

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors News: July 2018



# Glen's Story

At St. Vincent de Paul, every guest, volunteer, and staff member has a story. Glen, a guest of the free dining room, opens up about his struggles and provides his wisdom and wishes below.

"I think St. Vincent is good because a lot of people would be hungry without it.

"There are many services here. I am just beginning to find out about them. I am borderline diabetic and I have neuropathy. My feet are numb and sometimes I can't even feel them. It keeps my balance off. Sometimes when I lay down flat it feels like my feet are in the arctic. It is the nerves. It really is painful. It runs in my family. I am glad to know about the podiatry clinic here. And the medical van on Fridays.

"St Vincent saves a lot of lives. I grew up in Oakland. I am inside right now. But I really need a senior building. A quiet place. I am not into hanging out on the streets. I have a social worker that I hope will help me. I have done my share of being homeless. It has been a journey. I thank God I am still here.

"My wish is that they had a dental service. That is what seniors really need. It is so expensive. I'd give anything to get that. "I took some left turns when I should have made a right. Now I am trying to get back on track.

"You have to keep things in perspective. You have to learn how to live. You have to learn how to take the bitter with the sweet. A lot of people depend on St. Vincent. It helps people get through."

Visit [svdp-alameda.org/volunteer](http://svdp-alameda.org/volunteer) to learn more about how you can join us as a volunteer at our West Oakland direct service campus, or connect with a SVdP volunteer group (called a "conference") at your local Catholic parish. Help us to help others.



# Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Tuesday, July 3rd, **Development Committee**, 1:30 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Thursday, July 5th, 1:30 p.m., **Spirituality Committee**, Nob Hill Market in Alameda.
- Monday, July 16th, **Finance Committee**, 4:00 p.m., Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Wednesday, July 18th, **Board of Trustees meeting** - fellowship/meal at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6:00 p.m. Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.
- Tuesday, July 24th, 1:30 p.m., **Special Works Committee**, Downtown Campus, 2272 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland.

# Back to School Supplies Needed

SVdP is collecting new backpacks and school supplies for 250 children to be distributed at our Back to School Open House on Saturday, August 4. Backpacks and school supplies are needed by Saturday, July 28, at our community center, located at 2272 San Pablo Ave. To donate supplies, schedule donation drop offs, or sign up to volunteer at the open house, contact John at [jesterns@svdp-alameda.org](mailto:jesterns@svdp-alameda.org).

To donate online, visit [www.svdp-alameda.org/donate](http://www.svdp-alameda.org/donate), or mail your check to St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County, 2272 San Pablo Ave, Oakland, CA 94612. Please designate your gift to Back-to-School 2018.



# 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](http://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.)

# Conference Update: Church of the Assumption



*THE ASSUMPTION CONFERENCE SITS IN FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER AT THEIR HOLIDAY POTLUCK MEETING, DEBRIEFING ABOUT THEIR HOME VISITS.*

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Alameda County extends beyond our guests at the downtown campus. We have a network of thirty-seven groups, called Conferences, who work within their parish communities to support residents in their surrounding areas with services, including eviction prevention. Within each Conference, there is a leadership team who guides the group's service. The Assumption Conference President is Denis Ducey.

The Vincentian Conference from the Church of the Assumption in San Leandro is one of our most active, with twenty-five members, twenty of whom consistently participate in the monthly group meetings. The Conference's services extend throughout San Leandro and the "desert areas" in Oakland, places where a SVdP Conference presence is needed, but there is no active Conference nearby. As a group, the Conference conducts between fifteen and twenty home visits per month, where they bring a food box to the resident and enjoy in fellowship and

assess their situation and what needs the Conference can support. Often, people need financial assistance with bills, especially when challenges happen and emergency expenses take priority.

The Assumption Conference has a strong presence within their church community. They include an ad for their Conference in the weekly church bulletin, and make announcements during masses. Their monthly meetings are a place where members grow spiritually, as well as learn about Vincentian news and trainings. During each meeting, members have a chance to share a "praise report," where they note positive experiences from their service. The meetings always have food, and, no matter what, the meetings always end on time. The Conference communicates regularly via email, and everyone truly lives the motto of "neighbors helping neighbors." Conference member Albert Rajan said, "This group has good structure and good leadership. That's what makes it successful."

Members are also encouraged to serve on SVdP committees. Rajan is a member of the Development Committee, along with former Conference President, Gary Flinders. Flinders finds that the most important element of Vincentian life is the spiritual growth. "We spend quality time with our personal spiritual growth, and I think that makes the group more connected to the mission and to themselves." Flinders said. Thank you to the Assumption Conference for their wonderful work living as Vincentians and helping their neighbors.





# Women's Center Plans Eventful Summer

This summer, the Women's Center is adding a new even to their calendar. The Summer Reading Program is up and running, and gives the opportunity for our guests to turn the play room into a library and read as many books with their children as they can. Children who participate in the program will be invited to a carnival in August.

