



# St. Mary's INTERFAITH Community Services

Fr. Alan McCoy, O.F.M. Dining Room

Virgil Gianelli M.D. Medical Clinic

St. Raphael's Dental Clinic

Kara Brewer Family Clothing & Hygiene Center

June 2010

Summer

Part of Emma Lasarus' poem engraved on the Statue of Liberty states: "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me". We at St. Mary's Interfaith are not the Statue of Liberty, but to the many homeless who come to us it is fitting.

One of these "tempest-tost" is Antonio Rojas. Antonio was born in Puebla, the capitol of the state of Puebla, Mexico, in 1967 to Floriberta Rojas and Francisco Medel. As a child he remembers his parents arguing and that his father mistreated his mother. When he was five years old, his parents divorced leaving his mother to care for Antonio and his sisters Jirana, seven years old, and Maribel, nine.

A year later, Floriberta remarried, but after a short time her new husband said that her children could not stay in his home with his own children. Floriberta asked her brother, Maximino, to take her children. It was not long after this that their father, Francisco, died of acute alcoholism.

For the next five years Maximino supported the children, but then he told Antonio that he had to stop attending school and help him with his work. His sisters were a comfort to him, but he remembers that often at night he would cry himself to sleep thinking of the rejection of his parents.

When Antonio was fifteen, he learned of his mother's death from cancer. Unhappy with working for his uncle, and distraught over his mother's death, he decided to go to Mexico City where his cousins lived. Like thousands of street youth in Mexico City, Antonio took consignments such as pots and pans and sold them from door to door.

With money in his pocket, but with emptiness haunting him, he began drinking with the other street sellers. He heard the word that for \$200 a 'coyote' would deliver him to Southern California. Antonio, thinking the dream that a better life could be made in the U.S.A, saved the \$200 and found a ride to the border.

The 'coyote' delivered him to Santa Ana where he soon found a room and a job in a Chinese restaurant as a dishwasher. For over a year he ate Chinese food, washed dishes and drank himself to sleep. Other immigrants he met told him that there was work in Arizona and the money was good.

After a few months of working the fields he learned that he could apply for temporary legal residence status. When he applied in 1996 for permanent status, he could not produce the necessary time period of work. He was rejected, but placed on a pending list.

Because Arizona was becoming particularly hostile to immigrants, Antonio moved on to the Stockton area where he heard there was field work. He stayed at the Homeless Shelter for men and came to St. Mary's Interfaith for meals, clothing and hygiene services. He noticed a sign in Spanish at St. Mary's Interfaith offering English classes for the Spanish speaking. Bruce Pardella, a retired social worker, has assisted farm workers for years teaching them conversational English.

After several weeks in class, Bruce had an opportunity to speak privately with Antonio. Bruce had noticed the odor of alcohol, and Antonio readily admitted to his drinking and added that he drank because he felt so worthless. Bruce's response was "you may think that no one cares about you Antonio, but you are wrong. God loves you and you are very special to him."

Never in his life has anyone spoken to him so personally and with such conviction. It was as if a dark cloud lifted and brightness entered his life. "I never felt that anyone cared for me and that God loves me makes me want to change."

Antonio has now been sober for two years. He attends AA meetings regularly and is enrolled in SUSD's Adult Education Program in order to pursue his education. Antonio wants to be a better person, a contributor to society and to achieve an education. He feels comfortable with the encouragement he receives from the staff at St. Mary's and states: "La motivacion mueve montanas."

David Brewer  
Director of Client Relations

Edward Figueroa  
CEO

## Our Mission

*To Serve the needs of poor men, women and children through nurturing self reliance for a hopeful future by offering food, clothing, medical and dental care, educational programs and general assistance.*

# St. Mary's Interfaith Community Services

2010

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## News

### Social Services Department at St. Mary's Interfaith

In 2009, our agency expanded services with a Social Services Department in which staff are now able to provide case management. With our commitment to providing case management for clients we believe that we will be able to provide more than sustenance; clients will actually have the tools necessary to begin rebuilding their lives. Our staff assists clients by helping them navigate the complex web of agencies and social services which are available to them. We introduce them to the agencies and inform them as to the criteria required by each agency.

