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The TACO Times
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Our New Fall Fundraiser is here—Brews, Brats, and TACOs!

Enjoy craft beer, delicious food, a gorgeous sunset, live and silent auctions, and good company with other supporters of TACO.

Tickets are \$35, and can be bought at tacosd.org or by calling (619) 235-9445. We look forward to seeing you at our new location at Calvary Lutheran Church in Solana Beach.

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

The TACO Times

Celebrating Over 40 Years of Bread Day and 20 Years of TACO

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September 2016

Director's Report by Jim Lovell

We have reached the other side of summer here at TACO. The end of August, and our fifth Monday meal of the month was jam-packed and felt like it too. The reports that there are 500 additional homeless individuals in downtown San Diego this August feel true. People are very concerned that there will not be enough of whatever it is that we are giving out. Looking in the faces of those coming through our line you can see the worry and the weariness as well. It is also easy to see that affordable rents are far away.

Many of the folks we serve survive on disability benefits or retirement benefits by staying at aged residential hotels downtown and paying between \$600 and \$800 a month for renting a room



San Diego Girl Scout Troop 4069 helped serve a Friday meal and donated sleeping bags and blankets for our guests. Thank you so much for your amazing contribution!



with a bathroom down the hall. During July and August prices for even these places skyrocket and vacancies become like a mystery. This leads even the normally housed to be outside.

This brings a lot of tension, fear and desperation to those who are outside. And even among patients of our clinics, whose families may not be homeless but are often sleeping on the floor of their apartments they worry about food for any member of the family. We have such juxtaposition between this desperation and the tremendous amounts of food from which we benefit.

On any given Monday night after preparing and serving food to roughly 150 to 200

people, when we have 100 people come for our various clinics, we will again give out fresh produce, dairy, & bread. Depending on the evening and what we have received from our food pickups, that may be as many as four or five banana boxes full. This is a great boon to those who come to our clinics because they often live in neighborhoods without grocery stores at all.

Our Social Work staff here work with guests from all ends of our services. Margaret Alba, our part-time Social Worker who was added to our staff in mid-2015 has made a great impact. In the first 10 months of her time with us, she has connected

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Director's Report (continued from page one)

with more than 500 individuals. These contacts may be some of the first contacts a homeless person has with an agency downtown, or it may build on other services, but it can be a vital service. Many people may enter recovery by



coming through our doors or perhaps they secure employment that leads to housing. It may be that they are finally able to tell someone about being a victim of violence or thoughts of suicide and this may lead to receiving life-changing care. We are thankful for the added funding that has provided us with her skills.

Please help us by joining in our new Fall Fundraiser, Sunset by the Sea '16, Brews, Brats, & TACO's on the 15th of Oct. Our fall fundraiser is great fun and provides us with up to 20% of our budget for the year.



Our "Homeless Treasures" rummage sale took place on Saturday, June 25th - we gathered donations from all over the city and sold them to raise \$9,745! We'd like to thank all our donors, our volunteers, and St. Andrew's Lutheran for the use of their space - we couldn't have done it without you!

All the Saints by Nance Lovell

Have you heard the news that Mother Teresa was canonized earlier this month on Sept. 4th? I'm sure that was no surprise and perhaps, like me, you may have thought she was already a saint. Leads me to wonder aloud...how many saints are there, walking amongst us? Are you a saint? Would others regard you as a saint? Or could you, at least, say that you possess one feature that could be considered saintly? I would take an educated guess that answer is, "YES!" When I see someone who is demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit - I relate that to saintly behavior.

I see the saints frequently. That is largely due to the fact that I surround myself with volunteers. A volunteer offers himself or herself, freely. At TACO, volunteering is in service to people in need. Our volunteers recognize that we count on them, depend upon their

consistency and diligence. TACO volunteers show up and work repetitive tasks, week after week, without a lot of recognition, serving the hungry and sometimes desperate, desolate, and deprived. Our volunteers show up to meet with terminally ill homeless men and women when they are at their worst, when they are dying, at odd hours, long hours, and sometimes when the clients don't show at all. These volunteers are not after the glory of being called a saint, most saints are not. These are the caring people who make up TACO as a whole.

Additionally, I see the saints in those whom we serve. Last week, one woman told me a story about an interaction she had. It was the last day of the month and she was sitting amongst her possessions, which amounts to a wheelchair piled high with bags of collected stuff. A man approached her in

response to her need for cash. He had one question, "Do you believe in God?" She answered as she clutched the cross around her neck, "He is watching over my brother who left this world last month." The man handed her a one hundred dollar bill. Now let your mind wander. What do you think this woman did with the money?

...She let me know that she had thoughts of going indoors and getting a room for the night, as she is terminally ill and could use a good shower and sleep. She also could use a drink, as she is a lifelong alcoholic. She told me this, "it was the end of the month and you know how hungry everyone gets. I bought everyone dinner. I couldn't let anyone go without eating any longer. We are in this together. If I get money, I have to share it with everyone. We all had a good meal that night."

Meet Our New Volunteer Coordinator, Brad Young!

Please help TACO to welcome our newest Volunteer Coordinator, Brad Young. We are excited to have him join our team. And actually "joining" is maybe not entirely accurate as he has been a volunteer with us for the past several months.



Some of you may be saying, "Wait a minute didn't we just meet Michelle?" And that would be true. Those of you who have volunteered or come to events in the past 10 months probably met Michelle Steuber. Michelle's husband received a work promotion which led to their move out of the county in August. The following introduction is from Brad:

Hello my name is Brad Young, and I am truly grateful to be the new Volunteer Coordinator for TACO here in San Diego.

I am a native southern Californian, having grown up in Newport Beach, and attended college in San Diego. After leaving college, I worked as an event planner and eventually started my own event firm in Texas. Having recently moved back, I can honestly say it is good to be home and am loving the weather, in addition to being close to friends and family again.

Outside of TACO I am doing a variety of things. I am working on my Master's in psychology at SDSU. My goal is to become a social worker, perhaps specializing in HIV services. In my spare time, I am training for a triathlon which keeps me busy.

My experience with TACO actually began in February when I was looking for a volunteer opportunity nearby (I live downtown). I had also been thinking about taking a part time position, and when the volunteer coordinator job became available, it seemed like a good fit. I look forward to meeting you and working with all of you in the future.

Arms Outstretched 2015/2016

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