

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Quarterly: Winter 2017



Hundreds of Holiday Angels

The St. Vincent de Paul mission of serving those in need is brought into sharp focus during the holiday season. It is through the work of our Vincentian conferences that these needs are met.

One of the most important ways our Vincentian neighbors help neighbors at this time of year is through bringing food to families and individuals who experience food insecurity.

Literally hundreds of Vincetians deliver food to the homeless and to those struggling to make ends meet. With skyrocketing housing costs and increases in payments for utilities, health care and transportation, many families are unable to stay in their homes and provide food on a regular basis. If there is a sudden medical expense, this can take a family into a downward spiral leading to eviction, homelessness and job loss.

Vincetians bring turkeys, hams and other holiday food from our Food Locker, which has been donated by community partners and

through local drives, to make the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals real holiday celebrations. To supplement food that is donated by the community, St. Vincent de Paul provided



\$133,181 worth of purchased food last year, which was distributed by our Vincetians to those in need in their own local areas.

"Food is such a simple, basic human need," says SVdP executive director Blase Bova. "We make a special effort during the holidays to bring not only food, but also a sense of the season's spirit of hope and joy to those we serve."



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



The holidays are an exciting time at St. Vincent de Paul.

Helping someone who has no home, by offering them a warm place to sleep during the coldest and wettest months in our Winter Shelter, is an act of true human kindness.

It feels great to help families, and to put smiles on their kids' faces by giving them a new toy and a family portrait with Santa Claus. And as you can read on the cover of this issue, we are all about providing a Thanksgiving or Christmas feast for dinner tables all over Alameda County. We do this on a truly large scale.

But it's not just the folks receiving our services who make us feel so good about our work during the holidays. It's the people who are called, who feel driven, to be part of our work. This season brings out the best in so many people, and we get to see it all first hand. The parents who want to show their fortunate children what it means to give back, or what it's like to have less. The businesses who want to do more than make a profit, who want to provide a different kind of benefit to their whole community. The calls and emails we get, hour after hour, from people who want to give so generously of their most precious possession - their *time*.

Then there's something that happens every year at this time that just blows me away. People we've never met will walk into our office, making us wonder if they need one of our services and are just shy about asking for help. Instead, they'll reach in their pocket and hand us a check, sometimes a surprisingly large one. They'll say "Merry Christmas," or "thanks for helping our neighbors," and they'll turn around and walk right back out again.

Merry Christmas!

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

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

News Briefs

■ Blase Bova, Executive Director of St. Vincent de Paul, spoke at a forum on homelessness and tent encampments at the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce on December 1st. The forum was attended by local business leaders and was entitled "Sheltering the Unsheltered".

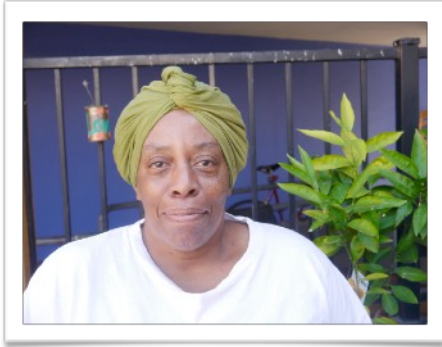
■ Your online purchases can benefit SVdP. Amazon.com will donate 1/2% of anything you spend on their site, once you sign up. Just visit smile.amazon.com, and choose "Society St Vincent De Paul Alameda" as your charity. Once you're set up, every purchase you make yields a donation to SVdP. Thanks for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



Gu

Guests: Juanita. I first came here 25 years ago and St. Vincent de Paul helped me with my kids and with the domestic violence that I had been dealing with. They helped me find a way to get to a safe house. I don't know what would've happened to me and my children without SVdP. Now I come here to get food. I'm still a little home-insecure but it is stable. I thank SVdP for helping me throughout my life and for helping my children. I tell other homeless people to go to SVdP so they can eat and find out about other services to help them.



