

HOPE-NETWORK

HOPE-NET

An Interfaith outreach program to eliminate hunger and homelessness

WINTER 2009

Food Pantry Leaders and Clergy Luncheon



Hope-Net hosted its second luncheon for its food pantry leaders and their clergy on February 17 at the Islamic Center of Southern California. Also joining the festivities were several Hope-Net board members. The luncheon provided the opportunity to thank the volunteers and clergy for their consistent and dedicated efforts to feed the poor of our area and to socialize, recount stories and simply enjoy one another.

Lee Strand from First Baptist spoke about the importance of volunteering and the increased number of persons needing food assistance in our area. The clergy perspective was given by Jihad Turk from the Islamic Center. Jihad stressed the

need for local congregations to step beyond their own constituencies to serve the larger community.

Awards were given to our pantry leaders who are passing the reins at their pantries to new leadership: Andy and Emily Maverick from St. James' Episcopal, and Marcia Ackley, Connie Cerrillo and Ramona Colegrove from Wilshire Presbyterian. We thank them all for their many years of dedicated service.

Special thanks to Hope-Net board members Michael Castro, Walt Engler, Jane Gilman and Sunta Izzicupo for their help in planning and ensuring that everyone had a good time.

17th TASTE OF LARCHMONT SET FOR AUGUST 24

Early reminder. This year's Taste of Larchmont will be on Monday August 24 from 6:00 – 9:00 pm. Put this on your calendar. Although invitations won't be mailed for some time, feel free to call the Hope-Net office and secure

THANK YOU

We would like to thank all who responded to our holiday appeal. The response was generous and Hope-Net received approximately \$13,000 to assist in its work. We want to thank the Ahmanson Foundation for their additional grant given to help purchase more food to meet the increased number of clients. Hope-Net also received another gift from the Betty Dietrich estate. We thank Betty and her niece Cynthia Daley.

Executive Director Report

2008 in Review

The economic challenges of the second half of 2008 had a direct impact on our local community, and by extension, our Hope-Net food pantries. From 2007 to 2008, the clients using Hope-Net food pantries grew from 110,000 persons to 140,000. In 2008, this number represented about 60,000 households.

As always, Hope-Net attempts to provide adequate supplemental food and continues to improve the nutritional content of that food. The average cost of a grocery bag per household was remarkably cost-effective, being approximately \$0.65 per grocery bag.

Clearly the additional number of clients increased the amount of food Hope-Net needed to distribute. Because of this, the money needed to subsidize food distribution also increased. In 2008 Hope-Net spent 17% more on food (and distribution) than it had in 2007.

2009 – Looking Ahead

As 2009 begins, it looks much like the last half of 2008. Our pantries are continuing to accommodate an ever growing number of clients. Hope-Net remains committed to procuring enough supplemental food to help our neighbors in need, while realizing its mission is not to provide for their total food needs. Hope-Net also will continue to provide additional amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables and other more nutritious food offerings (see Mazon conference below).

–Douglas G. Ferraro

MAZON CONFERENCE

Each year *MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger* assembles leaders throughout the state for a California Hunger & Nutrition Policy Conference. This year's conference took place on January 26 and 27, 2009.

The conference's goal was to provide the state's anti-hunger community with tools that will assist them in their efforts to increase access to healthy food. For some time Hope-Net has joined in this effort because of the link among hunger, obesity and other preventable diseases.

The conference engendered observations worthy of further reflections:

1. Food preferences are resistant to change. Especially among the poor, it demands a cultural shift for people to prefer healthy foods to junk foods. Agencies such as Hope-Net need to broaden their mission to not only provide food for those in need, but nutritious foods that lead to a healthy diet and healthy living.

2. Supplemental food providers, such as Hope-Net, are an essential partner in communicating nutrition education to low-income persons. Food pantries need to improve efforts at providing balanced, nutritious bags of groceries.

3. Nutrition education is a fundamental part of a food pantries mission. This education targets the volunteer workers at our food pantries as well as clients. For pantry leaders, the goal is to improve their ability to evaluate nutritional content of food and provide healthier foods. For clients, the goal is to increase their willingness to select healthy foods and encourage healthy dietary habits. This can occur through signage or brief instruction. Remember, poverty and obesity are linked and obesity is the most common health condition in the United States with serious health consequences. Hope-Net must be a partner in the overall goal of changing dietary behavior.

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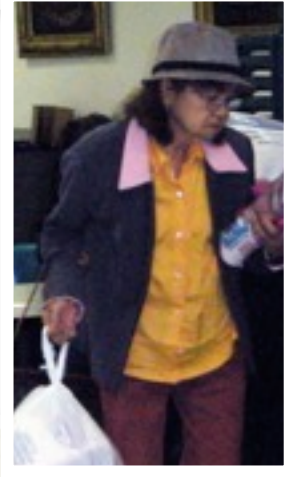
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Douglas Ferraro, Executive Director

Submissions of news, upcoming events, or human interest stories are happily received and should be sent in writing to the above address or FAXed.

Available in large print upon request.

A glimpse of some of our food pantries



Simple Nutrition Education

- Decrease fast food intake
- Eat more fruit & vegetables (5 servings of vegetables each day)
- Lower salt intake
- Cut down on sweetened drinks (e.g., soda). Substitute with water.
- Switch to whole grains
- Use lower fat dairy foods (e.g., 1% milk)

“Giving every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise is the safest way to health.” -- Hippocrates

Let “your change make a change” Pick up your Hope-Net piggy bank!

The small, clear “little porker” has inscribed on its side: “*Hope-Net ...because none of our neighbors should go hungry.*” Already over 350 little banks have been distributed to businesses, schools and individuals throughout the community. Put your loose change (or bills) into the piggy and when full, give us a call and we’ll come empty it for you. All funds collected will go directly to purchasing and transporting food to needy individuals and families in our area.



If you would like to participate and receive your own Hope-Net Piggy Bank, call us at 213.389.9949 and look on our web site at www.hope-net.info.

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