

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

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[www.tacosd.org](http://www.tacosd.org)

**This Month in the TACO  
Times:**

- An Empty Bowls reminder (page 1)
- A volunteer update (page 2)
- The latest news from Simon's Walk and Going Home (page 3)

**"A place where healing of body, mind and spirit  
can happen for any and all who come."**

*Empty Bowls* for TACO

**Fight Hunger, Find Beauty**

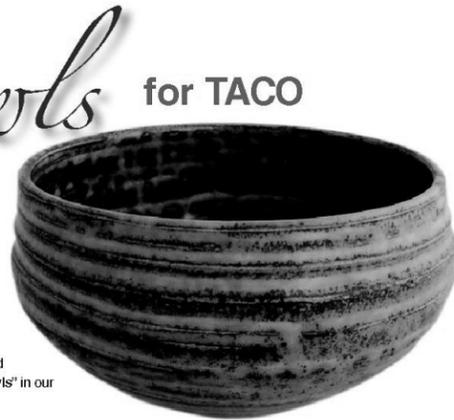
**CHOOSE** a handmade pottery bowl, donated by local artisans.

**FILL** it with delicious soup and bread from your favorite local restaurants.

**GIVE** Proceeds go to TACO (Third Avenue Charitable Organization), feeding the homeless and working poor in downtown San Diego for 34 years.

Empty Bowls is an international project to fight hunger and you can help. Bring your family and friends to the Empty Bowls Luncheon. For a suggested minimum donation of \$20, you'll be helping those who often have "empty bowls" in our own community.

**Information** TACO • 1420 Third Avenue • San Diego, CA 92101 • Phone 619.235.9445 • [www.tacosd.org](http://www.tacosd.org)



**PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS** • Beaumont's • Bernini's Bistro • Bread & Cie • Brigantine Seafood • The Cottage • David Fouts Catering • El Indio Mexican Restaurant and Catering • The Fishery • The French Gourmet • George's Restaurant • Julian Bakery • McCormick & Schmick's • Pacifica Del Mar • Point Loma Seafoods • Sammy's California Woodfired Pizza • San Diego Yacht Club • Soup Plantation • Three Squares • Waters Catering • Whole Foods Market and many more.

**Saturday, May 8, 2010  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

**\$20 suggested donation**

**La Jolla United Methodist Church  
6063 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla**

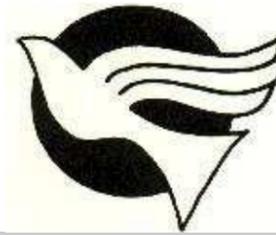
**The TACO Times**

Vol. 7 No. 2

**First Lutheran Church  
Third Ave. Charitable Org. Inc.  
1420 Third Ave.  
San Diego, Ca. 92101-3193**

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**TACO:  
Arms Outstretched**

Last year, the TACO board created the **Arms Outstretched** program to recognize donors that went above and beyond in their financial support of TACO, and donated more than a dollar a day, or \$365 a year, to our mission.

TACO's generous donors responded, and in 2009 we recognized 34 different donors as members of **Arms Outstretched**.

In 2010 we have been pleased to recognize the generosity of sixteen different donors who have qualify for **Arms Outstretched** this year:

Anonymous  
Betty and Joseph Corsi  
Brenda Johnson  
Brian and Dianne Williams  
David and Lois Case  
Deeann Freeman  
Dobrina Ivanova Russell  
Gary and Diana Randall  
Jeannie Oestreicher  
John and Donna Adler  
Kathleen Sorahan  
Kevin Gannon  
Pastor Laurie Line  
Mickey Lester  
Steven and Carol Hassett  
Wayne Spruce

Every member of **Arms Outstretched** has TACO's profound thanks for their support of the homeless and working poor of downtown San Diego. Please consider joining **Arms Outstretched**. Help us care for God's blessed poor every day of the year.

# The TACO Times

**Celebrating 35 Years of Bread Day**

**Volume 7, Issue 2**

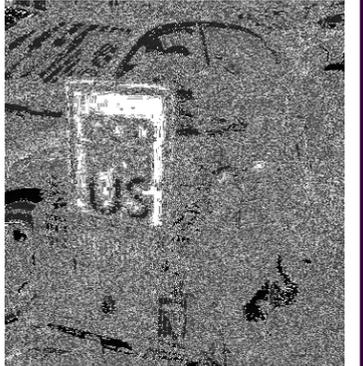
**April 2010**

## Director's Report by Jim Lovell

In March we acknowledged the deaths of two people who had been on the street for some time, and who are well known within the homeless community. Also, on the first day of spring, a long time homeless gentleman who had come to meals here for easily over 10 years and had entered the Going Home End-of Life Services died in hospice care with Sharp Grossmont hospice. His name was Kenny Hershey. He had Huntington's Disease, and we celebrated his memorial here this past Friday.

