



The TACO Times

Celebrating 39 Years of Bread Day

Volume 11, Issue 1

April 2014

Keep in Touch with TACO

There are more ways to keep in touch with TACO than our newsletter. You can:

-Visit our website at www.tacosd.org

-“Like” our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TACOSDFb

-Join our email list by sending an email to info@tacosd.org

Items most needed by TACO

- Men’s socks (white, crew)
- Disposable razors
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Small size deodorant
- Travel size sunscreen/ shampoo/conditioner
- Jackets
- Blankets

Contact us

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Director’s Report by Jim Lovell

Thank you, reader, for your interest in us. Whether this is your first time picking up the TACO Times or if you are a regular supporter/reader of us we are glad to have you involved. Those of you who have volunteered with us know that it is never a dull moment here at Third and Ash in downtown San Diego. This first quarter of the year is no exception. We have exciting news of our new Volunteer Coordinator in these pages, along with links to upcoming fundraisers to keep our doors open and services offered here. We also keep you in the loop as to what our programs are offering in the community in an effort to provide a small amount of care to those in desperate situations.

Your giving in the past year provided more than 95% of our budget! That is a phenomenal number. Your volunteer hours were more than 15,000 this past



year and that is just the time spent providing meals twice weekly. Many of you took on ownership of projects beyond our doors, asking members of your congregations to be involved in projects such as hygiene kit drives, clothing collections, fundraising events of which our programs were the beneficiaries. Some of you are connected to us

from far away. For instance did you know that your support of this work is also matched by a church in Northeastern Texas? Sherwood Shores Chapel PCA in Gordonville Texas are regular supporters of our Simon’s Walk Volunteers, a part of Going Home End-of-Life Services. Your work has far-reaching effects! We are thrilled to receive such support and recognition.

Arms Outstretched

Our work at TACO has always been blessed by the partnership and participation of our donors, without which our work in downtown San Diego would be impossible.

For the past few years, we’ve had special group of donors which we call “Arms Outstretched.” Those are those who give \$365 or more a year to help TACO’s mission. At least one-third of the world’s population lives on \$1 or less a day. We think anyone willing to commit that much—a dollar a day—to caring for the poor among

us locally is an important marker of commitment, and is a significant act of solidarity with the poor. We have created Arms Outstretched as a collective way to thank and recognize those who provide a solid foundation for TACO’s work.

The generosity of these donors provides a great example to others, and we recognize their decision by printing a list of Arms Outstretched donors in our newsletter. We feel this kind of leadership in donating to our organization is important to our

community and that it will encourage others by putting a name and face to giving. (If you prefer to remain anonymous, you can email info@tacosd.org)

The other way we like to say “thank you” is by giving Arms Outstretched donors a ticket to our fall fundraiser, Bread Upon the Waters. This event is a beautiful opportunity to join with other TACO supporters for a lovely evening of food and fun.

We hope you consider joining Arms Outstretched. Look for our 2014 members in the next TACO Times!



TACO Fast Facts for 2013

In the City of San Diego, there are 3,000 unsheltered and 2,500 sheltered homeless people. This is in addition to our city's working poor families and seniors on fixed incomes. Here is how we helped them:

- In our twice weekly meals:
 - Served over 16,700 people
 - Provided 25,000 meals
 - Served 23,000 cups of coffee
 - Served 29,000 doughnuts and pieces of cheese
 - Collected and distributed 72,800 lbs of food

- In our other capacities:
 - Held 9 weekly clinics to provide 375 people with medical/pharmaceutical care, acupuncture services, dental care, legal assistance, and counseling/support services. All FREE!
 - Collaborated with UCSD School of Medicine, Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, California Western School of Law, The Prudential Society of San Diego County, and SDSU School of Social Work
 - Assisted 700 people in establishing healthcare
 - Assisted 200+ people in obtaining vital records so they could establish identity, find work and receive care
 - Provided over 500 hours of volunteer service by our Simon's Walk Ministers to 12 of the most medically fragile in our community
 - Provided ongoing counseling to 20 people/week

- Volunteers:
 - We had 1,600 volunteers, 220 of them new
 - Together they gave 10,000 hours of service

**All of this done for less than \$20,000/month,
without any government funding.**

TACO Welcomes a New Volunteer Coordinator

TACO is proud to introduce our new Volunteer Coordinator! After 5+ months, we have hired Victoria (Tori) Rigg to the 20-hour per week position. Bill Radatz, our board president, Pastor Miller, and I conducted interviews of several interested individuals before choosing.

