



# News from the Food Closet

SOUTH SACRAMENTO INTERFAITH PARTNERSHIP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ♥ MARCH 2024

## SSIP Leadership Changes in 2024 Signal a Renewed Effort to Remain Sustainable

The South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership has adopted a new board structure that will more effectively meet the growing needs of the 55-year-old South Sacramento-based nonprofit.

A carefully planned re-structuring of the SSIP volunteer leadership corps and staffing changes will also provide sustainability for the food closet, where the demand for food continues to grow dramatically.

A noticeable change is SSIP's much leaner board with an eleven member leadership team, less than half the size of the previous board. Eight faith-based partner organizations are represented on the board, with alternates from each church who will stand in for any absences. With a smaller working board, SSIP leaders hope to streamline communication and facilitate decision-making, thereby fostering collaboration and business sustainability.

At the January 17 meeting, the newly seated SSIP board elected a slate of officers. The executive team includes: Shigeko Shibata, chair; Mark Hanzlik, vice-chair; Kathy Anderson, secretary; and Deb Kanner, treasurer. Hanzlik and Anderson do not represent faith-based partners but serve as community members, bringing the total number of board members to eleven.

This year, SSIP standing committees (Communications, Finance, Fund Development, and Operations) continue in somewhat the same fashion with new individuals chairing each committee.



*All those present at the February 21st meeting of the SSIP board of directors gathered outside in the sun for an informal photo.*

The Communications Committee has two teams: Media and Community Outreach, each with a team leader. Fund Development is comprised of three teams: Donor Engagement, Fundraising, and Grants Management. Committee chairs report to the Director, Simon Yeh.

Another change for 2024 is the creation of three advisory groups: Congregational Advisory, Business and Community Advisory, and Human Resources Advisory. Each group has the objective to provide consultation to the leadership team and Director so the organization stays informed of industry's best practices and makes changes, as needed, in response to the evolving landscape. *(Continued on page 3)*

## A NOTE FROM SSIP BOARD CHAIR

As the 2024 Board of Directors Chairperson of the SSIP Food Closet, I look forward to implementing the new board structure that we have developed in response to the dramatic increase in food insecurity since 2020. The new governance structure will support long-term sustainability of SSIP's mission. I approach the upcoming year of service with optimism and purpose.

I started volunteering at SSIP after retiring over 10 years ago. Family members had volunteered here before me. My sister Jane, and my mom worked out of the small food closet inside Bethany Church years ago. My daughter, Jill volunteered one summer in high school. Because they had such rewarding experiences at SSIP, I thought it would be the ideal place to give back to the community.

Since I started, I have met many wonderful people and have felt fulfilled. Besides working in the food closet once a week, I have volunteered as bookkeeper,

treasurer and now board chairperson. Being in this organization has provided me the opportunity to foster spiritual growth through putting faith, hope and love into action.



I am a long-time member of Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church, where I sing in the choir. I also serve with the women's group, United Women in Faith; we work on issues for women, youth, and children. I am chair of the CA/NV Beulah Older Adult Committee, which issues grants to other United Methodist Churches. I also serve as secretary of the Los Rios District, which includes over 35 churches in the area.

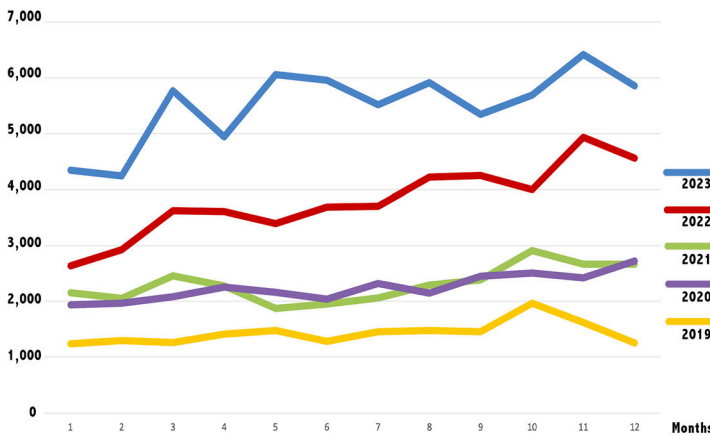
I look forward to serving in this new capacity for SSIP and to making a difference in our community, not only for the clients who come for food, but also for our volunteers, staff, and the agencies and grocery stores who provide the food for this remarkable mission.

