

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: May 2019



In His Own Words: Sylvester

Sylvester, also known as Langston, is a regular guest of St. Vincent de Paul who can be found eating in the dining room. He is a former guest of our shelter. He always said, "If you don't see me, it's because I found housing." We are happy to say he has found housing through Veterans' support and we hope to still see Sylvester and his smile come by our West Oakland direct service campus!

"I always came to St. Vincent between November and April and I would sleep underneath the cross. But in April the shelter would close, and I would need to sleep under a bus stop. It was hard. A man tried to attack me there. Now the shelter is open year-round and what a blessing that is. Now if you need a place to lay your head you know you can count on St. Vincent. I am a Vietnam veteran. I served three tours of duty.

"But now I have just gotten a place for homeless vets with medical problems and I can stay for two years! I have a spot on my liver that keeps growing and I just had extensive surgery on my kidneys. They

help you with everything. They also help you get transitional housing.

"When my granddaughter got killed in a car accident, I was in a grieving period for over a year and the Veterans helped me and St. Vincent helped me. It was a very difficult time. It almost killed me. I needed a place to lay my head and St. Vincent was here. Now I attend groups at the behavioral center to get my mind right. I am very grateful to St. Vincent de Paul."



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Saturday, May 11th, **District Council Meeting**, 9:00 a.m., St. Bede Parish, 26950 Patrick Ave., Hayward.
- Monday, May 13th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, May 15th, **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.
- Tuesday, May 21st, **Special Works Committee**, 1:30 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Tuesday, June 4th, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Thursday, June 6th, **Spirituality Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Nob Hill Market, Alameda.

Bova Recognized by Red Cross

Executive Director Blase Bova was awarded the Good Neighbor and Partnership Award from American Red Cross Bay Area at its Volunteer Recognition and Awards ceremony on April 14. The award was given “for collaborating with the Red Cross to meet a community need.” SVdP has worked alongside the Red Cross this year by offering our shelter to victims of an East Oakland homeless camp fire, and bringing food to the first responders and victims. Bova has visited multiple sites of disasters on behalf of SVdP. “Our motto is neighbors helping neighbors, so it is especially fitting and rewarding to be recognized in this way,” she said.



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 information.)

Easter Open House Serves 187 Children

On Saturday, April 13, we hosted our annual Easter Open House for 54 families and 187 children. With the help of 16 volunteers, including photographer Sacha and a group from Pledge to Humanity at San Ramon Valley High School, we were able to give every family a Safeway gift card, Easter baskets, photos with the Easter bunny, free books and Easter themed crafts. A special pizza lunch was made by our kitchen staff and Kitchen of Champions cohort.

Our open house events are a great way to celebrate important moments of the year and bring our community together for a bright spot in our lives. Thank you to all who continue to support the open house events. Our next open house will be celebrating back to school in August. If you would like to sign up to volunteer or donate, please contact our volunteer team. (See back page for contact information.)



Many Thanks to Our Incredible Volunteers



Thank you to all who came to our Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on April 28! We hosted 128 volunteers and Vincentians from around Alameda County for lunch and awards. We recognized volunteers who have been serving with us from one to over thirty years with special SVdP pins and customized M&Ms. Thank you to Chefs Javier and Armando, along with the KoC cohort and alumni, for making and presenting a delicious meal. Simon and Joseph did terrific

work in setting up the Dining Room and then clearing it out for the shelter. Adrian and Tiffany were excellent security staff. The Spirituality, Formation and Growth Committee and the Board of Trustees were supportive and helpful throughout the time we worked on the event. Thank you to the Community Engagement staff: John, Jackie, Wafa, Lu, Ava, Katie and Chris for all their great work in making the day go so well. What a great end to Volunteer Appreciation Month! We couldn't do it without you all.





Meet Our Staff: Simon Lua



SIMON LUA (LEFT) WITH KITCHEN MANAGER ARMANDO CORPUS (RIGHT).

