

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

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**This Month in the
TACO Times:**

- * Sunset by the Sea is com-
ing on October 10th! (see
page 1)
- * A volunteer update, and
the Tour de Revs visit (see
page 3)
- * Creative ideas for sup-
porting TACO (see page 2)
- * A fond farewell to Lori
McBride (see page 3)

In this month's TACO
Times we're getting ready
for our annual fall fund-
raiser, the "Sunset by the
Sea."

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



Sunset by the Sea Information Line: (619) 235-9445, ext. 124.

The TACO Times

Vol. 6 No. 4

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**Christmas in July
Continues!**

Our annual Christmas in July
fundraiser is still accepting
donations. A donation of
\$25 or more goes towards
the gift of sleeping bags and
duffel bags for the homeless.

**TACO:
Arms Outstretched**

In June the TACO board
created a special donor pro-
gram called **Arms Out-
stretched**. Members of
Arms Outstretched are
asked to contribute at least
\$1 a day or \$365 a year to
the work and ministry of
TACO. A dollar a day is the
amount of money that poor
people throughout the world
live on.

In just a few short months
we have seen a great re-
sponse. We are pleased to
report that 30 of our individ-
ual donors meet the commit-
ment for the **Arms Out-
stretched** program.

The benefit of membership is
knowing that you are work-
ing for the on-going stability
of TACO. Those who wish
will be listed as **Arms Out-
stretched** members in *The
Taco Times*. Also, **Arms
Outstretched** members will
receive a ticket to "Sunset by
the Sea" and be invited to
other special donor events.

As grant funding becomes
harder and harder to secure
we have asked more of our
donors; please consider join-
ing **Arms Outstretched**.
Help us care for God's
blessed poor every day of the
year.

The TACO Times

Celebrating 34 Years of Bread Day

Volume 6, Issue 4

September 2009

See You at Sunset by the Sea by Melanie Novak

Saturday, October 10th

Sunset by the Sea, TACO's annual
fundraiser is just weeks away, and
this year's event promises to be
even more glamorous, even more
exciting and (hopefully) even more
supportive of the wonderful work
we do.

The live and silent auction will be
held Saturday, October 10 from
4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the home of
Drs. Rup and Vani Nagala, 6209
Camino de la Costa in La Jolla.
This beautiful, three-story home is
perched in a seaside neighborhood
with wraparound balconies, a se-
rene patio and a sweeping view of
the Pacific Ocean, where sunset
occurs at 6:21 p.m. The location
was donated by the doctors, both
longtime friends and supporters of
TACO.

Event organizers have been work-
ing tirelessly on even the smallest

details from great food and drink
to fun and friendship. We're cer-
tain they've got a contact for a
great sunset as well.

Want details? This year's auction
features a wide range of gift bas-
kets, original art, jewelry, a week's
stay in a bungalow in the Bahamas,
and special entertainment extrava-
ganzas such as Pastor Wilk and
Dagmar Miller's ever-popular Ok-
toberfest harvest dinner and a
"Beers of San Diego" tour with
Pastor Andy Taylor. There's some-
thing for everyone - and their
friends - in the selection of gift
baskets; from the wine lover to
the movie buff, from people with
kids and people without kids - and
for people who enjoy getting out
and having fun in their own home-
town.

A bountiful autumn harvest supper
will be catered by Dinner a Go-
Go, which some guests may re-



member as the provider of last
year's spectacular salads. This year,
chef Lisa Rosa-Retamoza will be
creating everything from soup to
the nuts on the roasted beet, goat
cheese and grilled chicken dinner
salad. The event also features a
hosted wine-tasting, cheese tasting,
and everyone's dessert favorite,
the endless fountain of chocolate
from Alpine Chocolate Fountains.

Sunset by the Sea is TACO's larg-
est fundraiser, and all proceeds
from the auction go directly to
support the ministry of serving the
homeless and working poor.

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Director's Report by Jim Lovell

Recently I was asked how we have
been able to make it so far through
the year financially. I must say that
it has been an amazing story. So
far this year we have received less
than \$16,000 in grant funding.
That is under 10% of our budget.
In previous years, grant funding has
made up more than 85% of our
budget. This has been an incredi-
ble reversal. At the beginning of
the year, we wrote about our
situation. We let our donors and
those who care about TACO
know our situation, and so many
of you responded. It has been
such a great blessing. While we
are not giving up on grant funding,

it is increasingly difficult to rely on.
Your donations are responsible for
allowing us to daily meet the needs
of folks who are hungry, in pain,
dealing with trauma, diagnosed
with Diabetes, seeking to prevent
foreclosure and homelessness, or
searching for remedies to chronic
pain or addiction. Your donations
and volunteering have helped meet
the needs of more than 500 people
each week! This continues to
amaze me on a daily basis, how a
place seeming so small can do so
much, week in and week out.
Thank you all for your work on
our behalf.

