



A Publication of West Valley Community Services

# west valley CAN

Community Action Newsletter

Fall 2008

## Families in Crisis: *Even in Affluent Silicon Valley*

A family of four living in silicon valley needs to earn no less than \$77,069 a year just to cover the basics. This income might be sufficient for a "bare bones" existence but does not allow for extras such as car repairs, medical emergencies, or a savings account.



For many living in silicon valley, living paycheck to paycheck is almost a given. Single adults must earn twice the hourly minimum wage to pay for food, healthcare, housing, transportation, utilities and taxes. A single mother with two children can't get by on any less than an annual salary of \$65,864. Childcare expenses almost equal housing and utility costs with little left over for other necessities.

In response to the exorbitant cost of living in this area, families can receive food and financial assistance from West Valley Community Services (WVCS) if their monthly income is \$1,574 (almost twice that of the federal poverty line). However, the average annual income for families we serve is \$16,058.

After paying for fixed expenses such as rent, childcare, utilities and transportation, there is little money left for food. The majority of those receiving assistance have jobs but still struggle to provide enough nutritious food for themselves and their families. In addition to experiencing hunger and food insecurity, many we serve face chronic health conditions as a result of eating inexpensive, high-fat, calorie-dense food.

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## HOUSE OF HOPE *Transforming Community Blight into Community Light*

Almost two years ago, Calvary Church of Los Gatos purchased a residential, single-family home adjacent to their property. Unfortunately, the home on Los Gatos Blvd. was a disappointing blight to the community and a constant source of concern for the Los Gatos police.

Today, West Valley Community Services is working in partnership with Calvary Church to transform this home into a food pantry -- a new source of hope for those in need in the Town of Los Gatos and its surrounding communities.

With one volunteer-run food pantry in Cupertino, this second pantry location opening soon in Los Gatos helps WVCS further its mission to battle hunger in Silicon Valley.

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“Maintaining a balanced and healthy diet that includes fresh produce, meats, grains and milk is extremely cost prohibitive for low income families. They simply can’t afford it,” comments Executive Director, Naomi Nakano-Matsumoto.

*It is impossible for children to thrive when they are primarily eating fast food.*

~ Naomi Nakano-Matsumoto  
Executive Director

According to Nakano-Matsumoto, “Our responsibility is not only to alleviate hunger but to nourish the bodies and minds of those who are struggling to make ends meet. It is impossible for children to thrive when they are primarily eating fast food. The quality of food we provide is just as important as the quantity.” WVCS has increased its focus on acquiring fresh produce for families. WVCS offers a growing list of fresh produce including oranges, broccoli, green beans, carrots, squash and other produce when available.



# Prop 10 Tobacco Tax

## Revenues help build strong families

Ever wonder how Prop.10, a 50 cent tax increase on cigarettes, would benefit children? FIRST 5 California, created by Prop.10 in 1998, provides

resources and services to promote early childhood development and school readiness.

It has been approximated that Prop.10 generates \$590 million annually. With this funding, FIRST 5 has been able to create many types of programs, services, and resources to support children prenatal through age 5. The Family Partner Program at WVCS, developed by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, supports families by personally connecting them to programs and services based on each family’s specific needs. Many families are connected with a Family Partner due

to concerns about their child’s development or behaviors. It can be very difficult and intimidating when navigating through the system of services. In fact, the challenge might just be knowing where to start. This is the case for all types of families, wealthy or struggling. Without the correct information it can be overwhelming and frustrating not being able to access services. Imagine being placed in the middle of a maze

with no clues, directions, or support. Getting the appropriate services is similar to navigating through a maze. Some families may require guidance in reaching their goal. The WVCS Family Partner Program has received many positive feedbacks from families, teachers, and community members. It looks like our tax dollars truly do benefit children by successfully assisting and supporting families.

## Food Insecurity and Shame: Providing Families Safe Support

A single mom with four children who uses the food pantry regularly indicated to her case manager that she loves the volunteers in the WVCS pantry and feels that they treat her with dignity and respect. She said she used to feel very guilty about coming to the pantry, but in order to raise her four children she continues to come.

