

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Quarterly: Fall 2017



Team Building With Wells Fargo



Lenka Leon and her Wells Fargo's Due Diligence team spent a day in the SVdP Dining Room as volunteers. For close to a decade, Lenka has organized her colleagues to volunteer at SF-based food banks and service organizations. Since relocating to Oakland for a new role with Wells Fargo, Lenka was eager to find a new local organization to support. As expected from a Due Diligence expert, Lenka researched thoroughly to find SVdP and quickly inquired to learn more about volunteer opportunities for her team. Lenka spoke of their busy day of service: "Everyone enjoyed this experience. Some people recognized our Wells Fargo t-shirts and immediately wanted to talk to us. Acknowledging people's stories and history is a powerful way to connect with others. We all have

our stories in this life." Guillermo Sanchez, a fellow Wells Fargo employee, also spoke of the power of connection: "My dad was a boxer and I found myself having this in-depth conversation with a man who knew his boxing! We saw first-hand today how far a smile and eye-contact can go to connect with people we may never talk to on a given day. Brianna told us about this in the morning orientation and I appreciate the advice she gave us to sit down and have a chat with someone who may have some things to say."



Lenka chimed in with hopes to return to SVdP soon: "The dining room is so well-run and everyone is dedicated and passionate about the work they're doing. We all enjoyed the experience and I know that we'll be back again!"



Service, Hope, and Opportunity at St. Vincent de Paul



No work of charity is foreign to St. Vincent de Paul.

All over America, and all over the world, local chapters of St. Vincent de Paul, called Councils, create programs that best meet the unique needs of their own communities.

Since 1938, St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County has been blessed with volunteer leadership whose vision built a structure to meet both present and future needs of the families and individuals – our neighbors – who are struggling to make ends meet.

Our grass roots chapters, called Conferences, are groups of volunteers who visit low-income families in their homes, bringing food boxes, who are often able to help with things like rent, utilities, and furniture, to keep a family from losing their home, and to keep their kids safe and sound.

At our direct service campus in West Oakland (an area where so many have already lost their homes, and thousands more are facing ever-rising rents far beyond their incomes), we welcome anyone in need, with both safety net services and an opportunity for real transformation through training programs such as the Kitchen of Champions. We offer hot meals, laundry, clothing and other basic needs, with the help of hundreds of volunteers. These volunteers come from all walks of life, but share the qualities of altruism, love, and compassion.

I'd love to offer you a tour of this impressive campus. Call or email me any time to learn more. Thanks to Florinda Larkin, Sacha Kawaichi, and John Sterns for their work on this issue.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blase Bova".

Blase Bova, Executive Director
St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County

News Briefs

■ Your online purchases can benefit SVdP. Amazon.com will donate 1/2% of anything you spend on their site, once you sign up. Just visit smile.amazon.com, and choose "Society St Vincent De Paul Alameda" as your charity. Once you're set up, every purchase you make yields a donation to SVdP. Thanks for making St. Vincent de Paul your charity of choice!

■ Shopping at SVdP helps us all. We hope we're your favorite thrift store. If we're not, let us know why not. We want to keep improving until we're the favorite thrift store for every one of our volunteers and Vincentians.

■ 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

■ The *Tiny Tickets* Program lets BART riders donate their partially used tickets to St. Vincent de Paul. You can bring your tickets to any SVdP campus. We're also setting up donation boxes at various retail locations. Let Blase know if you'd like to help with this. Thanks to the East Bay Community Foundation, St. Vincent de Paul will receive 100% of the unused value on each ticket.



The Elements of Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Gu **Guests: Ernesto** "I knew nothing about homelessness. I was a heavy machine operator. St. Vincent helped me by not making me live on the streets. They helped me with food and shelter, and I got support. I need to be educated now so I can work. I came here today to shower. I can shave and clean up. And I got a haircut. I am now in school. I try and stay as presentable as possible. Just because I am homeless doesn't mean I am helpless. I still have hope. I try and be as good as I can. Maybe it will someday encourage others. "



Vi **Vincentians: Claire**, a long-time Vincentian and parishioner of Our Lady of Lourdes, is SVdP's lead volunteer for our open houses. This role keeps Claire very busy making sure we have all the right give-away items at our Easter, Back-to-School and Christmas events. Behind the scenes, Claire puts together backpacks with school supplies, Christmas gifts for children, and snacks and clothing at Easter. Claire, we couldn't do it without you!



