



Vol. 1

The TACO TIMES

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Wow, What a Summer We've Had!

Thanks to all of you for following our work and for all the volunteer time and donations you have committed. It seems that God continues to guide us as a group in meeting the needs of those who are brought to us.

The summer months brought warm weather, long days, and for TACO's feeding program, KIDS! Lots of them. See our **volunteer coordinator's report** inside to see exactly how many. We were again host to the ELCA's Lutheran Camps and Urban Safari.

Notes from the Clinics highlights current happenings upstairs at First. These programs continue to see an average of 45 to 60 patients every week.

One of the most amazing efforts this summer has been our **Christmas in July** campaign. Two TACO volunteers, Ladonna Piper (a member of First Lutheran) and Mina Nazaryan, came up with the idea and have worked diligently and faithfully to put the word out. The goal had been to raise \$1,250 for 250 blankets to give out at the Christmas Eve meal. I am ecstatic to announce that we exceeded that number – at press time our total was a **whopping \$1,595!!**

We have also asked Thrivent, a Lutheran financial service agency, for matching funds up to an additional \$800. Flush with their success, Mina and LaDonna have moved beyond blankets and are now planning to include new socks (always in short supply) and hygiene kits. In fact, volunteer Charlotte Collins (a member of Incarnation in Poway) has already put together hygiene kits for around 200 people. Wow, God is great! Just the thought of handing out blankets and necessary items to all on Christmas Eve is so thrilling.

God Bless, Jim Lovell – Project Coordinator

What's the value of a volunteer?

The average dollar value of a volunteer hour in the United States in 2003 was \$17.19. This is up from \$16.24 an hour in 2002, \$11.41 in 1990 and \$7.46 back in 1980!

The dollar value of a volunteer hour in California was \$18.67. The estimated value of volunteer time provides a uniform way for volunteer managers, nonprofit executives, government agencies and others to account for the value of time contributed by volunteers.

Nationally, Independent Sector, a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of approximately 600 national organizations, estimates that in 2003 volunteer time was the equivalent of approximately \$266 billion of contributed service. "While in many ways the service volunteers provide is immeasurably valuable, this national estimate provides a useful baseline for understanding the enormous economic contribution volunteers give to their communities," said Diana Aviv, president and CEO. *Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics*



Christmas In July A Great Success!

Thanks to all of you who gave so freely and with such happiness towards this campaign!

We have raised almost \$1600 and we are still counting! We'll be able to fill our guests' stockings with stockings (socks) as well as blankets this coming Christmas Eve.

Thanks to all of you who gave additionally to this project. Special thanks to volunteers Ladonna Piper and Mina Nazaryan for the concept and putting it into action. Thanks also to Lisa Seiler for her hard work assisting them.

God's blessings are always more than any of us expect.

Volunteer Commissioning Services Set For September

First Lutheran Church will celebrate TACO's 29th Anniversary and commission its volunteers on **Sunday, September 12** at the 9 and 11 a.m. services. The church is located at 1420 Third Avenue, on the corner of Third and Ash in downtown San Diego. Cake and coffee will be served between services.

For more information, call TACO at 619-235-9445. We look forward to seeing you!

Meal Report

We've had a very busy summer! TACO served 3,817 guests a total of 5,374 meals from the beginning of June to the end of August. We've noticed many more new faces in the past few months. A recent meeting with other agencies who serve the homeless population confirmed our observations.

Perhaps it is the good weather, our welcoming atmosphere, medical programs or a combination thereof, but our numbers continue to grow.

This summer has been incredible in terms of the numbers of **new volunteers**. Since summer began more than 280 volunteers have come through our doors! The Lutheran camps by far comprised the largest numbers with 203 campers and their counselors volunteering for five Mondays from July 5th through August 2nd. Unlike last year, two junior high school camps were included and the Urban Safari camp was combined from two weeks of 30 to one week with almost 60 campers. The Monday the Urban Safari group came was certainly a busy one! In addition to the almost 60 campers and 11 adult helpers, we fed almost 250 guests. Campers were split into several groups. One made greetings cards for Luther Tower, one chopped vegetables for future use, one serenaded the guests, yet another visited with guests on the patio, while still another manned the serving line. I want to extend a great big thank you to our regular volunteers who in turn extended a warm welcome to all of our new volunteers. We couldn't have done it without your support!

Two additional new volunteer groups also joined our ranks. A youth group, led by Pastor Bill Harmon from **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** in Encinitas, came in June and August. Pastor Harmon is hoping to make regular bimonthly visits throughout the year. In addition, we welcomed **Kids Korps USA**, a nonprofit youth organization that engages kids ages 5 to 18 in

community service. Their mission is to instill in America's youth the spirit of giving while providing valuable education in leadership and responsibility. They have volunteered twice already and are scheduled for more visits throughout the year.

