

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: December 2017



Norma Jean's Story



"I grew up in Oakland as an only child and my parents taught me compassion. It was very important to them and it is very important to me. No matter how people treat me or what they say to me, I always try to be kind and uplifting because you don't know what people are going through. I encourage people whenever I can. Just walking down the street, a kind hello can change someone's day.

I'm in a wheel chair now.

I saw on a pamphlet that 3.5 million children go to bed hungry in California alone. That should never be. We have enough to feed everybody.

In the old days you'd see one or two homeless people, but now so many have no place to live. I've seen a lot of changes in Oakland. It's a completely different city now.

I live in transitional housing now, but you cannot eat in the dining room there. You can shop and cook in your room but that's hard for me. So it's good I can come to St. Vincent's to eat. I come to the podiatry clinic here as well. And for the two years I was homeless, I stayed in the winter shelter here. It wasn't so bad. It was very lucky for me that it was here."



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, January 4th, 1:30 pm, **Spirituality, Formation, Extension Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda.
- Tuesday, January 9th, **Development Committee**, 1:30 pm, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Monday, January 15th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 pm, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, January 17th, **Podiatry Clinic**, 9:00 am to 11:30 am, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Wednesday, January 17th, **Board of Trustees meeting** - Direct Service Campus - Classroom 2, 5:30 p.m. - fellowship/meal at 5:30 p.m. followed by meeting at 6:00 p.m. Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (3rd Wednesday of the month).
- Tuesday, January 23rd, 1:30 pm, **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (4th Tuesday of the month).
- Saturday, January 27th, **Ozanam Enrichment** - All Saints, Hayward - Mass at 8:33 a.m. - followed by the workshop.

News Briefs

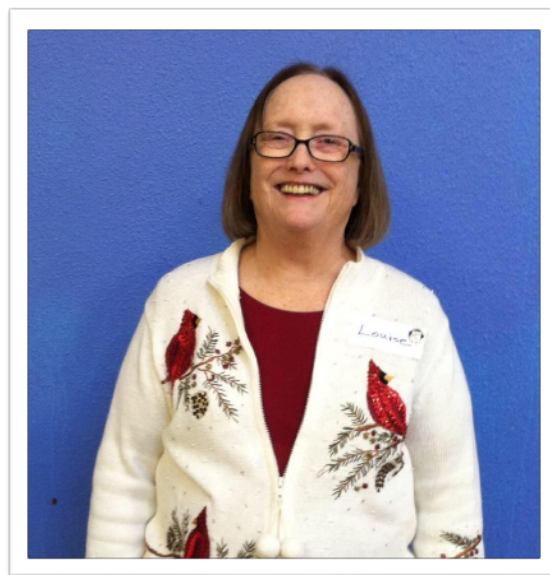
- The year 2018 is approaching and many of us are reviewing our plans for year-end giving. Your generous gifts sustain the essential services we provide. We couldn't do our work without you. Thanks for thinking of the families we serve.
- The Clothing Closet provides women and men with clothing, shoes and accessories. Our guests would love to have your help as a volunteer, or your gift of gently used clothing from your closet.

New Board President Louise Astle

Louise Astle has been elected president of the Board of Trustees for SVdP Alameda County. She will serve as president until September 30, 2018. She previously served as a regional representative for the Alameda deanery. Louise is a parishioner at St. Joseph Basilica in Alameda. She attended an informal meeting about St. Vincent de Paul about three years before her retirement. "I got involved so when I retired I'd have something to go into," she said.

She was involved in our reorganization and that role led her to seek the presidency. "I wanted to see it through," she comments. Her priorities as president include updating our strategic plan and gathering a nominating committee so SVdP can hold its next board election on a normal cycle.

"I want to reach out to the presidents of the different conferences on what it means to be a servant leader," she said, noting that she, herself, serves as the president of the St. Joseph Basilica Vincentian conference.



Kaiser Bay Area Recruitment Team

The end of November brought a new Kaiser team to our direct service campus. Kaiser's Bay Area Recruitment team was 14 strong and two volunteers shared their thoughts on how the day of service broadened their perspectives about the community we serve:

"I think I was surprised at seeing people from different backgrounds. Some people look as though they have a home, but maybe they couldn't afford food for the day. Seeing the diversity in the population SVdP serves is eye-opening."

"We're all here trying to do the same things. There's not that much difference between us and the people we served today."