“But I don’t tell my kids where the food is coming from,” said the single mom – and she is not alone. In the affluent communities of the west valley, many people who access the WVCS food pantry express feelings of guilt and shame about getting “free food.” Some even associate “free food” with begging for food,

which can lead to negative emotions such as hopelessness and desperation. WVCS case managers explain to clients that the food pantry serves as a safety net from the community; an opportunity to share community resources



where they are needed most. WVCS invites clients to shop the pantry for foods, similar to a grocery store.

Open M-F, 8am-noon and 1pm-5pm, and pantry hours are extended to 8pm on Thursdays to accommodate clients who work during the day.

Founded in 1973 by three public health nurses, the Cupertino Roundup became incorporated as Cupertino Community Services, Inc. in 1976.

In early 2008 our name was changed to  
*West Valley Community Services*  
to better reflect the communities we serve:

the West Valley communities of Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga, West San Jose and the unincorporated mountain regions.

*"The mission of West Valley Community Services is to encourage the sharing of community resources; to provide basic human needs in a caring and dignified environment; and to provide opportunities for volunteers to participate in West Valley Community Services' activities."*

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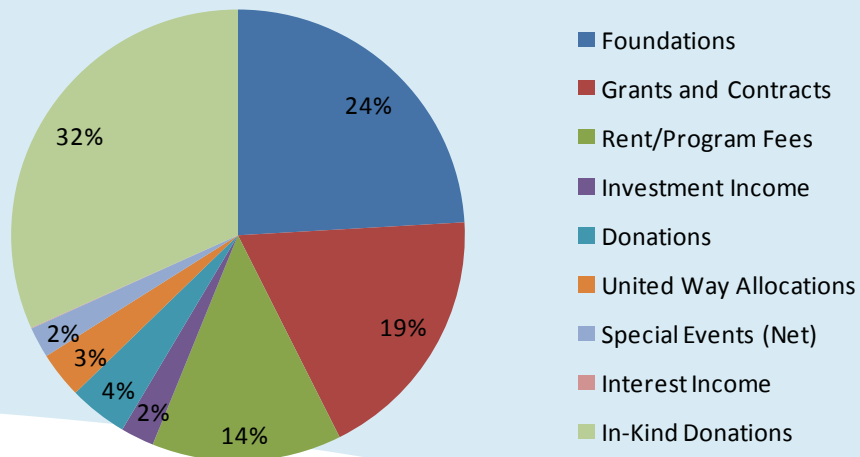


[www.wvcommunityservices.org](http://www.wvcommunityservices.org)

# Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Annual Report

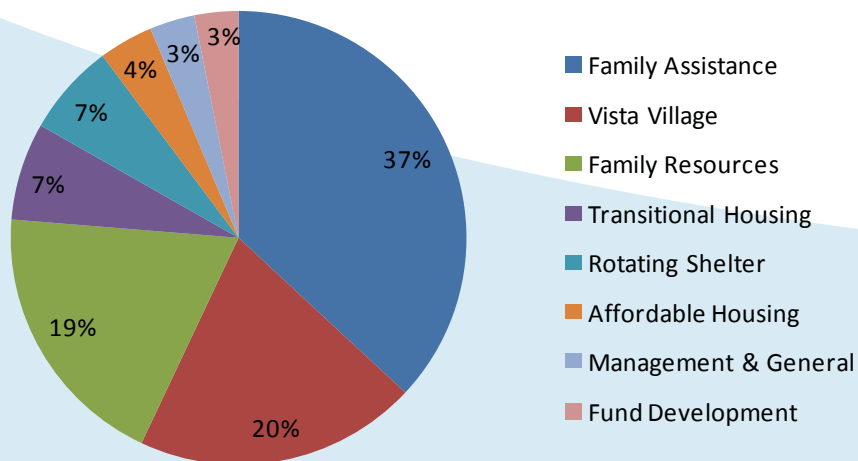
## REVENUES

Donations	\$89,497
United Way Allocations	\$70,475
Grants and Contracts	\$394,697
Foundations	\$514,172
Special Events	\$46,999
Rent/Program Fees	\$289,942
Interest Income	\$1,077
Investment Income	(\$51,180)
In-Kind Donations	\$676,570
<b>TOTAL REVENUES:</b>	<b>\$2,032,249</b>



## EXPENSES

Family Assistance	\$845,181
Vista Village Apartments	\$461,151
Family Resources	\$441,103
Transitional Housing	\$158,585
Rotating Shelter	\$150,430
Affordable Housing	\$88,747
Management & General	\$73,462
Fund Development	\$71,825
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$2,290,484</b>



