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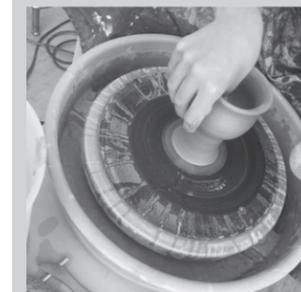
**The TACO Times**

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Many thanks to everyone who participated in each of our four Empty Bowls events—at La Jolla United Methodist Church, St. Peter's by the Sea, Tierrasanta Lutheran Church, and Sage Creek High School

# The TACO Times

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

Volume 16, Issue 2

July 2019

**Executive Director's Report by Jim Lovell**

Welcome to the second issue for 2019! I cannot believe how quickly the year speeds away. We continue as always to do our best and to stay as busy as possible. And there is much to do. Perhaps you have been watching and listening to the news reports about the growing number of people on the street in San Diego County or maybe just in the downtown area where we are. Maybe you have been seeing coverage of the potential risks to the Affordable Care Act and you wondered about those who come here for healthcare. Or, by chance you might of been thinking about the detainment of migrants at the border. Or perhaps you saw an article about the number of seniors who have lost housing in the past two years as rents go up.



All of those people are the types of people who come here. They are affected by even marginal changes in policies or in the cost of living. Our meals, now being orchestrated by Cindy Quinonez, serve people housed and homeless, elderly and young, English and Spanish-speaking alike. This is true

of both our clinic partners and those who come seeking social services.

By the way, you may know that our meals and clinics the roughly 700 people a week but did you know that the other days of the

*Continued on page three*

## The Best Imaginary Event of the Year Is Coming!

We are requesting the honor of your absence once again!

Due to the overwhelming positive response to last year's No-Show Gala, we are once again inviting our community of supporters to "the best imaginary event of the year." You can support TACO's mission without getting dressed up or leaving your house. Since we are not paying for an event space or catering, 100% of your donation will go to taco services directly helping those we serve.

Look for your invitation to our no show event in the coming weeks and remember...

**The event is imaginary.  
The need is real!**

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

**A Summer Day in Downtown by Brad Young, Volunteer Coordinator**

**8:00 AM** Workers arrive to continue construction of the multi-million dollar "Amazon Experience" for Comic-Con. The immense colorful tents and towers rise above the high security fence on a parking lot near the convention center. Around the perimeter, taking up an entire city block, black clad security keep people at bay twenty-four seven. NOBODY is allowed to sleep or loiter on the surrounding sidewalk. Across the street, multiple tents and filthy makeshift shelters dot the sidewalk as tourists and residents weave around them.

in the same building as 200 sheltered family members sleeping in bunk beds.

**1:00 PM** Parades and festivals attract thousands with sand castle contests, art shows, music, food, and the promise of a good time. As the day ends and people head home or to hotels, many others begin the search for a secure place to spend the night... outside.

**8:30 PM** Once again the Gaslamp Quarter is packed with tourists from around the globe here for the SoCal experience. Restaurants, galleries, shops fill with customers, while music from one of many venues provides the soundtrack. A block or two past what must be the agreed upon "demarcation line," people sleep

on bike paths, patios, and sidewalks. The lucky ones have a tarp or sleeping bag (many from TACO), the rest have only the cold pavement as their companion.

The stories continue... a homeless veteran with American flags on his cart wishing everyone a Happy Fourth... A young LGBTQ person kicked out of the home and with nowhere to go (40 percent of all homeless youth are LGBTQ)... A senior citizen sleeping in a doorway, their hand resting on the wheelchair, to keep it from being stolen.

They are all human beings, and many end up at the Third Avenue Charitable Organization. I thank the Lord we are there to welcome them.

## Executive Director's Report *(continued from page one)*

bring an average of 55 to 65 persons to our doors? In each situation we endeavor to be as helpful as we can, to offer any knowledge that we might have to help the individual change their circumstance. We are very thankful for the opportunity.

