

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: December 2018



### In His Own Words: Dave

Each of our guests has a unique story. We share our resources with anyone who walks through our doors. It is an honor for us to be able to learn about our guests and share their words with our community. This month's newsletter features words from a guest who does not use our services in the same way others do. He utilizes our space to meet and aid guests in need. Read below for Dave's story.

"I do outreach work in West Oakland. My clients are homeless, addicts, survivors. I came here to find those people, because they don't always want to find you. I've been coming to St. Vincent de Paul for five years. I eat in the dining room and socialize and connect with people that I can refer to services I know. I've lived at the same home for 22 years. I spent 27 years as a stock broker. When I retired, I looked into this community and saw a lot of grief and pain. I spoke to the executive director at St. Vincent at the time and she let me interact with the clients.

"I know the people in this community. I do a lot of work with West Oakland Health, so I refer people to them when I'm here. I'm from Jamaica. There, they teach you 'you're your brother's keeper.' In America, everyone is in it for the individual, not for the collective wellbeing. Mental health services are in a shortage around here. People can't live their full potential because of it. There are some absolutely brilliant talents in this center, but no one has ever encouraged them. No one has told them they love them. And that is a shame. That is a real shame.

"People fail to understand that when someone says they're cold or hungry, that need is now; you can't wait to act. If you wait, that person might not be around when you decide you want to help. It is urgent. It can be life or death. I come back to St. Vincent de Paul to help human beings. I promised myself I'll always do something for somebody. The reward comes when you look at another human and you know that you've helped them."



## Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Monday, December 17th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, December 19th, **Board of Trustees meeting** – fellowship/meal at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:00 p.m. West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Thursday, January 3rd, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda.
- Tuesday, January 8th, 1:30 p.m., **Development Committee**, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.

## Community Offers Up Prayers

Since Christmas 2016, the West Oakland direct service campus has offered a space in our community center for guests, staff and volunteers to offer up prayers by writing their intentions and posting them for others to see. It started with the idea of being a holiday tradition, but was so popular and meaningful, it's been left up ever since.

We offer a podium, writing utensils and sticky notes for our community to post their prayers on the wall. What is written is never thrown away, and is kept in a binder for safekeeping. These prayers reveal what is on our community members' hearts, and we plan on keeping the tradition alive for as long as possible. Pictured below is a guest writing an intention at the prayer station. May we always keep the needs of our community in our prayers, and take action when we are able.



## 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](http://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 information.)

# Volunteer Feature: Shirley Peterson



Shirley Peterson has been volunteering at the West Oakland direct service campus for many years in the family dining room. She serves every Friday with her fellow Toolworks cohort. Toolworks is an organization that helps provide job training, housing assistance and more for disabled people. St. Vincent de Paul is one of many organizations where Shirley serves.

Shirley also works at a children's hospital, an elder care facility and is taking cooking classes. She hopes this experience will help her get a job in the culinary

industry, at a coffee shop or restaurant, or a hospital kitchen. Shirley's kind heart is what makes us at SVdP happy to work with her each week. "I go to bed and I say 'What can I do for that person? How can I help out?' There are so many wonderful things I can do and continue to do. I have a lot to be grateful for. I have a bright future ahead of me," Shirley said.

## St. Philip Neri School Gives Back

The St. Philip Neri community consistently supports St. Vincent de Paul through its service. This fall, sixth grade students at St. Philip Neri School provided over three hundred new towels to our men's and women's centers. They were collected at the school and church, and at St. Albert's Church in Alameda. "The students took pride in this project. They were so excited to count the number of towels that came in," Vincentian volunteer Marianne Henderson said. The towels will be used to provide showers to hundreds of people each week at SVdP.

At St. Philip Neri, service learning is engrained in their curriculum. Each class chooses a service project to administer throughout the school year.

St. Philip Neri School emphasizes the role of leadership and community. The school was given the Outstanding School Award by Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl at their grant awards breakfast on December 13. Representatives from the eighth grade class attended the reception to accept their award. St. Philip Neri represents the positive impact young people can make within their communities. Thank you for your support!



# Coat Drive Bigger Than Ever



St. Vincent de Paul once again held a warm coat drive during the holiday season. This year more than 30 community partners participated in the drive and more than 500 coats were donated. The coats are distributed through our clothing closet and shelter programs. Pictured is community member, CJ, with the new coats.

