

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Quarterly: Summer 2018



Denise's Story

Much of our work at this time is centered around the homeless crisis in Oakland, where more than 3,000 individuals and families live without permanent shelter every night. This is the story of one woman who utilized our services and found housing after many years of perseverance.

"I have been coming to St. Vincent's since my kids were toddlers. I would have been lost without it. I have breast cancer now but I found it early and I am blessed. I am now having radiation but do not need chemo. I am so happy about that.

"I really need this help. I use the podiatry clinic and do the wash here and I eat here.

Since I had stroke I can hardly see. I have Graves disease, high blood pressure and COPD. Now I try to take care of myself.

"I pay \$665 a month for one room. I have a refrigerator, a crock pot and a microwave and 2 burners and I have a pot to warm my water. The bathroom is down the hall. St. Vincent's can't do everything but this place helps a lot of people. Everyone should be grateful it is here."

If you would like to engage in our mission through direct service, please consider volunteering in our free dining room, community center, women's center, or men's center. Arrangements can be made by contacting our volunteer team, whose contact information is on the back cover of this newsletter. Our downtown campus provides opportunities for fellowship with fellow volunteers, staff, and guests that can make a lasting impact on your heart.



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



Homelessness in Oakland - and throughout Alameda County, for that matter - has become a moral and cultural crisis in our midst.

St. Vincent de Paul works with you and our many individual and program partners to provide basic safety net services like food, showers, laundry, clothing, and shelter to those who are living without a permanent home, as well as job training, and eviction prevention for families all over Alameda County, through our network of 38 local chapters.

While affordable housing development is the long-term solution to the homelessness crisis, we need to address the short-term challenges as well. St. Vincent de Paul's Winter Shelter complements the City's program of outdoor navigation centers to provide safe alternatives for those who are living in the many tent encampments in and around Oakland.

We are able to extend services to our Winter Shelter residents so they can access a safe place off the streets, as well as food and services, almost 24 hours per day from Tuesday-Saturday. And of course our Free Dining Room provides what may be the only hot, nutritious meal someone eats on a given day.

At SVdP we want to do more. We want to increase and improve the services we provide through our Women's and Children's Visitation Center, Men's Center and Community Center.

We see an opportunity to provide our guests with better resources for them to begin the process of obtaining permanent housing, learn job skills, take care of their physical and mental health and take the first steps to move out of poverty.

I invite you to join us - as a donor and volunteer - to make life better for those we serve.

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

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

News Briefs

■ SVdP's service model revolves around our volunteers and the many ways these dedicated women, men and children work to help those we serve. Whether it is providing resources to clients in our Community Center or washing dishes and trays in our Dish Room to answering calls and assisting clients in our Phone Center, our volunteers give tirelessly to offer a hand up to those in greatest need. Please consider joining this team of volunteer service champions and contact our volunteer group today (see back page for information).

■ Your gifts provide the financial foundation for SVdP to work with you and our other generous supporters to feed, clothe, house and heal the many families and individuals who turn to us in need. Our collective efforts would not be possible - and many would face dire outcomes - without the sustaining donations you provide. A family remains housed when financial assistance is provided to prevent eviction. People have a safe place to rest for a night off the streets of Oakland. Parents receive clothing and supplies needed to care for their young children. Individuals and families receive a hot, nutritious meal in our Free Dining Room, which is too often their only food that day.

■ Visit svdp-alameda.org/donate to make your gift today.

The Elements of Neighbors Helping Neighbors



G **Guests: Michelle.** "I had to go back to Louisiana to take care of my father when he was dying. When I came back to Oakland everything was gone. The house I was staying at didn't take Section 8 anymore. I had nothing. I stayed at the shelter at St Vincent for 4 months. Where would I have gone? St. Vincent helped me by showing me how I could get a place to live. Then they referred me to Crossroads and I stayed four months and then they said we have a place and I started crying from happiness. I have my own key. I finally have my own apartment."



Vi **Vincentians: The St. Joseph/Mission San Jose Conference** in Fremont was awarded \$2,500 through our SVdP National Council, on behalf of an anonymous donor, who wishes to provide nutritional alternative for those in need through urban gardening nutrition programs and SVdP operations that provide produce for food pantries. Richard Sekar, conference president, and conference members recognized the need and decided that at this time the pantry could provide Save Mart gift cards to those in need to offset the costs of groceries.



