



Volunteer Report
by Rachel Line

This year has flown by as we are already looking forward to March! This year we have welcomed new groups as well as seasoned groups of volunteers. Many thanks to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in La Mesa, Carlton Hills Lutheran in Santee, First Baptist of Clairemont, several girl scout troops, a social justice class from the Waldorf School of San Diego, the girl's basketball team from Canyon Crest Academy, the couples group from Our Redeemer Lutheran in San Diego, St. Peter's Lutheran in Point Loma, Agape House at San Diego State University, Resurrection Lutheran on Coronado, Bethlehem Lutheran in Encinitas, Calvary Lutheran in Solana Beach, several home-school families, and a home-school group that call themselves "Compassion Kids Club."

Our volunteer groups are just as different as each person they serve. Every guest who comes through the line has their own story and their own life experiences. Each volunteer has a different background that leads them to why they give of their time. TACO is so grateful for the groups of volunteers that serve the meal. We are also indebted to our core group of volunteers who tirelessly work every Monday or every Friday, or even both! Another big thanks to Tim Harward, our food coordinator who also serves as security and oversees the use of the facility.

Thank you to everyone who makes the serving of a simple, hot meal possible.

The TACO Times

Celebrating 36 Years of Bread Day

Volume 10, Issue 1

February 2013

Director's Report by Jim Lovell

Welcome to 2013 - as we move towards spring we have tremendous things to share with you.

It seems that year after year I have a winter lament that I talk about in these pages. That lament is that winter brings dreariness, doldrums, and a wet/coldness that feels never ending. I say this because it is true again this year. You would think that I would have come to accept this and am finding the glimmers of sunlight and cloud-clearing as we speak, but this is not so. Each year this February feeling comes as a new ever-growing difficulty and I am surprised until I look at the calendar.

People working with those on the street and volunteers and staff here often complain that they "used to like the rain" until they began working with those who



make their beds on the street and came into February. It seems simple enough, the cold-wetness stays with people, never seeming to get warm, it takes a huge toll on bodies, adding to medical conditions, making it harder to get up and certainly more painful. People in pain and sleep-deprived become grumpy, perhaps you have noticed this in your own life. And for those who are on the street

with drug and alcohol addictions, their use of substances often increases. We pray for spring and the warm sunlight. We wait for jackets and socks to give to people; they brace to hope for a place to sleep and a little spot protected from the wet and cold wind. Each night they worry that they will be moved from sleeping

continued on page 2

TACO Gives Thanks to Sugar Hill Sisters

A wonderful evening was had by all on Martin Luther King Jr. Day at the Lamb's Players Theater. Over 200 of us were on hand for the staged reading of a brand-new musical, Sugar Hill Sisters. The performances were amazing, the music thrilling and spellbinding, and the story captivating. San Diego's theater critic, Pat Launer, introduced the musical and sang the praises of its author and librettist Bil Wright. We were blessed by the opening music performed by the Martin Luther King Community Choir of San Diego, and the music of the composer Dionne McClain-Freeney carried us through the evening.



The event raised a total of \$6,000 for TACO. We give thanks to Bil and Dionne for so graciously giving their time and talents to bring this event to benefit us, and to Bill Engel and the Rev. Jim Hallerberg for their art and industry. Finally we would like to thank Frank DeLouise, a member of TACO's board, for bringing this theatrical event to life, and for doing crucial work with both writers and a host of volunteers. Finally, we'd like to thank the volunteers themselves, who did tasks both small and large to support this journey. It was truly a once in a lifetime event and an opportunity to reach out to new people about the work of TACO.

Director's Report *continued from page one*

spots yet again.

Once a month a group of us spend several hours on the street meeting with people who are sick and struggling medically on the street. This team includes Dr. Ellen Beck, our Medical Director, medical students, myself as our social worker, our social work interns, and occasionally one of our Simon's Walk Ministers. Last time that we were out, we visited with a group of homeless folks at the beginning of our night, only to end our night watching as the police descended upon the encampment and dispersed the 8-10 folks who were asleep just an hour before.

