

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Quarterly: Spring 2019



In His Own Words: Dave

Each of our guests has a unique story. It is an honor for us to be able to learn about and be in fellowship with our guests and share their words with our community. This quarterly newsletter features someone who does not use our services in the same way others do. He utilizes our West Oakland direct service campus to meet and aid guests in need. Read on for Dave's story.

"I do outreach work in West Oakland. My clients are homeless, addicts, survivors. I came here to find those people, because they don't always want to find you. I've been coming to St. Vincent for five years. I eat in the dining room and connect with people that I can refer to services I know. I've lived at the same home for 22 years. I spent 27 years as a stock broker. When I retired, I looked into this community and saw a lot of grief and pain. I spoke to the executive director at St. Vincent and she let me interact with the clients.

"I know the people in this community. I do a lot of work with West Oakland Health, so I refer people to them when I'm here. I'm from Jamaica. There, they teach you 'you're your brother's keeper.' In America, everyone is in it for the individual, not for the collective wellbeing. Mental health services are in a shortage around here. People can't live their full potential because of it. There are some absolutely brilliant talents in this center, but no one has ever encouraged them. No one has told them they love them. They don't recognize what they can do. And that is a shame. That is a real shame.



"People fail to understand that when someone says they're cold or hungry, that need is now; you can't wait to act. If you wait, that person might not be around when you decide you want to help. It is urgent. It can be life or death. I come back to St. Vincent de Paul to help human beings. I promised myself I'll always do something for somebody. The reward comes when you look at another human and you know that you've helped them."



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



An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Day by day, household by household, ounce by ounce, St. Vincent de Paul volunteers work in their own neighborhoods to **prevent homelessness**. Last year we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars literally keeping families in their homes. We have a network of 800 committed volunteers in 38 local chapters all over Alameda County who serve their neighbors when they face financial crises.

It starts when a family calls for help and two volunteers bring food to the family's home. If the family is facing eviction or a utility shutoff, we try to do what we can to help, using funding provided by thousands of ordinary, generous individuals like you. We can't always help, particularly if the need is just too great, or when the help would amount to no more than a band-aid. When we are able, the local SVdP chapter will pay part of the overdue rent, or the light or water bill. Thus the family, who was facing the daunting prospect of life on the street, can stay in their home together, and can move past the crisis.

Homelessness is a huge issue in California, and what's needed to help those already homeless is expensive and takes years to come to fruition. Isn't it nice to know that there is support out there, with almost no overhead costs, using the gifts of generous neighbors and the time of dedicated volunteers, coming through for families *before* it's too late?

Thank you for the role you play in this compassionate and sustainable intervention. If you have thoughts to share, I'd love to hear from you. My phone and email are on the back page.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blase Bova".

Blase Bova

Executive Director, St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County

News Briefs

■ Volunteering can be one of the most rewarding experiences we have in life. It can feel good to serve with others and often we make lifelong friends with other volunteers. At SVdP, we rely on volunteers to provide services to those in need. If you already volunteer for us, thank you for your contribution. And please consider bringing along a friend to volunteer with you or sign up for another day to serve. If you don't already volunteer with us, please give it a try and contact our volunteer coordinator for more information (see back page for contact information). We couldn't do it without you.

■ Gifts of stock can not only help SVdP, they can also - at times - benefit the tax situation for the donor. If you are considering a stock gift, please call our community engagement manager (see back page for contact information) and find out how your stock gift can help those we serve.

■ Generous supporters donated 55 cars in 2018, contributing a total of \$31,000 to St. Vincent de Paul's services! It's easy to donate your car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat with CARS, a nationwide 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Remember to provide an Alameda County zip code to ensure St. Vincent de Paul receives your generous donation. For more information, call **800-322-8284**.



The Elements of Neighbors Helping Neighbors



G **Guests: Jerry.** “I’ve been coming here off and on for a few years. I eat here and I used to take showers but I don’t need to anymore because I am no longer homeless. I joined a rehab program called Options in 2017 after I was hit by a hit and run driver and was in a coma for one month. After I woke up I was too scared to ever use again, so I’ve been straight ever since. When I was doing nothing, I had nothing to lose. The man upstairs was with me. He had to be. He woke me up.”



Vi **Vincentians: St. Bede.** The St. Bede Conference now hosts all district council meetings. The district council is comprised of 40-60 members of SVdP leadership. Conference Secretary Steve Tedesco is excited for the Conference’s new role. “It allows us to see the fellowship that goes beyond our boundaries. We have things in common with conferences all the way from Fremont to Oakland. It’s a great opportunity to see the big picture of our district council in our tiny gym,” he said.



