

The TACO Times
Third Avenue Charitable
Organization, Inc.
First Lutheran Church
1420 Third Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101-3193

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www.tacosd.org

This Month in the TACO Times:

- A recap of TACO's successful 2010! (page 1)
- Christmas in July a success! (page 1)
- Simon's Walk thanks its past volunteers, and christens two new ones (page 2)
- TACO's Healing In Service (THIS) training, is fast approaching (page 3)

**"A place where healing of body, mind and spirit
can happen for any and all who come."**

Empty Bowls is Coming!

Mark your calendar for May 7, 2011 for Empty Bowls! For a donation of \$20.00 you will receive a beautiful hand-made bowl and you can fill it with delicious soups from around San Diego. All while supporting TACO and remembering those who go with "empty bowls" every day. This event will be from 11:00 a.m. from 2:00 p.m. at La Jolla United Methodist Church in La Jolla.

Contact us

Jim Lovell
Project Coordinator
(619) 235-9445 ext. 1
jim.chacha@firstlutheransd.org

Rachel Line
Volunteer Coordinator
(619) 235-9445 ext. 2
rachel.taco@firstlutheransd.org

Nance Lovell
Going Home End of Life Services Coordinator
(619) 235-9445 x110
Nance.taco@firstlutheransd.org

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Great News at TACO!

- Donor giving over the past three years has increased by a whopping 350%! from \$27,000 in 2007 to \$94,000 in 2010.
- In 2010 TACO served 24,313 meals to 15,698 people with the help of 392 volunteers and more than 9,000 hours of volunteer work.
- TACO's partnership with nine clinics see more than 800 people each and every week.
- TACO's social workers and social work interns have provided services to more than 25 clients every week.
- TACO has provided over 500 pounds of food every week to the residents of Luther Tower.

Website-Savvy?

TACO is taking steps to rethink our presence both on and offline. With that goal in mind, we'd like to reach out to our donors and volunteers and see how many are able and interested. If you have any training or experience in marketing, html, web design, graphic design, or any skill related to the above, and are willing to contribute your skills and time on a volunteer basis, please let us know by emailing our director Jim Lovell (jim.chacha@firstlutheransd.org). Thanks!

The TACO Times

Celebrating 35 Years of Bread Day

Volume 8, Issue 1

January 2011

Director's Report by Jim Lovell

It has been an amazing year of blessing here at TACO. This year through our Christmas in July program, we raised money to purchase 250 tents, tarps, knit caps, and other hygiene items given out on Christmas Eve morning. I think the joy of giving those out is only surpassed by the joy of wrapping them in knowing that people may be a little warmer and a little drier through this wet winter time. We give special thanks to the work of Ladonna Piper who has encouraged and facilitated this fundraising program out of the compassion of her heart and that of her late husband Barney.

The amount of individual and family giving has been astonishing. We end the year of 2010 with general contributions of \$94,000! This amounts to half of the 2010 year budget. Never before in TACO's history have individuals, churches



and families given in such tremendous ways. This includes more than 40 donors giving as Arms Outstretched members. These are members who have given \$365 a year or more in contributions. Combined with giving at our two yearly fundraisers, Empty Bowls, and Sunset by the Sea, this totals more than \$127,000 in giving by donors and volunteers. Indeed we have so much to be thankful for.

By comparison in 2007 our general contributions giving, that is to say giving by individuals families and churches totaled \$27,000. In three short years, you're giving has increased by more than 350%!

As those of you who have read these year-end reports before know this surprising incredible

Continued on page 2

Christmas in July Update by Kristen Naour

Christmas is such a routine concept in our minds that we don't often stop to think about those who may be unable to afford to celebrate it on their own. And that is why, each year, TACO challenges its volunteers to think outside of our own Christmas boxes and help our weekly guests celebrate Christmas as well. Christmas in July is the combination of fundraising, purchasing, bundling, and wrapping 250 gifts to distribute to our guests on a Friday morning near Christmas Day. Many thanks to Ladonna Piper who organizes this major project!

This year was no different from years in the past. The only thing that changed was the gift. This Christmas, TACO raised enough money to purchase 250 tarps and tents, and volunteers worked hard to bundle them with a knit cap or scarf, toothbrush, toothpaste and a pair of warm socks. Each bundle was then wrapped with donated wrapping paper, and stacked in the sanctuary to be blessed before they were distributed.

