

The ways people give

'No good deed is too small'

-Helen Bartolotta

By Margot Howard
Director of Development / Father Joe's Villages

Father Joe Carroll hit the nail on the head when he coined the phrase Neighbors Helping Neighbors®. In those three simple words he summed up how people

help change the world by helping change lives. In celebration of the season when many are thinking about ways they can give, we share these personal stories of our donors and volunteers.

How the Bartolottas say thank you

“A gift today meets a need today.”

Judy Bartolotta

Despite full lives of their own, Judy and Vince Bartolotta make time to give back and share the blessings of their abundant lives by supporting Father Joe's Villages. For more than 20 years they have contributed hours of volunteer service and made leadership gifts to create and sustain life-changing projects and programs.

“One should leave a place just a little bit better than he or she found it,” Vince says. “Giving to St. Vincent's is our way of saying thanks.”

Today the Bartolottas' energy is dedicated to raising awareness and funds for a new multi-purpose center that will provide critically needed opportunities for the poor at St. Vincent de Paul Village.

The “Three Buildings in One” facility will replace the current Bishop Maher Center. The facility will enhance living and program space for transitional housing residents; provide three floors for children's programs, and three floors of permanent affordable housing for San Diego's working singles and families.

The parents of four grown sons, Judy and Vince are particularly interested in developing resources for children. Judy, who has a background as a pediatric nurse practitioner, cares deeply about preventive medicine and well-child health care.

“Often children bear the brunt of poverty and are the last to be considered,” Judy says.

Judy and Vince both cite the success rate of individuals who access the continuum of care as a reason for their support.

“We want to be part of a team that creates visible results,” Judy says. “We



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can trust that our donation goes where St. Vincent's says it will go. A gift today meets a need today.”

Vince adds, “My suggestion is that those considering making a gift look at the track record and overall benefits of the money donated. Look at the amount that goes to the end product versus administration and look at the extent of local needs met. You'll find that St. Vincent de Paul Village is at the top.”

Vince believes that the innovative continuum of care developed by Father Joe's Villages has moved social services beyond providing a handout.

“It is personally gratifying to see so many

Philanthropists Vince and Judy Bartolotta on a recent trip to Africa.

families and individuals given back their dignity,” Vince says. “For me it is a ‘warm fuzzy,’ if you will.”

Looking ahead, Vince sees a road of many challenges.

“The United States has come upon difficult economic times. Contributors who normally make gifts may not be able to give as much this year if at all,” Vince says. “Some of us will need to dig a little deeper this year when we make our gifts. There is a limited pool of money that charities can access.” ■

“One should leave a place just a little bit better than he or she found it.”

Vince Bartolotta



Helen Bartolotta in a 2003 photo.

Helen Bartolotta's inspiration to “always share with your neighbor” came from her friend Rosa.

“Her father worked hard all day. When he returned home each evening he gardened,” Helen recalls. “There were nine children in the family and many of them helped him in the garden. When the first crop of summer vegetables was ready, Rosa's father asked the children to share the homegrown food with their neighbors first. It impressed me so much that the initial crop was always given to others first.”

The “neighbors” Helen shares with include the teens at Toussaint Academy of the Arts and Sciences and nuns at a convent in Tijuana. For many years she has clipped coupons for food, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, shampoo and other items, and made smart money-saving purchases to help the teens. She has clipped so many coupons that Father Joe has dubbed her “The Coupon Lady.” For 15 years she has contributed rice, beans, salsa, flour and other needed items on a regular basis to the convent.

At 91, Helen doesn't do as much shopping as she used to, but she still encourages family and friends to save product labels and proof of purchase coupons that can be redeemed by Father Joe's Villages for merchandise.

“I've lived quite awhile and seen much progress in the world in my years. I've always tried to help where I can,” Helen says. “It's no trouble, no trouble at all, and no good deed is too small.” ■



VILLAGE NEWS Patricia M. Walsh

Barbara Menard plays guitar in the chapel at the Joan Kroc Center.

