

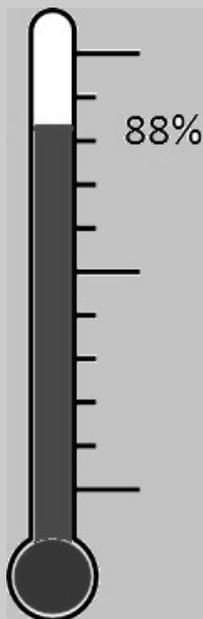


The TACO Times

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

**Help us Reach
Our Goal and Get
Elevated this Year!**

One of our 40/20 Anniversary goals was to raise funds for an elevator or lift to help those who have difficulty with the stairs. We're proud to say that we've now raised \$63,000 of the \$72,000 needed for construction—we're 88% of the way there!



We're all excited to be this close to funding what would be a major addition to our infrastructure. With your help, we can raise the final 12% we need. Please consider donating to get us to the top—both figuratively and literally. And thanks to all those who have already given!

Volume 14, Issue 1

February 2017

Ongoing Changes in Our 22nd Year *by Jim Lovell*

After 13 years Nance Lovell, MSW is stepping away from the Going Home End-Of-Life Services program and the Simons Walk Ministry, programs that she created in conjunction with a team of us here at TACO back in 2004. These programs, walking along with those who are on the street and terminally ill have had a huge effect on all of us here at TACO, First Lutheran Church, the surrounding Lutheran churches, the homeless community we serve, and the healthcare community as well.

This is happening because we started 2017 with a \$20,000+ deficit.

The board had some difficult deciding to do and after Nance leaves, the program will hold off on adding any new clients. Current clients in the program will receive services and our current volunteers with Simon's Walk will continue their work as well. We hope that it will be just a short amount of time before we are able to hire someone new into this position.

Our plan is to establish additional funding to continue this program. However, even then it will be a different position. Things are never the same when the founder goes. It will still be a powerful and inspiring

program, but different. I want to thank Nance for her thoughtful ministry to the homeless community. For her tireless advocacy in one-on-one conversations with providers helping them to understand why they should care for and provide services to this homeless individual. For fighting stigma and being a person to help each of her clients know that their voice is important and the dignity that God gives to each of us should be honored in them. It's been my incredible pleasure to work alongside and watch her ministry.

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These Ashes Tell a Story *by Nance Lovell*

This is Nance's last TACO Times entry. Many of you have commented on her writing talents and how she emotionally connects us the reader with the client that she's working with in their current situation. It's an amazing gift. The ability to connect us with each other. You will no doubt find that it stays with you.

Some departures are more difficult than others to do gracefully. Leaving my position at TACO will certainly not be an easy one. Working with terminally ill men and women on the street is a life experience beyond compare and has been an honor to be deemed "family" to some who would otherwise walk alone. Going Home and Simon's Walk have been a safety net for men and women who would not qualify for services elsewhere and would have died alone on our city streets.

Sometimes the best reflections come from life lived... (a journal



Going Home End-of-Life Services & Simon's Walk Ministry

- Innovative and one of a kind
- Has helped more than 35 individuals at the End of Life
- Getting people indoors and receiving care
- Planning and holding Memorials in the church, on the patio, & in the community
- Equipping 17 volunteers in working with those on the street

excerpt from years ago). Although this is a repeat printing, I thought it was suitable for my final note...

"...Yes, for five weeks your cremated ashes have been sitting on the top of my desk. Neatly packed up in the golden box within the larger cardboard box boldly inscribed, "TEMPORARY CONTAINER." Clearly attached to the box is the Permit for Disposition of Human Remains. The framed photo of you rests on top along with a short stack of brochures from your memorial service.

In a sense, I face mortality every time I sit at my desk in a very concrete way. Ashes to ashes could not be any clearer. How simple it all becomes when we are literally burned down to the contents of a small cardboard box. So foolish all the worries and cares of this world become. At the same time, how important every thing we do becomes.

