



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

December 2009

Winter

During World War II, and until 1964, the "Bracero" program brought workers from Mexico to the fields of the West. The workers were housed, fed and guaranteed paid work. Today, California's farm labor still comes from Mexico and some from Central America but without the guarantee of the "Bracero" program. Because many of these people are illegal, there is always the fear of deportation. The lack of knowledge keeps them from seeking help for obtaining U.S. citizenship or legal working rights. We do what we can to assist them in finding help through our Social Services Program.

Jose is typical of the impoverished poor seeking a better life. He was second in a family of twelve children. For generations the family lived near the village of Teopisca in the state of Chiapas. Ownership of their land was always in question, and survival depended on what work they could find on large ranches. With twelve children, it was always a struggle just to provide enough food to eat.

Jose felt hopeless. He had had no formal education or job skills. He worked the ranches with his parents, but it made little difference in meeting the basic needs of his family. He decided to travel to the United States. A rail line ran from San Cristobal, a town close to Teopisca, to Mexico City. Jose was able to board an open box car on a freight train with the hope it was going to Mexico City. The train made stops at every siding, and soon his food and water supply was gone. He, along with a few men who shared the box car, would hurriedly search for any food and water at these stops. While waiting on a railroad siding outside Mexico City, roving gangs were going through the box cars robbing and beating the occupants. Jose fortunately escaped and boarded an empty box car on another freight train moving north.

At Nogales, on the Arizona border, he had to leave the train. There were others in Nogales who had the same ambitions as Jose. Together they pooled what meager resources they had and crossed the border.

Spring rains had softened the harsh desert and the men were able to work their way to San Bernardino. Work was scarce, but Jose earned enough to share a van ride to Stockton. The 'word' was that good money could be earned picking cherries.

It has been fifteen years since Jose came to the United States and he has not had a chance to learn the English language until now. In the slow agriculture season he has been coming to St. Mary's Interfaith for meals and clothing. One of his fellow workers told him of Bruce

Pardella's English class. He is now learning English, but it is very slow going due to having no background in his native language. He still sends any extra money he earns to his family in Teopisca.

Some people have come to America as a refugee. Ingrid and her husband were products of a terrible civil war in Guatemala. The Guatemalan army was convinced that the Mayan villagers were supporting the insurgents, and proceeded to kill over 200,000 village people and destroy their villages. As a result, Guatemala was left in severe poverty.

Ingrid and her husband decided to immigrate to the United States. They saved what money they could for transportation, and knowing other Guatemalans who had moved to Stockton, they made this their destination city. For ten years, Ingrid and Ricardo tried to make a living in Stockton. Ingrid worked in the packing sheds and Ricardo in the fields. Their three children were born in these ten years, but economic survival was always pressing.

Ricardo began drinking and abusing Ingrid. It was harmless at first, but then it became severe and Ingrid called the police. Ricardo was sent to prison, and upon his release was deported to Guatemala. Ingrid was able to stay at the Stockton Family Shelter along with her children after Ricardo was no longer able to support his family.

Ingrid received an offer from a friend to go live with her, giving Ingrid a chance to work out a temporary solution. Along with Ingrid and her children, there are five other children and three adults in this house. Ingrid and her three children share one room. In order to supplement her meager earnings, Ingrid is able to utilize the services at St. Mary's Interfaith for her family's basic needs.

Gloria Briscoe, our Director of Program Services, has been working with Mario Gomez, our Director of Facilities, to move a donated mobile home from the East Bay to Stockton for Ingrid and her family. She is a hard worker and a good mother, and we have hopes that life for she and her children will improve.

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

2009

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News

PG&E and AAA Insurance support our community...

St. Mary's Interfaith Community Services truly appreciates all of our partnerships with local and corporate companies that provide in-kind and monetary support of our agency throughout the year. Our agency could not provide all of our services without the generosity of such companies as PG&E and AAA Insurance. These two companies are examples of how any company can make a difference in our community.

Recently, PG&E has partnered with our agency in several capacities. Our agency has been invited to participate at a local office in the company's charitable campaign kick-off in which employees have the opportunity to donate to a nonprofit agency through a payroll deduction program. Staff members from St. Mary's Interfaith have also been invited to give presentations about our agency's services to PG&E employees at local offices. Groups of PG&E employees have held clothing and/or food drives that benefit our clients. In addition, employees have received a tour of our campus and volunteered their time serving a meal in our Fr. Alan McCoy O.F.M. Dining Room.