And thank you for making it possible that we might provide these service to the least and to the most vulnerable. Your financial support makes us able to open our doors which we do wider and wider each and every year. You will see in this issue some photos from a total of 4 Empty Bowls events this year! We are so thankful to everyone who put this on as a way to raise awareness and raise money. We do hope that you were able to attend one of the events, and if you did that you picked your very best bowl. If you were not able to attend we hope that you might still consider making an additional donation to us.

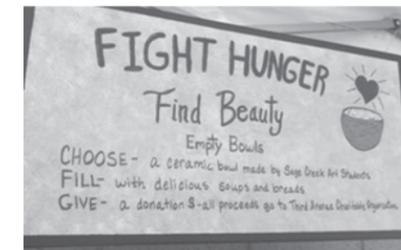
You may notice that there is no adver-

tisement for "Homeless Treasures," the rummage sale that we have been successfully a part of for the past 10 years. Unfortunately the team that has brought us this event every year was not able to do so this year. We hope that someone out there might be willing and able to take this event on. Certainly the organizing of the event. If that might be you, please do not hesitate to call or email us. We will respond immediately. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Martha Radatz for her tremendous dedication to us; she really kept fundraising for us in this marvelous way.

With the loss of this fundraiser you can imagine that we are missing the money that it brings in—\$8,000 this past year. This is where we need your help. If you have a fundraising idea and are willing to take a strong role then we need your help. Please get a hold of us at [info@tacod.org](mailto:info@tacod.org), write on our Facebook page, or call us at 619-235-9445.



Many thanks to everyone who participated in Empty Bowls! The above picture is from the event at La Jolla Methodist Church; below is from the event at Sage Creek High School. Altogether, the four events raised over \$15,000 for TACO!



## TACO Welcomes Our New Food Coordinator, Cindy Quinonez!

I greatly value being TACO's Food Coordinator, working together with volunteers from many places in the community, including First Lutheran, to help nourish any and all who come in need of the weekly meals we prepare. Feeding the homeless and working poor in San Diego has been an important part of my life for the past fifteen years.

In 2004, after a 25+ year first career in banking, I found myself starved for both time in the kitchen cooking, and helping the under-served – dual passions of my youth. I started volunteer cooking for YWCA shelter residents and then 300+ hungry children at a church in Tijuana, while helping do weekly food distributions to working poor San Diego families.

I came late to where I belonged: a culinary career focused on improving food quality for people most in need, rejuvenating body and soul. I was rejuvenated in the process, finding in the kitchen not only my true calling but also my Peruvian husband Pablo who has greatly enriched my life, directly and with his five children, who have become mine as well. Pablo and I meet in the kitchen of the West-



gate Hotel, where I did an internship for graduation from the San Diego Culinary Institute, before being hired as Kitchen Supervisor for the San Diego Rescue Mission. For two years at the Rescue Mission, I not only feed residents, but helped them develop kitchen skills of their own, while completing an associate degree culinary program at Grossmont College.

Furthering my education led me to work in a variety of kitchens, becoming food service supervisor and chef for Scripps Mercy Hospital in 2012. During my six years at Scripps Mercy my mission grew to promoting wellness through better access to quality food throughout the region in partnership with organizations like the San Diego Food System Alliance. Perhaps most notable has been my work with our commercial fishermen, their industry's survival important to preservation of San Diego's heritage as well our local food system. With success, locally landed, nutritionally important, affordably priced seafood may actually add to, rather than disappear from, the diets of our low-income residents, already impacted by the near- to full-demise of other historic San Diego food industries (dairy, poultry, etc.).

I retired as a healthcare food service executive chef and dietary manager early in 2019, wanting to focus more on my community activities. Thankfully, former TACO Food Coordinator Marguerite Grifka found me then through a mutual friend, and introduced me to TACO. I love every minute being part of the TACO crew, aiding wellness of body and soul for those we serve, through access to quality food.

## ARMS OUTSTRETCHED 2019

Arms Outstretched members are those who have donated \$365—a dollar a day—or more to TACO over the course of a year. This amount is more significant than many may realize. Kathryn Edin and H. Luke Shaefer, the authors of *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*, have found evidence that up to one and a half million American households live on \$2 a day or less.

