

Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: February 2017



Corporate Partners



Pandora Streams into SVdP Dining Room

Pandora's Advertising Sales team joined SVdP's Dining Room volunteer roster. This is the first of what the team's manager, Chase, hopes to be a regular monthly visit.

Says Chase: "The proximity alone makes sense. We can walk here easily and get to work right away. Plus the size of our team, 8 to 10 people, seems to be a good fit for the

Dining Room's needs. We will be back and we're already planning on donating some men's pants since we learned from a volunteer that they're in high demand right now."

Kaiser Keeps Us Thriving

Jaimie and her colleagues from the office of the CEO at Kaiser Permanente joined the volunteer team in the SVdP Dining Room.

A clear indicator that this group was a perfect fit came from observing their productive and playful approach to serving lunch. SVdP staff and regular volunteers, who cajoled and worked alongside them, commented on their strong and effective presence in the Dining Room.

They were not only helpful, but also joyful, sharing laughter with each other and our clients. Their



willingness to work hard and have fun while doing so demonstrated their flexibility and productivity. It's easy to get work done when you're having fun and there was no shortage of that!



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul welcomes "all who wish to live their faith by loving and serving their neighbor."

"What can we do? ... We can offer what little we have. We certainly have a few hours of time, some talent, and some expertise." Pope Francis (7/26/15)

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County has served those in need for almost 80 years.



**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
ALAMEDA COUNTY**
2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, CA 94612



Give Generously • svdp-alameda.org • (510) 638-7600

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, February 16th and March 2nd, 11:00 am, Free haircuts by Angel, Community Center, Downtown Campus.
- Monday, March 6th, 2:00 pm, Development Committee, Downtown Campus (Normally 1st Monday of the month).
- Tuesday, February 14th, 11:30 am, Property Committee, Conference Call (2nd Tuesday of the month. Contact Blase for more information.)
- Wednesdays, 10:45 am to 12:45 pm, Cal State East Bay (CSUEB) Nursing Program returns to offer our clients health screenings in the dining room on Wednesdays through February 22nd.
- Saturday, February 11th, District Council Meeting, Mass at 9:00 am, meeting at 10:00 am, 3433 Somerset Ave, Castro Valley, CA, 94546.
- Monday February 13th, Finance Committee, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland, 2:00 pm (Monday before Board meeting)
- Wednesday, February 15th, 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, February 28th, 1:30 pm, Special Works Committee, Downtown Campus (4th Tuesday of month).
- Friday, March 3rd, 1:00 pm, Spirituality/Extension Committee, Nob Hill Market, Alameda (1st Friday of 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. There are still beds available in our Winter Shelter. Invite those in need to arrive by 8:30pm to secure a bed for the night.

News Briefs

- Volunteer opportunities at St. Vincent de Paul:
- Community Center Help Desk - help provide information with a smile to our SVdP guests.
- Clothing Closet - help sift and sort seasonal apparel for our guests in the SVdP Clothing Closet, a free one-stop shop open five days a week.
- Fremont thrift store - have a penchant for organizational know-how? Color code to your heart's content and put your skills to good use in our busy Fremont location.
- 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!
- 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.

News Briefs

■ This winter has proven to be a cold and wet one for our neighbors in need. SVdP's Clothing Closet needs more men's pants of all sizes and large men's coats and jackets.

■ 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

■ Continued Warm Coat Drive: It's still cold and raining, and SVdP is still distributing sturdy coats to men, women and children who visit our Community Center. Donate your gently used winter coats to us, and help warm someone's heart (and body)!

■ 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.

■ We want you to be our date: our Spring Fundraising Breakfast will be Friday, April 28th. We'll be sharing more about this important (and moving) event next month!

Conversion of Vincent

January 25th marked the 400th anniversary of St. Vincent de Paul's moment of conversion. In a small village in the French countryside, St. Vincent de Paul was deeply moved by the spiritual and physical poverty of the people in his community. St. Vincent de Paul began encouraging others to change their lives from within, and to reach out to the people around them who had material needs. Join us in celebrating 400 years of our patron saint inspiring acts of fellowship and good works!



Join us for a day of Reflection

with guest speaker

Sheila Gilbert

Officially commissioned on Sept. 3, 2011, Sheila Gilbert is the first woman to hold the office of president of the National Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP).



