It’s Hard to Learn When You’re Hungry…

In many Sunnyvale classrooms, stomachs are grumbling. Last spring, local teachers and principals let us know that students were coming to school hungry on Monday mornings. Working families were making difficult choices as they juggled bills to pay, and food often ran out on the weekends. Sunnyvale Community Services worked with school staff and parents to pilot the Weekend School Food Program (see article on page 2).

One in four children in Silicon Valley are “food insecure”—not knowing if they will have food every day. Numerous studies show that children who live in food insecure households have worse performance in math and reading, lose school days because of illness, repeat grades, and have overall lower academic achievement scores due to lack of nutrition (AAP Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight).

Addressing Food Insecurity

In our role as the safety net in Sunnyvale, we have seen continued growth in the frequency of families coming for food assistance. Second Harvest Food Bank’s survey of 800 of their local clients in 2015 showed that 66% have had to choose between paying for food or paying for other necessities such as utilities, housing, medicine, or transportation.

According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), poor nutrition contributes to poor health, leading to increased diabetes risk, increased obesity risk, and increased risk of heart disease. It’s ironic that food insecurity and poverty also puts low-income children at risk of obesity, due to lack of access to healthy, affordable foods, fewer opportunities for physical activity, cycles of food deprivation and over-eating, high levels of stress, and limited access to health care.

In response to this growing need for healthier food, we now have nutritious food distributions every weekday. Over 50% of the food we distribute is healthy produce and 20% is lean proteins. A family of four who participates in all eligible food programs can receive healthy food valued at $396.00 each month, helping to close the food security gap and increase nutrition.

We have recruited hundreds of new volunteers and raised funds to fuel our food program growth. Thankfully, the community has responded with their time and their financial support.

—Marie Bernard, Executive Director

Did you know that SCS distributes food every week day?

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<td>Emergency Food</td>
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<td>Senior Food Distribution every 2nd Tuesday</td>
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<td>Challenge Diabetes Food Distribution every 3rd Thursday</td>
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<td>Weekend School Food Program</td>
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2016 Holiday Auction

Thursday November 17th
5:00 – 7:30 PM
Sunnyvale Elks Lodge
375 N. Pastoria, Sunnyvale
President’s Corner

Spring is a wonderful time to reflect on the many positive accomplishments you have helped us achieve here at Sunnyvale Community Services (SCS). Times are hard for low-income families in Sunnyvale, but our community’s generosity and creativity provides hope and keeps Sunnyvale strong. The rapidly increasing cost of housing has placed more and more stress on the families we serve leading to issues such as food insecurity, loss of housing, and the need to “double up” multiple families in single residences, and the stress that accompanies poverty.

Our agency is known as a leader in the County for its ability to tackle challenges head on. In addition to our customary food distribution and emergency aid services, our agency expanded services to veterans as a result of an innovative grant from the Department of Veteran Affairs. This spring we are expanding our Weekend School Food Program to include distribution locations at Bishop and Lakewood schools after very successful pilot programs began last year at San Miguel and Vargas schools. This program brings SCS services into the neighborhoods of some of our neediest clients in order to fight against food insecurity, which is defined as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.”

The fight against food insecurity continues with our Summer Food Program which provides nutritious meals to children when school is closed, preventing access to healthy meals from the school district’s breakfast and lunch programs. This program brings SCS services into the neighborhoods of some of our neediest clients in order to fight against food insecurity, which is defined as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.”

On August 4th we will hold one of our favorite summer events, “Backpack Day” when we distribute 1,400 new backpacks filled with age appropriate school supplies plus a $27 shoe gift card so our kids can be ready for school from head to toe. Each year we help more and more children, expanding our distribution of school supplies to local schools who take in transfer students after school starts, and to homeless clients who don’t have the needed supplies throughout the year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank you for your continued generous donations of time, money, and good will. All of these make Sunnyvale a stronger community.

—Michael Gallagher, Board President
Deputy Superintendent, Sunnyvale School District

Helping Kids Year-Round

Summertime is for Kids!

Kids everywhere are eager for the school year to end and summer to begin. For our young clients the transition can be difficult. Looming on the horizon is a time when school breakfast and lunch programs are closed, and many children are anxious about whether or not they will have enough food. With support from the community, we fill over 2,500 bags with special kid-friendly food and distribute them throughout the summer months.