The Women's Center, Community Engagement Department, and Community Center are also in the process of preparing for the Back to School Open House. Women's Center Coordinator, Jasmine Rogers, believes that the center is the most vital service SVdP can offer. "Having a

women's and children's center is so important because it affects the lives of children and adults. Our summer reading and back to school event is a good chance for us to make sure we are doing all that we can for our guests," Rogers said.

In addition to the summer back to school programming, the Women's Center continues to serve thirty clients per day. "Everybody deserves the basic necessities in life. When I was pregnant, I didn't know about places like this. I know could have used it when my son was small," Rogers said. See page 2 of this newsletter for information on how to donate and volunteer this summer.







# Volunteer Feature: John Proctor

Committed dining room volunteer John Proctor has worked with St. Vincent de Paul since childhood, having grown up donating clothes to those in need. It wasn't until he became a successful architect and worked with an architectural firm for over 20 years that he resumed his relationship with SVdP by serving in our free dining room. "Right away, I fell in love with this place. So I've been coming here once a week for two and a half years," Proctor said.

Proctor's professional background kept him busy designing luxury living complexes and stores. When he began making lifestyle changes, he looked in the community for volunteer opportunities, and decided to give St. Vincent de Paul a try. Little did he know, his work here would

inspire his newest passion project, called "fragile dwelling," focused on homeless solutions. Proctor wants to "use [his] abilities in architecture and design to reintegrate the homeless into society," by creating comprehensive living communities for homeless people, where residents can feel safe and supported, and receive the resources and guidance they may need to secure permanent housing, jobs, and overall stability.

As vice president of the Golden Gate Foundation, whose goal is to solve the problems surrounding affordable housing, Proctor is leading plans to build an enclosed ferris wheel, like the London Eye, at Treasure Island, that would provide breathtaking views of the entire Bay Area. Proceeds would help fund clever homeless solutions.

Proctor admires the ways in which SVdP utilizes a small amount of resources, like food and money, and transforms it for our guests. "[The reason you can't solve a problem is] not a lack of resources, it's a lack of resourcefulness," Proctor said. "It's a huge inspiration seeing people wearing so many hats at St. Vincent de Paul, especially as someone who wants to start their own design practice." Proctor is also active on social media, and frequently shares our SVdP Facebook posts to his online community. We are excited to see how Proctor's plans come to fruition, and we thank him for his continued commitment and zeal in the dining room each week.



# Meet Our Staff: Lu Cuevas, Vincentian Support Coordinator

In 1997, Lu Cuevas joined the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Alameda County as a Vincentian



volunteer at All Saints Parish in Hayward. Lu saw women starting to make announcements and reflections in mass, and decided to join them in their ministry. "I saw someone [speaking to the church] who looked like me for the first time," Cuevas said, and it inspired her to participate more in the parish. After a few years, Cuevas worked with Vincentian leadership to create her full-time position with St. Vincent de Paul, which she started in 2001. The Spirituality, Formation, and Extension Coordinator position is based on an existing position at SVdP in Phoenix, Arizona, and is essential in connecting our community of Vincentians with our three Alameda

County campuses, as well as ensure that everyone is receiving adequate support.

Cuevas has a long history of service, having honorably served in the U.S. Army as an EMT and dental hygienist from 1973-1979. Cuevas is grateful to "get paid for something I love to do." Lu is loved by the SVdP community and is a team player passionate about our mission. "Lu is someone who lives the Vincentian mission through all aspects of her life. She is a true blessing for the lives she touches," said John Sterns, Community Engagement Manager.

After being inspired by the creation of her new job position and the people she worked with in the process, Cuevas earned a master's degree from Holy Names University in Pastoral Ministry. Her education helps to guide her in being a spiritual advisor for our conference members. "The best part of my job is being present to the person standing before me. They're a present to me because of their presence," Cuevas said. As someone whose family benefitted from St. Vincent de Paul's services growing up, Cuevas is glad to be able to return the favor to the community. "God opened a door, and I was faithful enough to step through it," Cuevas said.



## 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
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: Nike San Leandro

The San Leandro Marina Square Nike Outlet Store generously donated over 125 pair of new and gently used shoes of various sizes to our downtown campus's monthly podiatry clinic. These shoes are fitted to our patients, many of whom seek a comfortable, durable shoe for walking. In the month of June, almost 45 pairs of Nike shoes were distributed, leaving our patients with a new, comfortable, and stylish shoe for the summer.

Donations are arranged by our dedicated volunteer, Janet Waring, who is a retired nurse and coordinates the podiatry clinic with St. Vincent de Paul and the Order of Malta. Waring spends hours each month reaching out to local shoe stores, sports teams, businesses, and individuals for donations of shoes, socks, medical and cleaning supplies, and more. The Nike store's generous donations will surely be used in the



coming months, and we are grateful for a new partnership with them.

The Nike store staff also visited and volunteered in the June podiatry clinic, expressed an interest in serving in the free dining room in the future. Thank you Team Nike!

