



www.tacosd.org

The TACO Times

Celebrating 35 Years of Bread Day

Volume 8, Issue 2

April 2011

Stay in touch with our Facebook page and RSS feed!

Want to know what is happening at TACO more often? Want to see pictures of great events you read about here? There are two ways to do so. One, if you are on **Facebook**, you can go to the TACO page at www.facebook.com/TACOSDfb and "like" us. The other way is to get regular "feeds" from our website at tacosd.org. Click on the **RSS button** for a link to TACO's feed as well as information about what feeds are and how to use them.

Thrivent Choice

Do you have a Thrivent connection?! Many friends of TACO who do are using Thrivent Choice to have additional money sent directly to TACO! And it doesn't cost anything for you to do so. So far this year, TACO has received more than \$1,500 from this program. Find out more at their website at Thrivent.com.

Director's Report by Jim Lovell

It is Spring and Easter is on its way! Here at TACO there is so much happening and we are in full swing. Our volunteers have come through bringing joy and excitement to our guests and a bit of sunshine in the grey days. One of the greatest joys this year so far was a visit from the Yale Undergraduate Gospel Choir. These students plan their own trips each spring break, travel with their own equipment and work to share the gospel in word and song throughout the world. Last year they traveled to India, this year TACO and points of service on the west coast. There were wonderful moments as they sang on the patio to our meal guests on a drizzly Monday evening where people were cold and damp but their spirits were lifted. After the group



had packed up, there was a wonderful moment where a homeless gentleman engaged two of the students in an a capella version of "Amazing Grace" and a lesser known gospel tune.

This was a bright spot along with others during a time that is both dreary and cold. This was true also in terms of ser-

vices to those in our community who are so poor. This year saw the San Diego City Council suggest closing the Neil Good Day Center (the homeless day center used by hundreds of downtown homeless individuals to stay safe and get needed services that are unavailable anywhere else), suggest not funding the Inter-

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Empty Bowls is Coming! Saturday, May 7 from 11am to 1pm

This year's Empty Bowls fundraiser will take place on Saturday, May 7, from 11am to 1pm at United Methodist Church in La Jolla (6063 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla, CA 92037).

Every year for the past four years, local potters and restaurants have partnered with TACO to hold our annual "Empty Bowls" fundraiser. Those four fundraisers have raised over \$39,000 for TACO, and in each year it has raised more than the year before!

First, guests **CHOOSE** a bowl, browsing through a selection of hundreds of hand-crafted, beautiful, imaginative and colorful bowls made by local potters generous enough to donate their time, skills, creativity and love to TACO.

Then, they **FILL** their bowl with delicious hot soup and bread donated by local restaurants. When their meal is done, you keep your bowl as a reminder of the people whose bowls are empty every night.

Finally, you can **GIVE** (suggested donation is \$20). All donations go to TACO's mission to fight hunger among the homeless and working poor of downtown San Diego.

This grassroots effort aims at doing our part to help feed the hungry efficiently and locally. The program began in 1990 when a high school art teacher in Michigan helped his students search for a way to raise funds

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Director's Report *continued from page one*

faith Rotational Shelter (helping 250 homeless individuals annually come off of the streets for good), and suggest not funding senior meals and youth gang prevention services amongst other services. It is not that the city is alone in this. These funds come from the federal government each year - and since there is no federal budget as of this writing, this program can only expect cuts in funds for services. There were several hundred people at the council meeting speaking out against these cuts. TACO board members wrote an open letter to the council encouraging the council to commit to funding these programs at the same level as last year, filling the gap with city funds if necessary. You can see this letter on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TACOSDFb

Currently the lack of a federal budget also means that funds are usually used to provide essential services are not available. Every year, the San Diego region along with all other regions in the country receives funds from FEMA for emergency services for the poor. This includes funding for emergency housing and food. TACO has been the recipient of between \$3,000 and \$5,000 each year for our meal program. It is unclear whether there will be a budget currently. If there is, it is unclear as to whether that budget will include this funding given the suggested cuts from

Congress. But it is not just TACO that is affected. Recently our social work interns and I were trying to help a disabled woman avoid becoming homeless. In previous years, she could count on assistance from programs funded by FEMA, but this year those programs are gone.