Many Blessings,
Lisa Seiler
Volunteer Coordinator



Urban Safari volunteers work the food line on a busy day

Open House Energy!

TACO's July Open House was a successful evening of fellowship and inspiration, generating new synergy among volunteers, church members, TACO board members, church council and staff.

About a dozen people toured the food lines, new patient waiting room, and medical, dental and acupuncture clinics. A surprise guest delighted everyone with her request for a tour: Betty Meyers, a founder of Bread Day at First Lutheran 29 years ago this October. She brought an old newspaper article with her and was thrilled to see what her "little" food program has become.



Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Seiler and some Bread Day memorabilia

Afterwards, a dynamic discussion in the library (well fueled by refreshments from the TACO board) focused on expanding our ministry of service and social justice. Many noted both the church and the people receiving care from TACO programs would benefit from more activities during the week. Lee Kaercher mentioned a woman who came to a Wednesday clinic, stopped in at the Artist's Bible study, and has attended that study for the past several months. Few were aware that a previously homeless man has run a Friday morning Bible study for years.

This seems to be a great opportunity to expand our relationships with each other, those on the street, those who volunteer, and those who would like to volunteer in new ways.

Couldn't be there? You can still see all the action! Come down on the Fourth Monday of any month for a tour. Meal service begins at 4 p.m., our waiting room sign-ups are at 5:30, and clinics at 6:30 p.m. We also welcome volunteers to help serve any Monday (from 3 to 5 p.m.) or Friday (from 7 to 10 a.m.) – we'll give you a tour too.

TACO Plans Concerts by Vegetable Orchestra

Here's one way to use the excess vegetables that are donated and will simply not fit into our freezers: We at TACO would like to establish a San Diego branch of the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra, led by no other than our lead Food Coordinator, Paul Moorman.

Paul will perform on the gurkophon, an instrument made with a hollowed cucumber, green pepper and carrot reed. Additional musicians, carefully chosen amongst our very talented volunteer staff, will round out the orchestra playing equally inventive instruments, such as the leek violin, radish marimbas, eggplant cymbals, and the carrot flute. Percussion musicians will play additional utensils, including knives and mixers.

The original Vegetable Orchestra was founded in January 1998, the "Veggies" as they are affectionately called, actually tour countries including Belgium, the Netherlands Sweden as well as the United Kingdom. After each performance, a professional chef makes vegetable soup out of the instruments and serves it to the musicians and the audience. Just think of the possibilities for our own hot meal program?! If you would like to learn more about this unique musical experience, log on to www.gemueseorchester.org.



Notes from the Clinics

The summer months are always a great and creative time at the UCSD Medical clinic. Not in school for the summer, many students take this time to return home or to work at side jobs while they prepare for their second year, which is a more stressful time than the first and leads into their third year where they begin their rotations and start to truly become sleep deprived.

But, for some, they spend their summer at the Student-Run Free Clinics. This is also true for some pre-med students. They dedicate their time to running the clinics, cleaning up problems and getting ready for the coming year, when about 45 new students will come to know our clinic and patients who come with regularity.

How valuable has it been to provide medical services for free in the downtown? Well, let me give you some statistics. The latest numbers show there are now an average of 45 million people in the United States without health insurance. That is a little more than 16% of our population. This is a more than 1% increase since last year.

But, perhaps the entire US is too large of an image to take in. In that case, locally, statistics from UCLA as of 2002 show that San Diego County averages around 25% of its individuals being uninsured. Statistics can also be a little nebulous so, there is this according to San Diego County Quick Facts, there were 2,930,886 people living here as of 2003 making the percentage roughly accountable to 732,722 individuals in the county. Now that is a lot of people.

Thanks to all the hard work of the volunteers, both students and willing Doctors who each week help provide services to those of us without the option of care elsewhere.

A Child of the Night

I am a child of the night
Doing what's wrong and not what's right.
I am a child of the night
Very well hidden from the light.
They call me honey and then give me money.
I am a child of the night.
Can't you see that it's not me.
I am a child of the night.
Feeling the chill and having no will to survive.
I am a child of the night.
The streets are cold and I'm only seventeen.
But I feel so old.
I am a child of the night.
My mother left me years ago.
I am child of the night.
My soul is crying and slowly dying.
I am a child of the night

*from an unnamed student at
Monarch School for their Summer
Poetry Program*



Jesse in the kitchen

'...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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