## NET ASSETS

Increase/Decrease	(258,235)
At Start of Fiscal Year	\$2,369,037
At End of Fiscal Year	\$2,110,802
Endowment Fund Balance	\$1,174,563

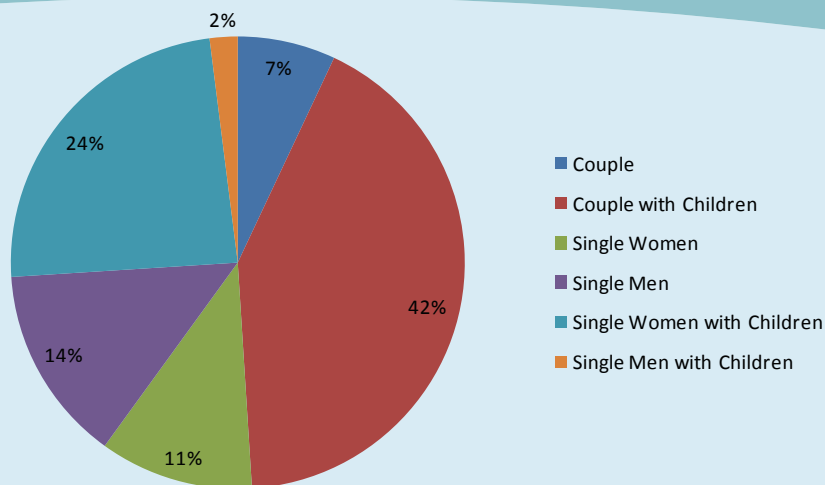
# community benefits

**6,159** clients served

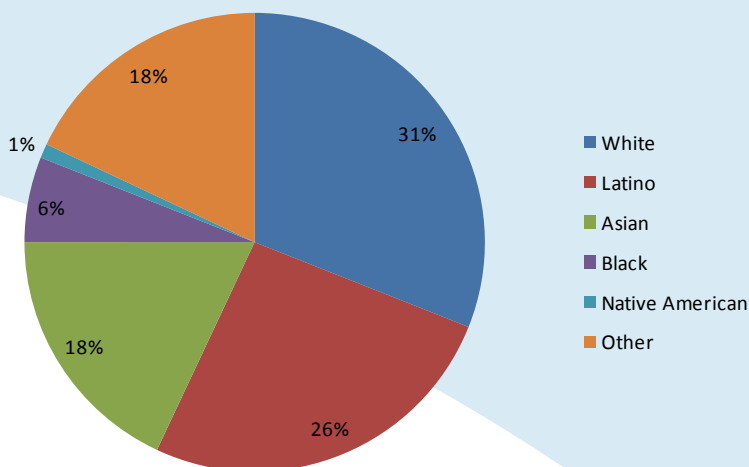
**262,535** lbs. of food distributed

**\$101,885** financial aid provided

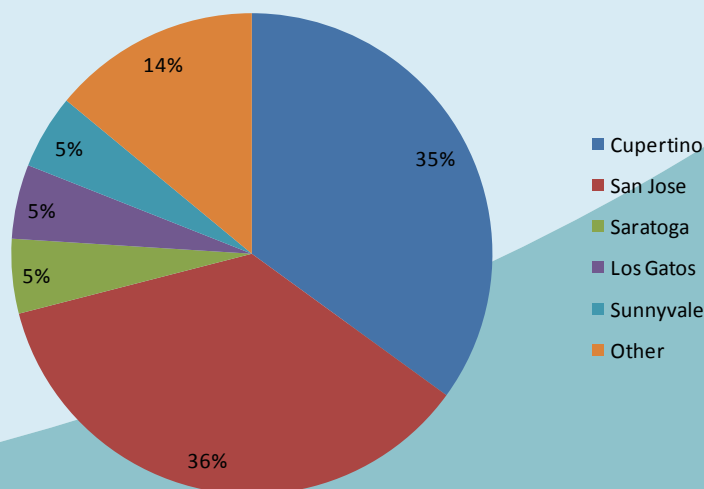
- 15,063 volunteer hours
- 543 families received financial aid
- 310 families received holiday food baskets
- 122 families in the Holiday Adopt-A-Family
- 386 families received family resource & support services
- 141 children received back-to-school backpacks, clothes & supplies
- 100 homeless men provided daily meals and nightly shelter
- 5,400 nightly shelter beds provided
- 16,200 meals served to the homeless
- 120 monthly bus passes provided
- 70% of clients gained employment and/or housing
- 148 homes placed in BMR rentals
- 5 homes placed in BMR Sales
- \$597,201 value of in-kind donations



Clients Served by Family Type



Clients Served by Ethnicity



Clients Served by City

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# Senior Hunger —

## *Feeding the greatest generation*

Seniors require greater consideration towards their health and medical needs, but compromise when there isn't enough food.