St **Staff: Katie Troy** has been doing a great job as volunteer coordinator. She has ten years of service experience from multiple international and domestic relief efforts. Upon her return to Oakland, Katie saw how homelessness had grown, creating a more visible gap between class levels. "I didn't feel correct not doing something to help out," she said. Katie is also a certified yoga teacher, and has begun teaching class at SVdP in collaboration with the community center every Wednesday at 2:00 PM. Thank you for bringing your talents to SVdP!



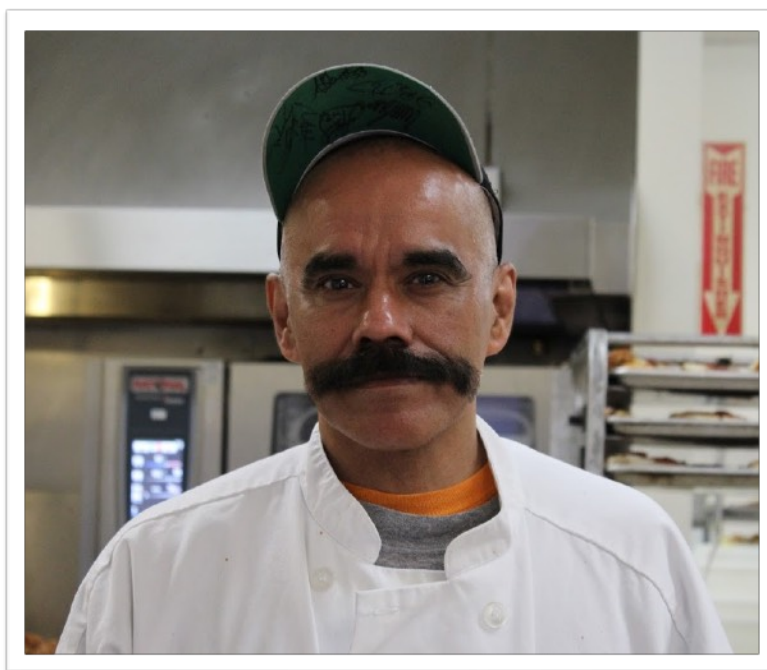
Vo **Volunteers: City Service Mission Spokane.** A group of over 20 volunteers traveled from Spokane, Washington, to the Bay Area during their spring break. The group leader, Bizzy, proclaimed the group's motto for the trip to be "Participate, don't anticipate." That way, the students can practice living in the moment. This helps the group stay focused so they can do their best work. We thank the students and leaders for their engagement with our dining room guests and great teamwork.



Meet Chef Armando Corpus, Kitchen Manager

Chef Armando Corpus began his service at SVdP as a volunteer in our kitchen prep room in summer 2017. After living in Oakland for many years, Corpus decided he wanted to “help homeless people and be a part of serving their needs,” and began his new role as Kitchen Manager late January. Since then, he has worked with two Kitchen of Champions cohorts, leading four individuals to graduation in December, and now leads a new group of cooks in the kitchen to make 500 meals per day in our Free Dining Room.

Corpus has previously worked at Thunder Road as a teen drug and alcohol treatment counselor and supervisor, where he started a culinary program for recovering youth. Has been teaching cooking for 15 years and working in drug and alcohol treatment since 1987. Corpus has acquired valuable experience in the kitchen and in helping people transform their lives and thinks of his position as kitchen manager as similar to being a party host. “You want a good meal, good company, everyone being entertained and having a good time...I want everyone to walk away feeling like this was time well spent,” Corpus said. “[My job as kitchen manager] is a great situation for me to help a lot of people have a good time”.



The Impact You Make

St. Vincent de Paul depends on the generosity of our donors to meet the needs of those we serve. We see ourselves doing work that fulfills our donors' - your - passions and interests. We try to match your giving preferences with practical methods for achieving your vision of how your gift works to help others. One way is to ask for small, monthly donations on an ongoing basis. For as little as \$10 a month - the price of two venti drinks at Starbucks - you can support 60 meals a month in our Free Dining Room. To make a contribution, go to www.svdp-alameda.org/donate and make a gift to help our neighbors in need. Thank you.