Saturday, March 4, 2017

8:00 AM—4:00PM

Please RSVP by February 25, 2017 by emailing info@svdp-cc.org or calling (925) 439-5060



St. Isidore Catholic Church

440 La Gonda Way

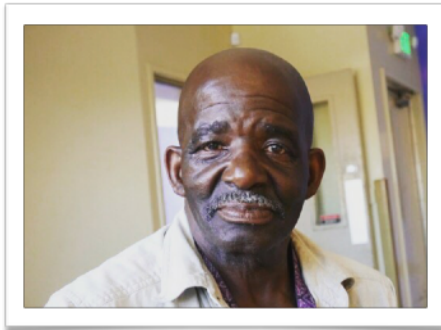
Danville, CA 94526

Who is Sheila Gilbert?

Sheila lives out the charism of Vincent in all she says and does. She is a strong advocate for "systemic change"- working closely with those living in poverty to better understand their plight and bring this experience to bear fruit through the training of Vincentians Nationally, addressing the root causes of poverty.

Sheila is also a great retreat facilitator. As the Societies' National President she continues her work to help us understand that as Vincentians we must never lose sight that our Catholicism and Spirituality is the breath, heartbeat and fire of our Vincentian work. **Who and what do you and your Conference bring to the Christ we serve?**

The Elements of Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Gu

Guests: Larry rides his bike all over town even though he is disabled from a failed spinal disc surgery. Despite his pain, he is always friendly, kind, and ready to chat in the Dining Room. Larry grew up in Oakland and is a Veteran who was stationed in the Philippines. He sometimes goes by his nickname, Breeze. He takes it easy and brings laughter to the SVdP West Oakland Campus.



Vi

Vincentians: Conor "I am a Vincentian because back in college, in Ireland, I got involved with the Vincentians. That was just for a year or so, but that was my first involvement. That was something like 50 years ago. I'm now part of the Conference at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and we help people who need funds in an emergency. We visit them in their homes and if we have the funds, we help prevent their electricity from being cut off, or their water. We also collect clothes and other items that come to SVdP. That relationship led me to become a regular volunteer."



St

Staff: Lu has been a staff member for 17 years. She now provides Vincentian support and 2017 will mark her 20th year as a Vincentian herself. When asked about the longevity of her career, she shrugs and states her truth, "I love having the opportunity to help people. I'm trying to live the mission." When a coworker describes Lu's presence and influence, it is evident how integral Lu has become within the SVdP family: "She is the most compassionate one and her length of service is a constant reminder to us about why we do the work we do."



Vo

Volunteers: Sacha has been an SVdP volunteer for over a decade. A regular Dining Room volunteer, Sacha builds relationships with many of our repeat guests. She carries her camera around and takes wonderful photos of individuals and families as she listens to their stories. She sees the humanity in each person and her photos show it. We thank Sacha for her commitment and talents in documenting the character and strength of many who are part of the SVdP family.



Cold Days, Warm Clothes

The Clothing Closet at our West Oakland campus provides women and men with a large selection of clothing, shoes and accessories. The items are continually replenished by donations from individuals, families and organizations located throughout Alameda County, including Vincentians, Conferences and service programs.

Donations are collected at our West Oakland site, where volunteers and staff members begin the process of sorting the items and arranging them on clothing racks and shelves to display in the Clothing Closet. In addition to collecting and sorting donations, volunteers assist in keeping the closet neat, clean, and organized. Donated clothes, shoes and other items for children are collected as well, and then sorted for distribution in our Women's Center.



"My goal is to have everybody be happy and to leave here better off than when they came in," says Mike Jefferson, the SVdP staff member who works in the Clothing Closet. At the end of 2016, more than one hundred men and women were visiting the Clothing Closet each month. For more information about making a clothing donation and/or volunteering to help collect, sort and display Clothing Closet donations, contact Muna Texier, our Community Engagement Manager. (See back page for contact information.)

Marin Academy Gets a Taste of Our Mission



17 sophomores from Marin Academy in San Rafael joined the volunteers in the Dining Room in January. This is the high school's first time at SVdP, but they have other long standing relationships with direct service organizations throughout the SF Bay Area. Students and their

staff shared their previous service stories and gave SVdP a high rating.

"I was surprised with how fun and enjoyable this was. I thought it would be a lot more prep work and not so much interaction with people. But I was happy to get the chance to talk to many people who came in for a meal."

- Rachel, Marin Academy student.

"To me there were two types of interactions: either people were really hungry and they just wanted to eat in peace, or they were chatty and glad to have a conversation with us. It was a cool experience."

- Valent, Marin Academy student.



Saturdays in the Dish Room

Four bright yellow aprons set the dish room volunteers apart from the rest in the SVdP Dining Room. Tuesday through Saturday volunteers come together to provide nearly 600 meals a day for the community, and that means 600 dirty trays need cleaning, in addition to all the pots and pans used by the kitchen. The fast-paced and soapy nature of the dish room creates a space that inspires natural bonding between volunteers, and that is no exception for the Saturday crew. Dr. John, Joe, Kevin, and Patrick have been collectively volunteering at SVdP for 56 years! For the past seven years, these four friends have come together every Saturday to volunteer in one of the most critical and often overlooked areas of the dining room, the dish room. To the untrained eye the job is far from glamorous, but the Saturday crew has made the dish room their volunteer home, where they review the week and share their take on politics, sports, and movies.

