If there’s one thing to be learned from watching the Oakland A’s volunteer team this past week, it’s that those who play well together, work well together. Volunteers bedecked in baseball caps and t-shirts of yellow and green graced the SVdP Kitchen and Dining Room on four consecutive shifts. Gentle ribbing of a colleague who opted to wear red flannel instead of the Oakland team’s prideful hues quickly exposed this group as a jovial crew. When asked about the annual volunteering at SVdP, all responses began with a deferential gratitude for Detra Paige as the spearheading force responsible for keeping the tradition alive. While the departments represented varied from Data Science to Corporate Partnerships, the commonality was clear: these folks were friendly, full of smiles, and ready to work.

Tina, an employee with the Oakland A’s for the past nine seasons, says she loves the company’s annual volunteering at SVdP: “I believe in giving with your heart and soul to those in need. It shouldn’t matter where people come from. I’m happy to see folks eat a good meal here.”

Steve, from the A’s Corporate Partnerships department, enjoys the camaraderie with his coworkers. He describes the front office as being a fun place to work, full of young people with high energy: “I tell my younger colleagues that we work in the toy department of life. You guys do the real work here at SVdP. It’s fun to come and see this important work get done. We always have a good time.”
Upcoming Vincentian Meetings and Events

- **Saturday, December 10th**, **District Council Meeting**. Mass at 9:00 am, meeting at 10:00 am, 3433 Somerset Ave, Castro Valley, CA, 94546.

- **Wednesday, December 14th**, 8:45 am - 12:00 pm **Podiatry Clinic**, Downtown Campus.

- **Friday, December 16th**, 1:00 pm, **Homeless and Caring Court**, Community Center in Downtown Campus.

- **Monday, December 19th**, **Finance Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland, 4:00 pm.

- **Wednesday, December 21st**, **Board of Trustees Meeting**: fellowship/meal at 5:30 pm followed by meeting at 6:00 pm, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland. (3rd Wednesday of the month).

- **Tuesday, December 27th**, 1:30 pm, **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus (4th Tuesday of the month).

- **Friday, January 6th**, 1:00 pm, **Spirituality/Extension Committee**, Nob Hill Market, Alameda (1st Friday of month).

- **Monday, January 9th**, 2:00 pm, **Development Committee**, Downtown Campus (normally 1st Monday of the month).

- **Tuesday, January 10th**, 11:30 am, **Property Committee**, Conference Call (2nd Tuesday of the month).

- **Monday, November 14th** through **Monday April 17th**, **Winter Shelter Program**. Our supporters and volunteers are encouraged to set up a time to visit or to help out. Call us at 510-638-7600 to find out how you can help.

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**News Briefs**

- This year we’re reviving a tradition from years past: a non-perishable food drive. We’re reaching out to community partners to ask them if they’d like to participate, and hope to invite more participants in the future. The food drive can continue into the New Year, allowing us to further support Conferences who offer food boxes to local families.

- 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

- Jackie’s team in the Call Center now has a special email address: callcenter@svdp-alameda.org, to make it even easier to communicate with them.

- 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!

- Our 2016-17 Winter Shelter Continues through Monday, April 17th, 2017.
As the weather turns colder, we are getting ready to participate in the national One Warm Coat drive. We’re asking for gently-worn warm coats for adult men and women, especially men’s coats and larger women’s coats. (Our Women's Center already has plenty of warm children’s coats, thankfully.) The coats can be dropped off throughout the winter – there’s always a need for warm coats in our Clothing Closet. We’d love to get your help in sorting, hanging, and distributing those warm coats, too!

You can make a gift to SVdP specifically to purchase turkeys. A monetary donation will stretch further, as we are able to purchase turkeys at a bulk rate.

SVdP also distributes grocery cards in $25 increments to clients and families during the holiday season. We take Lucky’s or Safeway cards, which allow clients to purchase food from Lucky’s, Safeway, Save Mart, FoodMaxx, or Pak-N-Save.

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.

A Gift from Fremont Bank

Fremont Bank made a generous contribution to St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County on Tuesday, December 6. David Lawrence from the bank brought the donation to our office and met with Executive Director Blase Bova and Community Engagement Manager Muna Texier. The donation is for purchasing food for our holiday programs. We extend deep and warm thanks to Fremont Bank.

The Livermore store received 6 of these beauties, and we were intrigued! Our store manager, Jamie made a visit to her friend John at The Gold Mill, who’s a wonderful resource for many of the rare and interesting items we get. John said he thought these might be the Warner Brother’s keys given to actors and other VIPs when they had an important association with the studio…how cool is that? He’s researching them, but meanwhile, stop by and see these and other fabulous finds!
SVdP Job Training Programs

SVdP’s Workforce Program is an integral part of our Special Works programming, and we are committed to offering job training to low-income and disadvantaged individuals in our community. Although our Champion Workforce program is currently rebuilding, we continue with our successful Kitchen of Champions culinary program. KoC offers comprehensive on-campus training in entry-level culinary skills, SERVSafe Food Handler Certification, and job search and placement support. SVdP is very proud of its efforts to break the vicious cycle of poverty by providing the support our trainees need to find and keep meaningful work. Ryan Uyehara, SVdP’s Special Works Manager, emphasizes the benefits of the KoC programs: “To start a job in the food service industry takes forethought and fortitude, and that is where we can give our trainees a leg up. They will be better prepared with some job credibility, which helps with the workplace culture shock when our trainees are starting out.”

