

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: July 2019



### In His Own Words: Darnell

"I grew up in Oakland and ended up homeless. I got tired of sharing space with other people and sleeping on couches so I ended up at the SVdP shelter eventually. When I was staying at the shelter there, I saw a sign about Kitchen of Champions and I said to myself 'I have to do something with myself.' That's when I joined Kitchen of Champions. Little did I know it would be such a rewarding experience. It gave breath to my life. I've been happy ever since. I graduated last year. Sometimes St. Vincent calls me to do catering jobs and they pay me. Now I'm volunteering here and still staying in the shelter. Bay Area Community Services is helping me with housing. Staying in the shelter helps me qualify to get housing.

"I worked at the Open Door Mission on 7th Street cooking for the homeless and the residents there. It is a rewarding experience any time you do anything to help the homeless, because you know what they're

going through because you're in the same situation. After working there, I felt that I could pursue bigger opportunities for myself. I'm looking for good housing and stable jobs. I can't do anything without housing. That's where it all starts. The people at St. Vincent's let me back to volunteer. It's like a home away from home or a home when you don't have a home. I really appreciate the opportunity to do something rewarding with myself on track with my new career. I'm praying to the Lord and hoping I get housing and a full-time job where I can be all I can be.

"I have my drivers license and a car. I have some other skills and I'm athletic. I'm a funny guy and I can cook. I'd love to be in movies one day. Here at St. Vincent's I can say that, despite all the stress in my life, I'm able to breathe a lot better. And I thank God for that. This is where I am now and I'm gonna continue going forward."



# Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Saturday, July 13th, **District Council Meeting**, 9:00 a.m., St. Bede Parish, 26950 Patrick Avenue, Hayward.
- Tuesday, July 23rd, **Special Works Committee**, 1:30 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, July 24th, **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, August 1st, **Spirituality Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Nob Hill Market, 2531 Blanding Avenue, Alameda.
- Monday, August 12th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.

## Invitation to Catering Fundraiser

You're invited to the first fundraiser for SVdP's newest enterprise, Catering of Champions! Proceeds will help purchase food, supplies and hire more Kitchen of Champions alumni to a secure and reliable job after graduation.

**When: Saturday, July 20, 2019**

**6:30-8:00 p.m.**

**Where: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish  
2808 Lakeshore Ave, Oakland, CA 94610**

Tickets are \$25 per person. To RSVP, call 510-593-6381. Please invite your loved ones. We are excited to see you there!



## 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.)

# Donations Needed for Back to School



We will be hosting our annual Back-to-School Open House on Saturday, August 10 from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. This is our biggest Open House and we expect to once again have backpacks and school supplies for more than 250 children. In order to make sure we have enough supplies for every child, we are accepting donations through Friday, August 2 at our West Oakland direct service campus.

To donate supplies or \$25 grocery gift cards and to schedule donation drop-offs, contact John at [jjsterns@svdp-alameda.org](mailto:jjsterns@svdp-alameda.org) or call (925) 323-5848. With your help, we will make this a wonderful 'bright spot' for SVdP families as they start a new school year prepared for success with brand new school supplies and backpacks.

# Warriors Donate Shoes for Podiatry Clinic

Thank you to the Golden State Warriors for donating 150 pairs of brand new shoes to our podiatry clinic last month! The shoes are all men's from brands like Nike and Adidas, and will be distributed in our free podiatry clinic on July 17. Every patient in the clinic has their feet washed, visits the podiatrist, and is fitted for a new pair of shoes and socks. Products such as insoles and creams are also distributed for those who need it. It is a drop-in clinic and no insurance is required or asked for. We see 40 patients each month.

The podiatry clinic is a partnership with the Order of Malta Northern California Clinic and is necessary for those living on the street, whose feet guide them through life, but often are neglected or treated as a low priority. The difference a new pair of shoes and a doctor's work can make is incredible. Thank you to the Warriors for providing us with high-quality shoes for our patients!



# Young Neighbors Spend a Week at SVdP

A group of teenagers from the organization Young Neighbors in Action at St. Joan of Arc Parish in San Ramon lived out our motto, "neighbors helping neighbors," by spending one week at the West Oakland direct service campus performing acts of service. The group stayed nearby at St. Theresa Church, and came to St. Vincent de Paul all day working in the dining room and completing various projects. The group was led on a walking tour through the neighborhood surrounding the campus, and saw new building construction contrasted with the tent cities and tuff sheds outside our doors. Though many people in the group had never worked together before, their experiences brought them closer and helped them feel closer to their neighbors in Oakland. The students and group leaders provided thoughts on their experience. Please read a selection of them below.

"Everybody is super welcoming and loving towards one another. It's so nice to be around so many smiles. It's infectious." - Kaitlin

"Serving here has opened my eyes to people who are suffering around me and in my community and I will carry that with me." - Josiah

"One thing that stood out to me is how much work people put in behind the scenes to make this all happen. We worked in the kitchen and saw the preparation. It's incredible." - Faustina

"I've gotten to meet so many new people and experience so many new things and learned so many new lessons that I'll hold on to. We'll definitely be back." - Justine

"It has been a great experience. Everyone I encountered is super friendly. It was eye-opening. Everyone had something to offer me, whether it was a story, assistance or a conversation." - Sebastian

"Working at St. Vincent de Paul is an awesome experience. Staff and guests are very friendly. I enjoyed my time here." - Zach

"I had a lot of fun, especially in the family room because you got to interact with a lot of people." - Regina

"Thank you for providing an oasis at St. Vincent de Paul. Seeing the conditions in which people live breaks my heart. Keep up your good work."