St **Staff: Willie.** Willie was a student of the Kitchen of Champions cohort 58, and graduated in July 2018. He works in the evenings to make dinner and breakfast for our shelter. He began this job as soon as the shelter opened in November, and alternates working days with fellow KoC graduate, Anthony. “I enjoy kitchen work, especially here. You feel most needed and it’s upbeat. There’s a lot to do and there’s a lot of freedom. I like what St. Vincent stands for. I’m honored to serve others,” Willie said.



V **Volunteers: St. Joachim School.** Thank you to St. Joachim School for sending representatives from every grade level to bring lunch boxes to our dining room guests. The whole school rounded up donations to supply snacks and sandwiches to our West Oakland direct service campus. They also added thoughtful touches to the lunch boxes by coloring pictures and writing encouraging notes and Bible verses on each one. We appreciate St. Joachim for their creative service to SVdP.



Celebrating a Successful Holiday Season



On Saturday December 15, SVdP hosted its annual Christmas Open House. This year's event was filled with joy to celebrate the holiday season with our families and their children. Eighty-three families and nearly 300 children received toys and other gifts this year thanks to the wonderful generosity of our donors and volunteers.

The day included a Christmas goodie bag and books for each child, along with three craft tables to call out the creativity of our younger guests. Santa Claus also made a visit and delighted the children with candy canes and photos. A raffle was held to

give away dolls that had handmade costumes and our dining room served a special meal of homemade pizza. "Christmas Open House is a wonderful event for our families," said John Sterns, SVdP's community engagement manager. "We are so grateful for our contributors who made the day a special one for our guests." Special thanks go to Chris Massey, an amazing Santa Claus, Claire O'Reilly, our lead volunteer for the event, and the Pledge to Humanity group from San Ramon Valley High School who donated crafts and toys in memory of classmate Ben Curry.



Volunteer Feature: Shirley Peterson

Shirley Peterson has been volunteering at the West Oakland direct service campus for many years in the family dining room. She serves every Friday with her fellow Toolworks cohort. Toolworks is an organization that helps provide job training, housing assistance and more for disabled people. St. Vincent de Paul is one of many organizations where Shirley serves.

Shirley also works at a children's hospital, an elder care facility and is taking cooking classes. She hopes it will help her get a job in the culinary industry, at a coffee shop or restaurant, or a hospital kitchen. Shirley's kind heart is what makes us at SVdP happy to work with her each week. "I go to bed and I say, 'What can I do for that person? How can I help out?' There are so many wonderful things I can do and continue to do. I have a lot to be grateful for. I have a bright future ahead of me," Shirley said.



Saint Mary's Gaels Write Grant

During the month of January, Rocio Angeles and James Gan from Saint Mary's College of California worked with West Oakland direct service campus staff to write a grant proposal as a part of their service-learning grant writing course. The students learned the dos and don'ts of grant writing from their professor and classmates, and checked in with SVdP for guidance on their final grant application. Angeles, a pre-med student, wanted to learn to write grants to help her gain experience for scientific research proposals. Gan, an accounting major, has worked in development in a nonprofit setting, and wanted to learn more about the way nonprofits are funded. Both students were also motivated to learn



about their communities. "Every time I drive in Oakland and see all the tents, it breaks my heart," Angeles said. Gan shares that sentiment. "I wanted to get out of the areas I was familiar with and learn how direct services work," he said. Both students learned new writing skills in their class, as they focused on "people-first language" to unite the grant reader with the staff, volunteers and guests of SVdP. Last year, two Saint Mary's students from the same course wrote a grant that earned \$10,000, and we look forward to seeing the results of the grant this year. Thank you, James and Rocio, for all your great work!



Councilmember McElhaney Visits SVdP



Oakland Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney (pictured) of district 3 visited our West Oakland direct service campus at the start of 2019. She was given a tour by Executive Director Blase Bova and Community Engagement Manager John Sterns. She saw our community center and dining room, which are converted into the shelter every night to hold up to 100 guests. She also saw the space in the breezeway off the dining room where we will be installing storage lockers for our guests' belongings during the day, a priority of the City. Councilmember McElhaney was curious about what challenges the shelter guests face, and was very interested in the home visits our Conferences do in aiding eviction prevention throughout the county.

Councilmember Lynette Gibson McElhaney was our second City official to visit us in 2019, preceded by Mayor Libby Schaaf and members of her staff who served in the dining room in January. Councilmember McElhaney was accompanied by Senior Constituent Liaison, Brigitte Cook, Manager of Human Services Department in City of Oakland, Lara Tannenbaum, and other esteemed staffers.

According to her website, Councilmember McElhaney's accomplishments include serving as the Executive Director of a multi-million dollar nonprofit, where she developed affordable housing, expanded economic opportunity and curbed violence in low-income communities. Through her work she has learned how to bridge the interests of the business community with the needs of the neighborhood.