Tori comes to us with a wealth of experience having worked as a Volunteer Coordinator with a large social service agency in town for a decade. Tori is a member of St. Peter's by the Sea in Ocean Beach & the proud mom of twin 9 year old girls. We are thankful to her and to the many regular volunteers who so faithfully picked up the duties of coordinating over the past 5 months, we could not have



done it without all of you. I must offer a great shout of thanks to Ladonna Piper, of First Lutheran and Randy Engel, of St. Luke's of La Mesa for their hard work as Board Members stepping into the breach as they made all visiting volunteer groups feel welcome and supported throughout. Also to Julie Morton, our Admin Assistant who faithfully worked behind the scenes to make sure that data got entered and that Volunteer Groups were called back and scheduled.

Tori started March 12th and will be here on Mon., Wed., & Fridays. Please make her feel welcome here with us. With the addition of Tori, we finally have our staffing at regular capacity which is thrilling.

The Dragon's Spume by Nance Lovell

Something you can never quite prepare for is to arrive and discover the person you were planning to visit has died. Yesterday morning, this is exactly what happened. It was that typical scene where we walked into room 38 and saw his empty bed. The linens were stripped and there was a large Ziploc bag with medical commodities upon the bed. The roommate's visitor said she had no idea what happened to him and they didn't know where he was. In the moment, it was somewhat uneventful for me. The nursing staff explained briefly that he had died just after midnight and they had alerted his brother who just left 45 minutes before we arrived. I felt vacant, caught unaware, and yet was also somewhat relieved. Relieved in the honest realization that I would not spend time with him while he was in great pains.

Now, a day later, I feel his death as a deeper loss. John Donne's quote has been echoing in my head for the past 24 hours. "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." His pain had become my pain, it was unbearable for him and he told me so – I was the container. For me, as well, it was too much. In turn, I pleaded with his nurses and hospice workers to bring him more relief from pain and discomfort.

It hit me while I sat in worship, during the prayers and during communion. I don't know if he was a religious or even a spiritual man. What I do know is that his death was a spiritual experience. He was angry, he was in pain, and he did not like how he was leaving this world. The people who were closest to him, he refused to invite their company in his final moments. It was he and God alone; that must have been spiritual.

During his final two days on this earth I visited him at the nursing facility. He did not fully understand that he was so close to his death. His wishes were to walk out of the place and regain his independence and ability. He did not like the isolation, the sterile environment, or the sensations his body brought him. He did not want visits from his family and friends. He allowed my visits for some unknown reason.

Now I sit with the knowledge that I was likely the last person who talked with him who knew him. Our conversation was nothing striking. We talked about pain and I talked with staff on his behalf to advocate for pain management. I let him know I had told his brother where he was and he was going to visit "tomorrow." I received his permission for our Simon's Walk volunteers to visit him each day and let him know that we would make sure that he had someone visit every day so he would not be alone. That if he had any needs, we would be there for him. I helped him adjust his bed in hopes of finding some comfort. I helped him sip water. I touched his shoulder from time to time. I feel like I need to run through a list to insure it was enough. Is there ever enough?

A Note of Gratitude to Christine Habib

Christine served as a Simon's Walk volunteer for the past 2 years. She was one of the rare people who work full time while serving in such an intense ministry. We give thanks for her generous spirit and kind wisdom. We send her onward with our blessings and thankfulness!

If You Knew - by Ellen Bass

What if you knew you'd be the last to touch someone?
If you were taking tickets, for example, at the theater, tearing them, giving back the ragged stubs, you might take care to touch that palm, brush your fingertips along the life line's crease.

When a man pulls his wheeled suitcase too slowly through the airport, when the car in front of me doesn't signal, when the clerk at the pharmacy won't say Thank you, I don't remember they're going to die.

A friend told me she'd been with her aunt. They'd just had lunch and the waiter, a young gay man with plum black eyes, joked as he served the coffee, kissed her aunt's powdered cheek when they left. Then they walked half a block and her aunt dropped dead on the sidewalk.

How close does the dragon's spume have to come? How wide does the crack in heaven have to split?
What would people look like if we could see them as they are, soaked in honey, stung and swollen, reckless, pinned against time?



TACO would like to thank everyone who came to our Christmas wrapping and volunteer appreciation party! Together we wrapped hundreds of tarps for our downtown community.

This Month in the
TACO Times:

- We welcome our new **Volunteer Coordinator** (page one)
- **TACO Fast Facts** (page two)
- **Homeless Treasures Rummage Sale Info** (insert)
- **Simon's Walk Update** (page three)
- **Empty Bowls is Coming!** (page four)

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

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Third Ave. Charitable Org. Inc.
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San Diego, Ca. 92101-3193

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
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Permit No. 194

Empty Bowls

for TACO



Saturday, May 10, 2014
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
La Jolla United Methodist Church
6063 La Jolla Blvd.
La Jolla, CA 92037

Feeding the homeless and working poor in downtown San Diego for 39 years.

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