



News from the Food Closet

SOUTH SACRAMENTO INTERFAITH PARTNERSHIP QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ♥ AUGUST 2021

“THAT’S WHY I DO IT!”

Volunteer and fund raiser extraordinaire, Jessie Carter, former chair of the SSIP Bowl-A-Thon and participant since 1999, was recently honored for her years of commitment to the Food Closet.

Jessie was dismayed when the 2020 fundraiser was cancelled due to the pandemic, and she was determined to not let it happen again in 2021. She set out to have a virtual Bowl-A-Thon, and it was a huge success, providing the Food Closet with the amazing sum of over \$8,000.



Left to right: Loretta Fransham, Jessie Carter, Rev. Jesse Larsen

In addition to her work as a veteran SSIP volunteer, Jessie recently completed over 27 years as a volunteer for Kaiser, and is also very active in her church, Bethany Presbyterian. She was honored at her home church with the presentation of a framed Certificate of Appreciation and a SSIP shirt.

When told that the funds she raised are greatly appreciated and will provide much needed food for those in need, Jessie responded, “That’s why I do it!”

Kathy Anderson, Board Secretary

FULL CIRCLE: GROWN IN THE COMMUNITY, FEEDING THE COMMUNITY

SSIP is fortunate to offer our clients locally grown produce thanks to local neighbors, community associations, and urban farms that donate the fresh vegetables and fruits from their gardens. Recently, many of these vegetables have come from our partner Table Farm & Table Bread, a social enterprise of The Table at Central United Methodist Church committed to growing food and making sourdough bread to share with Sacramento.

In the fall of 2020, The Table UMC began farming the one-fifth acre plot of land that was originally transformed into an urban farm by the non-profit Sowing Solidarity. The land, leased from St. Robert Catholic School, is situated at the heart of Hollywood Park about a half-mile away from SSIP.

Since June of this year every Tuesday and Thursday, Table Farm has been delivering several banana boxes of fresh vegetables harvested



TABLE FARM & TABLE BREAD
A ministry of The Table UMC

just that morning (lettuce, squash, zucchinis, and more). This super fresh produce is immediately added to the produce bag for our clients.

Table Farm is always excited to welcome new volunteers Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings. Community volunteers gather to cultivate and tend to pesticide-free produce and flowers. The harvest then goes to organizations such as SSIP and Tubman House, as well as to neighbors through weekly produce and flower subscriptions. Then, on the last Saturday of each month, children and youth gather for activities on the farm. Produce and flower subscriptions (think tomatoes, peppers, zinnias, and more) are still available to the public!

To volunteer, participate in family activities, or sign-up for a subscription, visit www.thetable.farm. All are welcome!

Chloe McElyea (Table Farm) and Simon Yeh (SSIP Food Closet)



WHAT LIES AHEAD?

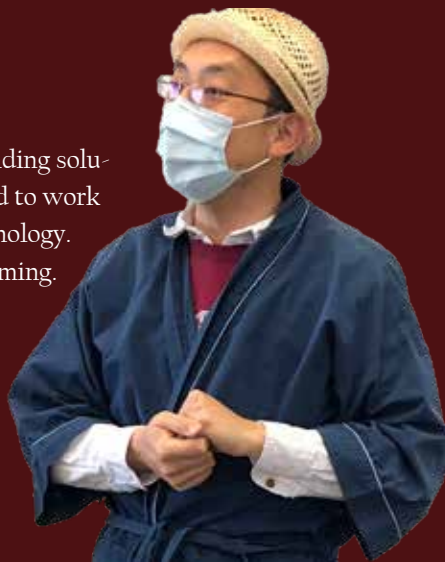
With everyone's efforts, we successfully navigated the COVID-19 crisis, incident-free. Volunteers are vaccinated. Masks are optional. Computer registration returns. It may seem business as usual, but we must remain on alert, for we are not out of the woods yet.