Distribution day always sneaks up on us, but each year Rachel and her game plan are ready to tackle the day. Each guest received a

ticket for a gift, which was given out from tables during the second half of the meal. Volunteers manned the distribution tables, cleaned up wrapping paper, and even offered to take paper and boxes home to recycle.

Christmas in July always goes smoother than planned, and everyone walks away either having received a Christmas gift, or having given one to someone in need. Giving to those who have very little is one of the best ways a person can spend Christmas, because in giving, we receive.

Director's Report *continued from page one*

giving comes at a time when TACO has experienced a shaking of its financial stability. And not just TACO, but financial struggling has come to even the largest or maybe especially to the largest non-profits throughout our country. The effect of unemployment and the recession on all Americans has meant that for so many there is so much less than there had been before. Our president, Bill Radatz has commented that this is a "perfect storm" in which foundations and grantors have experienced a decrease in interest from established funds and an increase in organizations seeking out money to perform their basic functions. We too began the year 2008 with awareness that by June of that year based on grant funding we would no longer have any employed staff. We had come to rely on grant funding for our staffing positions, our social worker, our volunteer coordinator, and Simons Walk Coordinator. But here we are at the end of 2010 with all those positions still staffed. Almost entirely due to the generous giving of donors.

We have so much to celebrate!

Throughout the year in 2010, we have hosted and offered clinics in the following areas: Legal, Medical, Acupuncture, and Dental. Our Going Home end-of-life services program and its volunteer component Simon's Walk have assisted five individuals in 2010. Two were assisted while they died and one now has a place in our church's columbarium where he had no place before. Two new Simon's Walk Ministry volunteers will be commis-

sioned this month and will soon be walking along with clients who are homeless and terminally ill. Dr. Ellen Beck, founder and visionary head of the free clinic, was awarded this year's KPBS Real Heroes award as well as achieving the James Irvine Foundation Leadership award. We are so honored to have such a caring and strong partner in our midst.

This year has brought us some exciting possibilities and options for people who have struggled so long on the street. We took part in Registry week, an effort to count and survey all those individuals who are on the street in downtown San Diego. This was done in conjunction with the 100,000 homes campaign, a nationwide effort to find housing for 100,000 homeless individuals in need of care. The statistics in our downtown community were troubling with more than 750 people interviewed over the course of three mornings, another 250 individuals who declined survey. For the first time in many years an accurate number of people who are homeless on the streets in downtown San Diego was found. Additionally of those who agreed to the survey of 138 individuals were identified as being at great risk for dying if left on the street for another year. Of this number 75 were veterans who had served in our armed forces. Currently efforts and commitments are to find and secure stable housing for these most at risk 138. This will not be assistance into shelter beds but rather into affordable 30% of income apartment housing with support services. This is the greatest concentrated effort our city and county has shown towards

alleviating the burden on those who are suffering in downtown.

Between our two MSW interns, the social work services of myself and of Nance Lovell, we have provided services to more than 25 individuals each and every week. Though largely this number indicates homeless individuals this is not always the case. Our clinics often are seeing individuals and families who are not homeless but who cannot afford care and often cannot afford basic food. These are families who we do not see in our food lines, who we do not see eating on our patio - they are too embarrassed and rather suffer in silence in their homes. Often they are seniors who may live within two blocks of us, but have worked hard for so many years that they are ashamed to have knowledge that there is nothing in their cupboards. Each and every week TACO has brought more than 500 pounds of food to the residents of Luther Tower. Two mornings a week members of Luther Tower meets Gregg Rayo at the van carrying in produce dairy and meat items into the community room to be distributed to those who are hungry.

We are so incredibly blessed and thankful to have been created out of the passion of First Lutheran church, to continue to be filled with the Spirit in this place and to provide a way of service for members in their spiritual walk.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Lovell, Executive Director

Going Home Update *by Nance Lovell*

"Slow and steady wins the race"...I like this story in general and also how it pertains to end-of-life work here at TACO. Going Home has been in service for 5 years now and "slow and steady" is an apt description for us.

