



# ST. JOSEPH CENTER

## FALL NEWSLETTER 2008

SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1976

## Advancement Through Enhancement

St. Joseph Center kicked off summer 2008 with a wonderful array of opportunities for clients and staff alike as we moved into our new 30,000 square foot facility on Hampton Drive. The building unites five programs under one roof, providing a greater variety of services and closer coordination between programs. The multi-purpose space allows for program enhancements and additions, including simultaneous client activities ranging from after school programs for children to computer training for adults. Programs now housed under one roof include our Family Center and Food Pantry, Early Learning Center, Senior Services, Affordable Housing and the Culinary Training Program.

Prior to moving in, toddlers and preschoolers at the Early Learning Center had just one sandbox for outside play and modest classrooms for each age group. Now, the children enjoy a stimulating environment, rich with more defined spaces that enhance the learning process and better promote age-appropriate development. New interior areas include a listening center, a woodworking space, a computer room and larger building block areas. Outside play is more dynamic with a carousel, a slide, a sandbox and climbing structures. Staff members happily report that the children are learning harmoniously and are participating even more enthusiastically in activities.



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## An Outcome-Driven Visionary

The arrival of Va Lecia Adams, Ph.D. as St. Joseph Center's new Executive Director in March 2008, marked the beginning of a new era. With Culver City roots, Dr. Adams, brings local heart combined with a dynamic portfolio of academic experience and professional accomplishments in government, health care and social services.

She started as an undergraduate at USC interested in law, but through graduate studies at Ball State and Stanford Universities, discovered her passion and affinity for helping low-income youth, both in a clinical setting and through direct service programs. While working on her Ph.D. at Stanford, Dr. Adams served as Executive Director of the Stanford Medical Youth Science Program. There, her interest and activity in the nonprofit sector expanded to include social service for veterans and the elderly.

Dr. Adams spent six years as Director of Transitional Living for United Friends of the Children, honing her approachable and focused management style while creating socially impactful programs such as Pathways, an 18 month transitional housing program that assists emancipated foster youth with obtaining employment and securing their own apartments.

"We are committed to our longstanding mission and to offering comprehensive services," states Dr. Adams, "this resource-rich environment allows for the development of cutting edge programs." St. Joseph Center serves a diverse community and offers a multitude of integrated services that the new facility on Hampton makes even more accessible to working poor families and individuals.

"With this holistic approach, we are able to place an emphasis on prevention in early childhood development and intervention-based approaches for adults," she declares, "we are focused on results and measurable outcomes." Armed with this outlook, Dr. Adams is the ideal leader to take the helm of a ship whose journey is guided by the needs of the community it serves.

### HOW TO REACH US

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## A Fresh Perspective on Giving Back

Guy Fitzwater flashes a welcoming smile at Food Pantry clients as he hands out supplemental grocery bags for the week. A dedicated donor, he has also been volunteering at the Pantry for the last two years, working alongside Pantry coordinator Delfia Gonzalez, who is something of a fixture, having worked at St. Joseph Center for 25 years and counting. Since the move into the new building, Delfia and the volunteers have enjoyed a more spacious work area and increased storage. Diapers are now being distributed out of the Pantry, and the large walk-in refrigerator allows for donations of larger quantities of perishable foods. A blackboard filled with notices for upcoming Family Center activities greets clients at the door and makes it easier for program staff to disseminate information. Meanwhile, a dedicated delivery area and separate doors for client entrance and exit create an ideal flow that ensures grocery distribution goes smoothly every morning.

“Clients have taken more ownership of the space, recognizing that it was built for them,” states Family Center Program Manager, Rebecca Amado-Sprigg. Clients are certainly more peaceful as they wait their turn, enabling them to interact better with staff and volunteers.

When asked what the most rewarding part of his time spent at the Pantry is, Guy responds, “I enjoy meeting the people we help, but believe it or not, it’s helping Delfia here—she’s a very hard worker and we’ve made friends,” he continues, “I first started at Bread and Roses Café after my wife’s friend Janice Minton told me about St. Joseph Center, but soon realized that the Pantry needed more of my help.” Such is their friendship that he has taken to bringing a miniature angel back to Delfia every time he returns from his many travels around the world. And every time they work together, they bring fun and laughter to the Pantry.