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Weekend School Food Program

Kids who eat school breakfasts miss less school, get better grades, and are more likely to graduate high school. On weekends, many children miss meals because their families don’t have enough food each week. Children arrive at school hungry on Monday mornings.

Since early 2015, Sunnyvale Community Services has partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank to supply extra food for children attending local “Title I” low-income schools. On Thursdays and Fridays, our staff and volunteers fill bags with healthy kid-friendly foods and deliver them to local schools, where parents organize the distribution. We started our Weekend School Food Program at Vargas and San Miguel Elementary schools, and expanded to Bishop and Lakewood Elementary Schools in 2016. Now over 400 low-income families don’t have to choose who has to skip meals at the end of the week.

Cake4Kids

Thanks to Cake4Kids, a local nonprofit dedicated to providing free birthday cakes for low-income youth, we were able to give over 180 cakes to children of SCS clients in 2015. If you’d like information about becoming a volunteer baker, visit their website at www.cake4kids.org.
**Shelter from the Storms**

The homeless in our community were facing an El Niño year, but there was no longer a cold weather shelter in North Santa Clara County. After a lot of hard work and close collaboration with The County of Santa Clara, The City of Sunnyvale, HomeFirst Services, and other agencies including Downtown Streets Team (DST) and Sunnyvale Community Services, a new temporary shelter opened in December at the former Onizuka Air Force Station site. From December – March, the shelter had 100 beds, but room for 125 on especially cold, wet nights. SCS and DST together referred many of the clients along with other nonprofit agencies in Santa Clara County. HomeFirst did a wonderful job of overseeing the facility and ensuring a clean, safe place to sleep for many, but sadly not all, during the winter months. DST team members cleaned the shelter daily. All of the guests received case management services during their stay in an effort to move them out of homelessness and toward self-sufficiency. SCS helped nearly 400 homeless individuals last year with our safety net services.

Thanks to many donors including Sunnyvale Rotary and Knights of Columbus, SCS collected over 100 each of warm sleeping bags, hats, toiletry kits, jackets, holiday gifts, and many more needed items to distribute at the shelter.

**Looking Toward the Future**

This past year our agency completed a lot of long-delayed facility improvements, thanks in large part to the generosity of legacy gifts to Sunnyvale Community Services. When you include SCS in your estate plans, you are helping to ensure our programs continue into the future. If you would like information about leaving a legacy gift, please contact Marie Bernard at mbernard@svcommunityservices.org.

**Neighbors in Need**

- **Predatory Payday Loans a Bad Deal**
  A hard-working Hertz rental car employee came to us when he was in a bind. He was trying to keep up with his rent and modest expenses the best he could, but was so afraid of losing his home that he started taking out payday loans to help cover his costs. Of course, it didn’t take long for those loans to come due and with high interest. That’s when he came to us and asked for help. We were able to help the client erase his payday loan debt, and come up with a budget plan that will keep him housed without having to resort to such drastic measures going forward. We spent time with the client educating him about the dangers of predatory payday loans, and the importance of having and sticking to a budget. He is grateful for the help and hopes that others don’t fall into the same trap he did.

- **Partnering to Prevent Homelessness**
  Many of our clients are longtime Sunnyvale residents struggling with rising living costs. One 20-year resident in Sunnyvale came to us when her landlord decided to stop accepting her Section 8 housing voucher. In partnership with Project Sentinel, we were able to advocate for an extension so our client would have more time to find a new home. After quickly finding a new landlord who was willing to accept our client’s Section 8 voucher, we were also able to help our client with the first month’s rent, security deposit, and moving expenses. Thanks to our casework team and community partners, our client will be able to stay housed and start a new chapter in her life.

- **Putting Family First**
  In January, one of our client’s children fell ill, so she began to miss hours at work in order to care for him. When she took her child to the doctor, he recommended surgery. Thankfully, the procedure was a success and the child was able to return home and then to school after one week. However, time off caring for her son made it impossible for her to cover the rent and living expenses for her family, and she received a utility shut off notice. She was worried that if the utilities were shut off, she would be unable to provide the necessary aftercare her child needed to recover. We were able to help her pay the rent and utilities so that she could focus on keeping her family healthy and getting back to work.
Poverty Simulation Draws a Crowd

“Should I pay the rent, fix the car, or buy groceries?” That was the challenge faced by 40 participants at this year’s Poverty Simulation held at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church and sponsored by Edward Jones and Heritage Bank. All participants had the opportunity to experience what it’s like for low-income residents trying to raise a family in Silicon Valley, where they must make choices like this every day.

