

## INSIDE

- director's message 2
- parent leadership 3
  - cuts to the poor 3
- perspective from the heart 4
  - fighting for home 5
  - pack-a-back 6
- life changing benefits 7
  - wyse guys save the day 8
- leaving a legacy 8
  - predatory lending 8
- social entrepreneurship update 9
  - youth education 10
- home energy upgrades 10
  - volunteer connect 11

## DETERMINED TO SURVIVE

Shortly after 3pm on November 4th, Angelica arrived in front of Sacred Heart with a folding chair and blanket. A single mother of four kids, she sat down on a little stretch of walkway nearly 18 hours before the scheduled start time for Sacred Heart's annual holiday food and toy registration the next day. Despite repeated pleas from staff that we would have ample appointments to serve her family if she came back in the morning, Angelica would not be moved. She was determined to brave the coldest night of the year to ensure her kids would receive some of the joys of the season. Soon after, Angelica was not alone.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 5]



- holiday needs**
- food**
  - frozen turkeys & chickens
  - canned foods
  - hams
  - infant formula
  - peanut butter
- items**
  - blankets
  - diapers
  - new socks & underwear
  - rain ponchos
- toys**
  - bicycles [with helmets & locks]
  - tricycles
  - infant toys
  - gift certificates
  - legos/building blocks
  - fisher-price toys
  - playskool toys
  - stuffed animals
  - books for ages 1-16
  - baby dolls
  - toy trucks
  - sports equipment
  - ipods/digital music players
  - new clothing
  - hair accessories
  - hair dryers/curling irons
  - jewelry: earrings/necklaces

After waiting in line for hours with thousands of other families on November 5th, Rosa meets with a volunteer to register her family for Holiday food boxes.



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE citizenship

It was about half hour into the conversation with my grandfather Jose that I got around to telling him what was really on my mind.

I had been sitting on the edge of his bed in the cool, empty room at El Camino Hospital bringing him up to date on the exploits of my little girls. As I held his hand gently, I acknowledged that I was distracted by a conversation I had at work that morning.

I had spoken with my colleague Josefina about a woman she was working with. Raquel had contacted Sacred Heart because she was at the end of her rope.

After years of suffering verbal and physical abuse at the hands of her husband, Raquel took the traumatic step of leaving to ensure the safety of her three little girls. Not unlike many mothers living amidst the horror of daily violence, she felt isolated, guilty, desperate. After staying with friends for a while, she had moved into a makeshift room carved out of a dilapidated warehouse situated behind a home on the east side. For a mere couple hundred bucks a month, Raquel was permitted to shiver with her children on a mattress while her worldly belongings were crammed on the other side of the "room".

Each night she carefully set a glass bottle on the dirty floor against the door to serve as an improvised alarm for fear of an intruder, such as a rodent or an addict looking for a corner to start their next trip. Raquel tried in vain to sleep despite the interminable coughing and other inscrutable noises coming from the other residents of this makeshift homeless shelter.

Raquel was determined to get her kids to school each day, and spent the rest of each day foraging for their basic needs and continuing with English classes. Her fight for survival made her question her choice to leave her batterer, but she ultimately reached out for help.

The tears streaming down Josefina's face revealed how much she had internalized Raquel's situation. Beyond the support group, food, and clothing Sacred Heart could offer Raquel, Josefina was scouring the valley for a affordable room, a trailer, any alternative for this family. We strategized how to scrape up some money for a deposit and a few months rent. Sacred Heart didn't have any budget for it, but we would try to see what we could do.

My abuelo nodded gently and encouraged me to keep fighting for Raquel's family.

A native of Pueblo Nuevo, Guanajuato, Jose Guevara was raised by his widowed mother in impoverished rural Mexico. My abuela, Juanita, was born in Los Angeles, but her family was subjected to the forced repatriation in the 1930s. They were married in 1941, started their family, and immigrated to the United States after Jose joined the Bracero program. These details of my grandparents' life I knew well.

He then revealed a different perspective on his life story. My abuelo insisted that the price of entry to this country is not only a commitment to work hard and sustain your family—which he did—but that you must contribute to the well being of the rest of our community.

**"the price of entry to this country is not only a commitment to work hard and sustain your family... but that you must contribute to the well being of the rest of our community."**

A founding member of the Sociedad Guadalupeana at St. Martin's Parish in Sunnyvale, my abuelo shared stories from his years of organizing the latino community to help others: everything from developing support systems for young families, providing food to the

homeless, assisting others in the naturalization process, and advocating for political participation. Becoming a United States citizen was one of his proudest achievements and he took the responsibility of **citizenship** very seriously.