A study which examined the health of seniors found that food insecure seniors had significantly lower intakes of vital nutrients. In addition, food insecure seniors were 2.33 times more likely to report fair or poor health status. Seniors sometimes have enough money to purchase food but do not have the resources to access or prepare food due to lack of transportation, functional limitations, or health problems. To learn more and what you can do to help, visit: [www.wvcommunityservices.org](http://www.wvcommunityservices.org).

### “HOUSE OF HOPE” - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Nutritious groceries, fresh produce in particular, play an important role in keeping families healthy. All too frequently



however, families with young children in Los Gatos and the surrounding unincorporated mountain regions find it difficult, if not impossible, to come to the Cupertino pantry. Mothers must first navigate a complex public transit system with their young children in tow just to reach our food pantry, and then struggle home carrying both groceries and children. Without the luxury of a car, or other reliable means of transportation, acquiring a week's worth of nutritious food becomes a time-consuming, exhausting,

and prohibitively expensive ordeal. For some families, it can often prove impossible to make this weekly trek.

For the children and families whose

futures are being jeopardized by their poverty, the House of Hope provides immediate improved access to wholesome foods, especially nutritious, but perishable foods like fresh produce, meat and dairy products.

To help us with this important community benefit project, contact WVCS at 408.255.8033 Ext.305.

*To find out more ways on how you can help improve your community*

*please contact David Ujita at **408.255.8033 x305***

*or visit our website at **[www.wvcommunityservices.com](http://www.wvcommunityservices.com)***



## 5 ways to improve your neighborhood

### 1 Donate

Whether fruits & vegetables from your own garden, monetary or in-kind, your donations truly make a difference in your neighborhood.

### 2 Volunteer

Assist in the food pantry, pick-up food, or help us with special events, just get hands-on and help your neighbors.

### 3 Advocate

Stay informed, become active and share your voice on national, state and local initiatives that can improve your neighborhood.

### 4 Educate

Talk to your family, neighbors, friends and co-workers about poverty, food insecurity, homelessness and what we can all do to help make a difference.

### 5 Get Involved

Volunteer, donate, advocate - when you reach out a hand to one neighbor, you influence the condition of all your neighbors.

## another success story

As a kid, Robert never imagined that one day he'd be homeless. Yet, in 2003 he found himself sleeping on the streets of downtown San Jose. Life on the streets wasn't easy, "it's embarrassing and people don't want to be around you at libraries and bus stops when you're dirty." For more than four years Robert survived on the streets by getting day jobs, and moving from shelter-to-shelter. Robert was eventually referred to the West Valley Community Services Faith-in-Action rotating shelter where he stayed for 3-months while receiving intensive case management and job search assistance. Once employed full-time with a new job at UPS, Robert graduated to the Transitional Housing Program where he paid a nominal rent and enjoyed roommates, while saving money for a more independent living environment. After 2 years

Robert is now ready to move-out on his own with a stable full-time job, savings account and new job skills. Join us in congratulating Robert!

Name changed to protect client privacy

**inside  
next issue:**

**The Faces of Hunger  
House of Hope Opens!  
Business is Booming  
Poverty in the Suburbs**

### **Holiday Food Drives: GET INVOLVED!**

During the holiday season, look for West Valley Community Services food donation barrels at your local grocery store.

Non-perishable foods are needed, such as: meals-in-a-can (soup, stew, chili), tuna/canned meats, peanut butter, canned

foods with pop-top lids, low sugar cereals, 100% fruit juices in single serving boxes, canned fruit packaged in juice, and canned vegetables. Food and monetary donations are also accepted at the WVCS office, 10104 Vista Dr. in Cupertino. For more info call us at: 408.255.8033 Ext.305.



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