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Vincentians: SVdP Conferences who received Rice Bowl grants. Nine Alameda County conferences received Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl Awards: Assumption, Corpus Christi (Fremont), St. Bede, St. Benedict, St. Columba, St. Felicitas, St. Joachim, St John the Baptist (San Lorenzo) and St. Joseph (Fremont). Congratulations and thanks for all the great work you do.



St

Staff: Ava Gambero is our Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) member. Ava will be with us till August 2018 focusing on volunteer development and workforce training programs. Ava is placed with us through St. Mary's College in Moraga, where she graduated earlier this year with a degree in English. "I'm interested in learning more about how to serve others," says Ava. "St. Vincent de Paul is a great way to put this into action."



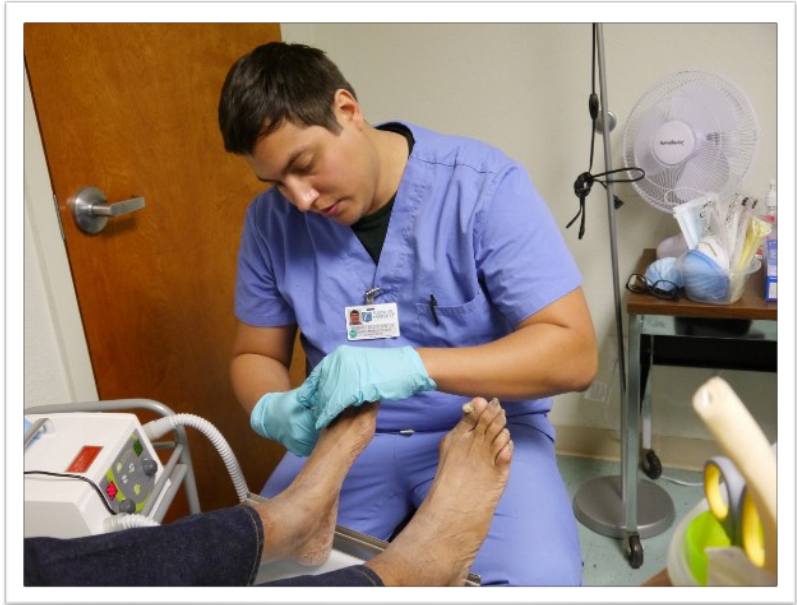
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Volunteers: Check Centers returned to volunteer in the SVdP kitchen and dining room. Two groups of five volunteers visited our campus on two consecutive days, showing off their flexibility as they helped where they were needed most. We look forward to their twice-yearly visits and hope this tradition continues. SVdP depends on the many ways that local businesses show their support for our mission through volunteering, hosting drives, and financial support. Thank you, Check Centers, and thanks to all of our partners in the business community!

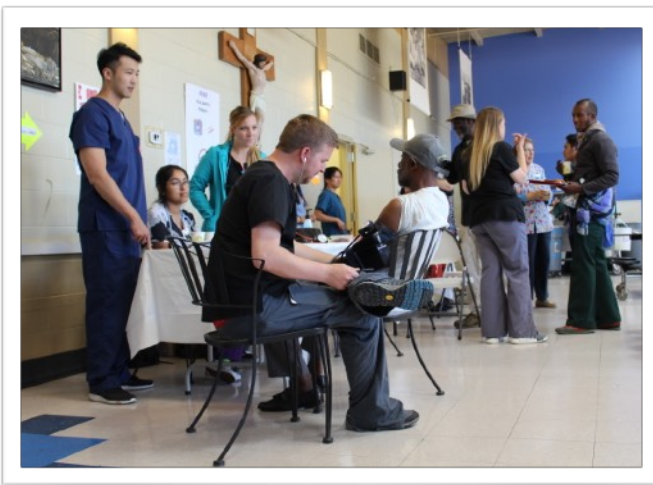


SVdP/Malta Podiatry Clinic Reunites Volunteers

On Wednesday, September 20th, the Order of Malta/St. Vincent de Paul Podiatry clinic served 32 clients in less than three hours. Our clinic continues to provide our guests with kind and efficient care as doctors, nurses, and volunteers wash feet, give exams, fill out medical referrals, and distribute fresh socks and shoes as needed. We are fortunate and proud to host the Order of Malta as they provide our community with this incredibly important service each month.