GUEST PROFILE

Langston: A Man of Courage

Langston is a Marine who has served three tours of duty. He was raised in Oakland by a grandfather who worked for Southern Pacific. He likes to tell stories about the old days in Oakland. At 18 he served in Vietnam and was injured by shrapnel. He recovered and returned for two more tours of duty so that he could support his family. His stories reflect the many sacrifices our troops make. Hard times have followed, yet his strength and courage are clearly apparent in how he relates and carries himself. He is now sleeping in SVdP's winter shelter, at his spot right beneath the cross. There is a great dignity that surrounds him. He is very grateful to be inside this winter.



Santa Clara University Immersion

Nine students and one staff member from Santa Clara University recently participated in a five-day immersion at SVdP's West Oakland campus. Activities included decorating our Community Center for the holiday season, serving in our Kitchen and Free Dining Room and sorting donated toys and clothing for our Christmas Open House. The group also had the opportunity to observe the Homeless and Caring Court session implemented by the Alameda County



Superior Court.

The participants visited a number of partner agencies in Oakland and Berkeley. This included CiviCorps, Jesuit Volunteer Services, ImpactHub, Kapor Center, St. Mary's, Mandela Marketplace and Family Justice Center. Captain Mike Carroll with the Alameda County Sheriff's Department spoke to the group about community

policing and the challenges faced by law enforcement personnel and community residents.

"These immersions are wonderful examples of how we make SVdP available to all members of our community," says Blase Bova, executive director.

A second immersion from Santa Clara University is scheduled for March 2018.



Oakland A's Back at SVdP



In mid-November Marcus Semien was just another volunteer on the line, serving trays of food with the best of 'em at SVdP. The Oakland Athletics star, along with members of the team's front office staff, joined SVdP for a day of service in the kitchen and dining room. Our KoC trainees were so busy prepping for the day's meal, they didn't realize one of their favorite players was on campus until the end of service. Mr. Semien and his group were great sports.

Thanks to local partners like the Oakland A's SVdP continues to shine as a hub where folks find fellowship in serving others.

Stacy and Witbeck

Alameda-based construction company Stacy and Witbeck joined SVdP for a day of service in late November. A few members of the group had joined us in the past, but the majority had never heard of our direct service campus. Due to their impressive turn out, 18 volunteers were put to work all over the SVdP kitchen, prep room and dining room.

Sometimes it's apparent how work-ready our volunteers are when they come in wearing

company themed volunteer t-shirts! Thank you, Stacy and Witbeck, for your productive day of service.



Thankful for Thanksgiving Volunteers



Thank you to our volunteer family for prepping and serving our Thanksgiving meal this year. Chef William and the hardworking Kitchen of Champions Cohort 55 led an

impressive group of volunteers in the SVdP kitchen and dining room. The prayer circle was 30 strong Thanksgiving morning - volunteers held hands and brought their intentions for the day to the forefront of our meal service. SVdP is grateful for the true community that is built and upheld each and every day on our direct service campus.



AHS Boys Basketball Team Bond with Elvis



The first Saturday in December brought the Alameda High School Boys basketball team to our kitchen and dining room.

15 young men put their teamwork to the test as they sliced leftover turkey from Thanksgiving, helping Elvis Tran and Chef

William prepare for the day's meal service. A special camaraderie grew in the prep room, this time between the team and SVdP's very own inspiring prep kitchen guru, Elvis. Elvis works tirelessly to make sure veggies are



chopped, fruit is washed and meat is prepped for the days ahead. Getting a group of young volunteers to assist him is usually a mixed bag for Elvis, but the Alameda team proved an excellent fit and before the end of shift, you could hear Elvis' voice bellowing in the prep room: "These are good boys and good workers! They are welcome anytime!"



For More Information Contact

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A Note from Volunteer Coordinator Brianna

The past three years working at St. Vincent de Paul has been more than a job. It has truly been a growing experience through which I was challenged by facing the brutal inequity of our

society and rewarded by building many friendships and watching volunteers connect with the community SVdP serves. The most rewarding part of my job was watching volunteers of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds come together to serve a common purpose. Through serving the community in need and sharing conversations, I saw the "otherness" of those who come to use the services slip away. Students who may have never spoken to an unhoused person or people who have never volunteered before are able to make connections at SVdP and realize the person they are talking to could be themselves or a friend or family member. I believe this is the most important gift we can offer. I am proud to have been a part of fostering those connections and I have so many lessons, friendships, and memories that I carry with me.