"This year's drive was our biggest ever," commented Blase Bova, SVdP's executive director. "It's amazing how generous people are and these coats make a big difference to our clients, many of whom are homeless."

The drive got an early start with the delivery of bins beginning in September. Coats were donated by individuals and groups throughout Alameda County and, for the first time, from organizations in Contra Costa County. Thank you to all our donors

for sending the coats our way and to our volunteers who sort and prepare the coats for distribution.

# Kaiser Thrives, Serves 500+ Hours

Kaiser Permanente volunteers filled our dining room, community center, and offices during December to provide over 500 total hours of service performed by about 100 volunteers, who were with us over the course of three days.

The groups were tasked with dining room positions, organizing our food storage, getting children's clothes ready for Christmas distribution, and more. "The Kaiser groups had positive attitudes and were so helpful. They helped us with tasks that would have been postponed without them," Volunteer Coordinator Katie Troy said.

Kaiser is a great community partner, and we always welcome their groups to serve with us, no matter how large or small.

If you are interested in bringing a group to volunteer with us, please contact the Volunteer Team (see back page for contact information.)

Thank you, Kaiser!



# Giving Thanks in the Dining Room

The dining room was bustling with activity as our direct service campus team executed another successful Thanksgiving service this year. Chef Armando, Chef Elvis, and the members of Kitchen of Champions cohort 61 worked hard to prepare a menu full of Thanksgiving classics: turkey, dressing, macaroni and cheese, gravy, cranberry sauce, coleslaw, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, sweet potato

pie and apple pie. A group of 34 volunteers served alongside our staff to serve 368 large meals to our guests. We are thankful for our staff, volunteers, donors, board members and guests who support our mission and give purpose to our work. Thank you to everyone who helped make Thanksgiving a special holiday for our community. We look forward to doing it all over again next year!



# Wishing Our Community Happy Holidays



On Saturday December 15, SVdP hosted its annual Christmas Open House. This year's event was filled with joy to celebrate the holiday season with our families and their children. Eighty-three families and nearly 300 children will receive toys and other gifts this year thanks to the wonderful generosity of our donors and volunteers.

The day included a Christmas goodie bag and books for each child, along with three craft tables to call out the creativity of our younger guests. Santa Claus also made a visit and delighted the children with candy canes and photos. A raffle was held to give away dolls that had handmade costumes and our dining room served a special meal of homemade pizza.

"Christmas Open House is a wonderful event for our families," said John Sterns, SVdP's community engagement manager. "We are so grateful for our contributors who made the day a special one for our guests."

Special thanks go to Chris Massey, an amazing Santa Claus, Claire O'Reilly, our lead volunteer for the event, and the Pledge to Humanity group from San Ramon Valley High School who donated crafts and toys in memory of classmate Ben Curry.





# 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 Website: www.svdp-alameda.org
Blase Bova	Executive Director	(510) 435-2625	bbova@svdp-alameda.org
Carmen Jones-Weeks	Human Resources Manager	(510) 385-8934	cjonesweeks@svdp-alameda.org
John Sterns	Community Engagement Manager	(925) 323-5848	jsterns@svdp-alameda.org
Julia Hancock	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jhancock@svdp-alameda.org
Leslie Thomas	Homeless Services Manager	(510) 719-1000	lthomas@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

## Donor Feature: Fremont Bank

SVdP received a generous donation from Fremont Bank to assist in funding our holiday programs. During our annual Christmas Open House, we are expected to provide clothing and new toys to over 250 children. Throughout the cold winter months, we also distribute warm coats to our guests to help keep them warm as the weather becomes colder.

Gene Anderson, director, commercial underwriting, for Fremont Bank came to our West Oakland direct service campus to deliver the check to our Community Engagement Manager John Sterns. Fremont Bank is a consistent donor to SVdP. "The ongoing support from Fremont Bank allows us to make our programs as special as they can be for our guests. We greatly appreciate their support," said Executive Director Blase Bova. Thank you to Fremont Bank and to all our wonderful donors for their support of our mission.

If you'd like to contribute to SVdP, please contact John Sterns at: [jsterns@svdp-alameda.org](mailto:jsterns@svdp-alameda.org).