## Advancement Through Enhancement

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Older children have access to improved learning programs through the Family Center and Food Pantry Program, which offers year-round education-based initiatives that include Mentoring for teens along with Summer Arts classes and Afterschool Tutoring sessions for kids from 1st grade to high school. A new training lab equipped with 16 laptop computers enables us to offer workshops in computer literacy and job search strategies for clients of all ages.

“The professionalism that the new building calls for allows us to do our jobs in a more efficient and seamless manner,” states Family Center case manager Jocelyn Mayo. Programs are able to efficiently coordinate their efforts on behalf of clients with overlapping needs. For example, Family Center and Senior Services report that it’s easier to get things done for clients when the Affordable Housing Program is right next door. Private offices for all programs ensure confidentiality during case management sessions that include crisis intervention and life-coaching. The Food Pantry itself is more spacious with significantly increased storage and a walk-in refrigerator shared with the Culinary Training Program.

At the heart of the new building is the Culinary Training Program (CTP). With 1,500 square feet of learning space, CTP is outfitted with professional kitchen equipment that includes Southbend rangetops, convection ovens and grills along with an industrial-grade Robot Coupe food processor. Students are now comfortably situated in a brightly lit environment more conducive to learning and participation.

“We look forward to serving clients in our new state-of-the-art building,” states Executive Director, Va Lecia Adams, Ph.D., she continues, “the new facilities position us to offer enriched services that promote personal empowerment and self-sufficiency.”

## Bread and Roses Café Volunteer Sees Her Way Through Over 75,000 Meals



**“There’s a need to give back to the community and volunteering feels good.” – Sheelagh Cullen, long time volunteer**

Sheelagh Cullen has volunteered weekly for more than 13 years at our Bread and Roses Café, which serves hot meals to upwards of 150 homeless people each day. Through generously dedicating her time, she has met many people and filled many roles. Today, Sheelagh starts her volunteer time by cutting fruit, but over the years she has served meals, washed dishes, and even cooked. Sheelagh remembers when one morning she made only enough meat pie and potatoes for 40 people, but 60 came to eat, “I think I prayed and at that moment someone arrived at the back door with a donation of sandwiches.”

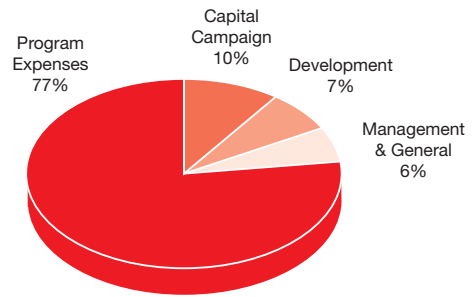
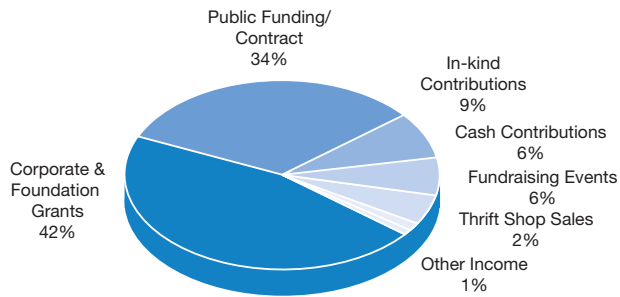
During her tenure, Sheelagh has seen improvements that have helped the Café become a true restaurant: paper plates have been replaced with real dishes and simple sandwiches with complete, well-balanced meals. Still, she notes, “The spirit of the place hasn’t changed.” Sheelagh had the privilege of knowing Sr. Rose Cecilia Harrington, CSJ, the Café’s first chef and coordinator. Sheelagh remembers how, “Sr. Rose believed that we are not here to just feed people and get them out. She wanted us to communicate and talk with them, learn their names, and never rush them – the human touch.” Sheelagh feels volunteering has increased her awareness of the cross section of people who are homeless and, living three blocks from Bread and Roses, is glad to help her community in this way.