This is also a time of greater hope. Unlike previous years, this winter brings a different kind of hope. Starting in December people on the street were being to be interviewed for placements in the new year-round transitional shelter and housing program at Connections Housing. On Monday evenings and Friday mornings an outreach worker from PATH could be seen on the patio building relationships with people who are outside all too often. Her goal is to assist over 225 people to leave the streets by the end of February. This is indeed hopeful. Over 75 of these individuals will have assistance in moving into their own studio apartment and be able to pay rent of 30% of their income each and every month.

And still there is more hope. This year our social work staff is working hard to help everyone whom we come in contact with to access newly available healthcare. As a part of the Affordable Care Act the federal government is making health care available for those in severe poverty in our nation. With our medical clinic team and our social work team we are actively helping people get documents, set appointments, attend and receive access to healthcare and build relationships with new clinics. All of this is truly saving lives.

And we are able to do all of this because of the support of our volunteers and donors. Last year our fundraisers reached their highest peaks ever and already this year has started on a wonderful note. We began January with a bang, as we were beneficiaries of a wonderful musical event, Sugar Hill Sisters at the Lamb's Players Theater. This was a truly beautiful night and we were blessed to be included. More than \$6,000 was raised in this first ever gala night.

And we are blessed to be a part of First Lutheran Church's 125th year celebrations. We were born out of the existing "Bread Day" program begun at First in 1975. It is with the support and vision of this congregation that we are here and are able to help be a part of caring for those on the streets. If you "like" TACO on Facebook,

you can read a great article about this church that ran in the UT recently.

You will notice in these pages of this first TACO Times of the year 2013 that you will see several opportunities coming up for both donations and fun and fundraising. Maybe you even have your own ideas whether that's soliciting socks and jackets and sleeping bags or raising funds so that we can add hours to staff here to be able to assist more people, it is your support, your prayers, your work that makes it possible for our hands to be busy helping all those who come to our doors. Already in this past year I've been able to fill a long vacant position, Sandra Taylor has joined us to help with a myriad of office related activities. This includes grant writing helping with fundraisers, and helping meet to be organized. Our board has long hoped and planned that we might add another half-time social work position here. As Dr. Beck is fond of saying, "the need is infinite."

Opposite this page we recognize our Arms Outstretched members for 2012, those who contribute \$365 or more in a year's time. Please consider that level of funding or greater if it is within your reach. May you have a blessed year.

Empty Bowls is Coming May 11

Saturday, May 11
11am to 1pm

La Jolla United Methodist Church
6063 La Jolla Blvd.
La Jolla, CA 92037

Every year for the past five years, local potters and restaurants have partnered with TACO to hold our annual Empty Bowls fundraiser.

First, guests **CHOOSE** a bowl, browsing through a selection of hundreds of hand-crafted, beautiful, imaginative and colorful bowls made by local potters generous enough to donate their time, skills, creativity and love to TACO.



Then, they **FILL** their bowl with delicious hot soup and bread donated by local restaurants. When their meal is done, you keep your bowl as a reminder of the people whose bowls are empty every night.

Finally, you can **GIVE** (suggested donation is \$20). All donations go to TACO's mission to fight hunger among the homeless and working poor of downtown San Diego. For \$5, you can still get a paper bowl and as much soup as you want.

These events together have raised over \$60,000 for TACO and are a great way of introducing the wider world to our community and our mission. We hope to see you there!

Lent and Simon's Walk *by Nance Lovell*

It might not surprise you that Lent is one of my favorite seasons of the church year. It is a wilderness time, desert time, a season of reflection. More thought is given to Jesus' suffering and sacrifice for us all. TACO's service to terminally ill, homeless men and women is grounded in Simon's example of carrying Jesus' cross for him, serving to relieve his final burden.

I look forward to moments of slow deliberate thought and the actions that stem from them. Most often that is when I make the best decisions and find that I am amidst adventures that I wouldn't normally allow myself. Chances are that some of you might also share the practice of looking inward during the coming weeks and listening to that quiet voice. Sometimes God speaks most loud and clear when we are still and quiet, at least for me this holds true.