- Margaret



# Google Group of 40 Beautifies Campus

Last week, we hosted a volunteer group of 40 from Google at our West Oakland direct service campus. They helped create a brand new garden on the patio for our dining room guests to enjoy. The group also painted three different colors on the hallway wall outside of the kitchen prep room to streamline our garbage sorting efforts. They painted one green for compost, one blue for recycling and one grey for landfill. Thank you to Wes



who came up with the idea, in hopes of making it easier for volunteers and staff to remember to separate our compost, recycling and trash. In addition, the group organized the walk-in freezer, deep cleaned the dish busing station in the dining room, and cleaned out the three walk-in refrigerators. "Having 40 volunteers from Google allowed us to work on projects that we'd always wanted to do, but hadn't been able to give priority to," Volunteer Coordinator Katie Troy said. "They helped us create a more beautiful and functional campus for staff, volunteers and guests and we look forward to working with them again."

Thank you to HandsOn Bay Area for connecting us with Google, and thank you to everyone who helped



make these projects run smoothly and made the group feel comfortable and welcomed. And of course, thank you to all of the Google volunteers who sacrificed their time to help us beautify our campus! These projects would not be completed without your help, creativity and enthusiasm. We hope to see you again soon!



# Inside Our West Oakland Food Locker

The food locker at the West Oakland direct service campus processed approximately 500,000 pounds of food in the past year. Food locker employees Ray Carney and Jesus Fernandez pick up donations from grocery stores like Safeway and Lucky's and bring them back to SVdP for sorting and inspection. Fernandez inspects dry goods to make sure they are unopened and unexpired and ready for redistribution. Besides being used to cook our daily free meals, food locker donations are given to Vincentian Conferences, who then share them within their own food pantries and while on home visits. Conferences place orders with SVdP, and our food locker staff delivers the orders to them. The work of our food locker staff allows us to feed our neighbors while reclaiming food that would be thrown away by grocery stores, downsizing food waste in our community.



# Home Visit Finds Dog an Unlikely Home



Home visits are how Vincentians respond to calls for assistance from our neighbors. The Assumption Conference has been performing home visits for 23 years. This is the story of one of their most memorable ones.

A number of years ago, on a cold December day, former Conference President Gary Flinders and his partner traveled to a home at E. 19<sup>th</sup> Street in Oakland. The sheriff had just left the couple a 5-day eviction notice after living in their apartment for four years. The couple had a 10 year-old son and a

small dog, Pookums, along with many belongings. They decided to contact the East Bay Community Law Group for advice on how to obtain an extension on the eviction. Once this was accomplished, they needed to search for another place. They were accepted to a place that didn't allow pets. They sadly asked Flinders to find their dog a home. On the day of their move, everyone was in tears as they bade farewell to their precious dog. It was love at first sight for Flinders. Once arriving home, he shared his feelings with his wife, Lita, who agreed to keep Pookums. It was decided to change her name to Rosalie after Sister Rosalie Rendu, who guided our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, to do home visits as the primary ministry for SVdP 186 years ago. "We thank God for Rosalie, our home visit dog," Flinders said.



# SVdP Contra Costa Celebrates 55 Years

Over 280 Vincentians, volunteers, board members and staff gathered in the parish hall of St. Stephen Parish in Walnut Creek on June 29 to celebrate the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Vincent de Paul in Contra Costa County.

Thirty Vincentians were honored for their "zeal for the poor, perseverance through adversity in service to our neighbors in need and dedication to the spiritual growth of our Society." The Top Hat Award is the highest and most prestigious honor of extraordinary service in our Society, and was presented to longtime volunteer Ron Weston, who recently passed away. Eileen Weston, fellow Vincentian and Ron's wife of 54 years accepted the posthumous award on his behalf.

Loaves and Fishes culinary program and members of St. Stephen made this event a celebration, as guests gathered to share a meal, talk story and celebrate the 55th and many, many more. Congratulation to SVdP Contra Costa on this amazing milestone! We pray for you as you continue to faithfully fulfill the mission of the Society.



# Shelter Offers Secure Storage for Guests

Our shelter now offers storage boxes for our guests. One problem that shelter guests face is having to sell or get rid of some of their large possessions before entering our facility because we have limits on what guests can bring with them. Providing storage for shelter guests allows them to have a secure space to keep bulky bags while they go about their day. Carrying your life on your shoulders can be very tiring, and can garner unwanted attention from the public. Guests can leave their belongings with us as they go to work, an interview, a family gathering, or just want a break from carrying everything. Each guest can receive a clear storage box, with their face and name on the outside, that is stored on a rack behind locked gates within our staff parking lot. We are happy to provide this service as we strive to make our shelter more comfortable for all.



# 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

## Rotary Club of Oakland Donates to SVdP

Thank you to the Rotary Club of Oakland for donating money to St. Vincent de Paul! Jim Camponigro (pictured) of the Oakland Rotary delivered a check to the West Oakland direct service campus in June. The rotary is careful about the charities they donate to, and after learning more about us, they chose us as one of their recipients. "We are happy to be recognized by the rotary as a nonprofit deserving of their gift. This affirms our good work," Executive Director Blase Bova said. To date, four rotarians from this chapter have met with Bova and toured our campus to learn more about our mission.

The rotary's goal is to live out their "service above self" ideal by engaging internationally and locally through service and monetary donations. Their members are of diverse backgrounds and bring their unique skills to execute service projects that empower youth and adults alike. Thank you for your generosity!