Simon Lua began volunteering at the West Oakland direct service campus in November and got hired on December 17 as a janitor. He works with Joseph to ensure our space is clean and maintained to serve clients, volunteers and staff. Lua and his wife, Yara, commute, starting at 4:00 a.m., for over an hour to SVdP from Stockton every day. "I brought my wife to work with me one day, and after that she loved it and wanted to come back every day," Lua said. "After that, I got her signed up for Kitchen of Champions and she's graduating in May." In his free time, Lua spends time with his family. He cites his family as his motivation for staying at St. Vincent de

Paul and for pursuing his goals and building a life for them. "I know how to maintain myself now. Family motivates me. My kids ask me to go to work with them. They want to see my accomplishments." Thank you for your great work, Simon!

Catering of Champions to Begin June 4

St. Vincent de Paul's newest enterprise, Catering of Champions, will begin on June 4. The idea was brought to us by longtime volunteer, Javier Silvares. "I remember seeing the happiness in the Kitchen of Champions students' faces while they were in the program learning so much and I thought I could do even more for them," he said. "I decided to do a step more than me just volunteering. This is really my home. It's the life I choose and the life I want to live." The program's first task is planning a fundraiser to be held this winter. The Catering of Champions staff will include Silvares, one part-time cook and an administrative aid to handle booking and advertising. Silvares has planned a menu including Spanish dishes from his home country. He cooked for 128 people at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in April, and received a lot of positive feedback about the flavorful meal. Silvares has two goals for the program: first, to provide stable employment and continuation of culinary education for graduates of Kitchen of Champions, and second, to earn money for St. Vincent de Paul. "We are really life-changers here. People want to do better and change and we accompany them on that journey," Silvares said.



Oakland A's Donate Time and Jerseys

The administrative staff for the Oakland A's volunteered in our Free Dining Room again in April. "We really appreciate the gifts and energy that the A's bring to our campus," says Blase Bova, SVdP executive director. "They have been volunteering more frequently and we really count on their presence and help." Katie Troy, SVdP volunteer coordinator, adds, "The A's group really works hard and they make connections with our guests, volunteers and SVdP staff. They go above and beyond the jobs they take on and everyone benefits." In addition to volunteering, the A's staff brought a donation of players' jerseys. As you can well imagine, this donation was very popular with our guests. Thank you to the Oakland A's for their generous support and best wishes for a successful baseball season.



Leaders Gather for Midyear Meeting

On April 24 - 27, more than 200 Vincentian leaders from across the country came together in St. Louis for the 2019 Midyear Meeting. The meeting began with the Vincentian Family Housing Task Force coming together to discuss their current projects. The following day, the National Board of Directors met, as did the Stores Committee and the Reentry Task Force. Thursday afternoon, members of the Multicultural and Diversity Committee hosted the first general session, "Open Our Hearts," which



focused on diversity training for Vincentians. One of the themes of the presentation was to remind attendees that there are different types of diversity. This year was the first time that multicultural and diversity topics were highlighted at a SVdP meeting. That evening, attendees had the opportunity to mingle at the welcome reception. Executive Director Blase Bova and our Board of Trustees President James Lee attended the Midyear Meeting and returned with positive reviews. "It is important that moving forward we focus on diversity and inclusion and I am

glad the national office emphasizes that. At St. Vincent de Paul we always strive to open our hearts to everyone we meet, and we look forward to spreading that message through our service," Bova said.



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
Marcell Lloyd	Shelter Manager	(510) 393-4259	mlloyd@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
Livermore Thrift Store	1817 Second St, Livermore, 94550	(925) 455-1104	lstore@svdp-alameda.org
Fremont Thrift Store	3777 Decoto Rd, Fremont, 94555	(510) 792-3711	fremont@svdp-alameda.org

Church Choir Fills Community with Song

On the first Saturday of May, a choir of 40 from Brigham Young University in Utah visited our West Oakland direct service campus. They took a tour and ate lunch with our guests, and then lined up throughout the room to sing for all gathered there. The group was taking part in a 12 day trip where they were performing concerts and doing service work. "They were truly amazing," Volunteer Coordinator Katie Troy said. "The whole dining hall went quiet and just listened to them sing." The choir is from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Some of the members echoed the sentiment that it was one of the best moments of their lives so far, including SVdP volunteer Jim Greenam who coordinated the performance.

Performer Ally Christiansen spoke for the entire group and said, "It's inspiring to see people who take a stand against the poverty in our own country." This surprise performance was surely a bright spot for all involved and it brought extra light to an already beautiful Saturday afternoon.

