

October 2013

# Pantry News

of the West Valley Food Pantry

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

## El Camino Students Raise \$2,180 for Food Pantry

Jennifer Frost

El Camino Real Charter High School is home to the Humanitas program. This group of a dozen or so students, led by their personable and charismatic teacher, Dean Sodek, has embarked on a number of recent projects intended to deepen the kids' connection to their community. On a recent visit to El Camino, our own Susan Steeb was surprised when the Humanitas students presented her with a check for the West Valley Food Pantry (WVFP) in the amount of \$2,180! The students raised this substantial sum through the production and sale of their second original musical album, *Just One World*. Their first, 2012's *Reach for the Sky*, raised \$1,420.

*Just One World* consists of twelve original pieces of music composed, performed, and recorded by the kids, themselves. Excited to explain their creative process, the students enthusiastically described overcoming initial misgivings about their musical abilities and rising to the challenge of making this project a success. Though two of the students acknowledged that they hope to build careers in the music industry, most admit that their only experience writing or performing music has come in the making of *Just One World*. Despite the requirement to



El Camino Students with their Album **Just One World**.

apply for the Humanitas program and be accepted before they begin writing songs, many students feared that they had gotten in over their heads as they sat down to the creative work of crafting a record album from scratch. Beating writers' block and finding inspiration in places as disparate as the BP oil spill, Hurricane Sandy, or a quiet walk home from school, the kids used collaboration and team work to create their best possible album.

The modern computer technology which has become usual in classrooms provided the students with an accessible way to realize their musical ambitions. Meeting them in their classroom, which had also been their studio, I felt old fashioned asking them how they began

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### In this issue:

On the front page, how El Camino students raise money for the food pantry through song.

As the beginning of a series about Food Pantry volunteers, the contributions of Earl and Roselle Lewis are celebrated in **Getting to Know You** on page 2.

Temple Kol Tikvah conducts a successful food drive. Story on page 2.

In a series about the Food Pantry coalition members, the early days of the Food Pantry at Prince of Peace Episcopal Church is headlined on page 3.

## **Did You Know...**

*We have over 148 volunteer slots for 2½ hour shifts each month.*

*We have 68 volunteers who have worked pantry shifts in 2013.*

*Most volunteers work 2 to 4 shifts per month.*

## **Benefit Concert Wonderful!**

See the details at  
[www.westvalleyfoodpantry.org](http://www.westvalleyfoodpantry.org)



Roselle and Earl Lewis

## **Pantry News**

*the newsletter of the*  
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The West Valley Food Pantry is dedicated to providing emergency food to those in need. Our hours of operation are 10 to 3 Monday through Thursday and 10 to 12 on Friday. See our website at [www.westvalleyfoodpantry.org](http://www.westvalleyfoodpantry.org) for our location and other details.

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## **Getting To Know You...**

*Dreams are the lofty suspension of reality wherein our thoughts rise above and beyond the limits of what is now.*

Imagine yourself at the age of nineteen — the last of those timid, sometimes turbulent, teen years — on the threshold of adulthood. Soaring through the clouds over sunny southern California as a B-17 pilot-in-training stationed in Santa Ana, Earl Lewis, born in Joliet, Illinois, dreamed that someday in the future he would return to live in southern California.

**Tedi Mae Tortolano**

This wish came true. Earl became a student in teacher training at UCLA. And at UCLA he met his future wife Roselle, a “native” Californian, who was also training to be a teacher. They bonded in their common interest to be in a profession beneficial to others. In the early 1950s, they both taught elementary school in the Los Angeles City School District. Over the years, Earl became an elementary school principal, and Roselle became an English teacher at Valley College.

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## **Kol Tikvah Yom Kippur Food Drive a Success**

**Susan Conner-Steeb**

For at least the past 13 years, our coalition partner, Kol Tikvah Synagogue has put on a Kemach Food Drive. In the early days, members would bring food donations to the Pantry straight from Yom Kippur services. Members would sort food in their “Sunday Best”. For a few years donations were delivered and the Pantry volunteers sorted the donations.

This year, both the Pantry and Kol

Tikvah’s Rabbi, Jon Hanish wanted to reengage the Kol Tikvah congregation in a personal way. It was decided to have Hanna Greenberg, Informal Education Director, her youth and their parents sort the food at Kol Tikvah so the kids could learn about the Pantry, the need in the community, how we work, whom we serve and how the food is sourced. The kids had *lots* of questions.

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## In the beginning...

The West Valley Food Pantry (WVFP) was started in 1975 by the Rev. Jess Taylor, the Rector of Prince of Peace Church (POP). The mission of the Pantry then, as today, was “No one goes away hungry”. Rev. Taylor began the program by asking the POP parishioners to supply a small pantry at the church with canned goods. In those days the Pantry was a small closet located in the kitchen (now the chapel) of POP. This small Pantry and its very small staff provided food to 3-5 families a week for several years. Margaret Shively was the church secretary at that time and worked with Rev. Taylor to collect and distribute food packages to those in need.

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### *(Getting To Know You — continued from page 2)*

Roselle was one of the earliest volunteers to work at the West Valley Food Pantry in the mid-1980s. She started out working a weekly shift serving the Pantry's clients and was involved in scheduling other volunteers, quite a task in the days before computers. She was a tireless promoter of the Pantry's annual benefit lunch.

Earl became more involved following his retirement in 1989. From that time until three days before his death in February 2012, he would pick up food donations every Wednesday at Albertson's Market located at Tampa and Saticoy. Conservatively estimated, that's over 1,100 pickups! He especially enjoyed driving the Big Truck to downtown Los Angeles to pick up supplies from the Los Angeles Food Bank for the Food Pantry.