AAA Insurance continues to partner with our agency every year during the month of November. On Thanksgiving Day our agency proudly serves a meal to those who need a place to go and eat for the holiday. The meal includes turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, vegetables, salad, bread, a beverage and a desert. Preparations for the meal take place weeks in advance in which community members as well as local and corporate companies provide our agency with in-kind food donations for the meal. It is with the donation of 24 turkeys from AAA that our kitchen is able to prepare enough food for the more than 800 clients that eat in our Dining Room on Thanksgiving Day. Each year AAA makes the commitment to help ensure that those in our community that are less fortunate have a place to go on Thanksgiving Day.

Thank you PG&E and AAA Insurance for being a community partner and supporting our agency's efforts! If you are a local business owner or part of a corporation and would like to partner with our agency, please contact Mario Fuentes, Director of Development at 209.467.0703 ext. 3121 or email:

mfuentes@stmarysinterfaith.org

University of the Pacific students lend a helping hand...

Students from University of the Pacific continue to show an interest in investing in the Stockton community. During the academic year, it is the faculty and staff members at Pacific that help facilitate student contact with our agency by educating and informing them about our programs and services. Students have become involved by interning and completing group projects with our Fund Development Office. Prior to the start of classes this Fall semester, incoming freshmen students toured our campus and volunteered in our dining room. The faculty and staff members have helped make more students aware of our agency and the importance of being an integral member of society.

In the month of October, Professor Ethel Nicdao, an Assistant Professor of the Sociology Department contacted our agency and wanted her Pacific Seminar class to learn about our agency. She arranged for one of our staff members to give a presentation in her class on the Pacific campus. At a later date, she also escorted her students and provided them with the opportunity to volunteer their time and assist our kitchen staff members and other volunteers with preparing and serving a meal in our dining room. Students leave our campus with a better understanding of the Stockton community. They become ambassadors on the Pacific campus by informing other students and their affiliated organizations about our agency. Professor Nicdao believes, "It is essential that students get involved in the local Stockton community as part of their experiential learning experience at Pacific. Volunteering at St. Mary's Interfaith is invaluable in terms of contributing to those in need and learning about organizations committed to serving Stockton residents." University of the Pacific understands that educating students outside of the classroom is just as valuable as educating them in a classroom.

Thank you, Professor Nicdao and the students in her Pacific Seminar class for allowing our agency to be a part of your college experience!

Men utilizing our services in our Kara Brewer Family Clothing & Hygiene Center.



Gloria Briscoe, Director of Program Services assisting a client in our Social Services Department.



Make a difference. Support our community!

PG&E employees volunteering their time and making a difference in the lives of others.



Professor Nicdao and her Pacific Seminar class from University of the Pacific.



"Nurturing Self Reliance for a Hopeful Future"

Special Acknowledgement!

Fr. Alan McCoy O.F.M.

Father Alan McCoy, pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church from 1955 to 1967 passed away in Los Angeles on October 15th of this year at the age of 96. Soon after his arrival as pastor, he was immediately aware of the severe poverty in the area surrounding the church. The park across the street from the church, along with the close neighborhood, was filled with single, unemployed men. Upon inquiry, he discovered there were no facilities or food available for these homeless men. Within the next few months, Father Alan and his staff of newly ordained priests refurbished an abandoned tavern on Hunter Street and opened 'St. Mary's Dining Room', now known as St. Mary's Interfaith Community Services. The dining room located at St. Mary's Interfaith has been named in his honor: 'Father Alan McCoy O.F.M. Dining Room.' In these 12 years, Fr. McCoy, in addition to establishing the dining room, started programs working with poor families, established a credit union, a residence hotel, and worked with farm workers to improve their conditions. Upon leaving Stockton, Fr. McCoy worked for world peace and the rights of poor people mainly in Central and South America. With your help we continue the important work Fr. McCoy began over 50 years ago.

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St. Mary's Interfaith Community Services

Because you care, St. Mary's Interfaith provided the following *units of service* to the county's needy individuals and families from January thru July 2009.

- **Medical & Dental visits to our clinics.....7,553 visits**
- **Meals provided.....294,435 meals**
- **Kara Brewer Family Clothing & Hygiene Center**
 - **Women and children served.....38,841 persons**
 - **Men served.....26,938 persons**
- **Total hours volunteered.....48,278 hours**