I'm hopeful that a couple of you might find yourself leaning towards a commitment to serve through Simon's Walk. Most people believe that they are not capable of caring for someone who is dying and even more

so if the person is also homeless. While this work certainly takes a considerable amount of compassion and diligence, it might not be as insurmountable as it would seem. It is an exercise, every time, of being with another. I stress *being with*. This is the listening, the comforting, sitting alongside, walking with. The gift of Simon's Walk IS being present. There are hardly any other avenues where our clients are with someone who is not trying to change who they are or make them jump through hoops. We offer sanctuary in the most basic form, being with/accompanying. This is where the healing takes place and how they trust they are not alone as they go through their final passage.

"Being with" is its own dynamic. Presence requires skill in listening and awareness, yet not interfering or leading. "Being with" is a skill to be learned. Most people find it easier to do something for someone, rather than being with them in their pain. When we really sit with someone, it allows for deeper introspection. The client is given space and time to sort through their own interpretation of what is happening to them. When someone listens, it becomes a

shared experience and they are no longer alone in the world.

Inevitably, being with someone who is dying will trigger any other death or loss you may have experienced in your personal circle. It will also nudge, perhaps stab, at your thoughts and feelings about your own mortality. Simon's Walk is life changing for both the client and the volunteer; it brings healing to all. Currently, we are planning forward for training new Simon's Walk volunteers this Spring, likely in April/May. If your Lenten journey brings you closer to considering Simon's Walk, please let us know.

We require all interested persons to complete an application, an interview and commitment to a 2-year minimum of service. We provide over 30 hours of training and mentoring, along with close supervision and support. Our current Simon's Walk volunteers include: Barbara D'Aversa, Christine Habib, Debby Hays and LaVerne Neuman. Please support them with your prayers and words of encouragement.

Arms Outstretched 2012

Arms Outstretched members are those who donate over \$365 over the course of a year to TACO's mission. Our service to the community of Downtown San Diego could not exist without them.

Anonymous
Pastor Andrew Taylor
Lindsey and Ann Bierer
Ann Hein
Betty and Joseph Corsi
Brenda Johnson
Carl Josephson
Charles Leib Jr. and Frank DeLouise
Charlotte Collins
ChasRo Enterprises
Pastor Darin and Angela Johnson
David and Helen Snyder
David and Lois Case
Diana Randall
Dr. Donald Snowden
Dr. Ellen Beck
Frank Jessie
George Nakashima
Dr. George Bassett
Harvey and Ruthann Peters
Dr. Irvin Silverstein
James and Ruth Gibbons
Jan Neuhaus
Janice Bluemer

Jean-Claude and Rebecca Chamaa
Jeannie Oestreicher
Jennifer Siverts-McGrady
Joanne and Rick Talazus
John and Katherine Adler
John and Suzanne Pew
John Wilbur
John Hoff
Karla and Edward Seyb-Stockton
Kathleen Harrington
Kenneth and Terry Anderson
Kristin Westerman and Linda Bright
Ladonna Piper
Pastor Laura Line
Laverne Neuman
Elizabeth Moss
Mark and Laure Reynolds
Mary Ann Horton
Mary Erlenborn and Tom Templeton
Mary Jane Setterlund
Michael Carroll
Mickey and Stephanie Wade
Mickey Lester
Navy Federal Credit Union

Paul Engel
Peg and Carl Ross
Rachel Line
Richard Hostin
Robert and Gretchen Ravenscroft
Robert Schroeder
Robert and Donamay King
Robert and Patricia Hendrickson
Roger Haenke
Ronn and Dorothy Garton
Samuel Green
Sandra and Andrew Taylor
Sheila Wenzel
Pastor Stephen Mather
Steven and Carol Hassett
Steven Moreen
Susan and Merv Rettenmund
Susan White
Ted and Marietta Johns
The Anderson Foundation
Victoria Wilson
William and Barbara Henderson
Rev. William Radatz

This Month in the TACO Times:

- **The Sugar Hill Sisters (page one)**
- **Volunteer Update (page one)**
- **Empty Bowls is coming May 11 (page two)**
- **Lent and Simon's Walk (page three)**
- **Our 2012 Arms Outstretched donors (page three)**

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

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June 22nd... IT'S COMING!

3rd Annual "Homeless Treasures"
Rummage Sale to Benefit TACO

**Let the closet,
basement,
drawer,
and garage cleaning begin!**

Details TBA. Questions?

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**"...gathering as a community in service with
the most vulnerable among us..."**