Their motivations to volunteer at SVdP are as varied and unique as they are, yet the reasons for their successful tenure are the same: they enjoy the friendship and camaraderie that comes from their shared desire to give back at SVdP. Patrick, who works during the week as an engineer, says that he thinks about volunteering when at work and he looks forward to Saturdays. Volunteering at SVdP is a grounding and nurturing experience for him, and while he must focus on materials and objects during his work week, his Saturdays are about good people coming together for those in need. As you pass by the dish room on Saturday mornings, you often hear laughter above the din



of the dish washer and the spray of water against the trays, and you can't help but smile. The bond these four friends share is an example of the special nature of SVdP. As Kevin says, "good people are drawn here and stay here."

Legacy Gifts Make Lasting Impact

Legacy gifts, also known as planned gifts, have made a tremendous difference for St. Vincent de Paul, our programs and those we serve. Legacy gifts offer a way for donors to ensure that their charitable giving continues to have an impact that reflects their beliefs, priorities and values. "Legacies have allowed us to continue and, in some cases, to expand the services we offer," says Blase Bova, SVdP's Executive Director. "From general support to job training to our Dining Room and Women's Center, these gifts have literally transformed lives."

If you are considering making a planned gift for SVdP, we recommend you consult with an attorney, tax accountant or other legal and financial advisors. For more information about legacy gifts for SVdP, contact Blase Bova or Muna Texier. (See back page for contact.)



Why Our Winter Shelter Matters

The notion that shelters are dirty is a familiar one to Leslie Oliver. As SVdP's Winter Shelter and Community Center Coordinator, it pains her that people assume shelters are places where one "can catch scabies." Such generalizations



"Winter Shelter is a lot of work, but what keeps me going is knowing that our clients need it. For me, it's also about checking in with them. They recognize what we are doing and they share how appreciative they are. It means a lot to me and reminds me how important the SVdP Winter Shelter is for our community." - Leslie Oliver

keep people misinformed on the needs of the homeless and housing insecure. Leslie and her team take pride in maintaining the shelter as a clean, safe, and warm environment. Despite its temporary nature, there is a sense of home at the Winter Shelter, from how food is presented to the quality of blankets and cots provided. Leslie adds, "We take pride in keeping the shelter clean and making sure that people can get a good night's rest. The idea is to provide space for quality rest so that clients have the energy to tackle bigger

issues like securing housing or landing employment on a more permanent basis. Our clients' long-range goals vary, but without rest and food in their bellies, they aren't getting their most basic needs met. When I hear critical comments about shelters made in casual conversation, I want to invite them to visit and take a tour so they can see what goes into creating this space. It's a lot of work."

SVdP's Winter Shelter opened in

mid-

November

and will

remain open

until mid-April.

With a

maximum

number of 75

cots per night, 7

nights a week,

there's a lot of



basic maintenance involved. Each guest gets the use of two blankets and a sheet per stay, and all linens must be laundered before they can be used again. There is an extensive sign-in and intake process, which requires training and accurate data entering from staff.

Each piece of the Winter Shelter puzzle is important and the puzzle is incomplete without the integral presence of the guests. Guest perspectives include gratitude for warm beds and heated facilities: "I like that there are snacks and food provided", said one guest. Another told us "It is hard to be homeless. But it's a little less hard when we can find a warm place to sleep."



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
Blase Bova	Executive Director	(510) 435-2625	bbova@svdp-alameda.org
Carmen Jones-Weeks	Human Resources Manager	(510) 385-8934	cjonesweeks@svdp-alameda.org
Julia Catania	Administration Manager	(510) 692-0460	jcatania@svdp-alameda.org
Muna Texier	Community Engagement Manager	(510) 719-0774	mtexier@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

St. Joachim of Hayward Brings Lunch and Love



St. Joachim School of Hayward was strongly represented in late January at our West Oakland campus. Two representatives from each grade (2nd through 8th) hand-delivered prepared sandwiches and snacks to guests in the SVdP dining room.

They brought 400 individually decorated lunch boxes with artful messages of love. Thank you to all

the students who participated in making the sandwiches and to the parents and teachers who helped orchestrate the day. This has been a Catholic Week tradition at St. Joachim for 25 years! Keep up the good work and here's to the next 25 years!