I apologized to him for being preoccupied, but he said firmly of how proud he was of Sacred Heart's efforts to help Raquel and her children on their journey to a better life. He promised to pray for Raquel and her daughters. He promised to pray for me, my wife and our daughters.

My prayer was that each of us will experience the blessings and fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship in this country, just as my abuelo did.

**Jose C. Guevara**  
1920 - 2011

Sinceramente,

  
Poncho Jose Guevara

# Successful Education Begins @Home

"The best example to our children is us," said Pedro Flores, a business owner, volunteer and single father of two. "I am a firm believer in helping my children flourish at school", and he gladly took part in Sacred Heart's new education leadership class for school parents: **Familias Unidas con las Escuelas** (Families United with Schools).

When the program began last February, Flores was glad to become part of the class and quickly became a group leader. He conducted five of the classes and inspired his fellow parents to embrace their children's education. "We have to put emotion into our work." He believes that encouragement and commitment will help his children, and his neighbor's children, to succeed.

Familias Unidas has started its second year at Sacred Heart, and program coordinator Roberto Gil is proud to be partnering with parents to educate others about being role models in their children's schooling. "It doesn't matter what your education level is. If you involve yourself in your child's school, everyone is going to win." With this in mind, Roberto

"Knowledge is power" says Roberto Gil, and that knowledge can sometimes be discouraging. In the program, the leaders and parents discuss statistics showing comparative salaries between students that fail to graduate High School versus those completing college. "This becomes a driving force for the parents. They want the best for their children. We've already seen a lot of success, and I know Familias Unidas will succeed this school year and every year afterwards."

selected the twelve week curriculum from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund in order to teach parents how to help their children succeed in class. The program empowers parents by providing tools for communicating with teachers, administrators and also with their children.



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## INCREASING POVERTY RATES COINCIDE WITH FEDERAL DISCUSSIONS OF DEEPER CUTS TO THE POOR

The Census Bureau released figures in September showing that the official poverty rate jumped to 15.1% in 2010. This 18-year high still understates the level of deprivation of many Americans today. Last month the Bureau released a new supplemental poverty measure that indicated that poverty for the western US stood at 19.4%. The devastation of poverty is exacerbated over time as individuals exhaust personal savings and temporary public benefits.

A new report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities indicated that without a public social safety net the 15.1% poverty rate would have nearly doubled, to 28.6% of Americans living in poverty. [[www.cbpp.org/files/11-7-11pov.pdf](http://www.cbpp.org/files/11-7-11pov.pdf)]

### KEY PROGRAMS UNDER ATTACK:

- Medicaid & Medicare
- Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (formerly known as food stamps)
- Community Services Block Grant\*
- Social Security
- Unemployment Insurance
- Workforce Investment Act
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance\*
- Emergency Food & Shelter Grant\*
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- Head Start

\* Administered by Sacred Heart

# PERSPECTIVES FROM THE HEART

## Breaking the Cycle

### Confronting the Challenges of Educating Children in Poverty

by Bridgit McGarry

As a school principal, I see the challenges in a community with high child poverty. As an educator, I look at the faces every day of children that need our help. Students who live in poverty – coming from households without the income to meet basic needs – have challenges beyond affording school supplies. Economically disadvantaged students face a variety of issues at school that are vastly different from their classmates who come from a better situation. Children in poverty live in neighborhoods that have high traffic routes, higher crime rates and fewer green areas for play. Households are often more crowded in order to make ends meet.

There are fewer cognitive enriched opportunities in the neighborhood. Fewer books are in the home, visits to the library are less frequent, and children spend more time viewing television than their middle-income peers. Lacking opportunities to network with appropriate adult mentors, such as coaches, for emotional and social assistance, adolescents are more likely to rely on peers for meeting their social and emotional support.

(Kumanyika & Grier, 2006) Needless to say, living in chaotic situations creates social, health and stress related responses in children, and they bring the results of these challenges to the classroom every day.

Usually, when the community debates issues about poverty, a common perspective is “if they would just work harder they will succeed.” In terms of education, I hear people say it is up to each child to take advantage of a free education to better themselves. If the child doesn’t succeed, they are seen as not trying hard enough. I have been working with families and children who live in poverty for years, I have little doubt that they work hard, each and every day, to make their lives better.