The podiatry clinic has also served as an unexpected reunion site for some of our most loyal volunteers. Nancy Hollister, Janet Waring and Betty Wolverton shared stomping ground for years as nursing professionals, and met once again at SVdP, with Janet and Betty volunteering in the podiatry clinic and Nancy volunteering in the dining room and clothing closet, where she organizes shoe donations for the clinic. These warm connections fostered between clients, staff and volunteers keep SVdP operational and we are grateful to partner with the Order of Malta to provide these much-needed and practical services to our underserved neighbors.



Cal State East Bay Back on SVdP Campus

The last Wednesday of September marked CSUEB nursing program's first day back on our direct service campus. During their fall semester students will get to hone their nursing skills every Wednesday at SVdP while administering flu shots, checking blood pressure and answering questions that arise on a per client basis. SVdP provides the perfect site for these students to

give culturally sensitive care to people of all backgrounds and socioeconomic means and our guests benefit from the students' knowledge and attention that are often missing for the most underserved members of our community. We are grateful for this rich partnership that continues to shine a light on the essential need for better health services in our neighborhood.



YapStone Joins the SVdP Family

YapStone, a Walnut Creek-based company, came in force to the SVdP dining room on a busy end-of-the-month Friday as part of Corporate Caring Volunteer Week. This group of enthusiastic volunteers brought positivity and flexibility while working in the kitchen and serving our guests. It's a pleasure to host first-time volunteers who hit the ground running and embrace being as helpful as needed on our direct service campus. It's clear our service site was a successful match for YapStone and we hope to have them back soon.



Clothing Donations and Drives



Our Direct Service campus is a busy hub for volunteers, guests and community partners. All the helpful commotion means that sometimes it's hard for our staff to properly greet each person who drops off donations. To better accommodate SVdP's needs and those of our generous donors, we encourage people to drop off donations on our campus from 10 am to 2 pm Tuesday through Saturday.

During the holiday season, SVdP hosts two drives for those we serve. One is for toys and the other is for warm coats.

The toy drive collects new, unwrapped toys for children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years old.

■ In addition to new toys, we also collect and distribute games, books and other age-appropriate gifts.

■ You can help with this drive by donating gift cards (e.g., Target, Walmart, etc.).

■ If you prefer to make a monetary donation, checks should be made payable to St. Vincent de Paul with "Christmas 2017" in the memo line (see back page for mailing information).

Toy and warm coat donations can be made at our West Oakland direct service campus (675 23rd Street) until Monday December 4th. If you would like to host a toy drive in your business, school or other type of organization, please contact John Sterns, our community engagement manager (see back page for information).



Ed Frakes Honored with Top Hat Award

Longtime Vincentian Ed Frakes from Corpus Christi Conference in Fremont received the Society's Top Hat Award in recognition for his dedicated service to helping those in greatest need. The award was presented at an event on November 3rd at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fremont. Board of Trustee Gary Flinders, himself a recipient of the Top Hat Award, conveyed the honor.

"Ed is a kind, generous and gifted man," says Blase Bova, SVdP's executive director. "There is no one more worthy than Ed to receive this award."

During the past 23 years, Ed has been involved in many programs for St. Vincent de Paul. He was president of the Corpus Christi conference for six years.

Ed served on the district council board and was board president of the district council from 2012 to 2015. Many pieces of Ed's artwork grace our SVdP locations, including crosses and paintings at our office in West Oakland. Ed continues to be a member of the Corpus Christi conference and serves as spiritual advisor. He is also active in the Meals of Mercy program.

The event also presented the opportunity for SVdP to host its first event in South County and we are

especially grateful to Duarte Monteiro, President of the Holy Spirit Conference, and Carol Snyder, President of the Corpus Christi Conference, for bringing together so many people to honor Ed.



Kitchen of Champions in Full Swing With Cohort 55



that I have my food handlers certificate because I can work in a restaurant now. But down the road I'd like to have my own southern restaurant. That's my biggest dream."