Winter Shelter Extended to June 11

The North County Winter Shelter has been granted an eight-week extension by the City of Oakland. The shelter will close its doors on June 11, after eight months of service. Besides providing beds for up to 100 guests on any given night, the shelter has hosted art stations, movie nights, and a notable February visit from Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf.



Schaaf sat down with some winter shelter guests as a “listening session,” to hear their concerns, hopes and fears. She spent a full hour seated with guests and staff in conversation, and even posed for a few pictures. By the end, she walked around the entire room to visit with people who were not involved in the initial meeting. “Mayor Schaaf being here was important because it let our guests know that anything they want to know or need, she’s here for them,” said Leslie Thomas, homeless programs manager. The shelter will reopen in winter 2018.

Women’s Center Gets Diaper Delivery

Committed SVdP dining room volunteer and National Charity League member, Anne Woods, was quick to act when asked for help. Our Women’s Center was running very low on diapers, so Anne sent out a message to her National Charity League chapter to bring packs of diapers with them to their next group event. Soon after, Anne’s daughter arrived at our downtown campus to deliver around 300 diapers. This quick diaper drive helped fill the need of our Women’s Center, and we are happy to have our cabinets

restocked with supplies. We are grateful for the generosity of Anne and the local National Charity League mothers and daughters, who creatively incorporated a diaper drive into their busy schedules.

If you’d like to donate much needed diapers in all sizes, especially 3, 4, and 5, wipes, and baby supplies to our Women’s Center, please contact our main office to schedule a delivery. Contact information is found on the back page of this newsletter.



Easter Open House

SVdP hosted its annual Easter Open House on Saturday March 17. Thirty-eight families and 146 children attended the event, which was a big success thanks to our wonderful and dedicated volunteers and staff members. Each family received a grocery gift card and a ticket for our raffle. The children received an Easter basket with candy, an Easter egg and a plush toy. Volunteers helped families choose age-appropriate books for each child and the three crafts tables were very popular. Children could choose to make an Easter bunny, a baby chick or a collage with stickers. The Easter bunny made an appearance for photos with children and families. "We couldn't do any of this without our donors and volunteers," says John Sterns, SVdP's community engagement manager. "They make this event a bright spot for our children and families."





Thank You Pledge to Humanity

A huge thank you to Beth McKnight and her team from the Pledge to Humanity Club of San Ramon Valley High School for collecting donations for this year's Easter Open House. The donated decorations, treats, crafts, toys, and games all put a smile on the faces of over one hundred children at our Easter event. We're so fortunate to have Pledge to Humanity be a part of the SVdP community!



Donor Spotlight: Wells Fargo

Thank you to Wells Fargo for their gift designated for operating support. The foundation supports organizations involved with education, job creation and job training, housing, financial literacy, human services, and community economic development. Wells Fargo has consistently volunteered their time and resources to SVdP, whether it is working in the free dining room, or conducting a regional diaper drive for our Women's Center.

This grant was also made possible by two Saint Mary's College students, who volunteered with our development department as a part of a month-long community engagement course on writing for nonprofits. It was their first grant application ever and it was a success! Thank you, Hunter and Oscar, for effectively communicating the mission and need of St. Vincent de Paul. Though they didn't spend much time at the downtown campus, the time they did spend impacted them enough to write from their hearts. Thank you to all involved in the grant writing process, and to Wells Fargo for their continued support for SVdP.

We are always grateful for the support of our donors, who help us live out our mission each day.



Bentley School Performs Two Days of Service in Dining Room

In early March, the Dining Room was happy to welcome seventeen 9th grade students and two teachers from the Bentley Upper School in Lafayette over the course of two days. The Bentley

students were participating in a special school program they called "Mini Term," where all Upper School students take two weeks away from traditional schooldays to learn outside of the classroom. Older students participate in more recreational activities, like cooking lessons and biking, while the 9th graders do service projects at various nonprofits, accompanied by a self-reflection essay. To be eligible for graduation, each Upper School student must complete a total of sixty hours of service.

The students helped serve beverages, hand out trays, clean tables, and organize our walk-in refrigerators. The students who were assigned work in the walk-ins were so committed to their work, that they spent extra time organizing until they were finished with everything. "The students were very focused on their task. They didn't want to leave anything incomplete. They worked hard and did the best they could," said volunteer coordinator, Katie Troy. SVdP always appreciates the dedication of our volunteers; it does not go unnoticed.