Continued on page three

Ongoing Changes in Our 22nd Year *continued from page one*

Now we need to get out there and raise some money so that we can return this program and our other social services to fully active. To do that, you'll find in this TACO Times a flyer for upcoming fundraisers we hope that you are able to attend one of them. And maybe that you can bring somebody else along. That would be nice. You may think to yourself "well that's a whole lot of breakfasts that have to happen" and that is true, however we all know we only get there one step at a time getting a little further than we were the day before. Welcoming the stranger, taking care of the widows and the orphans, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick and visiting those in prison. We appreciate God's constant



reminder. On the back page of the TACO Times you will find information about upcoming events throughout this year! Please mark your calendars & come out and support us. Consider becoming an *Arms Outstretched* member at \$365 a

year, unless you already are one. In that case I would ask you to consider doubling that amount, thinking of those who are living throughout this world on just \$2 a day. Please consider doubling up for us in this coming year.

Volunteer Update *by Brad Young*

Greetings everyone from TACO, I hope the holidays treated you well, as is the New Year. During the holidays, I like many of us, spent time with family and friends sharing meals. I began thinking about the importance of meals, what they represent, and the many benefits a meal can provide both physically and spiritually. In that vein, I would like to talk about how a meal at TACO comes to be.

The food itself comes from Feeding San Diego, Albertson's, and a community garden in Tierrasanta. Albertson's donates three times weekly, and any left overs are given to the senior tower next door. It's amazing to me that such a small store is able to donate so much food, and one has to wonder how much food is wasted daily by the over 37,000 grocery stores nationwide.

Once the food is received it is overseen by our new Food Coordinator, Marguerite Grifka. We are so blessed to have her, and we look forward to a long relationship. Not only does Marguerite oversee the entire meal/food process, but she also is in charge of the volunteers who help transform raw food and ingredients into a delicious and nutritionally balanced meal twice weekly. For instance, last week a meal consisted of chicken gumbo, fajitas, green salad, fruit salad, and a selection of bread from Panera Bakery and Yum Yum Donuts.

The next step involves the set-up of a

"buffet restaurant" twice weekly in the lobby of First Lutheran. Overseen by Wayne Boss, another group of volunteers helps to set up the tables, utensils, carts, and chairs necessary for the meal to be served.

Once the set-up is complete, a group of regular volunteers, complimented by different groups (some monthly) representing the best of our country, comes together to man the stations and help feed our hungry guests. Some of the groups we have been privileged to host include: the Navy, Lion's Club, Carlton Hills, Calvary Lutheran Solana Beach, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Coronado Teens, Quintiles, Realty World, and Incarnation Lutheran Church. As the volunteer coordinator, I am privileged to not only meet these people, but to get to know them and watch them serve. I consider it one of the great assets of my position.

The final, and most rewarding, part of the process is the meal itself. Last week we were able to serve 166 guests a total of 212 meals. Yet beyond the numbers are the many positives that come from the meals we serve. Just as we thrive on the community, sense of family, and socialization that our meals provide us, so do the people we serve. This is especially important for people who have few or no other opportunities available to them. Indeed many of our guests tell us that the sense of community that the meals provide is the real driver of their attendance.

Whatever our guests do take away from

TACO, be it sustenance, socialization, family, or a combination of them, the most important (in my opinion) is the sense of HUMANITY that TACO helps provide every Monday and Friday.

Dining for Donations

Everyone enjoys dining out so why not invite your friends and family out to breakfast and support TACO at the same time?

The TACO Board is beginning a new program called **Dining for Donations**. We will be hosting restaurant dining events throughout the year at different locations in San Diego County. Why a restaurant? Many restaurants sponsor fundraisers for school, church and non-profit organizations and donate a portion of their profits to that organization. By doing this, we can both enjoy a meal with family and friends and share our good fortune with those in need.

