A Night to Remember: Chefs of Compassion 2017

On September 22nd, 2017, more than 400 people gathered at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View. This incredible group of guests was there in a show of support to let our struggling families know that they are not alone in their struggle. Our community is united in the fight against hunger and homelessness.

The atmosphere was full of joy and celebration as the chefs served four delectable courses: Chef Joni Sare (Bruschetta over Onion Butter with Romesco Sauce), Chef Charles Honea (Grilled Plum and Cantaloupe Summer Salad), Chef Steve Capo (Chicken Jerusalem), and Chef Vidya Gurikar (Brown Rice and Carrot Pudding). The popular vote was won by Chef Honea, and the panel of judges (Chef Kevin Kohlmann, Chef Irfan Dama, Chef Alana Wind, and Linda Zavoral) selected Chef Gurikar. Full recipes for all of these delicacies can be found at www.chefsofcompassion.org.

Attendees also got to meet one of our clients, who spoke movingly about the challenges he has faced and how West Valley Community Services has changed his life.

We are truly grateful to our honorees, West Valley College and President Bradley J. Davis, Pat & Jim Jackson and K.A. & Martha Fisk for all they have done to build and support our community. We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to our host committee members, sponsors, chefs, judges, guests and supporters for making the event a spectacular success.

Check out page 4 of this newsletter for a photo gallery from the event.

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WVCS Tackles Rising Homelessness in Our Community

Every two years, during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of their homeless populations to measure the prevalence of homelessness in their communities. Communities collect information on individuals and families sleeping in emergency shelters and transitional housing, as well as people sleeping on the streets, in cars, at abandoned properties, or in other places not meant for human habitation.

The 2017 census was a comprehensive community effort. With the support of approximately 132 individuals who have experienced homelessness, 215 community volunteers, staff from various city and county departments, and law enforcement, the entire county was canvassed between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and noon on January 24 and 25, 2017.

The results of the survey indicate that Santa Clara County had a 12.8% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness, with 7,394 counted in 2017.
Meet our new Board Chair: Monica Chandra

We are delighted to introduce the new Board Chair of WVCS, Monica Chandra.

Monica first experienced the direct impact of WVCS’ role in the community a few years ago as a food pantry volunteer and gleaning. She joined the WVCS Board of Directors last July, and soon took on the leadership of the Internal Committee. Monica has also played an important role in the Executive, Governance and Strategic Planning Committees. Monica and her husband Rishi have also supported West Valley Community Services as host committee members of the Chefs of Compassion event.

Monica is an active volunteer for her children's school community and has served as a member of the School Site Council, board member of the PTO and troop leader for Girls Scouts. Previously, she developed patient and copay assistance programs designed to increase affordability and access to more prescription drugs.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to Monica.

Securing our Future: WVCS Circle of Giving Society

Impact Your Community...Create Your Legacy

Including West Valley Community Services in your estate plan enables you to make the most of your personal philanthropic objectives by supporting something you care about. Through a planned gift, you can expect to gain some or all of the following benefits:

- Allow your personal values to make a lasting impact on the community
- Inspire others to join in your commitment
- Participate in special programs for Circle of Giving Society members
- Gain valuable tax benefits
- Help West Valley Community Services continue to fight hunger and homelessness

For more information about including WVCS in your will or estate plan, contact Kohinoor Chakravarty at kohinoorc@wvcommunityservices.org or 408.255.8033.
Rising Homelessness: continued from page 1

(up from 6,556 in 2015). 26% of individuals counted were found in shelters; 74% of individuals were staying in unsheltered locations.

The City of Cupertino saw a 74% increase in homelessness from 2015 to 2017. At West Valley Community Services we see the need on a daily basis. Last year, we served 166 new individuals who are currently homeless. We see clients who are doubling up in small spaces, sleeping in their car, or renting garage or patio spaces to sleep. We are fiercely advocating for more affordable housing, running a safe parking program, supporting tiny homes projects, and exploring shared housing as solutions to end the current homelessness crisis.

Our new Rapid Re-Housing program is one such program that is designed to house homeless families with and without children within 90 days of entering the program. Rapid Re-Housing consists of the following components: help people find housing fast, provide temporary rental assistance, and connect them to jobs and resources. At the end of the program, families and individuals will be self-sufficient, financially stable, and able to live independently.

Thanks to the support we receive from donors, volunteers, board members, elected officials, and our community, West Valley Community Services is playing an active role in developing innovative strategies that will eventually transform the current housing systems to support homeless households. Working together, we can fight to end homelessness in our community.

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”
-Helen Keller

Like us...review us...interact with us...WVCS is online!

Back to School Wrap Up

On Saturday, August 6, low income and homeless children in Kindergarten through 12th grade picked out a new set of clothes for the school year as part of our Annual Back to School Program. This event is only possible because of the support of local volunteers, donors, and sponsors. Because of you, 170 students were able to receive new clothing and backpacks filled with school supplies. As a result, these young people were able to start the school year ready to learn.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jim & Janice

Jim and Janice have volunteered at the West Valley Community Services food pantry for more than a year. They see first hand the importance of having a food distribution program for families in need in the community. We are very grateful for their help.

One long time interest for Janice has been community involvement and helping others. Throughout her professional career in treasury finance, she participated in a variety of volunteer activities. Early on in her career, she realized how important it is to participate in activities beyond one’s own self-interest, and helping out at the Food Pantry is certainly a worthwhile and personally satisfying activity for her.

Jim has also held a passion for volunteering. While attending college in New York, he served as a volunteer firefighter where this sense of community service led him to the U.S. Navy. This sense of giving back to the community is still evident with his volunteer support for the City of Cupertino’s emergency preparedness efforts as the Emergency Coordinator for the City’s Amateur Radio Emergency Service.
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help Give the Gift of Hope this Holiday Season

Join us in spreading the gift of hope at our annual holiday event for low income families.

Come volunteer as:
- Gift Wrapper
- Check In/Out
- Arts & Crafts Helper
- Parking Attendant
- Event Guide
- Gift Sorter
- Gift Carrier
- Translator

Group opportunities are available for this event as well. For more information on how to volunteer for this event, please contact volunteer@wvcommunityservices.org

2017 Chefs of Compassion Photo Gallery

West Valley Community Services is grateful for the support of the following partners:

Gift in memory of Padmavathi Ramakrishna and K.V. Ramakrishna

Anonymous Supporters

Chris Roth
Fernando Cabildo & T. Kyle Harrison
Nancy & Chuck Harper
Bob & Pat Adams