With the COVID-19 storm clouds in the rear-view mirror, what lies ahead? This year's theme is "keeping operations going". SSIP remains focused on operational sustainability. With the unprece-

dent growth and expansion, we are finding solutions to address capacity constraints, and to work smarter and not harder by utilizing technology. Stay tuned because exciting times are coming.

We cannot thank you enough for your continued support, in the form of hard dollars or precious time, which remain the cornerstone of our success.

Simon Yeh, Food Closet Manager



FUND THE NEED: FOOD CLOSET MANAGER FOR A DAY



During our successful fundraiser, Full Plates, Full Hearts, you might have noticed a silent auction item fittingly described as "Become the 'Food Closet Manager for a Day'. Shadow our own FC Manager, Simon Yeh, as he multi-tasks another day at the Food Closet". There weren't a lot of on-line bidders for this item but ultimately, I won the bid, and on May 21st, I redeemed that auction item.

Fridays at the Food Clos-

et are often busy days. We push through plenty of food in exchange for more than 100 tickets representing households. I'm usually working on one side or the other of the staging/delivery window, alongside ten other volunteers, many of whom are also from my church Centennial UMC.

Knowing me, a few of them were expecting some kind of

hijinks, and on that morning, I did not let them down. I grabbed a few things from my wardrobe at home, including hats and other items. I politely asked Simon to wear an outfit during our three hours together. His costume included regulation size baseball stockings, a cotton bathrobe, a freaky T-shirt, and an assortment of hats.

I did ask Simon to "break a sweat" at the USDA station for much of the day. I also asked him to run errands for Shirley and myself at the staging area, which he did in a somewhat dramatic manner, using a string of positive affirmations that clearly contributed to the playfulness of our role exchange.

At one point there was a client issue outside that I gladly turned over to Simon to solve using his direct yet calm problem-solving skills. At the end of the shift, I assessed the experience of "being in charge" of the Food Closet as a positive one.

The day also allowed for some additional entertainment for our volunteers and staff. Ultimately, Simon let his hair down (or in this case, wore a funny hat or two) for us that morning, and showed us that being Simon for a day is a joyful ride. We're lucky to have him, and thankful for his selfless leadership.

Mark Hanzlik, SSIP Volunteer

Editors Note: Thank you Mark and Simon for your sense of fun. Mark, we appreciate the many ways that you support the SSIP Food Closet.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Kathy Anderson, SSIP Board Secretary, took fliers to local schools to let them know the Food Closet is here for their students' families. Fliers were also posted at south Sacramento libraries. Many families struggle during the summer to feed kids who normally receive subsidized meals at school. Thanks for this special effort, Kathy!

FUND THE NEED: FOOD CLOSET TREES GET A SERIOUS TRIM

For a long time we had noticed that five of the trees surrounding the SSIP Food Closet needed some serious trimming—more than could be accomplished by a couple of volunteers with pole pruners! Some of the trees had dead or broken branches that posed a safety threat, and others rubbed the tops of delivery vehicles.

During our “Full Plates, Full Hearts” fundraiser, tree trimming was included as one of the “Fund the Need” opportunities. Aided by the donations received that eve-



ning, we were able to get the trees trimmed on June 12th—at long last.

Although their company doesn't normally work weekends, Tree Tech Services accommodated our schedule by putting together a special crew for Saturday service since it would have been too risky to do the work during Food Closet open hours.

The trees look much better and, most importantly, no longer pose a risk to staff, volunteers, or clients. A hearty thank you to all of our donors!

Jim and Wally Hoffis, Co-Chairs Food Closet

“REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE”: WIN-WIN-WIN!

SSIP has always embraced the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” ethic. We reuse as many bags, boxes, and egg cartons as possible for distributing food to clients.

All cardboard that we can't reuse is recycled. Volunteers, primarily Gary Aycock and Craig Chalmers, laboriously load roughly 1,000 pounds of cardboard into a van about twice a month and take it to a recycling facility. At the current price of a penny a pound, it barely covers the cost of gas to get it there, but the cardboard is kept out of the landfill and it is the right thing to do.