As educators, we must support the children in our schools more effectively – not just asking the child to try harder. This requires support systems, role models, emotional assistance, physical education for healthy lives, and cognitive-mental support for students to acquire necessary academic skills. Teachers can determine what resources each child has – or lack – in their lives, and then provide a learning path that responds to the needs of the child. But teachers and school administrators cannot provide all the resources each child requires. Of course, parents must be involved with the child and the school. However, the entire community must take responsibility. Volunteers can assist in the learning process by supporting teachers through tutoring, reading programs, mentorships or coaching. Everyone should inspire a child to graduate from college.



BRIDGIT MCGARRY IS THE PRINCIPAL OF THE SACRED HEART NATIVITY SCHOOLS WHICH TARGETS SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN GRADES 6-8 IN THE WASHINGTON-GARDNER NEIGHBORHOOD OF SAN JOSÉ. BRIDGIT IS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SACRED HEART COMMUNITY SERVICE.

Through education, the cycle of poverty can change. Education allows for options and choices that open doors for the future. Students with a high school diploma have higher earning power than those that do not, and students with a post-secondary degree earn far more than those with a high school diploma.

When teachers and volunteers reach out to an under-resourced student, they teach what it means to be academically successful. Unless we join efforts as a community, children will be more likely to repeat a cycle of poverty. Let’s all work to give them the necessary tools and guidance, so that they will continue to work hard and make a difference for their future and the future of our community.

# DETERMINED TO SURVIVE

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Despite the 41 degree temperatures and threat of rain showers, hundreds of individuals started a makeshift encampment stretching down to the sidewalk to Alma, wrapping around the corner to First Street and along the block to Floyd Street. Outwardly, many of those waiting were upbeat about their presence at Sacred Heart as they shivered in the cold damp evening air. But individually, most were deeply concerned about their families, their neighbors in line, and frustrated at the circumstances that brought them there.

Steven and Francie recounted that they were both grateful to be employed again, but he shared his disappointment that he was now making \$9 less an hour than his previous position as a machinist a year ago. Francie was proud to be working at a nonprofit with foster youth, but noted that their combined salaries could not make ends meet for now. With three children and one on the way, they needed to make every cent count. The fact they had so much company was both comforting and deeply uncomfortable. Steven noted "there are a lot more folks out, and lots of seniors in line, more than I have ever seen. That isn't right."

Sacred Heart increased the number of toy box appointments by five hundred children, in the hopes on ensuring every family would get the opportunity to enroll their kids. It helped: the final appointment cards were distributed just before the registration day closed. The lines are now gone, and the preparation begins. We are reaching out to the community to provide 4000 holiday food boxes for Thanksgiving, 3,500 for Christmas, and 5,512 children are registered for our toy distribution.

For more information about how you can help sacred heart meet these unprecedented needs please visit us: [www.sacredheartcs.org/holidays](http://www.sacredheartcs.org/holidays)

## FIGHTING FOR HOME & COMMUNITY: LEADERS STAND GROUND

### POLICY ADVOCACY & ORGANIZING

After 15 years of on-time, uninterrupted payments to their landlord, an eviction notice was the last thing on Marisa and Ivan's minds when they first got word from the bank that their apartment building was in foreclosure. Apparently, the landlord had been pocketing rental payments but failed to pay the bank for several months. Presented with the option to leave immediately for a financial settlement or to stay, receive no payment, and risk a new owner jacking up their rent, the family felt the clock ticking.

As a disabled, low-income mother of two, Marisa called at least 50 vacant apartments in the hopes of finding a quick solution. None would meet the family's needs. It's not easy finding appropriate and wheelchair accessible living quarters in San Jose's skyrocketing rental housing market. Marisa began sharing her story with fellow community leaders who, together, comprise SHCS' McKinley/Bonita Action Committee. They called a meeting with Councilmember Sam Liccardo to share their concerns over the potential impact of another blighted building in their neighborhood – already strapped by violence, drug activity, and a dearth of police resources.

Within days Action Committee Leaders were meeting with top bank officials exploring possible ways of keeping their community whole. **Despite bank offers of more money to leave, Marisa's family insisted that money was not what they desired, they wanted to stay in the only home their children have ever known and to continue to fight for their neighborhood.** After extensive dialogue, sometimes in the presence of 60 residents, the bank execs decided to give Marisa's family what they so desired, a lease agreement. With this, the family could stay in its home even after the property went through extensive repairs and changed owners. The neighborhood would remain intact.

