Mobile Food Pantry Rolling Into the West Valley this Fall

You may not know Charlie - but you changed his life. Charlie lives in Los Gatos, and is a client at West Valley Community Services. Since he doesn’t have a car, Charlie relies on the bus to get to and from our office each week to pick up groceries from the food pantry. The bus ride typically takes about four hours round trip, but with the increase in traffic, Charlie’s trek to get the food and services he needs is taking longer and longer.

So long, in fact, that this summer it took Charlie 8 hours round trip on the bus to get to and from our food pantry in Cupertino. By the time Charlie got home, the milk and juice he had picked up from the pantry were no longer edible.

Likewise, we have been hearing similar stories from clients in Saratoga and West San Jose, individuals and families without a car or reliable transportation unable to get to our office for food, emergency financial assistance, and case management. We needed to do something for Charlie and all of our clients who struggle to get to us for the help they so critically need.

Your support made it possible to find a solution to this problem, and so this September we were able to launch our newest initiative, the WVCS Mobile Food Pantry.

Housed in an RV generously donated by Second Harvest Food Bank, the Mobile Food Pantry is providing food, emergency financial assistance, and supportive services to homeless and low-income residents of Saratoga, Los Gatos, and West San Jose. Now, Charlie can pick up nutritious and healthy food right in his home community, and meet with one of our case managers for the support and assistance he needs to get back on his feet.

Because of you, the WVCS Mobile Food Pantry can provide support and hope to even more of the 22,000 men, women, and children living in poverty in the west valley. Thank you so much for your support.
The atmosphere was electric at the Computer History Museum on Friday, September 16, at the 6th Annual Chefs of Compassion: Cooking for a Cause benefit event. The West Valley Community Services’ fundraiser was attended by over 300 guests who remained spellbound as they listened to three clients share their stories and their struggles with poverty, hunger, homelessness, and domestic abuse and how donors like you helped them get on their feet.

To top off the evening, long time West Valley Community Services leaders Dorothy Stow and Kay Lohmiller were honored for their years of dedication and service to West Valley Community Services.

During dinner, guests waited eagerly for the mystery dishes as each competing chef took the stage and spoke about their inspiration for creating competing recipes from ingredients found in the West Valley Community Services’ food pantry. Chef Kevin Kohlmann of Bon Appétit tantalized everyone’s taste buds with a delicious salmon cake and Chef Irfan Dama of Chef Dama’s Kitchen presented a most unique and creative salad. The Popular Choice Award winner was Chef Jerome Ito of Go Fish Poke Bar for his main course, sous vide chicken with miso mustard glaze and house made udon ravioli. The Judges’ Choice Award winner was Chef Jessie Lugo of Alexander’s Steakhouse of San Francisco, for her summer sunset peach cobbler.

Thanks to all of our community members and supporters, the fundraising event was a huge success and will allow West Valley Community Services to impact even more men, women, and children in need, right here in our community.

Deepest Thanks to Our Chefs of Compassion Sponsors

Gift in memory of Padmavathi Ramakrishna and K.V. Ramakrishna
For many families in need, the holiday season can cause increased financial hardship. Each year, West Valley Community Services works with local donors and supporters to make the holiday wishes of 200 families come true. As a mom said, “During the holidays when everyone else shopped, I had nothing to offer my children. I felt very guilty, but every year West Valley Community Services would step in and buy all of us gifts for the holidays... West Valley Community Services gave us a sense of normalcy in an otherwise turbulent life.”

You can make a difference this holiday season for a family in crisis. You are invited to shop for items such as toys, clothing, household goods, or personal care items that families will receive at this year’s holiday shopping spree. Your generosity will make this a memorable holiday for our families!

Please contact Amanda H. at amandah@wvcommunityservices.org for more information.

You Can Make a Difference this Holiday Season

Back-to-School Shopping Spree

The Back-to-School Shopping Spree was held on Saturday, August 6th, at Kohl’s in Campbell. It was a memorable event for 120 children in need.

In a letter written by a single mom, she expressed her appreciation for this special program:

“Thank you so much for the Back-to-School Shopping Spree. This event helps so much because I cannot afford to buy my kids new shoes and clothes. Thank you so much for your generosity—it helps my kids’ self esteem.”

Volunteer Profile: Jessica T.

Volunteer Role: Grocery Pick-up and Food Pantry

Why I volunteer: “I started volunteering when I was in 8th grade in a rest home where my mom worked. She would take me in on the weekends and I would refill the resident’s water pitchers with ice water. I had fun getting to know people and seeing how something simple such as giving a few hours of my time could mean so much to others.”

Impact on WVCS: “By giving just a few hours of my time each week to the WVCS Food Pantry, I get to see firsthand the generosity of our community grocery stores, gardeners, and volunteers who come together to help our neighbors and their families each week.”

Thank you to our incredible volunteers!
Donor Spotlight: Richard Lowenthal

Richard Lowenthal is an ex-Mayor of Cupertino, a successful entrepreneur, and an eminent member of the community. Richard is a long-time supporter of West Valley Community Services. We engaged in an exchange with Richard to get a deeper understanding about his interest in West Valley Community Services.

Tell us about your history with West Valley Community Services.

I’m a former board member and former board chair of West Valley Community Services. I was involved in the development of Vista Village and my family was a major donor to the Vista Village project.

Why do you donate to West Valley Community Services?

West Valley Community Services ensures that less fortunate folks in our community always have food to eat and solutions for housing. Nobody needs to go hungry or without a home in Cupertino and in surrounding communities in Silicon Valley. For more than 40 years, West Valley Community Services has continued to support people in need and help them get back on their feet.

How do you see West Valley Community Services positioned in the communities we serve?

West Valley Community Services is well known as the go-to agency for people needing help in Cupertino. The city trusts West Valley Community Services to take care of folks in need and provides an affordable housing program in Cupertino. However, West Valley Community Services also serves residents in Los Gatos, Saratoga, West San Jose, and Monte Sereno, and deservedly we need to get better recognition in those communities as a regional resource. Doing so will help us reach more clients, get involvement from people in those communities, and raise the money needed to serve more clients.

How would you like the community to engage with West Valley Community Services?

We should aim to reach more people who are in need in our entire service area. We also need to let the residents and community supporters know our impact. In addition, we need involvement and funding from all seven zip codes where WVCS serves clients. We must build leverage through partnerships with organizations like Rotary, YMCA, and Live Oak Adult Day Services so that we can ensure that people who need food, housing, jobs, or senior services can connect to the right resources.

Heartfelt thanks to Richard and Ellen Lowenthal for making a big difference to West Valley Community Services!