Councilmember McElhaney's visit was just one stop of her day long tour of multiple service centers in her district. She also went to St. Mary's Center on San Pablo Ave. and Brockhurst St. and the Tuff Shed Navigation Center on 27th St. and Northgate Ave. "St. Vincent de Paul is always happy to welcome Councilmember McElhaney to our direct service campus. We feel honored to have a physical presence from the City, since they've been a great community partner for us. We always welcome anyone who wants to tour our campus. These tours are a great way to get information out there about our services and discuss the very real need for them," Bova said. Thank you, Councilmember McElhaney, for your important work with district 3 and for being visible to our community.



Mayor Schaaf Serves in Dining Room

Many City officials have stopped by the West Oakland direct service campus so far this year. On January 8, Mayor Libby Schaaf used her first full day of her second term as Oakland mayor to serve at various local organizations, and chose to include our West Oakland direct service campus in her tour. There, she and a group of her office staff spoke with our clients and served food, along with juice, milk and water during lunch.



Mayor Schaaf consistently supports SVdP and our programs. "I could think of no better place to spend my first full day of my second term as the mayor of Oakland. Not only is it about returning to my own roots of community service, but being in proximity to the people I most want to serve as well as the people who are in service to our community's unsheltered and homeless. This is just a beautiful operation fueled by compassionate volunteers, amazing staff and guests who clearly love not just the tasty meal, but the wonderful community," Mayor Schaaf said.

Over the past year, Mayor Schaaf has visited our shelter, spoken at Kitchen of Champions graduation ceremonies, hosted press conferences and more at St. Vincent de Paul. The city of Oakland funds our shelter, which holds up to 100 guests each night, and is open year-round for the first time ever this year. The shelter staff is working with the City to provide secure storage lockers for our guests' bulky



items, so they don't have to be carried from place to place during the day. "We are glad to receive support from the City of Oakland, and the presence of city officials at our direct service campus really helps to lift the spirits of our community. It is a time they can voice concerns and joys directly to the people who can do something about it, and that time is very valuable," Executive Director Blase Bova said. We are grateful for the support we receive from the mayor's office and look forward to their next visit!



SPALEM Starts Annual Giveaway

Georgia Davis-Baker grew up in West Oakland near SVdP's direct service campus. She was always aware of SVdP and its programs and over the years developed an interest in our Women's and Children's Visitation Center. "God led me," she says, to create a project providing needed services and a bright spot of happiness to those we serve.

Spreading Positivity and Love Everywhere through Music - SPALEM - was the project that Georgia created and she took advantage of the holiday season to launch SPALEM's first annual giveaway of purses and hygiene kits. Georgia and her team of volunteers collected new and gently used purses and filled them with clothing and hygiene kits. The group came to our Women's and Children's Visitation Center on a

Saturday in December and handed them out to our clients. In addition, the SPALEM group sang Christmas carols to bring holiday cheer to our guests. "Every helping hand makes a difference," says Georgia. We thank the SPALEM group for sharing the holiday spirit and generosity with us.



St. Philip Neri School Gives Back

The St. Philip Neri community consistently supports St. Vincent de Paul through its service. This fall, sixth grade students at St. Philip Neri School provided over three hundred new towels to our men's and women's centers. They were collected at the school and church, and at St. Albert's Church in Alameda. "The

students took pride in this project. They were so excited to count the number of towels that came in," Vincentian volunteer Marianne Henderson said. The towels will be used to provide showers to hundreds of people each week at SVdP.

St. Philip Neri School emphasizes the role of leadership and community. The school was given the Outstanding School Award by Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl at their grant awards breakfast on December 13. Representatives from the eighth grade class attended the reception to accept their award. We are grateful to see the impact young people can make in their communities.



Park Day School Reflects on Service

On the first day of February, we were joined in the dining room by nine returning students and two teachers from nearby Park Day School. Take time to read below some of the eighth grade students' reflections on their service. Thank you for serving with us, Park Day!



"St. Vincent de Paul is an amazing way for our community

to get the needs they deserve. Whether they are homeless or can't afford a meal St. Vincent is there for them. Everybody who works there is very welcoming and sweet, and the guests are also super nice! By volunteering there I was able to feel more connected to my community." - Daphne

"It was really nice to see a place where the guests were treated as people. All of the volunteers knew many of the guests and it was really meaningful to see them interact with everyone. It helps them know that St. Vincent de Paul is a safe place." - Julia

First Cohort of the Year Now in Session



Cohort 62 of our Kitchen of Champions culinary training program is underway with four dedicated members. They have successfully served thousands of meals so far to our guests, and adapted to the busy crowds at the end of January, serving 750 meals for multiple days in a row. The students will have the opportunity to try out new recipes and sharpen their culinary skills before applying for jobs in the field of their choice. Most of our trainees receive job opportunities while they are in the program

or shortly after graduation. "This group has a good energy in the kitchen, and it is fun watching them work together. They are dedicated, and that's what matters most because that's how you give yourself opportunities to learn," Workforce Coordinator John Jones said. Cohort 62 is off to a great start and we look forward to working with them in the weeks to come!