I was struck to get a phone call on a Friday morning at the beginning of March from UCSD's hospital, from the surgical intensive care unit. When the social worker there called me asking if I could identify a gentleman who had been

found on the street, I wasn't sure what to say. I paused and said "is he dead?" She indicated that no, he wasn't, and I became puzzled, wondering why he was unable to tell them who he was. I said "well do you need me to come right away to recognize him?" As I write this I recognize that this is a fairly naive comment to make to someone in the intensive care unit. However, I didn't quite understand how this could have come about, and why I was being called by someone I had never met before. There was a part of me that wondered "could it be that I am somehow on a list that anyone who's homeless and ends up in the hospital that I am to be called?" A daunting idea, and I quickly recognized my own self-absorption in it. In all of my eight years at TACO, and all of my



eighteen years working with people on the street, I had never before been called by a hospital and asked to come identify someone. It was an overwhelming request: did I wish to be the one to go recognize this gentleman, to identify him because he could not identify himself. As I went to the hospital, I

*Continued on page 2*

## Fight Hunger, Find Beauty: Empty Bowls

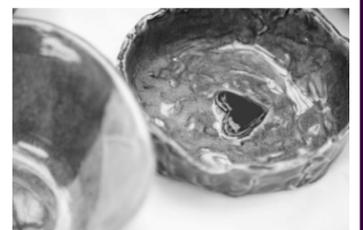
**Saturday, May 8  
11:00 AM—1:00 PM  
United Methodist Church in  
La Jolla  
6063 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037**

In 1991, an art teacher had an idea to raise money for charity drive in his Michigan community. His high school students made ceramic bowls, which were then used to serve soup and bread in a fundraising dinner. After they were finished eating, guests kept their bowls as a reminder of those whose bowls are empty night after night.

Since then, people all over the country have been hosting Empty Bowls events all throughout the year, and every Spring, TACO holds our own Empty Bowls fundraiser at United Methodist Church.

In partnership with United Methodist church, local potters (who donate the bowls) and local restaurants (who donate the food), TACO will host this year's Empty Bowls luncheon on Saturday, May 8th, starting at 11AM.

More information on Empty Bowls events held all over the country is at [www.emptybowls.net](http://www.emptybowls.net).



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**GIVE** Proceeds go to TACO, feeding the homeless and working poor in downtown San Diego for 34 years. (Suggested donation is \$20)

*(for a list of participating restaurants, see page 3)*

### Director's Report *continued from page one*

began to recognize with trepidation the honor that was here for me. That to be the one allowed to recognize someone who the world has chosen not to was a very powerful gift; it was also not something that I had done anything to earn.

I recognize that when I need started working here in 2003 I never signed on to be the person who would be called to identify a gentleman on life support who was on the street, I did not sign on to hold memorials for people who were not remembered by others, I did not sign on to receive letters from people asking about their children or if I had seen their brother on the street. Yet it has and continues to be a great honor to be here and to offer to "any and all who come" the opportunity to be recognized, to be seen, to be called by name, and to be known outside of the homeless community.

At our board retreat in February of this year our board continued to struggle with the question of what TACO's mission is. Pastor Andy Taylor, our Vice President and a pastor at St. Andrews Lutheran Church, helped keep us on track, counseling us that a mission statement is to be brief and direct

and clear, and to indicate what we do and what we do not do. This certainly has been difficult, because what happens here is often so unpredictable, because when we work with people it's a messy thing. There is not always clarity as to who is right and who is wrong, who is in need and who is not and even who is serving and who is being served. This last part – who is serving and who is being served – was a key source of discussion among the board members. In my eight years here I have lost count of how many times volunteers have shared with me how powerful and life-changing it is to be here. In those moments there is very little talk about how much they have done for others, but rather how their lives have been changed by being here. Perhaps this is why we are called to see the poor among us and to truly see Jesus in the eyes of those who are poor.

Many of you have been concerned, as have I, with TACO's financial situation. Recently I've met with pastors from ELCA congregations in our community. Many of these churches make financial donations to TACO on a regular basis, many have volunteers who regularly serve meals here, and many of their pastors have personally become involved with TACO. I met with them a year ago to share with

them our plight and the concern that we would not survive through the end of June 2009. I was there to give an update and to share with them the good news that their work and commitments have helped sustain us into 2010. I did however apologize that I could not say "thank you, and it's all better." Because even with all of their support, and the support of all of you in the community, we still do not know how we will make it through the end of 2010. In January we believed we would have funding through to the beginning of August, by the end of March we believe we will have funding through the end of September. With each passing month we hope and pray that we will be able to continue through the end of the year. Your gifts allow us to keep our doors open to the community, and to be here for you and hundreds of volunteers to create life-changing moments. They also allow us to tell people on the street that they are recognized, that they do have a name, and that they are valued. Thank you for your partnership with this ministry.

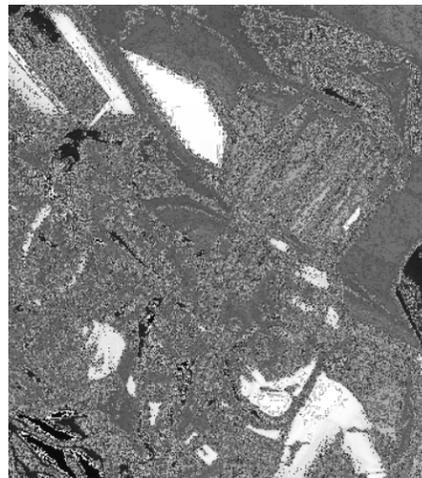
### Volunteer Update *by Rachel Line*

Paul writes in his letter to the church in Philippi, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!"