In the midst of this difficulty and suffering, there are other great lights. This year Bethlehem Lutheran in Encinitas collected money for 95 brand new sleeping bags for those who come to our patio each week! Bethlehem member David Wright, who has been coming weekly to volunteer, was inspired to call his congregation to donate to this cause. He also coordinated this effort with Sports Chalet who gave him a 20 percent discount on each bag and further discounted the sales tax on the overall purchase. These are tremendous gifts that will keep more and more people safe and warm during this part of the year.

On the 2nd of April there was a great group who came to our volunteer training session, called THIS (TACO's Healing In Service). For the better part of the day, this group met to explore our call to service, who we serve, and why. Many have said that the highlight was the conversation with two homeless gentlemen on being on the street. Thank you to Board President, Bill Radatz and First

Lutheran Pastor Wilk Miller for leading, and to Going Home Social Worker and Simon's Walk Ministry Coordinator, Nance Lovell for organizing the event and coordinating all the food.

Many of you have given during the first three months of the year which are the most difficult times for non-profits. Thank you so much. What is wonderful is the combination of funding support from donors throughout the year, allowing us to keep doors open during times when needs are so great. Remember that you still have time to help make your donation count for more! The Feinstein Fund Match continues through April. If you mark Feinstein Fund in the memo, when they divide their one million dollars amongst many non-profits throughout the country, we will gain a greater portion.

And looking forward, it is almost time for Empty Bowls! Over the past four years, many of you attended this wonderful fundraiser that uses beauty to fight hunger. What an amazing opportunity to enjoy marvelous art that you take home, unbelievable soups from restaurants you may have only read about, and raise money for essential services to the poor provided by TACO. Mark your calendar for May 7th and get that great Mother's Day gift bowl.

TACO's Rummage Sale Coming August 20

It's that time of year when many of us want to throw open the windows and doors and let those fresh spring breezes blow out all the winter-accumulated cobwebs. If only those breezes would also blow away all our stock piles of STUFF, so we could clear our lives of clutter!

But wait! Help is here! A **Rummage Sale** to benefit TACO is being

planned, the perfect incentive to sort through those piles. The date is Saturday morning, **August 20**, and it will be at Clairemont Lutheran Church, 4271 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. As you begin to tackle your Spring Cleaning, please set aside any items you'd be willing to donate. And save the date to come and shop! Contact Martha Radatz at [619-575-2845](tel:619-575-2845) for further information.

We are also looking for storage space to use between now and the week before the sale. If you have space in a garage, storage unit, basement, attic, or spare room, whether it be for a couple of boxes of books or more, please let us know. We are looking for the loan of clothing racks, as well.

Volunteer Update *by Rachel Line*

“Can I do the cheese now?” “No! Not until 7:30. Then, if no one else is here to do it, then you can do it.”

This conversation that I have with Bill Stevens, one of our regular volunteers, is not rare. He finishes one job and anxiously looks around for another job to do. Instead of encouraging him to work faster or more efficiently, I have to tell him to slow down, take a break, and have a seat for awhile! If it were up to Bill, he would have all the work done within an hour! I do my best to slow him down.

Our earliest Monday opening for a group is in September. Our earliest Friday morning is in July. I get phone calls asking if we need help serving the meal and I have to say, “Well yes, but not until September.” Instead of recruiting volunteers, I’m slowing them down.

The energy that the volunteers bring to TACO is astonishing. The outpouring of love and service that they share is what makes each of our meals possible. It truly could not happen without each and every one of them. In the past few months, we’ve had our regular church groups and the addition of several Girl Scout troops, the 6th grade class from Christian Elementary School West, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, a combination of campus ministries from Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Illinois, and even the Yale Undergraduate Gospel Choir.

Slowing down is not an option! We have been called to serve the most vulnerable among us, loving as Christ first loved us. Thank you to all of our supporters and volunteers who work hard to prepare the meals, serve the meals, clean up after the meals, and who share their love with all our guests.

