



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
of Contra Costa County  
50 YEARS HELPING THE POOR

# FALL 2014



*"I came here to help people and give to them, but after a few months I realized they were helping me."*

*- Steve Paris, Vincentian volunteer, Christ the King Conference, Pleasant Hill*

## Season of Sharing Helps SVdP Lift Families Out of Crises

"An opportunity to change lives" is how Stephen Krank, Vincentian Support Coordinator for Contra Costa County describes SVdP's partnership with the Chronicle Season of Sharing fund.

The fund, administered by partner organizations throughout the Bay Area, provides critical assistance grants to Bay Area families in need who are trying but struggling to help themselves. As one of the oldest and most trusted social service organizations in Contra Costa County, St. Vincent de Paul was selected as a partner service provider.

"This partnership works exceptionally well because it aligns perfectly with the work our Vincentian volunteers already undertake every day. They meet people face-to-face, assess their



problems, counsel them on a way out of their troubles, and, when approved, provide the financial assistance they need to get them stabilized by providing payments to landlords or other creditors directly," Krank said.

The fund is already helping SVdP

reach more people in need. For example, working with Catholic Charities of the East Bay, our District Council office in Pittsburg was able to help a client get her power back on after she was left destitute and unable to pay when her husband passed away after a long medical treatment. She was also connected to the social services she needs to stay afloat.

Soon, SVdP volunteers in conferences throughout the county will be able to submit applications for clients.

More information: [www.seasonofsharing.org](http://www.seasonofsharing.org)

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## CLIENT PROFILE: **Albert**

### Dear Friends,

“People helping people” is the phrase that comes to mind when I reflect on what St. Vincent de Paul does on a daily basis.

This summer demonstrated the awesome power of people who care to make a difference in the lives of others, from staff for our Family Resource Center programs to volunteer mentors for our Workforce Development Program to the volunteer physicians and nurses who dedicate their time to care for uninsured patients at the RotaCare Pittsburg Free Clinic at St. Vincent de Paul.

Perhaps most important, more than 600 Vincentian volunteers serve members of their communities, providing their neighbors food, advice, or other assistance in what is often the worst time of their lives.

To me, it is no surprise that our volunteers are frequently among our most generous donors: their experiences often move them to support our programs in other ways.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary in Contra Costa County, please consider making a donation of your time, talent, or generosity of spirit to help us serve the more than 200,000 people whose lives we touched in the last fiscal year. We are powered by people—including you!

With gratitude,



**Melanie Anguay**  
**Executive Director**



“I’m 39 years old, and I’ve never had my own place to live.”

Today, Albert is beaming. He’s just received word that he will soon be moving into his own studio apartment with government assistance. What might be a rather ordinary life event for many is monumental for Alfred.

Albert has been living on the streets for years. Since an accident at age 10, he has been permanently disabled and unable to work. After his father passed away a few years ago, he had nowhere to stay. A Pittsburg resident, Alfred started coming to the Family Resource Center and Free Dining Room to get help.

“I came here for years and got food, clothes, and blankets,” he said.

Now I am getting my first

apartment in my life!” When he wasn’t receiving clothes or food, he was receiving a little emotional support to get through his day. “Everyone here is always so nice,” he says.

He came in nearly every day for some form of assistance, from hygiene items to a hot meal or a snack from our dining room. Our staff members greeted him with warmth and compassion, and he kept coming back. Because they got to know Albert, and because he felt welcome, our staff was able to help him get assistance.

St. Vincent de Paul provided the basics: food, clothing, and human connections Albert needed to get his life on track. We wish him the best of luck!

### **SVdP, RotaCare & Kaiser Pair Clients with Free Vision Care**



In July, SVdP referred 40 patients from its Family Resource Center and the RotaCare Pittsburg Free Medical Clinic at SVdP to receive free vision care, including glasses, from Mission Vision/Kaiser Permanente.

Events like this really can and do change lives." "I love helping the community," said Tiffany Paz, a vision services associate from Kaiser Permanente's Pleasanton Medical Offices and second year volunteer.

## Diocesan Seminarians Help Prepare for 50th Anniversary

You might have met these three young men at some point this summer: Jose Morales, Gepaul Carpio, and Peter Lawonkerd, seminarians with the Diocese of Oakland, who generously volunteered their time to visit nearly every St. Vincent de Paul conference in Contra Costa County.