While sharpening their skills in our commercial kitchen, trainees help SVdP by providing the free meal in our dining room which serves, on average, 550 meals each day. Trainees gain insight into what it is like to provide a high volume of meals to our guests. "Chef

On October 17, Kitchen of Champions Cohort 55 began their nine-week culinary training program.

Cohort 55 started with four and has grown to seven members. Trainees have enjoyed the welcoming environment SVdP provides. Rita, a member of Cohort 55 said, "The people here are so pleasant. Everyone greets you with a smile and a hello and that's a good start to the day." All members will earn their ServSafe certificate so they can go on to work in a restaurant with proper certification.

Ryan and Chef Will taught me how to feed a lot of people. I like volunteering and I like helping people," said Davora.

Special works manager Ryan Uyehara says he wants to see trainees learn "SMART goals and a good work ethic" before graduation. Cohort 55's graduation will be held on December 21st. All are welcome, and we'd love to see you there. Give us a call at 510-638-7600 if you'd like to attend.

Rita, like many trainees, has dreams to own her own business: "It's been great to work alongside the chefs. I'm looking to expand my culinary knowledge since I want to start my own business one day." Trainee Davora shares her end goal: "Leaving from here I'll probably go back to school for culinary arts. It's good



Fluid Returns to SVdP - This Time in the Kitchen

Oakland-based e-commerce design and software company Fluid joined us again at our direct service campus in early November. After a successful visit last year, returning Fluid volunteers Taly and Kaye rallied their co-workers for a micro-shift service project at SVdP.

Originally scheduled to sort clothes for the SVdP Clothing Closet, the group of six was flexible and eager to accommodate Chef William's request for a kitchen project. Without hesitation, Fluid's team cleaned out an entire walk-in cooler and impressed Chef William with their positive attitude and efficiency: "This was a great group. They were driven to really help where we needed it and I could sleep in that walk-in right now. That's how clean it is!"



Kaiser Buy to Pay Returns to Dining Room

Serving at SVdP has become a tradition for Kaiser's Buy to Pay Supply Chain crew. For the past four years, these Kaiser employees have joined us in the kitchen and dining room on an annual basis. Most noteworthy was the distance traveled by some of the Kaiser team members. Joyce and Krisel came all the way from Pasadena, CA for a work meeting and stayed in town to volunteer. Staying in Oakland was an easy choice for Joyce: "The trip was worth it. It's a very humbling experience to do this and it feels great to be able to do something for the community

here. I would travel again!" Joe, one of the team's newcomers, was pleasantly surprised to learn of SVdP's food reclamation program: "I think it's cool that all these businesses contribute all the good food that is prepared here that would otherwise go to waste. It's a great program and it just makes good sense." The group of six were enthusiastic and ready to work, making them a great addition to our volunteer family.



St. Philip Neri Students Donate 1000 Pairs of Socks

Mr. Solomon and his 4th grade class rallied to heed SVdP's call for needed socks. The students stood up at mass and asked their community to donate, specifying they did not want dirty yucky socks but nice new ones! Julia Catania, SVdP's administration manager, visited St. Philip Neri of Alameda to collect an impressive donation of 1,287 pairs of socks and shared her memorable experience: "28 children gathered with Father Robert on the playground after their regular morning schoolwide assembly and I thanked them and gave them all personal certificates which proclaims they are now 'Vinnies.' Mr. Solomon was wonderful and asked about more



opportunities to partner in the future and Father Robert was very pleased with the entire experience. He told me it was a very nice way to partner with the parish."

A special thank you to Marianne Schonone for creating a wonderful moment for the students and to the 4th grade class at St. Philip Neri: SVdP welcomes you as Vinnies with open arms!

Curtis at 79

I was born in San Francisco and lived all over the city. I am 79 years old. I have a bad hip that put me in the wheel chair. I get to eat here at SVdP. Now and then I get a free haircut here. I eat here most every day. I have a place to live but the rents are so high. I pay \$625 a month. That is too high for a single person.

I have only one sister left and my kids are all over. I lost my brother last year. That was really hard. I was a school teacher, I worked in a foundry, I was a custodian supervisor and I shined shoes for a long time. St. Vincent de Paul helps a lot.