As far as we know, the Bank's decision to execute a lease directly to a family in the case of a apartment building foreclosure is extremely rare, if not a first. The Action Committee is now larger than ever before and Marisa is taking on a greater leadership role. And, for the first time in the neighborhood, community members have a sense of their power and their ability to work collectively for the betterment of all.

# Pack-a-Back 2011 a Huge Success

In July, Chris walked up to Sacred Heart in the early morning hours with the rest of his family. They sat on the sidewalk, wrapped in blankets, reading their books and talking together. They arrived at Sacred Heart at dawn so they would be sure they could sign up for a backpack for school before reservations were gone.

One month later, Chris was back with his mother and his sister, and they walked up to the doors of the agency with their tickets in their hands. Within minutes, they had chosen a colorful backpack filled with just the right supplies for the classes that started the following week. "I saw it hanging there and went right to it" said Chris. "And then, SJ Sharkie posed for a picture with me. It was a great day!"

The whole community came together and brought backpacks to 2,013 children. Hundreds of people had donated money, supplies and backpacks. Hundreds of volunteers arrived throughout the day and helped distribute the backpacks to the children. Everyone saw how important this day was.

"My girls started crying" said one mother as she told staff that her youngest daughter had been the same backpack with holes for the past two year. "I had no idea where we were going to get money for the supplies" she said after describing how her hours had been cutback while also having to support her brother's family on a meager salary.

Laura Diaz, SHCS Family Support Program manager described the importance of the program. "The greatest benefit of Pack-a-Back is that children receive the tools they need to participate fully in school." With the ever increasing challenges of living under the poverty line, school supplies become a luxury for many families. And when children fall behind in school, their chances of graduating and gaining living-wage work decreases dramatically.

So on a day filled with joy, the fight against poverty took a giant step forward. Together, we invested in the future of thousands of kindergarteners, high school calculus students, middle school readers and future college students.

Thank you to everyone that helped make this wondrous day possible.



## special thanks to our partners:

AARP Chapter 5151  
Adobe  
Archbishop Mitty High School  
Banana Republic -Valley Fair  
Bank of America  
Camera Cinemas  
CBIZ Benefits and Insurance  
Classic Vacations  
Envision Technology Marketing  
Ericsson  
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Starbucks  
Stone Church of Willow Glen  
Synopsis  
Target  
Tela Innovations  
Temple Emanu-El Preschool  
TriQuint Semiconductor  
Underwriters Laboratory  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
of Las Gatos  
Valley Community Bank  
VMware  
Willow Street Pizza  
Wyse Technology  
+MANY MORE FROM GENEROUS  
INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Maxie is a single mother of four children. During the worst economic down-turn of her generation, her work hours and assignments began to decrease gradually until she was eventually laid off. Soon after, one of her children fell very ill during the winter, which resulted in mounting medical bills. These two factors caused her to be evicted from her apartment, leaving Maxie and her children without a home. Maxie happened upon an article in the *San Jose Mercury News* that described Sacred Heart's new free tax assistance program and came to ask for help.



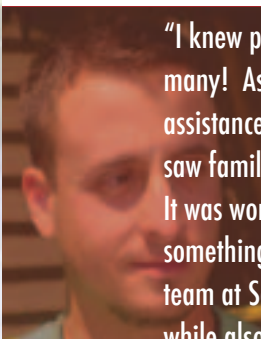
Staff and volunteers at Sacred Heart and throughout the local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) network, which is spearheaded by the IRS and United Way Silicon Valley, are trained and certified to provide free income tax preparation services to qualifying low income community members whose annual income is less than \$49,000. We strive to ensure families and individuals receive all the credits and deductions they are entitled to while avoiding filing fees.

# can benefits change a life?

After asking Maxie a series of questions, one of our VITA volunteers determined that she qualified for both the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit, among other credits. At first, Maxie thought it was too good to be true. "When everything was done, I ended up receiving a \$10,200 tax refund!"

The 2010 tax season was the first year this service was available at Sacred Heart, although referrals to sites throughout the county have been provided for years. Not all tax advisors practice fairly and many of our customers have complained of being taken advantage of. They were charged an average of \$150 to gain assistance with filing their taxes (sometimes ranging upwards of \$450 when they are eligible for the EITC). The increase in unemployed customers at our doorsteps combined with increases in complaints of predatory lending made the VITA program both necessary and vital for our customers.