Feinstein Challenge ‘11

Every year for the past 13 years, Alan Shawn Feinstein has given away \$1 Million to fight hunger, and this year he’s doing it again!

The more money we raise during the months of March and April, the greater the portion of the Annual \$1 Million giveaway to fight hunger will be allocated to TACO.

Putting “Feinstein Fund” into the memo section of your donation check is a great way to ensure that every dollar you donate towards helping the homeless and working poor of downtown San Diego goes as far as it can possibly go. With budgets for aid and social services tightening at the local, state, and federal levels, these dollars are becoming scarce—but the needs of our community remain.

For more information, visit www.feinsteinfoundation.org.

Empty Bowls *continued from page one*

for a food drive. They came up with a class project to make ceramic bowls in which to serve a simple meal of soup and bread to guests. The guests were invited to keep their bowl as a reminder of hunger in the world. By the following year, the originators had developed this concept, calling it “Empty Bowls”. Now, Empty Bowls fundraisers all over the world have raised millions of dollars to fight hunger—for more information visit the international site at www.emptybowls.net.

TACO would like to thank this year’s participating restaurants: Azul Steakhouse, Beaumont’s, Bernini’s Bistro, Bread & Cie, Brigantine Seafood, Charlie’s Best Breads, Dinner-A-Go-Go, El Indio Mexican Restaurant and Catering, George’s at the Cove, Maria’s Catering, McCormick &



Schmick’s, Miguel’s Cocina Mexican Food, Pacifica Del Mar, Point Loma Seafoods, Sammy’s Woodfired Pizza, San Diego Yacht Club, Souplantation, The Cottage, The Fishery, The French Gourmet, The Keating Hotel, Three Squares, Waters Catering, Whole Foods Market and many more.

We’d also like to thank our potters: Clay Associates, El Cajon Valley High School, Southwestern College Clay Club, UCSD Crafts Center, Clay Artists of San Diego, San Diego Potters Guild, Plum Pottery, Christ Lutheran School Third Grade Class, The Bishop’s School, and Get Centered Clay Studio.

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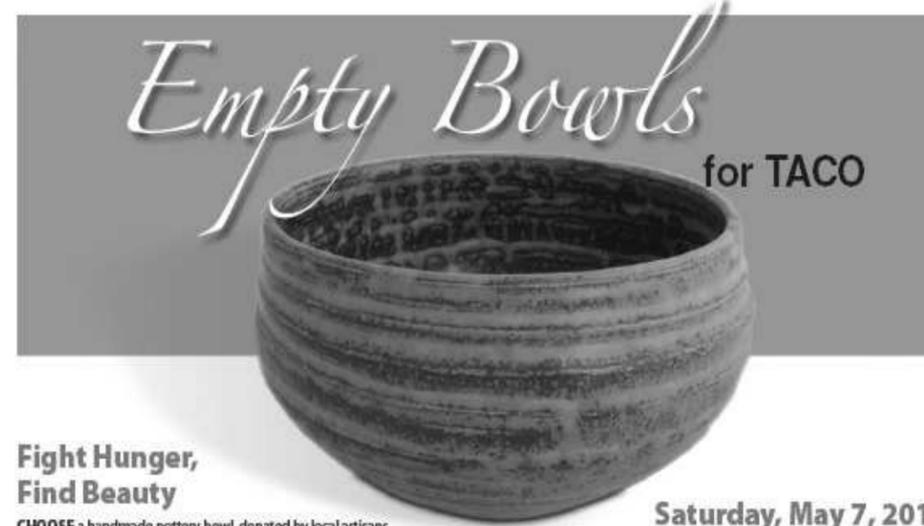
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**“...gathering as a community in service with
the most vulnerable among us...”**



**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 all proceeds to TACO (Third Avenue Charitable Organization),

Information TACO • 1420 Third Avenue • San Diego, CA 92101
619.235.9445 • www.tacosd.org.

Feeding the homeless and working poor in downtown San Diego for 35 years.

**Saturday, May 7, 2011
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

\$20 suggested donation

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

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