Volunteers also recycle our cans and bottles. Until last fall, however, dented cans and food unsuitable for distribution went

into the dumpster. There are now new requirements for diverting food waste from the landfill. Fortunately, we were able to engage a farmer to take all of our food waste twice a week to feed his animals.

An ancillary benefit of these diversions from the landfill is that, as a result, we have been able to reduce the size of our dumpster and enjoy the concomitant significant cost savings. A rare win-win-win situation!

Jim and Wally Hoffis, Co-Chairs Food Closet

HOW CAN I HELP?

Amazon purchases: Did you know that by using Amazon at <https://smile.amazon.com> .05% of your purchases could be donated to SSIP? At the top of the Amazon Smile page, in the left corner, click on: *Supporting* and type *South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership*.

Volunteer: Please help us to recruit willing volunteers for a variety of tasks needed to keep the Food Closet doors open. Please contact Simon Yeh at (916) 428-5290 or volunteers@SSIPFoodCloset.org.

Donate Funds: SSIP needs your monetary donations to keep our doors open and overhead expenses paid. Your dollars are leveraged to purchase food at incredibly low cost. We appreciate your donation through our website www.SSIPFoodCloset.org/give or send your checks using the enclosed envelope.

Food: We accept recently purchased canned goods and staples, and fresh fruit and vegetables from home or community gardens.

IN APPRECIATION FOR GRANTS

The Food Closet is grateful to have received two donations and a grant recently. The Rotary Club of South Sacramento donated \$2,000. They found a way to generate these funds even though they could not have their annual crab feed. The Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church gave \$4,000. Finally, we received a federal grant of \$7,800 from the Emergency Food & Shelter Program run by Sacramento County. All of these enable SSIP to pay the bills, run the vans, pay the four dedicated part-time staffers and distribute the food!

Jan Neeley, SSIP Fund Development Chair



ssipfoodcloset.org

5625 24th St
Sacramento, CA 95822

PAPER OR DIGITAL?

You have received this newsletter in a mailed, hard copy. If you prefer to receive only an electronic version, please email your request to info@ssipfoodcloset.org

THE SSIP MISSION

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

A big thank you to our partner grocers and a hero's salute to the SSIP volunteer drivers that pick up food every day at these grocers:

- Grocery Outlet (Florin Rd./Riverside Blvd.)
- Nugget Market (Florin Rd./Greenhaven Drive)
- Raley's (Freeport Boulevard)
- Trader Joe's (Folsom Boulevard)

The South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership is comprised of these local congregations:

- Bethany Presbyterian, 5625 24th St
- Centennial United Methodist, 5401 Freeport Blvd
- Faith Presbyterian, 625 Florin Rd
- Florin United Methodist, 7560 Florin Rd
- Hope United Methodist, 6161 Valley High Dr
- Parkside Community UCC, 5700 S. Land Park Dr
- Sacramento Japanese United Methodist, 6929 Franklin Blvd
- Saint Anthony Catholic, 660 Florin Rd

YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FUNDS URGENT NEEDS

Here are some of the ways your donations have helped the Food Closet to respond to unexpected expenses:

One of the old commercial refrigerators reached the end of its service life and gave out. A replacement is on order at \$4,700, including set-up.

A utility van needed \$1,000 worth of repairs to solve an over heating problem. It is running well again and back to picking up food daily from grocery stores.

Thank you for allowing SSIP to deal with these needs and keep our daily operations going.

YEAR TO DATE STATS

	Households	Individuals
January	2,151	8,608
February	2,051	8,254
March	2,457	9,929
April	2,275	9,134
May	1,872	7,069
June	1,950	6,613
Total	12,756	49,607

Associate members

- Fruitridge Christian, 4445 Fruitridge Rd
- Lutheran Church of the Master, 1900 Potrero Wy
- Prince of Peace, 7501 Franklin Blvd
- Wesley United Methodist, 5010 15th Ave