

Your Impact at Work: Melinda's Story

Melinda came to WVCS seeking support for her and her teenage sons after leaving an abusive relationship. She was facing severe financial hardship due to lawyer fees for divorce, as well as several thousand dollars worth of debt that was threatening her ability to remain housed.

After meeting with a WVCS case manager, Melinda has this to say:

"There are no words to express my gratitude for all the help I have been provided during a very hard time of need. Raising two teens as a single mom while dealing with domestic abuse is not easy, and your help has made a HUGE impact on us. Our case manager's genuine interest in our case has been beyond getting a job done. Our case manager was caring, supportive, understanding, and listened to my struggles not only to hear me, but to find other ways to help. WVCS was able to help me by finding ways to assist us with rent, utilities, food, clothes for my sons, and therapy. I am very humbled by you. Thank you for all your genuine caring of me and my kids. Thank you very, very much West Valley Community Services for your services to people like me. I am forever grateful".

While these are Melinda's words, her name has been changed to protect the identity of her and her family.



11th Annual Chefs of Compassion

The 11th annual Chefs of Compassion was a success, raising more than \$300,000 in support of our programs. Our guests had this to say about their experience at the event:

"The stories told by the beneficiaries of WVCS touched our hearts And helped us realize the lifesaving work being done."

"It was beautifully executed from beginning to end. Best food yet! Delivery of the meals was seamless. The program was so organized and well paced."

"It was very interesting to hear personal client stories. I was not familiar with WVCS before being invited to attend this event and I learned a lot. The meal, which I could eat at home!, was also delicious."

(cont.)



11th Annual Chefs of Compassion

As in 2021, Chefs of Compassion was hosted online this year, with a delicious three course meal designed by Chef Nikos Moulinos (Taverna), Chef Issac Karachepone (Stanford Health Care) and Chef Sachin Chopra (All Spice). The gourmet dishes were inspired by food found in the WVCS Market, and food kits and wine were delivered to attendees' homes the afternoon of the event.

The program also included inspiring client stories, and an award ceremony for the 2022 Champions of Compassion, Sharon & Jim Walker and Bank of America. We are deeply grateful to all the sponsors and donors who supported this year's event, and help make all of WVCS' programs and services possible.



Thank you to all of our amazing donors and partners for making this event possible!

A GIFT IN HONOR OF
**MRS. PADMAVATHI AND
MR. K.V. RAMAKRISHNA**



A GIFT FROM
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Advocacy Corner: Housing Element 101

Have you heard the words "Housing Element" recently - in the paper, on Next Door or from someone in your community? The Housing Element is one of the most consequential items for a city or county, and it is happening in every city in California this year.

The Housing Element is one of nine elements of a city's General Plan, and is the only element that has to be approved by the state. It is a visionary policy document in which a jurisdiction plans to accommodate existing and future housing needs for people at all income levels. The jurisdiction selects sites and implements policies and zoning changes to encourage development. Though no housing is directly built from the Housing Element, the document must provide ample evidence that housing is likely and able to be built within every community.

The Housing Element is driven by the RHNA (pronounced ree-nuh), or the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. This is the number of units each city is required to accommodate in their Housing Element.

It is critical that everyone in our community raises their voices as part of the Housing Element process.

To learn more about the Housing Element in your city, contact Public Policy Coordinator Kylie Clark at kyliec@wvcommunityservices.org, or visit www.wvcommunityservices.org/housingelement.

Save the Date: Back to School 2022

The Back to School program provides clothing, shoes, backpacks, and school supplies to children facing food and housing insecurity in our community. Back To School 2022 will take place on Saturday, August 6th at Old Navy in the Westgate Mall. We look forward to hosting the event in-person again this year.

For information about sponsorship, adopting a child, or volunteering at the event, please email trishyam@wvcommunityservices.org.



WVCS' Park-It Market Program Continues to Grow

In February of 2022, WVCS partnered with the Moreland School District and Anderson Elementary School to expand the Park-It Market to a new school site. The Anderson School student body is largely composed of families struggling in the face of food and housing insecurity. Based in San Jose, 70% of the school's student body is eligible to participate in the free and reduced lunch program, so the need for food support services is high among students and their families. This expansion was funded, in part, by Kaiser Permanente, Bank of America, and PwC.

Currently about 80 households are accessing the program at Anderson Elementary School. After the launch of the program, Principal Tasha Quinonez said, "I am so grateful for our partnership with WVCS' Park It Market. Our community is able to come to campus and leave with fresh produce, milk, and meat, on top of shelf-stable foods such as cereals and rice. Families are able to select foods they would like to try plus foods they know their families enjoy. There is a community feeling around the food pantry as it is set up like a farmer's market so that people feel welcome."