And there is so much to do! We
have seen an increase of more
than 30% in the numbers of people
coming to our meals each week.
Our partners at UCSD Free Clinic
have seen new patients coming
hoping to be seen in the double
digits. This is in addition to the
weekly 20-35 returning patients
who have no options for medical
care. Part of the job of our social
work team is to help find options
for care for those we cannot see
at our clinic. With so many re-
turning patients, our clinics cannot
see many of

Continued on page 2

Director's Report (continued from page one)

the new patients who are coming. But I can tell you that all the agencies we normally work with are seeing the same problems. There has been an increase in need without an equal increase in available services.

The effects of the economic shift have created many more people in desperate need than a year ago. I feel that we are in the front lines of this situation. We see people who started by being laid off, not finding new work, unable to keep their cobra insurance because of the cost, having a small medical need which

they tried to let go, and seeing it grow into a serious problem. If untreated, they will end up in the emergency room, receiving the most expensive care available and being billed for it.

Once the bills go to creditors, their options for other needs become more limited as their credit plunges. It is far cheaper for folks to be seen by primary care physicians before conditions get bad. It is through this kind of care that costly and life-threatening problems can be stopped, relieving the individual and the community of a costly and painful burden.

We see these things happening around us each and every day, and strive to meet the needs of everyone who comes through our doors. Many of you are a part of that, both by being here as well as by your financial support. Though we cannot meet the needs of everyone, we daily work to meet the needs of as many as we are able.

I am thankful for your ongoing support. It is truly through that support that we continue to offer as much as we can as often as we can. Peace and Blessings to you.

Simon's Walk by Nance Lovell

People often inquire about the clients we serve and they tend to expect that we make some type of difference in their lives and deaths. While this may certainly be true, what is also remarkable are the changes that occur in the lives of Simon's Walk ministers. All of us have baggage we carry around, past lives and burdens, our own brokenness. To meet and be present with people who are dying brings about a personal introspection, a combination of examining our own mortality, spirituality, purpose and being.

Speaking for myself, I stepped into this service as an act of faith. I had no intention of working with dying people who lived on the streets, let alone with adults—my plan was to continue working with teens and children as a therapist. I can tell you God's plan is better! Since making this career change, I have been more content and more inspired than ever. I believe this comes from

the relationships built through serving.

Every time I meet with a person, I try to make a conscious effort to see Jesus in them. This does not come naturally for me, but is a very intentional part of my serving. It is a humbling and honoring place to be when someone gives their trust to you in their dying days. A Ministry of Presence allows us to simply and profoundly BE WITH a person...this is perhaps the single most important gift we bring in offering comfort, dignity, trust and love. At times, when we take notice...it is also a holy place where God meets us. Somehow, through this process there is a gentle healing when we allow.

There is a natural order of street wisdom that abounds with the poor and dying. It is a wisdom that I hope to absorb portions of as I spend my time with them. One that I enjoy most is their lack of pretense. Each conversation is real and present and honest (mostly). I'm terrible at



We welcome the newest volunteer Jon Glasoe to the Simon's Walk Team!

"small talk" and so when I meet with someone and they say, "I want to die... this sucks...I'm angry...I'm in pain" or they burst into tears...for me, this is what's real and I know God is amidst us.

If you know me and see me, you've noticed my hair graying and politely wondered to yourself. This is a curious effort on my part. Quite simply, I want to see what I really look like. More deeply, I'm in search of how I can live more closely to the truth and with that lack of pretense I am intrigued with. It is an outward reflection of my own mortality, one that I'm embracing as I work with the dying.

Creative Ideas for Supporting TACO - You Could... by Jim Lovell

- Give us a pound of food for every pound you lose (like Nancy Eckert did~ 100+!)
- Bring us half of the vegetables from your church's community garden (like Tierrasanta Lutheran Church does, except for the ones the deer got!)
- Make sleeping bags out of quilts to be given out to homeless folks (like the Bag Ladies of St. Andrews)
- Hold a garage sale and give the proceeds to TACO (like the Naours did)
- Set up a food barrel at a neighborhood store (like Dorothy Crisci did)
- Bring co-workers to serve a meal here. (Many of you do that)
- Invite TACO to come and speak at your next group meeting or church meeting (we love a good audience)
- Bring 500 coins to donate to the Tour de Revs (like Marion Hughes did)
- Hold your birthday at TACO during a meal. Invite your guests to serve and pay for the meal instead of getting you that
- new electric frying pan (like Pastor Marohn of St. Peters by the Sea did)
- Bring us all the milk, cheese, and butter we need each month (like the folks at the Chinmaya Mission do)
- Hold an new underwear drive for us (like Danielle LoPresti and the Masses did for a concert a few years back)
- Threaten to grow your mustache back before church pictures unless you collect \$1,000 (Like Pastor Andy Taylor is doing)