It would seem common knowledge that the intimate nature of caring for dying individuals is best nurtured with a slow deliberate building of trust and care. Yet, often times, larger end-of-life programs are over-burdened and staff may burn out or grow weary. Turnover is high and does not allow for staff to be fully present

with each person or grieve each loss. Going Home is not overshadowed by insurance regulations, enormous caseloads, and stringent restrictions. That is the beauty of our service and allows for us to grow in deeper relationship with those we serve.

We begin the New Year with some change. We graciously thank Jon Glasoe, Lori Roads and Kathy Burns for their time and service through Simon's Walk. We also welcome two newly trained volunteers, Michelle Matson and Marge Herson! I'd like to recognize that Simon's

Walk volunteers are serving with their whole being. This work penetrates our souls and instills wisdom that uniquely the homeless and dying may impart to us. Due to the nature of the dying process, we become immersed in the lives of others and our lives are enhanced. While there is beauty in this, it also rattles us to our core.

Please come to welcome and support our Simon's Walk volunteers on Sunday, February 27 at 9:00 as we will bless and commission the volunteers for Simon's Walk service.

Volunteer Update *by Rachel Line*

What a year it was! 2010 is history and we are already filling up 2011. In fact, our earliest opening for a group on a Monday evening is in JUNE! Wow! What a wonderful problem to have! With the help of 392 NEW volunteers and almost 9,000 hours of volunteer hours, we served 24,313 meals to 15,698 people in 2010. That is amazing. I am indebted to our volunteers who come faithfully to prepare, serve, and clean-up. They do so much of the prep work and also stand on the sidelines when a group comes through to serve. They also help keep things flowing smoothly by helping new volunteers and "showing them the ropes." I have the privilege of working with the best volunteers in San Diego. A special thank-you to Gregg Rayo for everything he does. When people ask what Gregg does, I often respond with "everything!" He makes each meal flow seamlessly. Thank you Gregg, for all your work. Thank you all for making 2010 a great year. And 2011, here we come!



2011 Feinstein Challenge

Every year for the past 13 years, Alan Shawn Feinstein has given away \$1 Million to fight hunger, and this year he's doing it again!

During the months of March and April, funds from the Annual \$1 Million giveaway to fight hunger will be put towards matching any donations to TACO made during that period.

Thrivent Member?

Do you have any life insurance or financial accounts with Thrivent Financial? If so, Thrivent gives you an extra change to help TACO. How? Several times a year Thrivent should be sending you an email or letter about your account and probably mention "Thrivent Choice" in that communications. This is money from Thrivent (not from your account) that Thrivent allows you to designate to specific charities. The amount you can designate is based on a formula related to the value of the accounts you have with them. You can chose TACO and those funds will automatically be forwarded to TACO for its ministry. You can either designate TACO each time you get a notice, or you can chose to have it automatically send to TACO every time funds are available (which is usually 3-4 times per year). If it is not clear from the Thrivent communications you receive on how to set this up, give them a call and they will be glad to help you set it up - and TACO will be VERY grateful!

Rev. Bill Radatz

TACO's 2011 Healing in Service Training

How do we take care of those who are in need? Who are those in need? Why? Why do we care? What difference does it make? For them? For us? For the community?

**Whether you are a current volunteer at TACO, an interested donor, or a member of a church that supports TACO:
~ We invite you to come~**

- WHAT? THE 2011 TACO's Healing in Service Training
- WHEN? Saturday April 2, 9am – 4pm (Lunch Provided)
- WHERE? TACO/FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
1420 Third Ave. San Diego, Ca. 92101
- WHY? TO GROW, CREATE, RETREAT & EMPOWER!
- RSVP: Rachel.taco@firstlutheransd.org or 619-235-9445* 2

Donations accepted

Speakers to include:
Jim Lovell, MSW, Executive Director of TACO, Pastor Bill Radatz, 2010 TACO Board President, A panel of currently homeless persons, Nance Lovell, MSW, Coordinator of the Simon's Walk Ministers (the volunteer group for Going Home End-of-Life Services), Rachel Line, TACO's Volunteer Coordinator, and Pastor Wilk Miller, Pastor of First Lutheran Church and TACO Board Member.