We host the simulation each year because it gives members of our community a chance to feel the stresses of trying to make ends meet when you don’t have enough money. Often participants are surprised at how much time it takes to get anything done when you’re poor,” said Marie Bernard. “The lines are long and there are too few people available to help so many in need.”

At then end of the simulation, team members of Downtown Streets Team shared how the simulation reflects their struggles. “So often, you are one paycheck away from the streets, and any problem can mean the loss of your home,” said one of the team members.

Challenge Diabetes Program Update

Chronic health problems and lack of access to treatment and nutrition can lead to lost wages, lost jobs, and even homelessness. Thanks to our partnership with El Camino Hospital, we have continued to host their Challenge Diabetes Program, which allows us to support and educate pre-diabetic clients. Since August, we still have 209 clients enrolled in the program who come to pick up a bag of diabetes-friendly food once a month, including healthy items like whole wheat pasta, quinoa, low-fat milk, and chicken. At the end of May, we will hold a post-screening for all enrolled clients to see how their A1C (blood sugar) scores have changed since beginning the program.

Serving Those Who Serve Our Country

Thanks to generous funding from the Department of Veterans Affairs, our Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) launched on June 1, 2015. The SSVF program provides veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with case management services and financial assistance, with the end goal of finding permanent housing for these veterans and their families. Our hardworking SSVF staff has helped several veteran families move from homelessness to housing. Help us “House a Hero!” We are reaching out to property managers, faith communities, and homeowners who may have a room to rent. There are an estimated 700 homeless veterans in Santa Clara County, according to the 2015 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey.

A Joyful Holiday Auction!

Thank you to all who donated, volunteered and stopped by to say hello at our 2015 Holiday Auction. Over $80,000 was raised, all of which was used to help our clients in need during the holidays.

Thank you!!

Did You Know?

SCS distributes an average of 25,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables every “Produce Monday!”

Thank You!

“When our rent went up again last week, we did not have enough money for school supplies and shoes, and not enough food for our family.”
—SCS Client and mom
We’ve Got New Wheels!

Second Harvest Food Bank generously donated a brand new 18’ Isuzu box truck with a lift gate in July 2015, which has allowed us to save time and money and expand our programs to better serve our clients. According to Carolyn Alexander, our Director of Operations, “you really could not ask for a better partner than Second Harvest; they actually worked with us to design the truck especially for our needs.”

The truck has allowed us to pick up large food donations instead of relying on deliveries from food suppliers and has saved us money on bulk food items that we did not have access to before. We have also been able to expand our weekly school delivery program and our grocery delivery to low income seniors at Life’s Garden. Since adding the box truck, we are now providing more food for seniors, including doubling the number of Life’s Garden residents we are supporting.

Can’t Ask for a Better Neighbor!

Located just two blocks from SCS, Texas Instruments has become an incredibly valuable neighbor to our agency. Storage space at SCS is a big issue and TI has been gracious enough to let us use their available space to store all of our Christmas center shelving, extra backpacks and other odds and ends. TI’s generosity has saved SCS a lot of money in offsite storage, and the TI facilities staff has been fantastic to work with, helping us load and unload every few months when we need to do a transfer. As if that weren’t enough, TI also donated 600 scientific calculators for our high school and middle school backpacks last year valued at over $8,000 and has had groups of employees volunteer throughout the year. Thank you TI!

Grocery Rescue

Grocery stores throw away thousands of pounds of food and household items every year because they are slightly damaged or too close to the expiration date for the store to sell. However, this does not mean that these items are not fit for consumption. In partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, SCS is working with stores including Target, Sprouts, and Zanotto’s to collect these items and provide them to our clients. The management at each retailer is truly committed to ensuring these items end up with those who are in need. Thanks to our tireless volunteers and our liftgate truck (donated by Second Harvest), we can pick up, load, unload, weigh, and sort all these donations for our clients so that they can be distributed in our Pantry Program on Tuesday and Wednesday each week, where our clients can “shop” once a month for extra food and household items. SCS receives nearly 10,000 pounds of donations from these retailers every month, including frozen chicken, beef, and pork, which our clients especially appreciate.

