



The TACO Times

Celebrating 36 Years of Bread Day

Volume 10, Issue 4

November 2013

What Happened to Christmas in July?

This question has been heard around TACO a lot—everybody seems to be wondering what's happened to the program that for seven years has brought gifts to those who come here throughout the year looking for the help that we provide to any and all who come.

So, what has happened? Well, it is still going strong. However this year we made a calculated effort to not call it Christmas in July. In this past year in May we held an Empty Bowls fundraiser. In June, the rummage sale. And in August, Bread Upon the Waters. That is a lot of fundraising for just 3 1/2 months. Our board was so thankful for all the giving that had been done during those three months that they felt they should not come at all of our donors again to say "here's another opportunity to give money" but rather that we would continue to look for funds for Christmas in July as we entered November and December.

So maybe think about it as Christmas in November or Christmas in December where we usually think about Christmas. We are still looking for donations of \$20 a piece for gifts to be given out just before Christmas. You will see in this issue of the TACO Times the invitation to the Wrapping Party and Volunteer Appreciation event we do hope that you can come and help us wrap these gifts. If you've been before you know what a joyous occasion this is.

Peace, and Merry Christmas!

Director's Report *by Jim Lovell*

We are, as usual, excited by the coming of Christmas around here. In this TACO Times you will find information about the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation and Wrapping Party. We do hope you can come. It is such a fun reminder of how giving can also be receiving.

October 1st began what the country refers to as Obamacare. The reality is that this program has been rolling out for the past two years. For those of us involved in caring for the poor, we have been waiting a long time for programs that would provide true health coverage for our clients. Due to the volume of recurrent care the patients require, our UCSD Free Clinic has not seen new patients with any regularity for 2 years. Many of those coming to the clinic have been coming in order to stabilize and receive maintenance care for the same conditions that the majority of Americans suffer from; diabetes, hypertension, heart disease.



For years we have had to turn people away simply because it is irresponsible to provide care for someone one time and then let them worry about the next time themselves. For the past year, we have been identifying those individuals who attend the clinic who should have options for free or very low-cost coverage. We are working with them to transition

into this new healthcare marketplace. Now, whether you are healthy or ill, whether you have a longstanding medical condition or just got sick, there are options for ongoing healthcare that can be free for the lowest income earners and affordable for those making more.

This in no way counters people's difficulties with the healthcare website; I offer it only as another perspective. We are blessed to work alongside MDs and students who are dedicated to bringing health to those in need and that is such a beautiful healing. Hopefully, we will be able to invite new people in as we help others access healthcare in the new exchanges.

As we continue to dedicate our work to the "health and healing of any and all who come" we do work to help our clients, guests, and clinic patients to access healthcare and food programs available. We worry when these programs become more limited as well as we know how this affects the least of those around us.

A Week at TACO

Many of you who receive the TACO Times see the highlights of our fundraising efforts—Bread Upon the Waters, Empty Bowls, the Sugar Hill Sisters—but we don't often talk about the day-to-day workings of TACO.

Serving the homeless and working poor of downtown San Diego is a full-time job, but our organization is lucky enough to have a collection of volunteers and partners that rise to that task week after week to our meals, clinics, and

social work humming along. If you're a volunteer or if you've been around TACO for a while, you may already know much of what we do—but you may not know all of it.

The week starts on Monday, which is a meal day—TACO's Monday and Friday meals are perhaps the most visible of our programs. Our food coordinator, Tim Harward, supervises our volunteers in the sorting and preparation of the food, much of

which comes from Albertson's, our partner in the Feeding America Fresh Rescue program. Last month Albertson's donated 4,460 pounds of food, including 3,110 pounds of produce. Whatever TACO can't use goes next door to Luther Tower.

Monday is also medical clinic night. Many of San Diego's residents have difficulty getting access to medical care, so UCSD Medical Students,

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A Week at TACO *continued from page one*

under the supervision of Dr. Ellen Beck, have set up a free clinic in the upstairs offices of First Lutheran Church. Some of the clinic's patients are homeless; others are working but do not have health insurance. Dr. Beck and her students see to as many as they can.

Next door to the medical clinic is the dental clinic, which receives patients on both Monday and Wednesday nights. There, members of the UCSD pre-dental society, headed by Dr. Irv Silverstein, assist volunteer dentists that see between five and ten patients every night. Both the medical and dental clinics are filled to capacity—this is an area where need outstrips supply.

Also in the Monday lineup are the Community Law Project (in partnership with the California Western School of Law) and the Acupuncture Clinic (in partnership with the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine). The CLP is student-run project which provides pro bono legal services to low income people in the greater San Diego community. The Acupuncture clinic sees homeless clients on Monday night and seniors on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings.

Between clinics and the meal, Mondays can be pretty hectic. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday provide a bit of a breather, but there's always something going, or something to prepare for. Fresh rescue pickups and food sorting happen on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (averaging about 300 pounds of food per pickup).

What's more, TACO's social work services continue throughout the week, helping clients obtain ID, access to government services, assistance programs, and low-cost housing. Rarely a moment goes by without someone on the patio looking for Jim Lovell, or one of TACO's social work interns, even for something as simple as picking up their mail.