During our first tax season, Sacred Heart filed 255 electronic tax returns and assisted with 30 paper files, of which about 1 out of every 4 customers were eligible to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit. This enabled us to put over **\$350,000** in returns back into the pockets of low income Silicon Valley residents. Simultaneously, part of the VITA process includes screening for eligibility for public benefits such as Food Stamps,



"I knew people needed help, but I was surprised by how many! As an intern with Sacred Heart's benefits assistance program, I helped at all the VITA events and saw family after family coming in looking for help. It was wonderful that 99.9% of the time, I could do something important to impact their lives. The benefits team at Sacred Heart trained me to provide tax assistance while also taking care of each individual that came in. It was an awesome experience." **-Luis Campos**

LIHEAP energy assistance, and MediCal. We also provide financial education workshops and consultation with local partners that offer additional guidance with legal, housing, and banking issues.

When Maxie learned the amount of her anticipated refund, she turned to our volunteer and tearfully said, "We have enough to put a deposit down for an apartment."

**JOIN OUR VITA TEAM! TO LEARN HOW TO VOLUNTEER CALL US AT 408.278.2171**

## “Wyse can help you with that”



“Wyse can help you with that”, said Jaime Horejs of Wyse Technology. She had volunteered with Sacred Heart for years, helping with holiday programs and most recently the Survival Sack distribution. But when she saw the odd assortment of PC’s in our computer lab, she got her product teams involved.

Sacred Heart has combined computer skills and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, and we have always used donated computers. John O’Keefe, our Technology Manager, and volunteer Alan Baker, have spent hours keeping the computers running. “Since they are all older PC’s and all different, we had to pull parts from one place or another just to keep them running. And with thirty PC’s in one room, there was a lot of noise.”

When Wyse came to the rescue with small and efficient computers, the new computer lab was born. “The Wyse Technology Powerterm uses less space, less power, requires less maintenance and is waaaaay more reliable than anything we had before in our classes” said Alan. “Wyse donated the Powerterm PC’s, monitors and all the licenses we needed to manage them.”

Doreen, one of computer skills tutors said the machines were a pleasure. “It is so quiet in here now. We can focus on our work!”

Thank you to Wyse for the donation and thank you to Alan for installing everything!

## Leaving a Legacy Planned & Memorial Gifts

Anne Forsythe is a long time volunteer and donor for Sacred Heart, and she feels strongly about how we can help people find work in this technological society. As an early user of PC’s, Anne wanted to help others learn word processing so they could build their resumes and qualify for higher paying work. She and her husband, Richard, had donated to Sacred Heart over the years because **“we admired what Sacred Heart was doing, and we wanted to encourage others to do likewise.”**

When Richard died in 2000, Anne wanted to make a gift that would last as a memorial to him and help make a better tomorrow for Sacred Heart’s customers.

**“I was thinking about a gift, but I didn’t know how best to honor his memory. After talking with Sacred Heart staff, I chose to make a gift to the endowment.”**

Besides helping to ensure that Sacred Heart would feed and educate people for years to come, the etched brick on the patio is a permanent remembrance for the 48 years Richard and I spent together.”

The next time you come to Sacred Heart, look at all the names built into the foundation of the agency. Their gifts tell the history of the agency and the future of our work. If you would like to help build that future, please talk with Poncho Guevara or Jay Pecot. We’ll share with you the vision of Sacred Heart and how your gift with make a better tomorrow for thousands of people.



**Jay Pecot**  
408-278-2196  
jayp@sacredheartcs.org

When Juliana lost a few hours of work one month, she needed a loan of \$300 in order to pay all her rent.

Unfortunately, she didn’t get 80 hours of work on her next paycheck either, and so she didn’t

With an annual percentage rate of 459%, a payday loan grows beyond a family’s assets and ability to pay off the loan. Though payday lenders defend their loans as a way to cover emergency financial needs, most people use them to cover gas, food and rent. And since these lenders are not subject to the same regulations as banks, the ease of getting a loan is deceptive.

