

## A Pathway Out of Homelessness

Jose has been a West Valley Community Services client since 2011. He was homeless for 21 years, struggles with a multitude of serious health issues, and uses a wheelchair to get around. He moved from abandoned homes to various shelters and recently to a County sponsored medical respite motel during the pandemic. With WVCS' support, Jose had access to the food pantry, laundry quarters, bus passes, and assistance to get him housed. Working with his case manager, Jose was able to move into an apartment after a long period of homelessness and is receiving assistance to help him start life in his new home. Jose had this to say,



*"I wish to express my gratitude to WVCS for securing housing for me. I was out in the elements for many years, then I was referred to WVCS and with the help of your staff I am finally in an apartment. Your people have kept me going with the pantry and laundry packets and holiday gifts. Without WVCS and the patient, kind people [who volunteer and work there] I'd still be out [on the streets]. Thank you and wish me luck!"*

Your support makes these services possible to Jose and the many men, women and children who come to West Valley Community Services each year for assistance. **Thank you for bringing hope to our community's most vulnerable residents.**

## You Helped to "Lift Us Up"



In 2019, West Valley Community Services launched an effort to serve even more low income community members by expanding our no-cost food grocery shopping area. The vision was also to purchase a state of the art mobile food pantry that would serve families who were struggling to put meals on their tables but had difficulty reaching us. As we kicked off the \$2.2 million capital campaign, the pandemic hit, and the impact on our community was extraordinary. Equally extraordinary was the collective courage of our donors and supporters who rose to the occasion and met this storm head-on. As hunger increased exponentially in our neighborhoods, so did the determination of

our donors and partners to see the vision for this project turn into a reality! We saw our capital campaign committee, our partners, our donors, our community, and our supporters continue to show up. We're excited to share that construction has been completed and we recently moved back into our newly completed and expanded site! We are full of stories, meaningful statistics, a shiny new Park it Market (our new mobile pantry) and a beautiful shopping Market. The smiles on the faces of our clients makes it clear how much we were able to accomplish together to provide dignity and care to our community. As always, together we will continue to inspire, serve and transform.

## 10th Annual Chefs of Compassion

What an event! With 515 tickets sold, 495 three-course meals and 400+ bottles of wine personally delivered to attendees' homes on March 5th, 2021, WVCS had a spectacular Chefs of Compassion! Given the pandemic, this year WVCS pivoted to a virtual format for Chefs. We didn't, however, lose any of the fervor or sentiment! Our guests dressed up, plated their food, and enthusiastically joined us from the comfort of their homes, to enjoy their meals, watch the chefs and hear some incredible client stories. To pick the winners, we set up online voting so everyone could support their favorite chef after



tasting the meals. This year's popular choice award winner was El Camino Hospital's Executive Chef Jacques Wilson who made a tantalizing Chocolate and Blood Orange Caramel Flan. The Judge's

Choice award winner was Chef Kristyan D' Angelo of Terun Palo Alto who created a delicious Straccetti di Pollo appetizer. As always, all the courses were created by using ingredients found in our food pantry. Our honorees for the event this year were Ellen and Richard Lowenthal who have been dedicated long-term supporters of our mission. Learn more at [www.chefsofcompassion.org](http://www.chefsofcompassion.org).

**Thank you so much to all of our sponsors and donors who made this event successful!**



**Jeanne Bradford  
Bob & Pat Adams**

## Program Expansion: Park-It Market Mobile Food Pantry



Thanks to the generous gifts of donors during our Capital Campaign, our agency has been able to design a

brand-new mobile pantry! The new Park-It Market invites clients to select groceries to suit their family needs. The market also features a built-in lift in the back and an area for case management inside the vehicle. The new mobile pantry will continue to further WVCS' goal of fighting hunger in the community.

## WVCS Legacy Society

**DID YOU KNOW:** Even a gift in your will of 1% of your estate can make a difference!

Making a donation to West Valley Community Services in your will leaves a legacy of your values, and makes it possible for you to continue to support a cause you care about. As a member of our Legacy Society, you can:

- Allow your personal values to make a lasting impact on the community
- Help West Valley Community Services continue to fight hunger and homelessness in your community
- Inspire others to join in your commitment

To find out how you can become a member of the WVCS Legacy Society, please contact Kohinoor Chakravarty at [kohinoorc@wvcommunityservices.org](mailto:kohinoorc@wvcommunityservices.org) or call 408.366.6096.