This type of extreme poverty is more widespread than most Americans realize, and San Diego is no exception. Fortunately, through the use of donated food and our dedicated volunteers (at meals, clinics, and elsewhere), TACO has learned how to make a dollar go a long way. Please consider joining ARMS OUTSTRETCHED—and, if possible, consider a donation of \$2 a day as well!

John and Donna Adler  
Pastor Bill and Sheri Bengtson  
David & Lois Case  
Jean-Claude & Rebecca Chamaa  
Umesh Chatrath, M.D.  
Susan Connors  
Will Cooper  
Colleen Doering  
Randy Engel  
Rev. Gloria Espeseth  
Pastor George & Ethel Falk  
James and Ruth Gibbons  
Marguerite Grifka  
Pastor Jim and Jessica Grumm-Friedrich  
Richard Hostin  
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Frank Jessie  
Rev. Ted & Marietta Johns  
Brenda Johnson  
Chris Justice  
Mickey Lester  
Elizabeth Moss  
R.J. Nelson

Jan Neuhaus  
Laverne and Sandy Neuman  
Sandra Peters  
Ladonna Piper  
Rev. Bill and Martha Radatz  
Robert & Gretchen Ravenscroft  
Sue & Merv Rettenmund  
Peg & Carl Ross  
Dobrina Russell  
Sean Sell  
Joe & Beth Slevcove  
Joanne & Rick Talazus  
Pastor Lee Wesley  
Kristin Westerman

Thanks also to the churches and foundations who have supported us at the Arms Outstretched level:

Alfreda Matschuck Trust  
Beta Theta Pi  
California's Table  
Christ Lutheran Church in Pacific Beach

Domanica Foundation  
ELCA Domestic Hunger  
ELCA Pacifica Synod  
First Lutheran Church  
Incarnation Lutheran Church  
Navy Federal Credit Union  
Paypal Charitable Giving Fund  
Sage Creek High School  
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church  
Sherwood Chores Chapel  
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church  
St. Luke's Lutheran Church—Women of St. Luke's  
St. Peter's by the Sea Lutheran  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church  
The Benevity Community Impact Fund  
Thrivent Financial  
Tierrasanta Lutheran Church

## Going Home and Mr. C by Kim Walker, Going Home Coordinator

I have worked in Social Work for over twenty years and consider myself a seasoned professional. But nothing has quite prepared me for my work thus far as the Going Home Services Coordinator for TACO. I have grown spiritually in a deep compassionate way for the most vulnerable, the forgotten, marginalized people that are rejected by society based on not living up to societies standards of having their basic needs met.

My work at TACO reminds me of Mathew 25:35-40:

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

*Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger*

*and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.*

Being homeless and on the street is tough in itself but when one is terminally ill or medically vulnerable the exposure to outside elements can make life physically unbearable. In March of 2019 I started working with a Going Home Services client for his privacy I will refer him as Mr. C in this article.

A friend of Mr. C's stopped by TACO to let us know Mr. C was found unresponsive where he camped below the freeway overpass and was in the hospital. The friend also dropped off Mr. C's personal belonging because he knew it would be safely stored at TACO.

Mr. C stayed in the hospital for about two weeks and spent another three weeks in a

rehab facility. He had several medical issues, the most concerning being Congestive Heart Failure. He was discharged to a local independent living facility. Mr. C stayed at the facility for a night and decided to leave because the living conditions felt unsanitary. Mr. C stated he would rather stay outside than live in a place where he was not comfortable.

As a result of Mr. C's decision to leave the independent living facility he had no place to go but the streets and had a very high risk of being re-admitted. Going Home Services was able to pay for Mr. C to have a hotel room.

I assisted Mr. C in moving into his own apartment. We established supportive services from a visiting physician company, he has a nurse to help him weekly with medication management and he comes to meals at TACO. Mr. C thanks everyone who made his dream of getting an apartment come true. He is happy and loves his new place.