St **Staff: John Sterns** joined us as community engagement manager in July. John is a third-generation Vincentian and has worked at a number of nonprofit organizations. He is also a former Maryknoll lay missionary, having spent three years in Thailand working in the HIV/AIDS ministry. We're thrilled to have John and his years of experience on our direct service campus. Welcome!



Vo **Volunteers: Rosilyne** When Rosilyne had to choose a volunteer site for an academic service learning assignment, SVdP was at the top of her list. For six weeks Rosilyne spent one shift per week organizing clothing donations to keep the Clothing Closet well stocked. She's enjoyed working alongside SVdP staff and, thanks to her background in social services, she has helped guests with a patient and listening ear. Rosilyne greeted staff and visitors in the Community Center

with ease as if she'd been here for many years. "The kindness I found here made this assignment a memorable one and I plan on returning to continue as a volunteer."



Golden State Warriors Win Again

We offer our sincere gratitude to the Golden State Warriors for donating over one hundred pairs of shoes to our Podiatry Clinic, along with boxes upon boxes of new t-shirts, workout pants, sweatshirts and sweatpants to our Clothing Closet.

On two separate visits, Warriors representatives, alongside SVdP staff, volunteers, and KoC trainees worked together to unload and transport the generous donations from their trucks. Amazing community partners like the Warriors support and enable SVdP to clothe and care for our neighbors in need.



We also want to extend a BIG thank you to Janet Waring, our dedicated Podiatry Clinic lead nurse, for orchestrating the two smooth donation drop-offs at our direct service campus!

A Raiders Gift

SVdP's Spirituality, Formation, Extension Coordinator and diehard Raider fan Lu Cuevas took a short trip to Alameda to collect donated goods from the Oakland Raiders.

When asked if she enjoyed every second of meeting the Raiders' representatives, Lu gave her usual rejoinder: "It is what we do for one another."

Lu took the opportunity and invited the Raiders to SVdP's Dining Room before the team's big move to Las Vegas. Thank you, Oakland Raiders for your generous donation and for making Lu's day a great one!



Oakland A's Thanksgiving in June

Oakland A's players Daniel Gossett, Adam Rosales, and Liam Hendricks, and Tarah Semien, wife of Marcus Semien, brought Thanksgiving in June to the SVdP direct service campus. The team's commitment to "Rooted in Oakland" was on full display as they served beverages and trays in the SVdP dining room and gave away boxes of green and yellow baseball caps to guests. The Oakland A's Community Fund funded the delicious and very popular meal, which allowed Chef William to design a delectable menu of slow-cooked brisket, jalapeño polenta, and pumpkin pie. The players and their colleagues brought joyful smiles to guests, volunteers and staff alike and left an indelible mark in the heart of our community. Special thanks to Christine Kroeckel of the Oakland Athletics for letting us use her wonderful photographs.



Ready, Set, Go! - Back to School

SVdP hosted a terrific back-to-school open house on Saturday August 12. Forty families attended the event and complete backpacks were distributed to 105 children from kindergarten through high school. An additional 32 backpacks with universal supplies were assembled and will be distributed to families on our waiting list.



An event like this cannot happen without the gifts of time and talent given by our volunteers, who we deeply appreciate. We had four craft tables, helmed by our volunteer Adele and



students from Beth McKnight's Pledge to Humanity group. The Tongan youth group from St. Bernard parish worked at our books table and refreshment stand, escorted guests to the Dining Room for lunch, and also helped



with backpack distribution. Conor and Marc handled guest registration. Sacha and her helpers - Justin and Noma - provided photos for our guests, which were printed and sized by Shirley and Suzan. Claire, our lead volunteer for events, shopped for and assembled the backpacks with SVdP volunteers in the weeks before the event.



A special lunch was provided to families and children and the menu included hamburgers (with the works), tater tots and fresh baked brownies. Fresh-cut melon and water was available in the Community Center.



In addition to our volunteers, special thanks to our generous donors who made the event possible, including Friends of the Oakland Public Library, Sunlight Giving, Rodan & Fiels (corporate sponsor of buildOn) and Pandora.