SVdP is happy to be involved with helping the students take steps to complete their graduation requirements, especially since sometimes, they get more out of their service experience than expected.

Katie Troy said, "New volunteers provide a new energy to our regular volunteers. It was nice for them to be able to work with and talk to some of the more seasoned volunteers and get a different perspective. I think some of them got along really well." We look forward to welcoming more Bentley students in the future and are grateful for their good work for SVdP.



80 Ways to Get Involved

As we celebrate 80 years of service throughout Alameda County, we are excited to be able to offer 80 ways to volunteer and get involved with St. Vincent de Paul. To view the full list of opportunities, please visit www.svdp-alameda.org/blog. If you are interested in doing one or more of these activities please reach out to Katie Troy, Volunteer Coordinator, at 510-877-9252 or at volunteer@svdp-alameda.org, or visit our website at www.svdp-alameda.org.

Help us feed 80 children for a month- More than 31 million U.S. children received a free or reduced lunch at school, help us organize a fundraiser to raise \$3,520 to feed 80 children for one month.



“Sharing is caring” – Share/Donate time share, season tickets, rewards points, miles for us to raise funds for the organization.

Change It – Start a competition between classes, families or individuals by giving them each a coin jar to collect change for a designated amount of time. The one with the most collected wins a prize.

Skip a Meal – Join with your peers to commit to giving up a meal together and give the money saved to St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP).

Give it Up – Commit to give up a regular activity, e.g. buying a latte at Starbucks, for a month and donate the money you save to SVdP.

Donate your gently-used furniture or household goods to any of our thrift stores.

Hygiene kit drive – Collect hygiene kits or raise funds to purchase hygiene products for our drop in centers including shampoo, conditioner, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant etc.

Open house volunteer – Volunteer at one of our seasonal community open houses, either for Back to School, Christmas, or Easter.

Men’s & Women’s Center Drive – Hold a drive for our Men’s and Women’s drop-in centers and include: socks, white t-shirts, underwear, sweat pants, bras, etc. and make it a goal to collect at least 80 items.

Hablas Español – Lead English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to our clients.



Make it official – Provide ServSafe Certification prep and tests for 4 Kitchen of Champions culinary training students- \$500.

Lions, tigers, and BOOKS, oh my! – Volunteer to sort books in our thrift stores. Come with friends, or make a new one as you find fascinating books.

Do what you do best – Have HR experience, an MBA, photography skills, carpentry, etc.? Lend your professional expertise to SVdP.

Stipend for a trainee – Provide the stipends for 5 of our workforce trainees for a week - \$250.

Pray for us – Set an intention based on our mission and pray for it as much as you can. We appreciate the support of all who think of us and our guests.

Computer Love – Do you have any groovy computer skills? Join us and hold basic computer classes for our students, transitional employees, and alumni.

Find your zen – Drop by our community center for a free yoga class, every Wednesday at 2:00 PM.

Happy feet – Donate a new pair of shoes or raise money to purchase new shoes to be given out at our podiatry clinic and clothing closet. Our goal is to collect 80 pairs of shoes.

Diaper drive – collect diapers from your community in sizes 4, 5, and 6 to donate to our women's center.



| 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 |
| John Sterns | Community Engagement Manager | (925) 323-5848 | jssterns@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 |

Scott's Story

"I am currently at the emergency shelter down the street at Casa Maria. I come here as regularly as I can to eat because I don't have extra money to buy food. I also really enjoy some of the homeless people that I meet here and the staff and the people who volunteer are exceptional. It really helps me to have contact with people.

"I am schizophrenic. I am on medication. I have had suicidal ideation and had to have several interventions. I have been institutionalized many times. I have a case manager who helps and it is really important that I not sleep on the streets because my medication is stolen and then I become unstable and end up in the hospital again.

"I am in the walker chair because I have neuropathy. It took an hour to go a block. It is sometimes very painful. The nurse Betty in the podiatry clinic found a walker with a seat for me. So now I can sit down when it is too painful. I don't go out at night. You are a target as a person with a disability.

"I am an artist and it helps me deal with what is going on in my head. I make collages. I make art boxes as well. It is a de-stressor for me. I like sharing my work with people. I had never heard of St. Vincent de Paul before I came here. The food is really good. I am really lucky to live close by because I get migraines if I don't eat. I am grateful to be able to come here. It is a really good place with really good people."