For the next year, Sacred Heart will be working in our community to educate our partners – staff, customers, volunteers, donors and the general public – about the

## fight against predatory payday lenders continues

“I thought I would be fine since I had paid my bills without any problems the past year.” She walked to a check cashing and payday lending store on South First and applied for a payday advance loan. It seemed simple enough. She showed them her pay stubs, her ID and wrote them a post-dated personal check. That’s all she needed to borrow the \$300. The fees were a bit steep – \$45 to borrow \$255 – but it was better than being late with the rent, and she would be sure to pay the loan back as soon as her next paycheck came in.

have enough money to pay her bills or to pay off her payday loan. Juliana walked right down to the payday loan store and they said “If you pay off your loan today with what you have, we can give you another loan to hold you over until your next pay day.”

This scenario is all too common for working families struggling to make ends meet. They resort to payday loans, and it frequently becomes a cycle of greater and greater debt.


**it frequently becomes a cycle of greater & greater debt**

problems with payday loans and how we can help low- and moderate-income families use safer financial tools that build futures, rather than imperil them.



# SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP UPDATE

## a new landscape for employment



Enrique is a skilled carpenter. For many years, he was a union member, worked hard, and made good money. But the recession left him unemployed for more than a year and a half. That is a really long time to be without any steady income. He's picked up the occasional odd job, but he is very grateful for the services like food and clothing that he has received from Sacred Heart Community Service.

For six months, Enrique also invested over 150 hours of unpaid time in the process of starting a worker-owned cooperative business along with three other unemployed guys and the help of Sacred Heart's Cooperative Business Development Manager, David Smathers-Moore. It is a green business — **TeamWorks Sustainable Landscape Maintenance** — that does what you would think of as standard yard maintenance, but with a twist: we use organic methods and electric equipment. After many months of research and planning, the new cooperative, incubated by Sacred Heart for a year, opened last spring.

Enrique learned about cooperative development from Sacred Heart. The agency's leadership is thinking seriously about what its long-term vision of "a community united to ensure that every child and adult is free from poverty" really requires. And that reflection has led to experimenting with a number of creative projects that seek to build healthier and more socially-just relationships in the community.

Why are cooperatives — which are businesses owned by their workers — one part of this exploration? For us, it comes out of a growing recognition that creating jobs may not be enough. In the traditional arrangement, a job means the renting of labor. When it is no longer needed, as in Enrique's experience, the rental can suddenly end and the person is on their own. The underlying relationship is an economic transaction. It can be dehumanizing and, frankly, terrifying if you suspect that it is not stable.

In a cooperative, on the other hand, the fundamental relationship is a community of human beings who have come together for the common purpose of advancing their individual and shared well being. It is a genuine partnership. One of the many implications of this shift is that cooperatives tend to respond to recessions very differently than traditional companies.

### MANAGING THE DOWNTURN

To weather tough times, cooperatives often approve steps like across-the-board pay cuts to share the pain as they work on the top priority: keeping all of their members engaged and connected to their cooperative community. Continuing health care benefits is also a high priority.

Other steps are usually taken as well, such as exploring ways the business can adapt to changing conditions, perhaps by researching new products or services and ways to harness new technologies. When the recession really hit hard in the winter of 2008-09, the TeamWorks cleaning cooperative saw its monthly revenues drop by more than 15%. No one knew how far it would keep dropping. But the cooperative never even considered laying off its members. Everyone's pay went down, but they kept the group together (and their health insurance).

Community food pantries around the country, and certainly here at Sacred Heart, have reported stories of once prosperous people coming for services and confiding quietly that they never in a million years thought they would need this kind of help. Many of these people worked as rented labor that could suddenly be let go just as Enrique was, sometimes despite decades of involvement with and commitment to a workplace.

We are excited that cooperative development is increasingly being recognized as a compelling economic development strategy for addressing poverty and



These qualities suggest that cooperatives offer a strategy not only for improving the lot of the working poor or unemployed, but also for other groups. Middle class people and professionals are now facing economic insecurity that they never expected to experience.

unemployment. But this can become a narrow view that misses the larger promise of cooperatives: that they offer a meaningful path forward for all people who know that genuine security is rooted in committed human relationships and a community that can adapt, change, and grow together over time.

to get a quote call: **408.250.8619**  
or visit: **www.teamworks.coop**



## Youth Education

Sacred Heart's early childhood education and homework club sessions began with the new school year. With further cuts to the state education budget looming, the efforts to invest in school readiness and bolster academic achievement are more critical than ever.

ECE teacher Patty Santiago said "It is a pleasure and a blessing to be able to work with the little ones. One of our main goals is to spark a love for learning and exploration in preschool that can carry them forward as they enter kindergarten."