## Donor Spotlight



Sharon and Jim Walker are long standing WVCS champions and donors who are dedicated to giving back to the community. Jim was an active capital campaign committee member while Sharon co-chaired the Chefs of Compassion silent auction this year. Here is an interview excerpt:

### Q: Why do you support WVCS?

The more we knew about WVCS, the more we wanted to help. We learned that there are many ways they are helping those in need in our community. WVCS is local, and focused on helping its clients now, not with promises, but with positive action.

### Q: You are donors as well as volunteers. Which programs and activities have you participated in so far?

We've enjoyed our participation in Back to School and Christmas programs, Chefs of Compassion events, donations of needed items, building and property improvements and the recent Capital Campaign.

### Q: Why do you like investing your time and money in WVCS?

We're very comfortable in knowing that we're joined in supporting WVCS by City, County and State agencies as well the private sector of individuals, businesses, corporations and foundations. We can do so much more when we all work together!

### Q: What is your message to the community ?

As individual community members we can't do everything, but we can all do something. We can all make a difference by what we say, do and give!



Thank you Sharon and Jim for all that you do!

## Save the Date - Back to School!

West Valley Community Services' Annual Back-To-School program will take place on July 30th and 31st. Children entering TK-12th grade will receive a backpack filled with supplies as well as a gift card to purchase new clothing for the upcoming school year. **To donate or volunteer and for more information please contact Anh Nguyen, Special Events Coordinator at [anhn@wvcommunityservices.org](mailto:anhn@wvcommunityservices.org) or 669.245.4128.**



## Advocacy Corner: Single Family Zoning

Single Family Zoning is a 100 year policy that has made it difficult to bring housing costs down and has exacerbated the housing crisis in California. Much of the impetus for passing these laws was rooted in racial bias toward Black, Asian and immigrant communities. Because single-family zoning is a barrier to lower-income people of color, housing advocates have been asking for the loosening of restrictions on multi-unit housing as a first step in a set of remedies to the Bay Area's widespread problem of segregation and lack of affordable housing. WVCS is advocating for Opportunity housing which allows multi-family housing units in neighborhoods exclusively zoned for single-family homes today.

For more information and to find out how to advocate for opportunity housing, reach out to Jennifer Santos, WVCS Public Policy Coordinator at [jennifers@wvcommunityservices.org](mailto:jennifers@wvcommunityservices.org) or Opportunity Housing San Jose.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Alice Isaacson

### Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I have a chemical engineering undergraduate degree and an MBA. I have been retired for 12 years, having worked as a process engineer at Chevron and in sales/business development at IBM. I've always had a heart for the homeless.

### Q: How did you find us and why did you choose to volunteer here at WVCS?

When the shelter-in-place started, I volunteered at several Second Harvest Food Bank distribution sites, and one of the SHFB assignments was at WVCS. I found out that WVCS had their own volunteer program, so I filled out forms to become a WVCS volunteer. I really enjoy being part of the entire process of food sorting, organizing the food pantry, setting up for food distribution, interacting with the clients, and even clean-up!

### Q: What have you learned about yourself volunteering here at WVCS, especially during COVID-19?

I feel very blessed in my life, and it's an absolute privilege and joy each day that I come in to volunteer to try to be a blessing to others. I try to be extra kind, but firm with our guidelines, and to treat every client with respect and caring. I want each client to know that we are happy to be here to serve the individual and the community the best way that we can.

### Q: Any special moments you would like to share about your volunteer experience here at WVCS?

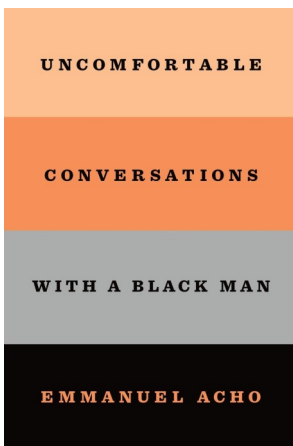
I've been able to get to know many of our regular clients -- to understand a little of their experiences and to anticipate their preferences. I think the clients appreciate that we often remember their specific needs and try to fulfill them. It's nice that many of them know me by name and see that we are eager and happy to be able to help them.

### Q: Is there anything else you want to share about your volunteer experience here at WVCS?

The staff and volunteers are absolutely wonderful to work with; everyone is very thoughtful and committed to doing whatever is needed to make the WVCS food pantry a success. The volunteers are given a lot of autonomy to give the clients the best service.



## Social Justice Book Club



Join us for our next Social Justice Book Club on Tuesday, August 3rd at 7pm.

We will be discussing, "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man", by Emmanuel Acho. The Social Justice Book Club is free and open to all!

For more information, please contact Josh Selo at [josh@wvcommunityservices.org](mailto:josh@wvcommunityservices.org).

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