Shelter Up and Running through Winter



THE SHELTER IS SET UP WITH 65 BEDS IN OUR DINING ROOM. THERE ARE AN ADDITIONAL 35 BEDS ARRANGED IN OUR COMMUNITY CENTER.

As many know, our shelter is the largest in Alameda County, with a capacity for 100 people each night, and is funded for a full year by the City of Oakland for the first time. Since opening in October, we have almost reached capacity a few times. An average night has around 60-80 guests, depending on the weather conditions.

To help execute the newly structured shelter, we were able to hire our first shelter manager, Marcell Lloyd. Lloyd is a recent graduate of Saint Mary's College of California, with a bachelor's degree in Leadership and Organizational Studies. Lloyd worked with St. Vincent de Paul as a Saint Mary's student. His class helped create the soft skills curriculum for our Kitchen of Champions program. His experience with SVdP, Saint Mary's and coaching sports at a Catholic school have helped prepare him for the demands of his new job and the structures in place at a Catholic organization.

We have hired a case worker, Ashley Davis, to help our shelter guests be placed in transitional

and permanent housing and make sure they are receiving the care they need. We have also hired two cooks, Willie and Anthony, alumni from our Kitchen of Champions job training program, to prepare a hot meal for dinner and a light breakfast each day.

Lloyd's first big project is working with the City to bring secure storage space to our shelter guests, where they can keep their luggage and large items during the day, so they can have freedom to go on job interviews and do day-to-day tasks without being weighed down by their belongings. We are confident that Lloyd and Davis will be great assets to the SVdP team, and commend our shelter staff for all of their great work so far. "My desire is to have a job that pairs well with my vision of helping people in the community. Being shelter manager is a perfect match," Lloyd said. Thank you to all of our shelter staff and volunteers, whose hard work ensures a safe, warm place for our guests each night.



MARCELL LLOYD IS OUR FIRST EVER SHELTER MANAGER.



Fremont Bank Funds Festive Holidays



SVdP received a generous donation from Fremont Bank to assist in funding our holiday programs. During our annual Christmas Open House, we provided clothing and new toys to over 250 children. Throughout the cold winter months, we also distributed coats to our guests to help keep them warm as the winter weather became colder.

Gene Anderson, director of commercial underwriting for Fremont Bank, came to our West Oakland direct service campus to deliver the check to Community

Engagement Manager John Sterns. Fremont Bank is a consistent donor to SVdP. "The ongoing support from Fremont Bank allows us to make our programs as special as they can be for our guests. We greatly appreciate their support," said Executive Director Blase Bova. Thank you to Fremont Bank and to all our wonderful donors for their support of our mission.

If you'd like to contribute to SVdP, please contact John Sterns at: jssterns@svdp-alameda.org.

A Legacy of Service from Pedder Family

Brendan Pedder was a dedicated volunteer in the St. Vincent de Paul free dining room at our West Oakland direct service campus. His family, including his father Bill and sister Shannon, continued the spirit of Brendan's giving after he passed away.

With the generous donations from friends and family members, Shannon has generated more than \$40,000 to benefit our dining room, which provided over 20,000 free, hot meals over the course of several years.

"The Pedders' gifts not only honor Brendan's service to SVdP and his memory," says Blase Bova, SVdP's executive director, "they provide direct and much-needed benefits to our clients in the dining room." These gifts help us continue to provide food, clothing, shelter and

healing to our neighbors. We thank all of the donors to the Pedder memorial fund for their commitment, generosity and thoughtfulness. We will continue working in memory of Brendan and his heartfelt service alongside our community.



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-Weaks	Human Resources Manager	(510) 385-8934	cjonesweaks@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

Little Caesars Delivers the Love Kitchen

St. Vincent de Paul ended 2018 on a good note by filling our dining room with fresh pizza on December 29. Little Caesars brought their 18-wheeler Love Kitchen to the West Oakland direct service campus to serve enough pizza for 900 people.

Thanks to the pizzas made and donated by the Love Kitchen, we served almost 600 trays to our guests for lunch, with plenty leftover for a pizza night in the shelter. There was a party-like buzz



throughout the kitchen and dining room as volunteers, staff and guests shared their excitement about pizza day. It goes to show how a simple menu of pizza, salad, fruit and a sweet treat can bring joy and levity to our community. Thank you to Chef Armando for scheduling the visit, and all who helped coordinate and serve a successful and special lunch to our guests. We are grateful to have Little Caesars as a partner and look forward to having the Love Kitchen back in our neighborhood soon!