SVdP as First Responder

The 4-alarm construction fire on July 7th at Grand and Valdez displaced more than 100 Oakland residents. SVdP was a key part of the first response team, working closely with the City of Oakland and the American Red Cross. It's a sign of SVdP's greater visibility in the local civic community that we were included in the meeting with the Mayor, city department heads, and County officials that was called the morning of the fire.

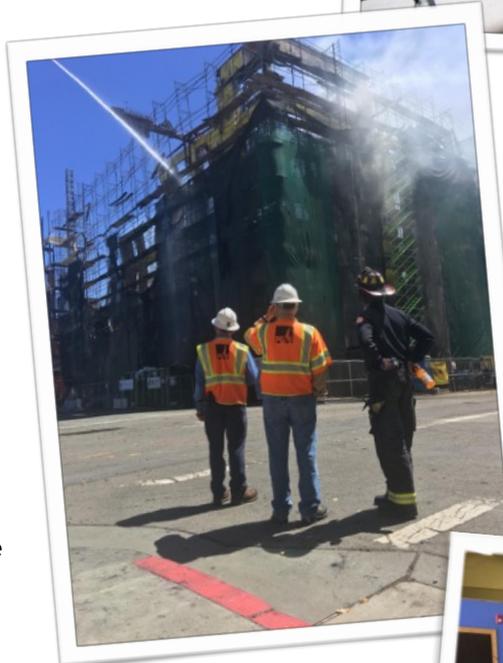
On the day of the fire and over the next days, SVdP provided food and clothing to those in need, and we hosted an emergency shelter for two nights. We brought 100 sandwiches and salads to Christ the Light Cathedral, which served as the immediate crisis response center for victims and community organizers. City briefing meetings to update those displaced by the fire were also held in the SVdP Community Center.

Our very visible and quick response to this latest fire garnered us quite a bit of media coverage, including KTVU-TV and the San Francisco Chronicle. And the posts of our response on our own social media pages garnered a high



readership and about \$1,000 in online gifts to help us better serve those in need.

Fr. Jay from the Cathedral of Christ the Light, and Fr. Jayson from St. Benedict (and Oakland Fire Department Chaplain) were very appreciative of our quick and compassionate response, as was Bishop Barber's staff.



We are proud that our agility and our mission to feed, clothe, house, and heal those in need helps define us as the go-to charity to provide such basic needs in emergency situations.



St. Benedict's Ladies Auxiliary of St. Peter Claver

For over four years, members of St. Benedict's Ladies Auxiliary of St. Peter Claver have been monthly volunteers in SVdP's kitchen and dining room. Coming from the heart of East Oakland, these ladies serve throughout the city, supporting organizations whose missions align with those of St. Peter Claver. Wallita Sykes-Bush has been a member of the group for close to twenty years and explains why SVdP is a go-to service site: "St. Peter Claver is the patron saint of slaves and ministry to African Americans. Feeding people is an easy way we can serve the needs of our community. SVdP is here with food and volunteers who care. Serving the less fortunate is important and there isn't one of us who can say with certainty that we may never need this help ourselves one day."



Parishes in Action Come and See Event



On June 13th, St. Vincent de Paul hosted a "Come and See" event on behalf of Parishes in Action (PIA) in the hopes of animating parishioners to put their faith into action.

Parish leaders from the Diocese came to hear about the Parish Solidarity Initiative, which was designed to help parishioners energize a deeper involvement in direct service and to provide leadership training and helpful

resources to budding leaders, particularly among young adults and immigrants.

The event was a success, with parish leaders touring the SVdP campus and learning about the different volunteer opportunities available on-site. The attendees ate in our dining room in fellowship with our guests and staff. SVdP looks forward to continued collaboration with PIA.



The Ripple Effect

Inspired by a fellow parishioner who is a long-time volunteer in SVdP's Dining Room, Nancy Hollister has been a regular volunteer with us since December of 2014. You can find Nancy, clad in her SVdP apron, serving beverages in the Dining Room on Thursday mornings and sorting donated clothes on Thursday and Friday afternoons. You might also recognize Nancy as the volunteer who crochets sweet goodies for our Open Houses. She's become a beloved presence on our direct service campus, charming new volunteers and influencing the SVdP family for the better. Nancy recently shared a story that highlights the power of community:

"I went out to pick up my car from the dealership and the service adviser saw me wearing my apron, so he asked me about SVdP. I told him about the Clothing Closet and the need for donations. Now he's been bringing me all his old clothes. He calls me periodically and I go out and



pick them up. So yesterday I was out to pick some up and the sales adviser who was helping me about leasing a new car heard about it so he's going to bring me his clothes! I think the word is getting out and we'll have a lot more donations. And they just love doing it!"