Tierney Berlinski, our Workforce Program Coordinator, reports that in FY2016, 16 KoC trainees graduated and 13 are now employed, and that 49 CW trainees graduated and 33 are now employed.

Rickki, a KoC alumni who currently works as kitchen staff at the Novato Healthcare Center, reached out to SVdP to offer job opportunities for other KoC alumni. What a great example of how community partnerships can develop when working alumni become advocates for SVdP! In other good news, Juan, a recent Champion Workforce graduate, left the program early after securing a temporary position and is now being considered for at least three well-paying full-time positions in administration. Congrats to Juan and to all of our hardworking alumni. We are very grateful to the many people who have supported our job training programs this year: Vincentians, volunteers, donors, and community partners alike.
Save the Planet, Feed the Hungry

The best thing you can do to reduce your use of resources that are used for clothing is to not buy them- to reuse something you already own. The second best? Shopping at a used clothing store.

The clothing industry is the second largest polluter in the world … second only to oil. We are a nation of shoppers and that shopping results in the use of precious resources for items that may last in your closet a matter of months, or even weeks. Some top clothing designers are on the leading edge of reforming the fashion industry and are reducing water use and carbon emissions and working to make their supply chain sustainable by 2020. But all of us need to take part and focus on more sustainable shopping now. The best way to start? Buy your clothing at secondhand thrift and vintage shops, and we happen to know of two great ones here in Alameda County. Shopping in a St. Vincent de Paul thrift store helps fund the vital programs that offer basics like food and shelter, as well as job training and ongoing support for neighbors in need.

We Brunch

*We Brunch* founders Chastity Harper and Adereni Fashokun, along with their group, joined the SVdP team during Dining Room service. Their group’s mission to cultivate community through meaningful conversation and action made them ideal volunteers. *We Brunch* is a budding non-profit organization that began as a business networking endeavor and is blossoming to include service-oriented activities as part of their programming.
Your support for St. Vincent de Paul ensures that our critical services help those in greatest need. Our Free Dining Room provides hot, nutritious meals to thousands of individuals and families. Our Winter Shelter will give refuge from the cold and rainy weather to hundreds of men and women.

- For $1,000 you can give 50 packages of diapers, formula and family hygiene products in our Women’s Center.
- For $500 you can provide 120 sets of new socks and underwear for people sleeping in the cold and rain.
- For $250 you can serve 100 hot, nutritious meals in our Free Dining Room.
- For $100 you can wash a week of bedding for our Winter Shelter.

Please consider a gift to St. Vincent de Paul. Contact Blase Bova or Muna Texier (see last page) to learn more. If you prefer to donate online, please visit www.svdp-alameda.org/donate.
It’s not easy keeping up with Ryan Uyehara, SVdP’s Special Works Manager. On any given day, Ryan buzzes from his front office to the kitchen, from the walk-in coolers to the Food Locker, or from the Women’s Center on his way back to the Men’s Center. SVdP recently hired a Kitchen Manager, but until that person comes on board, Ryan is responsible for keeping the kitchen operational. He’s a one-man army when it comes to delegating tasks to get the kitchen ready for the day ahead, and making sure our other Special Works programs run smoothly. Observing Ryan at work is to watch a person totally in the flow: on a mission to accomplish one task, he will undoubtedly be approached by trainees, kitchen staff or colleagues, each with pressing questions that only he can answer. He takes the time to answer each without losing his footing or his cool, but only if you can keep up with him!

When asked about his role in the day-to-day operations at the direct service campus, Ryan is matter-of-fact: “I’m just trying to survive. The Special Works department has difficult responsibilities. We must love what we do to work at SVdP, and most folks here do. But not every department interfaces with our clientele in such an intimate way. And there can be a lot that goes with that. Other departments don’t have to deal with people banging on the door, asking for lunch after kitchen service has been closed. Or hearing the doorbell ring throughout the day, with countless folks asking about the Winter Shelter. The idea is to survive and do the best we can despite all the pressing needs and distractions that pop up in our community every day. There’s an emotional component to what we do. I don’t want to downplay what anyone else is responsible for, but it can be emotionally draining on this end of things.”

It’s clear from following Ryan around to steal a few minutes of his time that this is a man who cares deeply about the services we offer, the clients we serve, and the people he works with. In the short walk back to his office from the Community Center, Ryan fielded questions from HR and a concern from a kitchen staff member. It’s just another afternoon for Chef Ryan and he will continue to keep it all moving.
Customer Appreciation

The Livermore Store has long had a loyal fan base that stops by regularly to shop—some as often as twice a week! Jamie and her team wanted to say thank you for all the years of support the community has offered and celebrated them with a party in November. It was well attended and everyone enjoyed food, a live band and getting to know each other better. We love Livermore and the great people that make the store an even better place to work and will be here to celebrate you for many years to come!

Thank you!

Thanks for your interest, and thanks for the work that you do for St. Vincent de Paul! Once you’ve read this, please think of someone you know who might like to learn more about us, and forward it to them. We appreciate all the ways that you make St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County a part of your life. If you’d like to learn more about our Society or its work, or if you have questions, ideas, or concerns, I’d love to hear from you. Please contact me at any time at the phone number or email listed above. Thanks to Florinda Larkin, Muna Texier, Sacha Kawaichi, Ryan Uyehara, Patty Breslin, and Tierney Berlinski for their contributions to this issue!

In service,

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