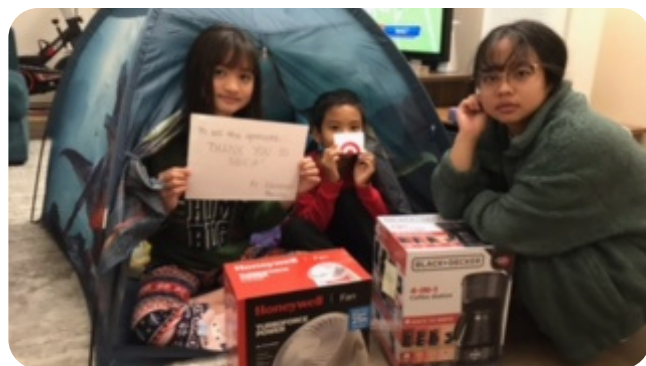


This year, WVCS also launched a new partnership with the Assistance League of Los Gatos Saratoga to support families visiting the Park-It Market. Assistance League members assembled care kits containing personal hygiene products and household items. "Our vision at Assistance League of Los Gatos-Saratoga is that when essential needs are met, families flourish," says Assistance League members Susan Weber and Karen Azzi. "By providing some of the necessities of life, we bring dignity to the lives of the clients." We are grateful for this new partnership, and look forward to working with them again in the future in support of our clients.

Gift of Hope 2021

Our annual Gift of Hope was held on Saturday, December 11, 2021. Due to COVID, it was a drive through event again last year, with most of our clients picking up their gifts in the parking lot outside our office in Cupertino. In addition, staff delivered gifts to homebound clients, and items were also distributed at our Park-It Market locations.

Thanks to the support of our generous donors and partners, Gift of Hope 2021 served more than 1,100 people last year. Thank you to all the donors and volunteers for providing the Gift of Hope and bringing holiday joy.



Thank you to all of our amazing donors and partners for making this event possible!



Individual Donors

Volunteer Spotlight: Maya Bhadury

Q: When did you first begin volunteering with WVCS?

My first volunteer experience with WVCS was the summer after I graduated from high school. I wanted to help out in my community and WVCS was perfectly located. When the pandemic hit, I returned home from college and my newly flexible schedule allowed me to begin volunteering again.

Q: What do you enjoy most about volunteering at WVCS?

I've found the adaptability of WVCS staff and volunteers to be especially inspiring. From working out of the Oaks, to reimagining the Vista Drive facility, to navigating the pandemic, everyone has shown amazing resilience. Clients are always served with compassion and kindness, and everyone is willing to go the extra mile to make sure their experience is the best it can be.

Q: What can you tell others about volunteering at WVCS?

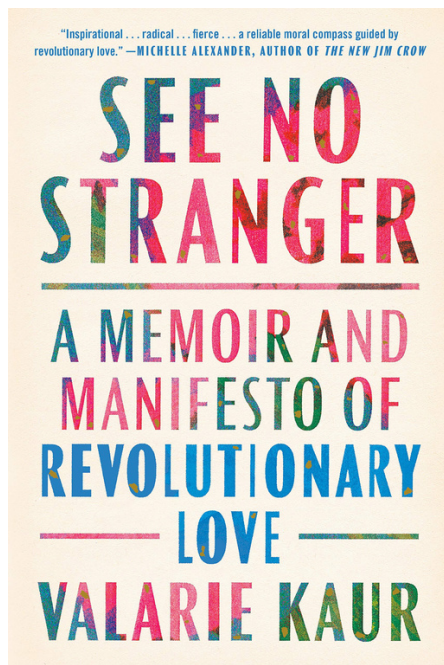
Every week at WVCS brings something special; whether it's learning something new about my co-volunteers or clients, or marveling at the assortment of unique products in the WVCS Market, I can always count on my time at WVCS to be enriching and fulfilling. I'm so grateful to be part of such a supportive and compassionate community, and want to extend a big thank you to the staff that make this program possible!

From all of us here at WVCS, thank you for all of your hard work Maya!



Social Justice Book Club

Join us for our next Social Justice Book Club on Sunday, August 7th at 7pm on Zoom. We will be discussing "See No Stranger: A Manifesto and Memoir of Revolutionary Love" by Valerie Kaur



For more information and the Zoom link, please contact Josh Selo at: 408.956.6113 or josh@wvcommunityservices.org

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