Mike Vega, Homework Club coordinator and college student, reflected on the importance of encouraging each child to reach for success. "We have to work together and convince every child that college is part of their future. I'm proud that we get to reinforce that message each day with the students and their parents."

Sacred Heart needs more volunteers to strengthen our program and inspire young people to educational success. If you would like more information please contact the volunteer office at 408.278.2171.

**"I thought I had my health problems taken care of and a good place to live. What was supposed to be a routine check turned out to be another life-threatening issue for me and my family. I'm a disabled Veteran, formerly homeless, struggling with a bad heart, and now a heater is endangering everyone in my house. What's next?"**

Mike had been living in his van for several years before housing assistance made it possible for him and his daughter to get their first home in many years. No more cold nights of sleeping on the back floor of his van. Mike now has his own home, with his own bed, shower and kitchen.

**"I can feel more relaxed living in a more comfortable environment,"** he said. **"It helps out and makes me a more productive citizen."** The VA San Jose Clinic connected Mike with housing assistance that helped him find an inexpensive home to rent. When he moved into his place in February, initial checks revealed that his heater was leaking large amounts of carbon monoxide, endangering him and his family.

Through the government funded Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Weatherization programs, Mike has been able to get the needed changes to make his home more energy efficient and safer.

When the SHCS technicians first arrived at his home at 9 a.m., the two of them did a walk through the house to see what was needed. Bahn and Terry replaced the light bulbs and fixtures. They installed a carbon monoxide detector and a new fire detector in the hallway, along with a new thermostat.



Mike's heater was replaced so carbon monoxide will no longer be a threat. In the space of a day, his sense of security had been returned. Bahn said **"I love my work. I'm in a different house everyday, helping people out. And getting Mike's heating problem fixed was the best part of the week. He has more important challenges to face than a faulty heater."**

While Bahn and Terry were at the house, they also installed a low flow showerhead and attachments to the faucets, which will help Mike save on his water bill by using 2.5 gallons instead of 10 gallons. **"I'm so glad they were able to do this,"** Mike said. **"I'm glad for this program. I'm comfortable at home and I love it."**

Lorena Sánchez Castañeda, director of the Family Assistance Programs at Sacred Heart Community Service, said **"the program helps to avert safety issues in the future. It protects from toxic gases, the water heater from coming unhinged and the family turning on the stove for heat because they believe they are saving energy that way."**

Statistics show that up to 30% can be saved on a family's energy bill if they go through all of the changes, Castañeda said. The money saved through this program could be used for other basic needs, such as food. Her hope is to also educate families and their landlords about the benefits of the program, the safety issues that arise and environmental protection.

Mike said he feels at home in his new place. The kids get out of school and he can hear them laughing and playing in the empty lot next door. He has started fixing up bikes for the neighborhood kids through bike donations he receives from his neighbors and friends.

**"I help other people, because I feel like I've been blessed,"** he said. He just started receiving disability and until recently he was in the hospital after having a stent put in. He is now retired, after starting work at the age of three. He was picking strawberries in the field before he could even pick up the basket he put them in. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Mike, 56, has had his share of ups and downs, yet his good spirits are unwavering.

**"The harder you hit me, the harder I laugh,"** he said.

## SACRED HEART COMMUNITY SERVICE ENERGY PROGRAM



Volunteers from the **San Jose Fire Department, Rotaract Club of Silicon Valley & Bank of America** helped raised more than \$5,000 at the Nov. 13 San Francisco 49ers awesome victory over the New York Giants.



**Google** has adopted Sacred Heart as a charter member of the company's 1 percent initiative, allowing Googlers to spend 1 percent of their work time volunteering with us.

**Lisa & Ed** were in line for holiday program registration on Nov. 5 when they noticed that several of the families arriving had challenges communicating with volunteers. They offered to help interpret for other families in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, ultimately staying for over three hours... They saved the day!



# VOLUNTEER CONNECT

Committed admin volunteer **Maureen Leach** has come every Thursday for more than a year to perform a critical job behind the scenes: shredding documents to protect customer privacy.



**Carol Drocco** comes from Aptos twice a week to help in Parents of Preschoolers. She's a 12-year volunteer and each holiday she donates toys for 40 children in Early Childhood Education.

**The Silicon Valley Volunteers** completed a 24-hour service marathon in late June and spent an entire night cleaning every corner of Sacred Heart.