It is through our case management respective component that clients will be provided with the resources necessary to better their situation and thrive as productive members of our community. It is extremely important that clients be made aware about public services that are available to them because it can make all the difference in their current living situation. By providing these services to clients we expect to be able to bridge the gap between the unmet needs and available services for individual and/or their families who seek our assistance. We want to make sure that clients have an agency that they can turn to and depend on in order to get connected with community-based, local, state and federal government departments and agencies.

## Special Thanks!

### St. Joseph's Spirit Club

Every year on Easter Sunday our agency prepares a special meal for clients. This past April, St. Joseph's Spirit Club members donated eighty-five Easter baskets that were distributed by staff to the many children who came to our dining room with their families. The children who received these baskets were very thankful and it was apparent by the many smiles. In addition to receiving baskets, children were able to enjoy an Easter egg hunt that was held on our campus lawn. It turned out to be a fun filled day where children and their families were able to have a memorable day. *St. Mary's Interfaith wants to extend our sincere gratitude to the all of the members of St. Joseph's Spirit Club for their continuous support of our clients. A special thank you to Nancy Mitchell who organizes and coordinates the donation of the baskets with our agency!*

### Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner took place during National Volunteer Week on Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010 at six o'clock in the evening in our Fr. Alan McCoy O.F.M. Dining Room. The event had a great turnout! Volunteers in attendance enjoyed an Asian cuisine and a brief program in which management acknowledged the many volunteers that assist clients throughout the year. Dinner was served by students from the Interact Club at Franklin High School. The event came to an end with gift baskets that were raffled and each volunteer was given a small gift as a token of our agency's appreciation. *Thank you volunteers for supporting our agency's mission to help our community's homeless and working poor families!*

## Upcoming Events

### Evening of Appreciation

Our biennial event, Evening of Appreciation is scheduled to take place on Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at six o'clock in the evening at Bare Ranch, a Michael~David Winery Facility in Lodi, California. St. Mary's Interfaith is pleased to announce that this year's event will be in honor of generous supporters, Dino and Joan Cortopassi. Sponsorship packages are available for group tickets and donations of auction items for the event are being accepted. If you would like to be a sponsor, make an in-kind donation or purchase tickets for this event, please contact Mario Fuentez, 209.467.0703 or email:

[mfuentez@stmarysinterfaith.org](mailto:mfuentez@stmarysinterfaith.org)

Antonio Rojas.



Bruce Pardella teaching Antonio English.



*Providing hope to those who are less fortunate in our community!*

Children receiving Easter baskets that were donated by St. Joseph's Spirit Club members.



Volunteers enjoying Asian cuisine at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in our Dining Room.



"Nurturing Self Reliance for a Hopeful Future"

## Items Always In Need

- Backpacks
- Blankets
- Diapers (Newborn to Size 6)
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Ground Beef/Chicken
- Infant Formula
- Men's Pants (Size 30-38)
- Razors
- Shaving Cream
- Shoes
- Socks
- Sweatpants
- Sweatshirts
- Men's & Women's Underwear

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St. Mary's Interfaith Community Services  
 545 W. Sonora St.  
 Stockton, CA 95203

Because you care, St. Mary's Interfaith provided the following *units of service* to the county's needy individuals and families from January thru April 2010.

- **Medical & Dental visits to our clinics.....4,760 visits**
- **Meals provided.....138,148 meals**
- **Kara Brewer Family Clothing & Hygiene Center**
  - Women and children served.....29,538 persons**
  - Men served.....11,602 persons**
- **Social Services.....5,111 persons**
- **Total hours volunteered.....28,110 hours**