Together, Roselle and Earl would do the monthly scheduling of

Richard Podleski

Clem Matzen, a POP member joined this small organization in 1985. A retired social worker, Clem brought a wealth of experience and had the idea of getting other Churches and Synagogues to join the effort to feed the local hungry in the West Valley. Clem convinced ten other churches and synagogues to join together to create the formal coalition which now is the West Valley Food Pantry. This coalition enabled the WVFP to obtain food from the LA food bank at a substantial discount and to supplement pantry shelves with cost free government food contributions.

### *(continued on page 4)*

volunteers. Roselle would write thank you notes to those who made donations to aid the Food Pantry, a task Earl continued to do after his beloved Roselle's death in June 2005. Now their daughter Madeline continues her parents' dedication to the Food Pantry by writing all those notes.

When asked to describe her parents' relationship, or if there was a motto they lived by, Madeline responded, “Fight every day!” She clarified by saying, “They fought constantly — with each other, about ideas, and for social justice.” Perhaps it was this spark that kept the flame aglow in the 55 years of marriage that bonded this spirited couple. Earl was so devoted to the memory of his “darling Rosie” that her things were left untouched — even her purse remained in the spot where she had left it — until his own death.

**For their long-time dedication to the West Valley Food Pantry, Earl and Roselle Lewis were presented the Volunteer Award as a tribute to their many years of service — beneficial to others. ♦**

### *(El Camino - continued from page 1)*

the daunting recording process. Their simple answer, “We did it all on computers,” was a reminder of how recent technological upgrades have enabled these students to undertake projects which would have been impossible in earlier generations.

Once the songs were recorded on digital files, they could be sent to a Simi Valley factory where vinyl records were pressed and packaged for a nominal fee. Each copy includes a colorful vinyl “picture disk,” a CD copy of the album (more accessible for most listeners), and an autograph sheet which each student has signed. Selling copies to friends and family meant taking order forms around and drumming up interest but the kids were diligent and managed to move just over 200 copies with all profits donated to the WVFP in support of its efforts to serve the needy. And why did these Humanitas students choose our WVFP as their beneficiary? This is a group of students truly interested using their talents to do good close to home. When asked, “How do you see the work of the WVFP as a part of your community,” one student answered that she feels we would see many more outward signs of the distress of underserved members of our community without the efforts of organizations like the WVFP. The Humanitas students are determined to be part of the solution.

More about the Humanitas albums, *Just One World* and *Reach for the Sky* can be found at <http://ecrhumanitas.net/benefit-albums/>. ♦



*Temple Kol Tikvah volunteers after a successful food drive.*

***(Kol Tikvah - continued from page 2)***

They also got to see first hand how Kol Tikvah participates in helping our cause to alleviate hunger in our own community.

The Kol Tikvah Food Drive was a **huge** success. The official count was over 437 bags of food and \$725. We look forward to not only next year but there is talk of more events throughout the year.

We owe a huge **thank you** to Herm

Fischer, his wife Carol and Hanna Greenberg who did all the planning at Kol Tikvah and were instrumental in making it fun and successful. Also, thank you to our Pantry volunteers, Terri and Harry Seidman, Cecil Czachow and Susan and Erik Steeb.

The kids and parents did a great job and finished in 2 hours. Neal, from Valley Interfaith Council drove the truck and helped load and unload. He has done this for the past 3-4 years.

We at the Pantry are proud of our 12 coalition partners who have been with us from the beginning, 28 years ago. They come together to provide volunteers, donations and are our voice to the community. Thank you Kol Tikvah, for all that you do for the Pantry. ♦

## Coming Events

### October 5

Sprouts food drive. Call Jeff Albee if you can help.

### October 10

Board meeting at Taylor Hall.

### October 12

Albertson's food drive. Call Carol Lombard if you wish to help.

### Note:

A backup driver is needed for both of these food drives. Call Al Trumpler if you can help. If you need the phone number for any of those mentioned above, call the Pantry at 818-346-5554 or see the non-web Pantry Paper.

### November 16-17

Calabasas Drive-through food drive. Experienced volunteers are needed to teach novices how to sort.

***(In the beginning... continued from page 3)***

The San Fernando valley chapter of the National Charity League (NCL) began supporting the Pantry over 25 years ago. Today, NCL is one of the Pantry's largest contributors. NCL partners mother-daughter teams as volunteers to work in the Pantry directly with the clients. Many of their volunteers are second generation supporters. The mother-daughter program furthers a volunteer experience to NCL members and provides invaluable service to Pantry clients.

In 1998, Luke Fishburn helped the coalition apply directly for grants to provide money for food purchases. Luke suggested that the WVFP should expand its distribution sites in the valley to reach a greater number people. The coalition members decided to partner with the Family Rescue Center (Rescate) in Canoga Park, and that relationship has continued over the

years. Our sister pantry Rescate distributes food received from the WVFP, thereby furthering the food distribution channel, and serves many Spanish-speaking clients.

Today, the WVFP now has over 200 volunteers who collect, store and distribute food to over 1300 families a month in an area including twelve zip codes that cover the west San Fernando Valley. Support with both contributions and money from the local community and the coalition members make it possible for WVFP to achieve our mission. As the WVFP moves forward, it is fitting that we remember with thanks and gratitude those who helped found the WVFP. Many of those early volunteers are still active in the WVFP. As we highlight other members of the coalition, more of these early and long-term contributors will become known. ♦