**Glenice McGee** is a committed Pantry volunteer from our Monday morning sandwich making crew. She also works with Sacred Heart's Policy and Organizing Program to help maintain senior nutrition at the Alma Center and strengthen senior services in the county.



**Tom De Natale** has been helping in JobLink for about two years and oversees our bike program for job-seekers. **Oscar Gutierrez** has logged more than five years in JobLink and teaches Spanish-language orientations.

**facebook** has adopted Sacred Heart as a go-to volunteer site, sending three groups since the summer and supporting our Pack-a-Back drive.



A group from **St. Simon** volunteered a full day at Sacred Heart in our Faith Immersion Program. Volunteers worked bagging apples, sorting clothes and in our Welcome Center asking Sacred Heart customers about payday lending practices in our community.

**Pedro Flores** has been a Parent Leader in our Education program for over a year. He teaches other parents about important topics in public education through our Families United With Schools & Homework Club programs.



First and Second graders from the **Indigo program at Frost Elementary** came to Sacred Heart in October to volunteer and they brought with them canned food and warm coats to donate.

**Bradley Baker** joined the Sacred Heart Family in April and spends eight hours a week helping in the Volunteer Office.



A COMMUNITY UNITED TO ENSURE EVERY CHILD AND ADULT IS FREE FROM POVERTY

## by the numbers

[15.1%/22%] Percentage of Americans/children living below Federal Poverty Level (FPL);

[43.6million] Number of Americans in poverty;

[\$22,113] FPL income for a family of four.

[16.3%] Percentage of California residents living below FPL;

[10.5%/13.2%] Percentage of Santa Clara County residents/children living below FPL;

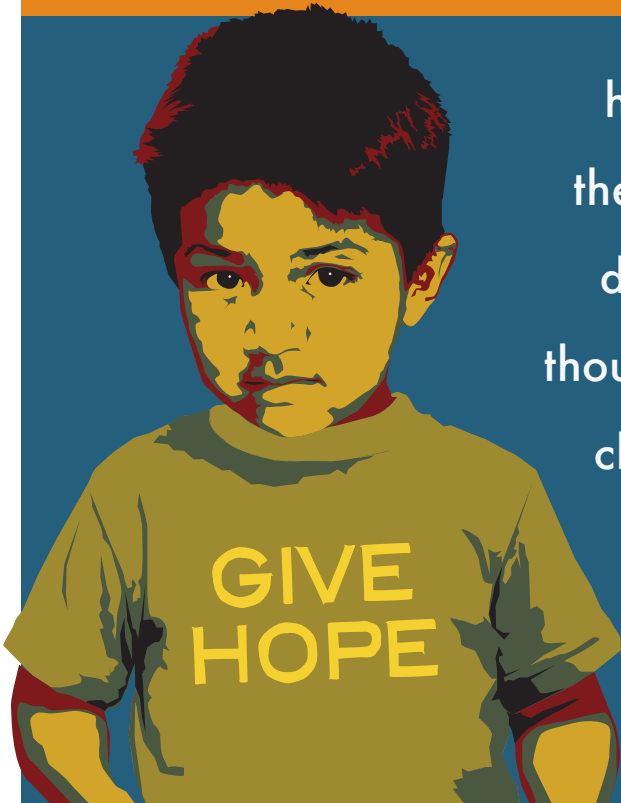
[19.3%] Percentage of Latinos in County living below FPL;

Source: 2010 Census, American Community Survey, released September 2011

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- MY NAME IS MISSPELLED
- I RECEIVED DUPLICATE COPIES
- PLEASE REMOVE MY NAME FROM YOUR MAILING LIST

## ENDING POVERTY BEGINS WITH YOU



help fulfill  
the holiday  
dreams of  
thousands of  
children &  
families  
in need



## holidays 2011

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1</b> <b>CASH GIFTS</b><br>your tax-deductible gift helps us purchase vital commodities           | <b>3</b> <b>DONATIONS</b><br>help fill our critical needs: frozen turkeys & chicken, blankets, toys, diapers, & canned food |
| <b>2</b> <b>VOLUNTEERS</b><br>give of your time & make a difference in the lives of families in need | <b>4</b> <b>DRIVES</b><br>organize a group to secure donations for our programs   |

**408.278.2170**  
[www.sacredheartcs.org/holidays](http://www.sacredheartcs.org/holidays)