**Shigeko Shibata, SSIP Board Chair**

### SSIP CLIENTS SERVED

Month	Households	Individuals
NOV.	6,422	18,154
DEC.	5,857	16,526
JAN.	6,424	18,193

### Families Served Monthly



## COMING THIS YEAR TO SSIP FOOD CLOSET

SSIP heads into 2024 with tremendous appreciation for the community of supporters that make our mission so remarkable. We give thanks to the volunteers, donors, partners, and agencies for their generosity and compassion. Here are some upcoming events to celebrate our caring community.

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon	Apr 25th
Big Day of Giving	May 2nd
Annual Fundraising Event	
Full Plates, Full Hearts	June 7th
KCRA3 Kids Can!	Fall
Donor Appreciation Event	Fall



Support SSIP during our region's annual 24-hour giving challenge, Big Day of Giving.

Every gift, no matter the size, will help us grow our impact in Sacramento County. Gifts will be accepted from April 18 to May 2.



## A WIN-WIN FOR SENIORS

Looking for a way to donate to the SSIP Food Closet and reduce your taxable income? If you are at least 73 years old and fortunate enough to have retirement income, keep reading.

It is possible to send a donation to SSIP directly from your IRA. Since SSIP is a charitable organization, the donation will not be taxed and you can use the full amount of the donation to offset your taxes. Please note that the donation could be made as a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your IRA. Make a donation and reduce your taxable income: everybody wins!

The date by which SSIP must receive the donation is December 31 for the 2024 tax year. Discuss this option with your financial adviser or tax preparer. For information, contact us at [funddevelopment@SSIPfoodcloset.org](mailto:funddevelopment@SSIPfoodcloset.org).

## SSIP LEADERSHIP

*(Continued from page 1)*

Last fall, the board promoted Simon Yeh to the newly created, full-time position of Food Closet Director. In addition to overseeing daily food closet operations, he provides leadership and support to the board and committees, focusing on business sustainability. Yeh is accountable to the SSIP Board and reports to the Board Chair.

Leadership changes began last summer after the Board of Directors held a day-long retreat facilitated by Lang & Associates. After the retreat, task forces looked closely at how the organization could evolve to effectively fulfill SSIP's mission. 2023 Board Chair Tom Busch spoke of the need to respond to the growing urgency to serve SSIP clients. Food distribution had already reached what was assumed to be the highest possible level.

Ultimately, changes began with revamping the structure of the decision-making body, the SSIP Board of Directors, which had grown to more than 20 members.

## FLORIN UMC DEPARTS SSIP

In December 2023, the SSIP Board of Directors regretfully accepted the congregation's decision to end their membership in the Partnership.

Florin UMC was a founding member of the SSIP Partnership in 1969.

We are grateful for the decades of congregational support, the performance of leadership roles by individuals and the dedication of former and current volunteers.

## DONATIONS IN MEMORY AND HONORING

*Donations received Dec 2023- Feb 2024*

*In Memory of Pamela Anderson*  
Robert Anderson

*In Memory of Bob Betts*  
Rebecca Kingsbury, Margaret & Charles Brown,  
VJ & SA Freeman, Judith A Townley

*In Memory of Laurie Birney*  
Pat Aguiar & Alfonso Ramirez

*In Honor of Craig Chalmers*  
David Ipps

*In Memory of Barbara J Hansen*  
Sue C Hansen

*In Memory of Grace Y. Hiuga*  
Larry Hiuga

*In Memory of Alan Logan*  
Susan Barker, Arlene Nelson, Nancy Mahaney,  
Michaëlle & Lisa Byam & Moses-Allan, Marlene Steele