The seminarians were tasked with collecting Vincentian stories—the stories of the highs and lows of the work our volunteers have done in 50 years of service to our community. They also provided direct assistance for visitors in need at our Family Resource Center, from distributing food to providing information and links to our partner organizations.

Along the way, they were moved by the stories they heard about how lay people decided to dedicate their lives to serving the poor. The stories they have collected will be published later this year to coincide with our 50th Anniversary Celebration dinner with Bishop Barber. We hope you can join us for this very special event!



Photo (L-R): Jose Morales, Gepaul Caprio, and Peter Lawongkerd

*More information:*

*Tickets to the dinner*

*are \$50 per person. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit our website [www.svdpc-cc.org](http://www.svdpc-cc.org) and look for the dinner link under “Upcoming Events.”*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Ed Regan, St. Mary’s Conference



“  
We have  
to give  
back.”

*Ed Regan has been volunteering with St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County for 51 years—since 1963. He sat down to share some of his experience with us (excerpts below):*

*What are you doing these days?*

I go with another volunteer, John, to Starbucks and bring the stuff to the St. Vincent de Paul store to give away, and if there’s anything left over we give it to the day laborers at the Monument Crisis Center. We also work with volunteers from Carondelet High School who help us distribute food.

*You’ve been doing this for so long. What motivates you?*

My dad was in St. Vincent de Paul years ago. He was at St. Leo’s in Oakland. We would go to the county hospital in Hayward and give away treats for families and patients. So when St. Mary’s wanted to start a conference of St. Vincent de Paul, I was right there.

*Why should someone get involved with St. Vincent de Paul?*

Our Lord says help people. If we’re successful, we have to give back. I think that’s what people have to understand: if more people gave back, the whole country would be better off. There are a lot of people just out for themselves.

You know, it’s tough for a lot of people. They might be on drugs; they might be on alcohol. Sometimes you can help those people, and it’s good to help them. If they know your St. Vincent de Paul conference is doing a good job, then they know they can go there and get some kind of help. We’re the same as everybody else—we don’t have a lot of funds to help. We can put people up for a couple of nights, but we can’t rent an apartment for a family in need. It’s too bad.

We have a lot of good members who have arranged for us to get goods donated. I’ve been blessed to work with so many good people.

## Wells Fargo Foundation Continues Support For Critical SVdP Programs

This year, the Wells Fargo Foundation awarded SVdP of Contra Costa County a \$10,000 grant to help fund our programs, including the Workforce Development Program. Our Workforce Development Program, which provides on-the-job training, mentorship, and classroom learning for people facing barriers to employment, is beginning its fifth cycle of participants this month.

We are grateful for Wells Fargo's support, and for the generosity of all our corporate and foundation donors!



(L-R): SVdP Development Director Barbara Hunt, SVdP President James Noe, Wells Fargo Bank Vice President Ashoo Vaid, Wells Fargo Vice President for Community Development Raminder Somal, and SVdP Executive Director Melanie Anguay.

### Upcoming Events—Register Online!

#### **Bocce Ball Tournament—9/13/14—Martinez**

\$59 per person - Register at [www.svdp-cc.org](http://www.svdp-cc.org)

#### **Friends of the Poor Walk—9/20/14 (Conferences) and 9/27/14 (District Council—St. Isidore's)**

Register at [www.fopwalk.org](http://www.fopwalk.org)

#### **50th Anniversary Celebration Mass & Dinner- 11/8/14 - St. John Vianney, Walnut Creek**

Dinner tickets \$50 per person

Register at [www.svdp-cc.org](http://www.svdp-cc.org)

### Upcoming Sales at Our Stores:

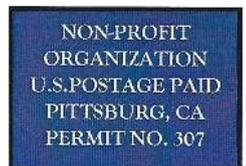
**Columbus Day**—Pleasant Hill Store - Oct 11, 12, 13, 2014  
Pittsburg Store - Oct 11 & 13 only

**Halloween**—Pleasant Hill Store - Oct 26-31, 2014  
Pittsburg Store - Oct 25-31 (closed Sunday)

Sign up for our email list at [www.svdp-cc.org](http://www.svdp-cc.org).



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"Sharing a meal with people in need brings me joy!" - Dining room volunteer