Sunset by the Sea (continued from page one)

Tickets are \$75 each or 6 for \$300, with all proceeds going to TACO. Only 150 tickets will be available for sale.

If you're not able to find a space on the street, the event will offer free parking at the La Jolla Methodist Church, and a shuttle to the location.

Sunset by the Sea is TACO's largest fundraiser, and all proceeds from the auction go directly to support the ministry of serving the homeless and working poor.

Tickets are \$75 each or 6 for \$300, with all proceeds going to TACO. Only 150 tickets will be available for sale.

If you're not able to find a space on the street, the event will offer free parking at the La Jolla Methodist Church, and a

shuttle to the location.

Information and Tickets:

For tickets and information, please contact Dianna Little at the **Sunset by the Sea Information Line:** (619) 235-9445, ext. 124.

Sponsorship Information:

Every angel that helps cover the cost of hosting Sunset by the Sea helps TACO's bottom line, enabling the event to raise the maximum amount for those we serve. Sponsorship is a great opportunity to help TACO and spread the word about your personal support in the community.

If you are interested in contributing to Sunset by the Sea as an underwriter or sponsor, including advertising in our auction catalog, please contact Melanie Novak at (619) 294-9174.



A Fond Farewell to Lori McBride

Two months ago TACO bid a fond farewell to staff member Lori McBride. Lori had served TACO & First Lutheran both as a volunteer and as an administrative assistant for many years, organizing and filing information for clients and grant applications and a myriad of other duties. Her presence around the office never failed to brighten everyone's day.

But all good things must come to an end, and Lori has moved to Oregon to be closer to her family. She takes the love and good wishes of everyone at TACO with her. Good luck, Lori!

Volunteer and Tour de Revs Update by Rachel Line

This summer has gone by too quick! I hope that you all were able to enjoy these months as a time of rest and as a time to volunteer! The summer brings regular volunteers who might be unable to help out during the school year. We have people who are only in town during the summer, people who teach during the school year, and those who are in school. These consistent volunteers are a tremendous blessing to Gregg Rayo, to me, and to TACO. We are also blessed by the volunteers who are with us on a monthly basis. We especially thank you all as our numbers continue to rise. In July 2008, we served 1,573 meals. In July 2009, we served 1,970 meals. Near the end of each month, we serve over 200 people. It takes a lot of people to make these meals run smoothly! We see about 300 new volunteers a year and we are thankful for every one! This summer has brought special groups of volunteers to TACO.

On the 17th of July, we were blessed with a visit by the three pastors (from West Virginia) who were traveling across the country on a three-man bike. The Tour de Revs arrived on the patio of First Lutheran Church one half hour before our Friday morning Bread Day meal. We were thrilled to have these

three pastors who were traveling for 100 days through all the ELCA synods to raise awareness and money for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Their desire was to raise an additional 5 million dollars this year and to present that at the ELCA National Assembly in Minnesota. A touching moment at that Assembly was when the Revs presented Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson with a large bag of coins that had been collected off the streets by a "homeless woman" from San Diego. That woman happened to be First Lutheran's own Marian Hughes.

We are so thankful that they could come and minister to us in the work that we as a church and TACO have continued to do for 34 years. They served soup and salads to our 115 guests who came for a hot meal. They taught us about themselves, their bamboo triplet bicycle, and why we all need to be concerned about hunger, throughout the world as well as within our own community. Two statistics that stand out: of the 6 billion people in our world, 1 billion do not have food enough and 1 billion have enough food for 4 billion. We continue to be called to share of our tremendous wealth whether far away or down the street from where we live. We have four times what we need. After an hour with us, they were



Reverends Soltow, Twedt, and Schlak arrive on their triplet bicycle and help serve the Friday meal

on their bike and down the road, off to share their ministry with more and more people. From First they rode to North Park, to Our Saviors Lutheran where they were present at the Village Pantry and where a Sending Service was held. Thank you to all who attended the Friday morning event and to those have made a donation to the ELCA Domestic and World Hunger Appeal.