## Financial Highlights Year Ending June 30, 2007

REVENUE - \$7,863,891

EXPENSE - \$5,925,311



## Program Service Accomplishments

St. Joseph Center proudly helps 6,000 people on the Westside develop the inner resources and tools needed to become productive, stable and self-supporting members of the community. Some of our program accomplishments in 06-07 include:

- Assisting 210 Veterans with money management and/or representative payee services
- Providing 86 children from low-income and homeless families with full-day child care
- Guiding 419 families toward self-sufficiency through case management
- Placing 40 homeless seniors in transitional housing
- Graduating 37 culinary training students into employment
- Placing 87 individuals in permanent housing
- Serving 24,857 hot meals to homeless men, women and children

## Getting Involved

Volunteers and donations are an essential part of serving the clients of St. Joseph Center. Please consider participating in or donating in the following ways:

### Year-Round Volunteer Service

Serve with one of our programs as a regularly scheduled volunteer. Help our clients and staff to serve meals, assist with childcare, visit with clients and share your skills with our programs. Work with Volunteer Services to design your volunteer placement depending on your schedule and interests.

### Group Service Projects

Partner with St. Joseph Center by organizing a collection of items for clients, volunteering with programs, or explore other ways to share your generosity with our clients.

### Younger Volunteers

Children ages 12 and older are welcome to arrange independent volunteer hours with our Bread and Roses Café and our Family Center Food Pantry.

### Summer Service

May to September our programs need extra volunteers, ideal for students on break.

### Seasonal Giving Opportunities

To make someone's holidays special, donate Thanksgiving meal items or sign up in November and December to adopt a client or client family holiday wishlist and brighten their holiday season (anonymously).

You can make a difference with our programs and clients. Please call 310-396-6468 ext. 326 for more information.

### St. Joseph Center's Year-Round Wishlist

- Diapers (sizes 3-5) and baby wipes
- Shampoo and laundry detergent
- Fast food and grocery gift certificates
- Staple foodstuffs including proteins, vegetables, fruit, juice, milk and starches
- Socks and underwear (all sizes)
- High chairs, strollers and car seats
- Toiletries and hygiene kits



# \$200,000 Grant from S. Mark Taper Foundation Supports High Quality Child Care

In 2007, the S. Mark Taper Foundation awarded St. Joseph Center the largest grant it has ever received for program expenses: \$200,000 to support the Center's two intensive early childhood development programs, Early Learning Center (ELC) and Infant Toddler Development Center (ITDC). The S. Mark Taper Foundation, founded in 1989, is a private family foundation dedicated to enhancing the quality of people's lives by supporting nonprofit organizations and their work in our communities.

These grant funds helped cover core operating expenses such as salaries for teachers and meals for the 85 children ages 12 weeks to five years that were enrolled during the year. Both ELC and ITDC combine all-day care with strong parental involvement and regular consultation with clinical professionals who help ensure that children who are experiencing developmental delays receive treatment to help them get back on track. With their children in good hands, parents can work full time or take classes to help improve their earning potential. "Most of our families have so little income that the programs are free for them," said Leticia Garcia Greenman, St. Joseph Center's Director of Family Services, "but the state only covers about two-thirds of what it costs us to operate these programs. We are so grateful to the S. Mark Taper Foundation for recognizing the importance of maintaining an environment where children from low-income families can thrive."

A major factor that led the S. Mark Taper Foundation to make its grant for the childcare programs last year was St. Joseph Center's impending move into its brand new facility. "We're like a new homeowner," states St. Joseph Center Executive Director, Va Lecia Adams, Ph.D., "we have a beautiful new home, but owning always costs more in the short-run than renting. We deeply appreciate how this grant from the S. Mark Taper Foundation has helped us get a good start in our new home."

## Fashionable Finds for the Resourceful Shopper at our Thrift Store

2545 Lincoln Boulevard  
Just North of Washington Blvd. in Venice



### ST. JOSEPH CENTER

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