Going Home, our program providing services to the terminally ill and dying, also continues its work throughout the week. The nature of Going Home makes it difficult to describe a "typical" week in the program—its clients rarely have the benefit of predictable schedule. However, Nance Lovell and the volunteers of Simon's Walk make whatever time they can.

This past week, for example, included helping several clients gain access to medical care, SSI benefits, or even housing. One terminally ill and mentally ill client was able to move into his own cottage—the first time he's been in permanent housing in over ten years. Just as often, Simon's Walk volunteers simply visit with clients during and after medical procedures, helping them manage the process. This past week two Simon's Walk volunteers made a total of three visits totaling over 13 hours to one husband-and-wife couple undergoing a pair of medical procedures.

Wednesday sees another dental clinic during the evening, and on Fridays we have our second weekly meal, with volunteers and staff arriving as early as 6am to begin preparations. With the cupboards bare than usual after the Friday meal, it's once again up to Albertson's to help. The third fresh rescue pickup of the week happens on Saturday morning, to be sorted again on Sunday—and the process begins anew.

Empty Bowls in Solana Beach



Carole Hildebrand, left, and Cheri Sheridan, who attend Calvary Lutheran Church in Solana Beach, warmed up soup donated by local restaurants for the Oct. 12 "Empty Bowls" fundraiser there.



The Big Decisions entertained diners. The event raised \$10,600 to benefit elderly, hungry and working poor people in San Diego.

Advantages of Stock Donations

*A message from Tom Templeton,
TACO Treasurer*

For those of you who itemize deductions on your Federal tax return, you may wish to consider a donation of your appreciated stock.

As you probably know, you may claim a deduction for the current market value of a stock donation to a 501(c)(3) corporation such as TACO rather than your cost or basis in that stock. This could obviously be of great benefit to you given the favorable performance of the stock market recently and, of course, your donation would, as always, be extremely helpful to TACO and well appreciated.

To facilitate transfers of stock, TACO has recently established an account with Charles Schwab. If you are interested in making a donation of your appreciated stock, just contact Jim Lovell for the account number and routing number necessary to complete the transaction.

It is prudent to contact your tax advisor to assure such a donation would be applicable to your financial situation.



Volunteers from Calvary Lutheran Church in Solana Beach and St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Del Mar served soup and bread.

Edie Ham (right) of Calvary Lutheran serves soup donated by local restaurants.



A Letter to Congress by the TACO Board

The text below is from a letter sent on September 13th by the TACO Board of Directors to Congresswoman Susan Davis concerning the HR 3102, the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act of 2013. Congresswoman Davis voted Nay on the bill, but it still passed 217-210.

We urge you to vote against this bill that would cut \$40 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the federal program that provides food assistance to low income families. We know, first-hand, the negative effects this will have on individuals and families in the greater San Diego area.

TACO is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in San Diego County that provides meals for homeless and low-income persons and coordinates an array of medical and legal clinics available to these families and individuals. The number of individuals utilizing these services has steadily grown over the past few years, fed by high unemployment rates and dramatic cuts in

safety-net services. This has pushed our program to the limits of our capacity. Among those we serve are large numbers of veterans, seniors, persons with mental illnesses, and the "working poor" (people employed but still earning under federal poverty guideline levels, and usually in jobs that do not include benefits). Having SNAP assistance reduced or eliminated for many of these folks will destroy a fragile balance that enables them to meet minimal nutritional requirements on a daily basis.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recently released annual report, 14.5 percent of U.S. households were food insecure (lacking consistent access to adequate food throughout the year for all family members) in 2012 and 5.7 percent of U.S. households fall into the most severe category of food insecurity. In spite of an improving economy, these numbers represent increases from previous years. The average SNAP assistance is less than \$1.50 per person per meal. Even

this small amount is a needed and helpful resource to families wondering where their next meal may come from. This is especially critical for children under 5 years of age whose healthy development is so dependent on good nutrition.

SNAP has been proven to be an effective anti-hunger program with a remarkably low rate of fraud and error. It is designed to grow as need grows in a poor economy and contract as need lessens in a good economy.

Please oppose the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act. Make eliminating hunger in this wealthiest-of-all-nations a priority goal for our nation.

Sincerely,

William Radatz
Chairperson, TACO Board

Arms Outstretched 2013

Arms Outstretched members are those who have donated \$365—a dollar a day—or more to TACO over the course of a year. Arms Outstretched members receive free tickets to our fall fundraiser and special recognition in the TACO times. They have our special thanks for helping both us and the community of downtown San Diego. Please consider becoming a member of Arms Outstretched by donating \$365 or more over the course of a year.

Anonymous
Betty and Joseph Corsi
Brenda Johnson
Cabrillo Charitable Fund
Carl Josephson
Carl and Peg Ross
Charlotte Pettus
Charlotte Collins
ChasRo Enterprises
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Sandra Timmons
Stephen Mather
Steven and Carol Hassett
Steven Moreen
Theodore Behrmann
Tom Templeton and Mary Erlenborn

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

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Annual Wrapping Party and Volunteer Recognition Potluck

What: Wrap gifts for our patio parishioners.
Celebrate all that volunteers have done in 2013!

When: **Saturday, December 14th**
Wrapping starts at 10 am.
Potluck starts at 12 pm.

Where: First Lutheran Church
1420 Third Avenue

Please RSVP to:
Phone: (619) 235-9445 x. 102
Email: juliem@tacosd.org

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