Since January 1, 2010, we have served almost 8,000 meals to over 5,000 hungry people. Is this anything to rejoice over? In this big, scary job of feeding the hungry, one can easily feel the weight of the needs of so many. Yes, there is huge need out there in the world, but we can also find joy in our response to that need. It's not a feeling of easing one's guilt, nor is it a feeling of happiness based on other's misfortune. Rather, we know and experience the love of God in our lives and our response is to joyfully give back to others. We love others as we have first been loved. And out of that love, comes joy.

In the picture attached in this article are three of our regular volunteers: Randy Engel, Susan Mayes, and Ron "Cowboy" Thompson. Cowboy has found a way to stack the serving plates and bins all the way to the ceiling. He's usually quite proud of that accomplishment. Randy, Susan, and Cowboy spend most of their Mondays at TACO. They are always filled with joy and are excited to be serving their neighbors.

I am so blessed to be at TACO and to share the big, scary job of feeding the hungry with so many who can find the joy in life and in the love of God and their neighbor. TACO is so blessed by the work of the volunteers. Thank you to those of you who give of your selves, your time, and your possessions. Again I will say, Rejoice!



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### What Happens When We Die? *by Nance Lovell*

For many of us, we can rest in the knowledge that our families or loved ones will take care of us when we die. We know that our lives will be honored with a memorial service or celebration of some type. We trust that our bodies will be buried or inurned in a respectable, dignified manner. For some of us, we take part in planning our own arrangements.

Yet for many homeless men and women, when they die on our city streets, they are forgotten. TACO has participated in the annual memorial where the homeless who died in the past year are remembered for a moment on All Saints Day. But what happens to their remains? I was able to ask this question when designing Going Home end-of-life services. In meeting with the County Medical Examiner, I learned that when an indigent person dies, there is every effort to locate and contact family. If no family is available or if they are unable to take responsibility for their family member, the County will make arrangements through their Indigent Burial Program. This is commonly known as a "potter's field," today's equivalent is cremation and burial at sea.

Going Home/Simon's Walk makes every effort to provide a memorial service for our clients. We offer them the option of designing what that might look like. Sitting with our clients to find out their wishes for memorial is a great honor for me and is also a great honor for them. I've been surprised at how eager and ready some are to choose their songs or eulogist. For others, although they don't desire these things, they are touched that it is available to them. I've also witnessed the immense dignity it brings them to know they will be remembered.

When other arrangements cannot be made, Going Home has been blessed to have the partnership with First Lutheran Church. Part of FLC's ministry is a columbarium located in the chapel. In the past we have been able to bury a client in a columbarium niche alongside church members. This is a visible outpouring of love to the homeless community. When some learned their friend was buried on FLC's grounds and they would be able to visit and pay their respects, it softened their relationship with us. It offers them hope.

At this time, we are hoping to bury a young man's remains in the columbarium. He died at the age of 38 from Huntington's Correa. He was an exuberant man in spite of his disease and many of the homeless community helped to care for him. TACO is hoping to raise the \$580 to cover costs of his inurnment. If you are able to contribute, please make checks payable to "TACO" and in the memo line include "columbarium fund."

### Simon's Walk Update

Our team of volunteers is continually moving and growing and changing. This month of April, we say good-bye to Jon Glasoe who has served as a Simon's Walk minister over the past year. Jon has moved to the Santa Barbara area. We appreciate and thank Jon for his compassionate care as well as his honest, personal insights with our team.

Simultaneously, we are welcoming two new volunteers to the Simon's Walk team...Marge Hersom and Kathy Burns. They are currently amidst training and will become active mid-May. Please pray for Marge and Kathy as well as our team.



### Thanking our 2009-2010 Social Work Interns

Shana Gaters and Johnny Floersheimer are TACO's 09-10 social work interns. They began their work here in Fall of 2009 and will finish in the second week of May 2010. TACO wishes to thank both of them for their over 500 hours apiece of service to our community and to our cause.



### Tierrasanta Lutheran Church's Community Garden

In March, Rachel Line visited Tierrasanta Lutheran Church's Community Garden. They have nine plots in the garden that are dedicated to TACO and all that is grown is given to us. What a unique and generous way of giving to those in need. Thank you to Carol Morse who oversees the garden and delivers fresh vegetables to TACO.



### Thanks to all the restaurants who will participate in our upcoming Empty Bowls Fundraiser!

Beaumont's, Bernini's Bistro, Bread & Cie, Brigantine Seafood, The Cottage, David Fouts Catering, El Indio Mexican Restaurant and Catering, The Fishery, The French Gourmet, George's Restaurant, Julian Bakery, McCormick & Schmick's, Pacifica Del Mar, Point Loma Seafoods, Sammy's California Woodfired Pizza, San Diego Yacht Club, Soup Plantation, Three Squares, Waters Catering, Whole Foods Market, and many more