

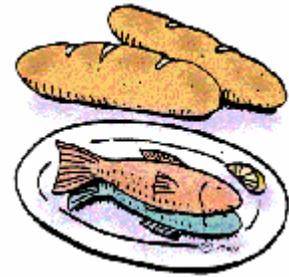


The TACO TIMES

Vol. 1

Issue 1

May 2004



Welcome to the First Edition of The TACO Times!

We have been excited to share this newsletter with you. We really see it as an opportunity to share all of the amazing work that God is doing in the lives of our staff, volunteers, clients, donors, and church members. The things that happen here at TACO are varied and truly incredible. Some of you will remember that Bread Day and TACO had a Newsletter in the past. That is correct. It was called the "TACO STAND" and was written by Michelle Squire, who was volunteer coordinator of the Bread Day program. With a tradition of 29 years of service in the downtown of San Diego, TACO and First Lutheran Church continue to be focused on the issues of social justice and social service to all who come.

The past three months have brought us many people both new and old to our food program and to our various clinics; medical, dental, acupuncture, senior acupuncture, counseling. We have expanded our dental clinic from one night a week to 6 times per month. Currently we are the only free dental clinic for the county of San Diego that sees anyone who is in need.

Downtown is a place of much change these days. While in many ways this is a blessing, it is also affecting those we serve in real and radical ways. We continue to see more and more people in our food lines. The prosperity that is occurring for some is not happening for everyone. We are also seeing an increase in the numbers of families without medical insurance.

We are thankful to all of you who join with us in this mission as we focus to hear God's calling to us and directing us. We hope this latest version will fill you in on all the happenings and the exciting social ministry that TACO and First Lutheran Church are doing in downtown San Diego.

We request your prayers and support as always.

God Bless, Jim Lovell – Project Coordinator

Volunteering is good for your health

A recent article in *Delicious Living* magazine notes that approximately one-third of the American population volunteers throughout any given year. The reasons include the obvious, such as helping others, making a difference, and displaying religious compassion.

But volunteering can also improve the quality of your own life. A 2000 study by the University of California, Berkeley discovered that people who volunteered at least four hours a week for two or more organizations were less likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease than their non-volunteering peers.

Likewise, research by the Big Brother/Big Sister organization showed that volunteering boosts healthy feelings of trust, self-worth, and self-determination, and promotes a sense of challenge, commitment, optimism, and joy. Volunteers also enjoyed such health benefits as fewer colds, migraines, stomach aches, and suffered less from insomnia. So, keep volunteering - your body will thank you for it!

Source: *Delicious Living*, February 2004

Kitchen Food Report

by Lisa Seiler

Trader Joe's has become one of our generous food donors. Thanks to Claudio Paglia at the La Jolla store we have recently received cases of fresh strawberries and bananas, bags of romaine lettuce and many pounds of salmon, ground beef and ground turkey. With these ingredients, we've surprised our guests with Marian's strawberry-banana whipped delight, barbequed salmon a la Paul, a variety of fresh salads and one of my personal favorites, turkey enchilada pie!

In addition, recent pick-ups from Food Recovery have resulted in some wonderful surprises. In early April, we served donated potato skins dressed with yummy guacamole, sour cream and bacon bits, sprinkled with a taste of grated cheese. These were eaten with great gusto! In the past few weeks, we have received 10 crates of green beans, which have kept our cutting boards quite busy!

Many thanks to Paul Moorman and Marian Hughes, who along with our dedicated kitchen volunteers, make our meals as tasty and tempting as any restaurant. Also many thanks are extended to Geri Engelke and Dale Thompson who graciously do our bulk shopping at Smart & Final. We couldn't do it without you!

By the numbers

Since January of this year, we have served 3,252 people more than 5,200 meals, with an average of 19 volunteers per meal. Seventy new volunteers have helped cook, serve and clean up on Mondays and Fridays. Surprisingly, more than 7,000 donuts have been consumed along with 150 pounds of cheese!



Get the recipe

A new creation from Paul Moorman, chef extraordinaire – scaled down from 150 servings!

Paul's Green Bean Casserole

1-2 lbs. green beans, washed and cut
2 cans artichoke hearts
2 cans kidney beans
3-4 fresh chopped tomatoes (can also use canned)
1 large red onion, chopped
1 cup chopped cooked bacon
Basil to taste, chopped
1 can chicken broth
Salt & pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients and bake for 40 minutes at 450 degrees.