Menard Family Foundation helps those with less

Awareness about the needs of others bloomed early in Barbara Menard, who has served for years as a cantor during the monthly Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Village. Her father, Bernard, and mother, Mary, were children of the Great Depression. Remembering their struggles through hard economic times, they made it a priority to reach out to those with less.

"My mother was a World War II nurse and genuinely cared about people her entire life," Barbara says. "Both of my parents believed in the importance of St. Vincent de Paul Village and were true champions for Father Joe."

Bernard and Mary's legacy lives on through the Menard Family Foundation. An active steward of her family's interests, Barbara heads the foundation. Her background as an experienced social worker gives her a well-informed perspective when making funding decisions.

"Some have much while others have so little," Barbara says. "And today, as the middle class is struggling harder to make ends meet, it is imperative that those of us who are able to make contributions to Father Joe's Villages continue to do so, and, if possible, at an increased level to help offset the numbers of people who won't be able to contribute this



Mary and Bernard Menard in 1988 on a cruise on the Rhine River.

year. It is a joy and privilege to do so."

Barbara is impressed by the Village staff and volunteer commitment "to treat every individual with dignity – no matter who it is." She is also impressed with Father Joe and admires his extraordinary focus to serve the poor and his skill at turning all kinds of situations into ones that help our neighbors in need.

"I'll never forget the time a big truck carrying canned foods was in an accident and all of the cans came spilling out of the semi, literally covering the freeway. As soon as he heard about it, Father Joe called and got the dented cans – which of course contained perfectly good foods – donated for the kitchen. This was a wonderful way for Father Joe to turn one company's major headache into something good." ■

Jane Ryan's personal triumph is felt around the world

Jane Ryan at the Village with Father Joe's roses planted in honor of his mother, Kitty.



VILLAGE NEWS Patricia M. Walsh

Twenty years ago Jane Ryan was supposed to die. At best, she had a 20 percent chance to keep cancer at bay for five years. "So, I decided that if I could beat this I would work to help others," Jane says.

In 1984, Jane was invited by her friend Ginny Hoy Risch to join the Ladies of Charity, today known as the Village Ladies Guild. "It's a very nice group of women from many faith traditions and walks of life. We meet once a month and we have many wonderful projects keeping us busy."

A dedicated volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul Village for nearly 25 years, Jane has personally touched the lives of thousands. In Children's Services she has nurtured little ones. At the receptionist desk at the Joan Kroc Center, Jane has comforted neighbors, greeting them with dignity and kindness. As a docent she has shared the Village's story of hope and transformation with visitors from around the world.

People from all walks of life have been on

the tour of the Village with Jane – social workers from places like South Africa, Russia, Ireland and Poland, and public officials from across the nation developing programs to serve the homeless; students from nearly every high school, college and university in San Diego; police academy trainees, and Girl Scouts troops.

"It happens time and again," says Jane, "Visitors come in and see what we do here and are astounded at how comprehensive we are. I would encourage everyone to come in for a tour. Homelessness is a serious situation and when we show what we are doing here – well, it's a joyful thing."

Jane remains inspired by all she's met and will never forget the young boy who took a tour of the Village with his family. "Before we began the tour the boy asked me, 'What do homeless people look like?' I told him, 'Just like you. They are your neighbors!'" ■

"Homelessness is a serious situation and when we show what we are doing here – well, it's a joyful thing."

Jane Ryan

Join us

We invite you to share the joy of transforming lives at Father Joe's Villages.

VILLAGE TOURS:

To arrange a tour of the Village, please contact Laura Kojima - 619.645.6312, ext 1102

VILLAGE LADIES GUILD:

For information, please contact Virginia LaMendola - 619.435.2108

HOST A DRIVE:

Collect new toys, clothes, blankets or food. For information, please contact Oscar Labiano - 619.446.2702

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

For information, please contact Laura Kojima - 619.645.6312, ext 1102

COLLECT COUPONS:

To obtain a product list for label redemptions, please contact Geraldine Englen - 619.462.5499

To make a contribution, please contact Margot Howard - 619.446.2108.