AARP Taxes

For the 9th year in a row, tax aid volunteers from AARP have been on hand at SCS to help our families complete their tax returns, free of charge. This year, over 700 federal and state income tax returns were prepared using this service. If you are interested in helping next year, please contact Carol Reichner at careichner@yahoo.com.
Everyone deserves to feel beautiful inside and out, regardless of income level. Recently a group of generous and talented hair stylists from Atelier Aveda at Santana Row, San Jose wanted to do something good for the community and came to SCS to give our clients free haircuts. They helped 20 clients, including one who had recently been released from a correctional facility and was struggling to reintegrate into the community. She was thrilled to have the chance for a professional haircut, which boosted her confidence and helped set her on a path to finding a steady job. We wish her the best of luck and thank the Atelier Aveda stylists for their generosity!

Unite Your Community with a Donation Drive

You don’t have to work for a big company to run a big donation drive. With just a few homemade posters and some grass-roots outreach via Facebook, NextDoor, or your neighborhood email group, you can get your community involved in helping those less fortunate. How about setting up a donation drive on July 4th or National Neighborhood Night Out Day on August 3rd?

We are asking community members to start collecting new toys early for our Community Christmas Center. A “Christmas in July” drive is a great time to ask neighbors to donate. Who knows, maybe Santa will stop by on his way to the beach! For more information about how you can run a neighborhood donation drive, please contact Carolyn Alexander at calexander@svcommunityservices.org. (And don’t worry – we will provide the barrel!)
Major Program Contributors

Underwriting SCS’ $1,000 a day operating costs not covered by grants or contracts

Michael Frank
Phyllis Freeman
Philip & Juniko Friedlin
Al & Donna Fragaquiri
Michael & A. G. Libation
Jennifer and Brian Garrett
Elahb Gattass
Michael & Kiethly Gianni
Aileen Good
Michael & Susan Graubin - in memory of Frances B. Gravel
Timothy & Emma Graham
Kruma Attari - to my Family
RALPH & LAVI
Julie & Robert San Diego Salvation Army
Robert & Julius Garbus
Janet Fire
Brenda Lee & Jason Wong
Gloria M. Lausten & Robin M.

3 Days = 3,000 quarts of milk

Mary Ellen and Stephen Barasch
Charles L. Barnard, Jr.
Camille Barnes-Moyle
Marlene and Bruce Poton
Nicholas and Anna Bronsthal
D. Delange & G. Carvert
Nicholas and Anna Brosnahan
Marie Bernard and Bruce Paton
Mary Ellen and Stephen Barasch

4 Days = 2000 meals-in-a-can

Anonymous (4)
Sunnyvale Community Church

Anonymous (3)
Community Services Agency of

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Save the Date

SCS Auxiliary Holiday “Affaire”  
& Quill Raffle
Location: Sunnyvale Community Services  
725 Kifer Road, Sunnyvale, CA

This is a free event.

Annual SCS Holiday Auction
Location: Elks Lodge, 375 N. Pastoria Ave.  
Note the November Date!
This is a free event.

Programs and Services

- Financial assistance for rent, utilities, medical care, prescriptions, other critical bills, and rental deposits for homeless families moving into housing
- Case management for families, seniors, and homeless individuals
- Daily emergency food, weekly “Produce Mondays,” twice-weekly Pantry, monthly food for families and seniors, and Kids’ Summer Food distributions
- Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program to help veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Community Christmas Center, affording clients the dignity of selecting a two-week supply of food, new gifts for infants through teens, and a practical household gift
- Budgeting assistance, support counseling, and advocacy
- Workshops and referrals to medical, mental health, employment, shelter, education, and legal programs
- Clothes, backpacks/school supplies, household items, bus passes and gas vouchers

SCS Wish List
Visit our website for the most needed items.  
www.svcommunityservices.org/donate-wish-list.html

Many thanks to Alpha Graphics and California Mailing for their discounts.