

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: October 2018



Celebrating 80 Years

SVdP celebrated its 80th anniversary of service in the Oakland diocese with two special events on Saturday, September 15. The festivities began with a Vincentian-oriented Mass at the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland. The Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland, celebrated the Mass, joined by concelebrants from parishes with SVdP conferences. More than 100 Vincentians and their families, friends and supporters attended the Mass.

The guests were invited to SVdP of Alameda County's West Oakland campus for a reception held in our Free Dining Room. Food was prepared by our chefs and by alumni of our Kitchen of Champions culinary arts workforce development program. Memorabilia from our 80-year history delighted the guests and helped start many conversations about "back in the day." The 85 guests were welcomed with remarks by outgoing SVdP Alameda president Louise Astle, incoming SVdP Alameda president Jim Lee and SVdP Contra Costa president Ron Costanzo. Many thanks to all who helped make this a special celebration for our Vincentians.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Monday, October 15th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, October 17th, **Board of Trustees meeting** – fellowship/meal at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:00 p.m. West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Tuesday, October 23rd, 1:30 p.m., **Special Works Committee**, West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave.
- Thursday, October 25th, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda.
- Tuesday, November 6th, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., West Oakland Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.

Save the Date!

Save the date for our Fall Fundraising Breakfast on Thursday, November 8 from 7:30-9:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of Christ the Light Event Center, 2121 Harrison Street, Oakland, 94612.

We welcome all community members, Vincentians, and friends to join us for a morning of delicious food and fellowship. We will have a special visit from Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, Bishop of the Diocese of Oakland, and testimonials from clients, staff, and volunteers about their experiences with St. Vincent de Paul. Tables can be reserved in advance by contacting John Sterns or Blase Bova. (See back page for contact information.)



MOST REVEREND MICHAEL C. BARBER, BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND, ENJOYS BREAKFAST AT THE 2017 EVENT WITH DIGNIFIED ATTENDEES.

News Briefs

- 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
- Want to show the love you feel for SVdP? Come volunteer with us! Play the piano for clients in our Community Center, chop vegetables with Elvis in our kitchen, or help run a craft demo in our Fremont or Livermore stores. There's so much happening here, and most of it goes better with more hands involved. We'd love to train you in a new, rewarding volunteer opportunity. Contact John Sterns for more details. (See back page for contact information.) Your free time can make such a difference in the life of someone in need!
- Legacy gifts, also known as planned gifts, have made a tremendous difference for SVdP and those we serve. Legacy gifts let your charitable giving have a long-term impact reflecting your beliefs, priorities and values. "From general support to job training to our Dining Room and Women's Center, these gifts have literally transformed lives", said Blase Bova, SVdP's Executive Director. For more information about legacy gifts, contact Blase Bova or John Sterns. (See back page for contact information.)

Q&A with District Council President Jim Lee

Every three years, the Conference Presidents hold elections for a new SVdP Board President, also known as the District Council President. Our new District Council President, Jim Lee, presented his platform to the Vincentian voters, was elected, then began his tenure on October 1. Lovingly referred to as the “servant of servants,” the Board President is responsible for supporting all Alameda County Conferences and leading the Board of Directors. Read below to get to know our new president.

How did you get started with SVdP?

About 6 years ago I attended the hospitality Sunday (coffee and sweets), sponsored by the St. Albert SVdP. Vincentian Steve Tao, who is now sadly deceased, asked me if I would join. I agreed to attend the next meeting, and my journey at SVdP commenced.

What is being the Board President like for you, compared to other Vincentian roles you’ve had?

This position has a much broader perspective. You are much more the representative and spokesperson for the association, and less the hands-on deliverer of services.

What made you want to be President?

It is a wonderful opportunity to grow spiritually and as a person, and to expand my Vincentian world.

What are you looking forward to the most?

The opportunity to meet with and interact with other Vincentian volunteers, both in Alameda County and in other locations.

What is something you wish to learn?

I wish to learn more about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and to communicate effectively this knowledge to our district members.

What can Vincentians look forward to during your term?

My goals are to be present and available in this District, listen to the Vincentians and try to carry out their vision of our society.

What are your main tasks as President?

As my predecessor Louise Astle said, as President you are piloting the plane at 32,000 feet. Your goals are to keep the plane aloft, fly in a correct direction and make a safe landing. It is not to micromanage. Steve Kerr, the very successful coach of the Golden State Warriors, stated his goal as a coach is to guide the players to success. We have a wonderful staff at SVdP and excellent volunteers, and my goal is to continue our recent successful reorganization, and direct it to even greater success.

Thank you, Jim, for your service to the District Council. We look forward to the years ahead!



Kitchen of Champions Cohort 59 Graduates

Our Kitchen of Champions job training program's Cohort 59 graduated on September 13, 2018 in the West Oakland campus community center surrounded by family and community. We wish sincere congratulations to our graduates: Alonzo Curry, Leander Sellers, Anthony Randall, Trina Hewitt, Aniqua Jones and Juan Salinas.

Each graduate prepared a favorite meal to share with all attendees, including po' boys, gumbo, enchiladas, sweet rice, steak, chicken salad, and more. The ceremony featured keynote addresses from local chef, media star and entrepreneur, Chef Aminah Robinson, and KoC Cohort 47 alumnus Chef Marshawn Howard, who now owns his own catering company. Each graduate was

able to address their guests and teachers, while receiving their certificates of completion and brand new knife sets.

