kitchen of Champions culinary arts program, for which Strive for Change has been an important source of support. “Strive for Change is a local leader in the workforce development field,” says Blase Bova, SVdP Executive Director. “They not only offer financial support, but they also serve as a resource for job training organizations who help

one another expand and improve their programs.” An example of this role as resource was the recent grantee meeting, which brought together representatives from more than 20 workforce development agencies and offered an opportunity for attendees to share best practices and strategies about the recruitment, retention and job placement of workforce trainees. “Our workforce program exemplifies our work to offer a hand up, not a handout, to those we serve,” says Bova. “We appreciate the support that Strive for Change has provided.”