*In Honor of Jan Merrill and Gary Bond*  
Todd Merrill

*In Memory of Fred Nichols*  
Douglas & Anna Skewes

*In Honor of Noriko & George Narasaki*  
Shigeko Shibata

*In Honor of Maryann Rabovsky*  
Rebecca Rabovsky

*In Memory of Abdul Razak Shaikh*  
Amy Hines-Shaikh

*In Honor of Shigeko Shibata*  
Francine Vujovich, Betty Y. Hirata

*In Memory of Larry Toy*  
Katherine Toy Gosney

*In Memory of Shirley Trimble*  
Joan Normington

*In Honor of Howard & Lauren Tsztoo*  
Cameron Yee

*In Memory of Jim Zazzera*  
Roy & Vicky Chastain, Lewis & Linda Whitney

*In Honor of Steve, Judy, Michelle, Sarah & Families*  
Marian Sheppard

*In Honor of Simon Yeh and SSIP Staff*  
Arthur Chan

*In Honor of the SSIP Staff & Volunteers*  
Katherine Toy Gosney

## JIM & WALLY HOFFSIS VOLUNTEERING: A WAY OF LIFE

By Susie Hennessy, SSIP Communications

Long-time SSIP volunteers Wally and Jim Hoffsis could be considered “career volunteers.” They began with the Peace Corps in Fiji, right out of college. Although they were told they’d be teaching math in Fiji, they ended up teaching chemistry, English, music, and health science for the tropics; Jim became the athletic coach. When asked if it was daunting to be suddenly responsible for so many things, Wally replied, “That’s just the way it was.” Evidently, their two years in the Peace Corps gave them a new outlook and would lead to more adventures in service to others. Being thrown into this life-changing experience “put them on a different trajectory,” said Jim.

After Fiji, Jim and Wally continued teaching, this time in West Virginia at a Job Corps center, where Wally taught English and Jim taught math. Job Corps is the largest free residential education and job training program for young adults in the U.S. What a great way to have a positive impact on young people. Subsequently, they moved to Florida where they lived for eleven years.



*Wally and Jim paused for a brief moment to respond to our photographer’s request.*

Eventually, they arrived in Sacramento when Jim was hired by the California Energy Commission. Before accepting the job, he conducted a geographical survey of the area to see if it would be a good place to live; he concluded that Sacramento was ideally located (as we all know!) for exploring the natural beauty of California: Lake Tahoe, San Francisco, Monterey and Yosemite are all a short trip away.

Now considered native Californians after 30 years, Wally and Jim take full advantage of life in Sacramento and have found even more ways to contribute to the community. Over time, they built up their volunteering resume, participating in parks cleanup, the Sacramento Food Bank, literacy tutoring and blood donation. According to Wally, volunteering became “a way of life.” Both spoke fondly of their experience with Sacramento Senior Gleaners, an organization in which volunteers “glean” or gather produce left in farm fields after harvest. The produce is then donated to food banks.

Like teaching high school in Fiji, volunteering can be an adventure. The couple recounted a memorable assignment they had with Senior Gleaners: They were given very vague directions to a farm field of butternut squash and told to pick all the squash and load it into their trucks. When they arrived, much to their surprise, the field was full of squash, as if it hadn’t yet been harvested. They got to work anyway and filled their bins in no time, all the while looking over their shoulder, wondering if they were in the right field. Were they gleaning or poaching? We will never know!

SSIP came into the picture about 10 years ago when Wally heard from a fellow librarian that the food closet was an unusual place. Both Jim and Wally were instantly inspired by how much the food closet was able to accomplish. For Jim, SSIP was like “the little engine that could,” doing so much with so little. They wanted to be part of this organization that was ever striving, “punching above its weight.” The commitment and hard work of the volunteers impressed them as well, and convinced them to become a part of SSIP.