Reflections

We recently asked volunteers and guests to share their feelings about the TACO program. Here are a few of their comments.

“Your program is great, with generosity and love given to the poor, sick, and homeless. I believe it is inspired by the love of Jesus Christ. God Bless you always.” [Patio Guest](#)

“Everyone here is so nice. My visits are always enjoyable. Coming to eat here gives me a chance to catch up with old buddies. Food's not bad either!” [Patio Guest](#)

“This program has been a huge blessing to me. Being able to come and serve the Lord in this way and to share the joy I have in Him with other people was just awesome. Thank you.” [Volunteer](#)

“I was reminded how a smile can change someone's day.” [Volunteer](#)

National Hunger Awareness Day

The San Diego Food Bank is offering two opportunities to visit its new facility at 9850 Distribution Ave. off of Miramar Blvd. (858-527-1419) and to help recognize National Hunger Awareness Day, **Thursday June 3.**

Volunteer Corner

We have been blessed with some wonderful youth volunteer groups in the past few months. Mr. Bob McKenzie, a World History teacher at Santa Fe Christian School in Solana Beach, has been bringing a small group of his students on a monthly basis. These high school sophomores are very helpful and always show compassion to those in need.

We have also had two groups of college students from the University of Mississippi and McNeese University in Louisiana. All were on Urban Adventures during their spring breaks, where they do volunteer and philanthropic work. They are brought to us by Pastor Alan Thompson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Claremont.



Ole Miss helps out

In addition, ten students age 6-12 from Del Mar Montessori School recently volunteered at our Friday meal. Not only did the children help serve the meal; they also amazed us

with their culinary chopping skills! Even the littlest ones adeptly cut the carrots and potatoes they brought to donate to TACO. The children told teacher Kathy Hamilton this was one of the best field trips they had been on and asked when they could come back!

They made good on their promise – returning in mid-April – and are scheduled to come again in May.

Last, but not least, Pastor Abigail Byrd from Good Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Alpine brought a small group of her youth and a parent volunteer to help with the Monday meal during Holy Week.

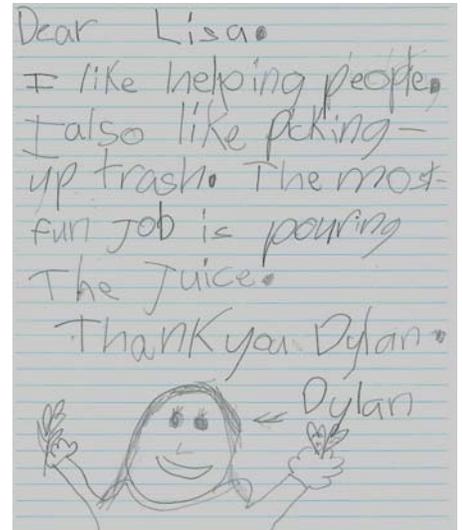
These repeat volunteers jumped right in, helping with cooking, serving and even dishwashing! And, as a donation, Pastor Byrd brought in the largest bag of carrots that we had ever seen!

TACO Wish List

An electric can opener

Sturdy table (approx. 5' x 3') for the outside patio to hold our heavy water jug and cups for our guests

Disposable Razors



Out of the mouths of babes: **“Thanks for arranging this for us. I liked chopping up potatoes and passing out cheese. It is great to help people.”**

What would YOU do?

In April, one of our guests turned in a cell phone that he found the previous evening near the W Hotel. We were able to track down the owner, a student at San Diego State University, who had lost her phone on her way home from a Padres game.

The grateful young lady brought in a beautiful plant to express her thanks and left a kind word to the gentlemen who chose honesty over self service. The words “What Would Jesus Do?” really rang true in this instance and we applaud our guests for their integrity.

'...a place where healing of mind, body, and spirit can happen for any and all who come.'

Join us

- Preparing and serving meals
- Set-up and cleanup
- Driving, shopping and picking up food donations
- Gathering other supplies and donations

Sponsor us

- Urge your company or corporation to contribute
- Organize your church or youth group
- Make an individual financial contribution

Support us

- With your prayers and voice of advocacy for the people we serve

Are you a medical professional? Consider donating your time and services to our medical, dental and acupuncture clinics.

Contact us

We can not close our eyes to the realities of our community, and we will not close our doors when outside there are people in need.

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