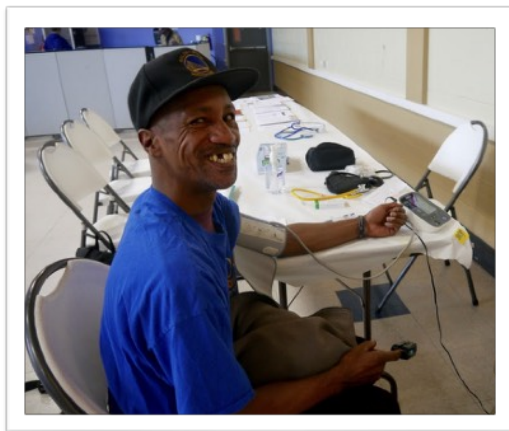
What's it Like to Be a Vincentian?

Gary Flinders has been a Vincentian for over 20 years with Church of the Assumption Conference in San Leandro. Here he shares a bit of the rich history of his involvement with the conference.

"Twenty years ago, the Assumption conference was reactivated and we used to only do home visits in San Leandro. Then there was a need requested from the Oakland area which we border upon. This was a very difficult ask for some of our conference members, but it turned out to be a wonderful growing experience. I invited some of the members to tell their stories: 'Hey, I was born and raised in Oakland and even sheltered from certain parts of it, but we are called to serve the poor and Jesus didn't talk about boundaries.' As a result of these conversations, more and more of our members began to heed the call of service and now for over 12 years we have been going out and visiting our brothers and sisters in Oakland.



"We have so many members now that we go out in trios so everyone can serve. It's a very vibrant group and we're blessed to have two spiritual advisors that prepare for our meetings so we can go do home visits when and where needed. Christ has invited us to go out to the poor. It's worked very well. It's meaningful and we have a good time."



Health Care for the Homeless

Every Friday Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) parks its mobile clinic outside our direct service campus in West Oakland. Since 1988, HCH has provided health care and case management services to persons experiencing homelessness throughout Alameda County. Current services include comprehensive primary care with integrated behavioral health treatment.

"HCH provides much-needed services to our clients who would otherwise go without even routine health care provisions," says Blase Bova, SVdP executive director. "The urgent care, brief social work assessments, and referrals to community resources provided by HCH are invaluable services for our guests."



Chevron Corporate Caring Week

Each September, the Contra Costa Crisis Center, with presenting sponsor Chevron, offers Corporate Caring Volunteer Week, the largest corporate volunteer program in the Bay Area. This week-long event brings employees from local companies together to volunteer at



nonprofit organizations throughout the East Bay. This year marks the fourth consecutive year that Chevron has chosen SVdP as one of their main service sites. Chevron employees from the greater Northern California area gathered and volunteered in the kitchen and dining room, many of whom had never met in person.

Corporate Caring Volunteer Week provides an easy way for Chevron employees to get involved in community service while allowing them to foster stronger work ties and team building skills. Thank you to the Chevron teams for participating. SVdP was happy to have an abundance of volunteers during what turned out to be a busy week in September!



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

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	Human Resources Manager	(510) 385-8934	
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

The Impact of Your Giving

Like most nonprofit organizations, SVdP receives about two-thirds of its contributions from individuals during the final three months of the year. These generous gifts from our donors makes possible the programs that serve those in greatest need throughout our communities. Some of the people helped by your donations include:

Troy and Carol were sheltered at SVdP during the winter and finally found permanent housing for the first time in 18 years.

Ernesto has meals at our Free Dining Room, putting aside enough money to start school for computer programming. He has the real possibility of landing a well-paying job close to his family.

Sheila saves money by using the laundry at our Women's Center and getting clothes from our Clothing Closet as she cares for her two

grandchildren.

These are just a few of the individuals and families we serve each day because of your generosity. If you receive a solicitation letter from us in the coming weeks, please remember that your gift is a critical part of the story for people like Troy, Carol, Ernesto and Sheila. You make a better life possible.