These days, Wally and Jim are ever-present at the food closet. They continue their involvement with the Operations Committee after having served as co-chairs of the committee for four years. Operations are central to SSIP’s ability to receive, sort and distribute food. The Hoffsis’ involvement in Operations has proven instrumental in meeting the growing need for food in our community. In the words of Simon Yeh, “Wally and Jim are indispensable! They helped navigate the expansion of the emergency food distribution program at the SSIP Food Closet for the past four years. They were at the helm and kept operations going one challenge after another, going above and beyond the call of duty. For all their contributions, I am sincerely thankful.” As if that commitment was not enough, Wally is currently the Volunteer Coordinator and Jim serves on the Finance Committee.

When asked to share an unforgettable moment in volunteering, Wally recalled one day seeing a couple get their SSIP groceries, then proceed to sit down at the curb, pull out the peanut butter and a loaf of bread and devour it all at once. She understood immediately that people were hungry and really did need to be fed.  
*(Continued on page 5)*



# SSIP Food Closet Welcomes Several Volunteer Groups



**Golden 1 Credit Union** Leadership & HR delivered 12 SSIP volunteers. Thanks to leaders Heather, Kristin and Valerie.

Four area **Starbucks** sites sent 8 volunteers to SSIP. Thank you Roger and Rosie.

**CommonSpirit Health** representatives Bic, Arvin, and Elisha

## VOLUNTEERING

*(Continued from page 4)*

Jim still remembers trying to help a client whose rickety pull cart was falling apart. Jim went to find something to repair the cart and when he returned with some cord, he saw that another client had given the man one of his own shoelaces to fix the cart. Jim saw that even those with little to give find a way to help each other. As Wally says, "People are innately giving beings." Those small acts of kindness remind us that sharing what we have is part of being human.

Both Wally and Jim agree that working alongside other volunteers is an important factor. Being part of a group of people who are committed reinforces their sense of purpose.

These dedicated, career volunteers are optimistic about the future of the food closet. The outlook for SSIP is indeed bright, especially with the continued involvement of Wally and Jim Hoffsis.





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## THE SSIP MISSION

The primary mission of the SSIP Food Closet is to maintain and operate an emergency food distribution program to help alleviate food insecurity for Sacramento area residents. Partner faith-based organizations, with assistance from local businesses and other community members, provide the support and resources for the Food Closet's mission. In carrying out its mission, the Food Closet adheres to the values of service, integrity, stewardship and accountability.

## FAITH-BASED PARTNERS

Faith-based partner organizations, with assistance from local businesses and other community members, provide the support and resources for the Food Closet's mission.

### Members:

- **Bethany Presbyterian Church**  
Cathy Sapunor
- **Centennial United Methodist Church**  
Loretta Fransham
- **Faith Presbyterian Church**  
Tom Busch
- **Hope United Methodist Church**  
Venéta Forrest Saulny
- **Parkside Community Church, United Church of Christ**  
John Sugar
- **Parkview Presbyterian Church**  
Carla Hart
- **Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church**  
Shigeko Shibata
- **Saint Anthony Catholic Parish**  
Henry Sepulveda

## GROCERY PARTNERS

Special thanks to our grocery partners that play a vital role in providing fresh and frozen perishables, produce and dry goods for distribution. They make our work possible.

### Grocery Partners:

- **Bel Air (Rush River Dr.)**
- **Grocery Outlet (Florin Rd./Riverside Blvd.)**
- **Nugget Market (Florin Rd./Greenhaven Dr.)**
- **Raley's (Freeport Blvd.)**
- **Trader Joe's (Folsom Blvd.)**

## VOLUNTEERS HELP

Please **help us to recruit volunteers** for a variety of tasks needed to keep the Food Closet doors open. Contact us at (916) 428-5290 or [volunteers@SSIPFoodCloset.org](mailto:volunteers@SSIPFoodCloset.org).

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