It's clear Nancy's enthusiastic attitude and infectious smile draw the best out of the people she meets, and we are so fortunate to have her as part of our SVdP family.

If Nancy's story inspires you to reach out to your community, we'd love to hear about it!

Cost Plus World Market

Three cheers for our Cost Plus World Market volunteers who, in addition to helping out in the Dining Room, also filled bags of school supplies for our upcoming Back to School open house. A few of these ladies will be back to participate in the August 12th celebration and backpack distribution on our direct service campus. That's dedication for you!



A New Curriculum from St. Mary's College

What do you get when sixteen professional minds work together to serve an organization they believe in? You get a very impressive work product. Saint Mary's College students from an innovative Leadership and Organizational Studies program for working professionals



presented the results of their end-of-term project in early July. The project involved investigating the needs of SVdP's workforce job training programs, as well as researching local best practices. Using internal interviews and questionnaires, as well as external research on other successful workforce models, the students compiled and presented their findings at our direct service campus. Their project resulted in curriculum that will help structure existing and future workforce programming. Our board members, staff and volunteers were impressed and inspired by the students' presentation. Special thank you to SMC faculty member Barbara McLaughlin, Ed.D for choosing SVdP for her students' project, and to Natalya Ferdinandi, our AmeriCorps VISTA, for facilitating

this partnership between Saint Mary's College and SVdP. This presentation served as a bittersweet ending both to Barbara's tenure as an adjunct with the BALOS course and to Natalya's year-long VISTA service with SVdP. Barbara McLaughlin has taught at Saint Mary's College for 15 years and in the BALOS program since its inception. Natalya Ferdinandi will move on to law school in the coming weeks, leaving big shoes to fill for our incoming Saint Mary's AmeriCorps VISTA. Thank you to all who gave of their time and talents toward improving and expanding the scope of SVdP's Workforce program. This curriculum will be useful to so many and we are proud of the hard-working professionals who are responsible for its presence on our direct service campus.

Legacy gifts, also known as planned gifts, have made a tremendous difference for St. Vincent de Paul, our programs and those we serve. Legacy gifts offer a way for donors to ensure that their charitable giving continues to have an impact that reflects their beliefs, priorities and values. If you are considering making a

planned gift for SVdP, we recommend you consult with an attorney, tax accountant or other legal and financial advisors.

For more information about legacy gifts for SVdP, contact Blase Bova or John Sterns. (See back page for contact information.)



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
Blase Bova	Executive Director	(510) 435-2625	bbova@svdp-alameda.org
Carmen Jones-Weaks	Human Resources Manager	(510) 385-8934	cjonesweaks@svdp-alameda.org
Julia Catania	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jcatania@svdp-alameda.org
John Sterns	Community Engagement Manager	(510) 719-0774	mtexier@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

GUEST PROFILE: BILL

Bill lost both his legs in Vietnam when he was 19 years old. He uses a wheelchair since a prosthesis was never made for him. What he wants most is to walk again.

"I have pain and I have flashbacks. There is nothing I can do about it, so I just let it be. St. Vincent de Paul gives me a place to come to when I'm hungry. But if a person doesn't help himself, who will help? But I do get help here. It's a real ride though. As the five blind boys said: I'm coming up the rough side of the mountain.

"SVdP helps the vets and we appreciate everything. And there are a lot of disabled vets

around here. There are not that many places to go. And we are trying to give back to our

community too. I know people a lot worse off than me. No arms, no legs. I don't complain. When you start walking, first you crawl then you learn to stand. Don't let them keep you from having courage. Like a child learning to walk, it takes many steps. You have to fall to learn to walk.

"If my floors need cleaning, I don't have help. I get the bucket and get down on my

knees and clean my own floors. We are not handicapped. We are disabled veterans. That's all. Sometimes it is hard, but I can't give up."