Our first event, described on the TACO Times insert flyer, will be at Applebee's on April 1st. Purchase your tickets online on our website, www.tacosd.org and join us on April Fool's Day. Notices of upcoming events will be announced in the TACO Times, on our Facebook page and on our website. If you have any questions or a suggestion for future **Dining for Donations** events, please email us at events@tacosd.org.

These Ashes Tell a Story *continued from page one*

Your life on earth was full of glory. Had it not been for your disability, you may have been one of the most exuberant people I know. Yet, had it not been for this life-taking disability, there may have been no need to fight against anything, there would be nothing to prove.

These ashes tell a story. No one has noticed the box upon my desk. Even when pointed out, it takes a second look for it to sink in, what I described to them. For me, my desk has become a holy place while inhabited by your remains. We share the space in a rather

mundane way. Only when I let the whole of the story funnel in, does my mind allow my soul to connect with that truth. Nothing is permanent, not even death. So it is... heaven's gates have opened wide for you and now I wait for when my time will come. "

...and so it goes. It is a good memory to hold onto again and meditate upon. During our Lenten walk to Jesus' death, it is a natural progression to spend time with our own mortality.

My endless gratitude to the TACO community for the honor of serving over the

past 13 years; I have grown in a street wisdom that could not be garnered in any other fashion. It has been a privilege to work in a place that holds great integrity and strives for the well-being of all. Grace and peace be with you.

Friends of TACO

TACO has been blessed over the years by the generosity of individuals, congregations and organizations who have supported our TACO mission with their fundraising efforts. The TACO Board appreciates this backing and would like to continue to support adventurous groups or individuals who are willing to help us raise funds to feed the homeless.

You, your youth group, your congregation, your company or organization can become a **Friend of TACO**. We will advertise your event on our website or on our Facebook page. It could be any kind of fundraiser, from a carwash to a dog wash, a recycling drive to a bake sale, any kind of event where you choose to include TACO as one of the beneficiaries.

If you have any questions or are interested in becoming a **Friend of TACO** and sponsor a fundraiser, please email us at events@tacosd.org.

Our New Food Coordinator *by Marguerite Grifka*

Hello, TACO. My name is Marguerite Grifka and I am the new food coordinator. I began my position here in January. I want express my gratitude for the welcome I have received, and for the opportunity to facilitate the kitchen part of the TACO meal program. It has been a smooth transition due to the beautifully run program headed the past months by volunteer Chef Kevin Vallone, with the help of Wayne Boss and perhaps most hardworking volunteer dishwasher Loren (insert last name here). As well as LaDonna and the incredible crew of regular volunteers that show up each and every Monday and Friday! I truly enjoy bringing well prepared, healthful food to all people, and it is a dream come true to be part of offering that to members of our community on a no cost basis.



I was raised in San Diego. I've been into making a mess in the kitchen from childhood, but began my professional career after moving to New Orleans in my twenties. I received a classically based culinary education there and have gone on to cook in a variety of establishments from fine dining to food trucks.

I want to continue the tradition created by the members of the First Lutheran Church, of offering our guests a good meal and the opportunity to sit down and enjoy it; along with providing a fun and fruitful experience for all the volunteers involved in this amazing effort.

I look forward to working with and getting to know all of you in this vibrant & loving community.

This Month in the TACO Times:

- Ongoing Changes in Our 22nd Year (page one)
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Save the Dates!

We now have dates for five fundraisers we'll be holding over the course of the coming year! We hope you can make room in your calendar for them. Here they are:

Golden Acorn Casino Shuttle Bus Run: Saturday, March 11

Flapjacks at Applebee's: Saturday, April 1

Empty Bowls: Saturday, May 13th at La Jolla United Methodist Church

Homeless Treasure: The end of June at Clairemont Lutheran (new location!)

Eat, Drink, and be Sharing: Saturday, September 23rd at Calvary Solana Beach

For the Casino and Flapjack events, see the flyer inside for more details.

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