This group of six graduates was essential to serving over 500 meals per day in our free dining room, and even were able to use their own recipes to feed our guests. For example, graduate Aniqua Jones made a jerk spice that was enjoyed by our dining room guests and staff. On top of culinary lessons and practice, the trainees learn soft skills, such as resume building and interviewing techniques. "I think everybody should do KoC. It's a great opportunity to learn new things, even if you're a cook already. There's always stuff to learn," Jones said. Congratulations to Cohort 59, we are very proud!



Volunteer Feature: Ala Costa Center

A group of four to eight volunteers from Ala Costa Center have been coming to serve in our free dining room every Thursday for years. The group assists with cleaning tables and trays, prepping vegetables in the kitchen, and working in the family room. Volunteer Sakaie Thrower has been volunteering here for two years, handing out the desserts in the family dining area. “[Plating the desserts] is my favorite thing to do. I like coming here because it’s my favorite work site I’ve gone to with Ala Costa,” Thrower said. Fellow volunteer, Tenzin Shekhang, also likes his assignment of cleaning tables in the dining room, and does it consistently. “I get to talk to people and I get to help. It reminds me of a similar experience I had working in Alameda where I gave food to elderly people. I got to use my manners and I want to keep doing it,” Shekhang said. When they are not volunteering, both Thrower and Shekhang enjoy

watching all types of television and movies, ranging from superheroes to Disney movies.

The mission of Ala Costa includes empowering school-aged children with developmental disabilities to find, use, and express their unique strengths and talents. The Ala Costa volunteer group is a great example of young people’s ability to make a difference at SVdP, and we are happy to have them with us as regular volunteers each Thursday.



St. Barnabas Donates 100+ Warm Coats

On October 2, volunteers from St. Barnabas Parish in Alameda brought over one hundred warm coats to our West Oakland campus, to be distributed to our guests in the coming months. This is a very early and timely contribution to our county-wide warm coats drive. Last year, we collected over 300 coats, and this year we would be glad to exceed this goal. Thanks to St. Barnabas, we are off to a great start! For more information about donating to our Warm Coat Drive, please contact John Sterns. (See back page for contact information.)



LONGTIME CLOTHING CLOSET VOLUNTEER, NANCY HOLLISTER, SORTS THE NEW WARM COATS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO OUR GUESTS.



Conference Update: Our Lady of Grace



MEMBERS OF THE OUR LADY OF GRACE CONFERENCE POSE TOGETHER AT THEIR GENERAL BODY MEETING ON OCT. 4.

Our Vincentian conferences are a vital part of the St. Vincent de Paul community, and help broaden our outreach throughout Alameda County through their work. The Our Lady of Grace Conference in Castro Valley utilizes their 8-10 active members, with a few other community volunteers, to conduct four to 12 home visits per month, work on their weekly soup and sandwiches food program, hold monthly collection at Mass and donation drives, and host biweekly meetings.

Each Conference has a group of leaders who keep everything running smoothly. Heidi Denzler-Halsey has been Conference President for five years, and has seen important changes during her tenure so far. One big transition was giving all members access to the Conference's records through an online database. This allows members to be able to update and view important documents, data and notes from anywhere. "We are flexible. We have to be," Denzler-Halsey said.

The Soup and Sandwiches Lunch Program was started by the Our Lady of Grace Conference to better reach homeless people in their community. The early stages of the program involved individual members preparing food, and bringing it to a public place where those in need could access it. Over time, the program transitioned to a permanent location on the Parish grounds, after Denzler-Halsey received permission from their pastor to use the facility. Now, they hold their food distribution every Wednesday from 3:30-4:30 p.m., and have been doing it for over one year. One surprising advantage of this community meal, which serves between four and 15 individuals per week, is the ability for guests and volunteers to share information with each other. Conference members put together binders with resources for guests, and the guests are able to share what they know about hiring, housing, and Vincentian support opportunities.

In the future, the OLG Conference will continue to adapt to and be open to ways they can best serve the community. Denzler-Halsey cites the home visits and the meal distribution as strong points of the Conference, and they are always looking to adapt their services to the community's need. "God gives us a group of volunteers with all of different gifts. We need to use the gifts that we have in order to minister to those in need," Denzler-Halsey said.



Corporate Caring Week Aids Dining Room

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.

We also saw multiple visits from other corporate groups from Wells Fargo and Kaiser. Wells Fargo has proven to be a consistent supporter of SVdP, through their monetary and in-kind donations, participation with our Kitchen of Champions program, and volunteerism. The Kaiser volunteer groups came from downtown Oakland to volunteer in our free dining room twice in September and had matching aprons for the occasion. The volunteers were all pleasant to work with and brought warmth, hard work and happiness to the dining room. SVdP was happy to have an abundance of volunteers from various organizations and companies during what turned out to be a busy month in September!



GROUPS FROM KAISER (LEFT), WELLS FARGO (TOP RIGHT), AND CHEVRON (BOTTOM RIGHT), BROUGHT GREAT ENERGY TO OUR DINING ROOM AND MADE THOUSANDS OF MEALS POSSIBLE DURING SEPTEMBER.



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
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

Donor Spotlight: Michael Lane

SVdP benefited from gifts collected by a generous supporter who held a fundraising event on our behalf. Michael Lane, a residential real estate broker, hosted his second annual Summerfest at Corica Golf Course in Alameda. Michael's guests, who included clients, family and friends, made contributions to benefit programs at our West Oakland direct service campus. In total, nearly \$2,000 was donated to SVdP. This is another example of the ways our supporters utilize their creativity, generosity, and vision to help keep alive the mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

"Michael is a wonderful supporter of ours," says Executive Director, Blase Bova. "He understands our mission and programs and serves as a generous ambassador for us."

If you are interested in hosting a community fundraiser for SVdP like Michael Lane does, please contact John Sterns, our community engagement manager (contact information above).

