

# FOOD4THOUGHT

JULY 2015

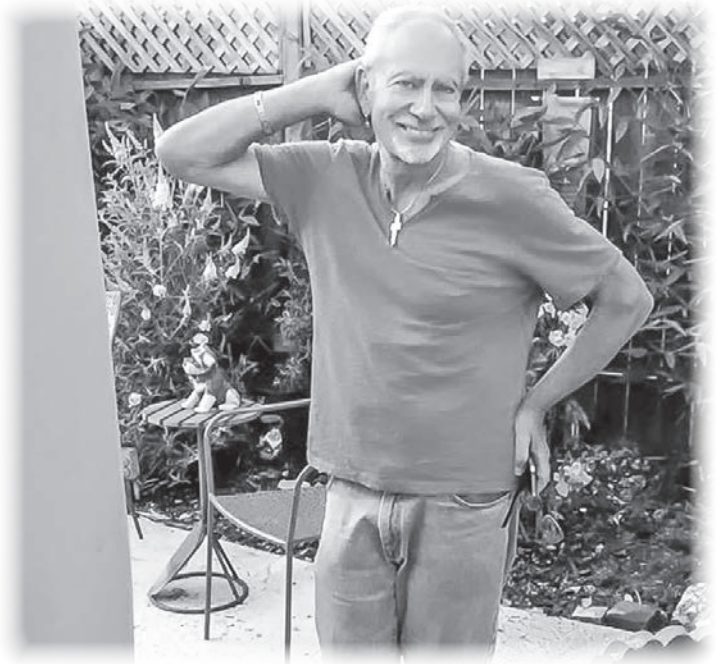


FIGHTING HUNGER  
FEEDING HOPE

## Pay it Forward

Jim is one of Valley Food Bank's exceptional heroes because of his emotional, spiritual, and financial bigheartedness. He says he would not sleep at night if he was not doing something to help those less fortunate. Jim has been honored as Citizen of the Year on two occasions. His commitment to compassion and caring for others is confirmed by his generous philanthropic efforts to the food bank and other local charities.

Jim discovered us seven years ago by way of the Metropolitan Community Church in North Hollywood. He gives his time, advice, and financial support to the Valley Food Bank because he knows and trusts as much of his donation as possible is used to directly serve those in need. He is further impressed with our "amazing volunteers and success stories."



*Did you know...*

Over **1 in 4** veterans reported food insecurity with **12%** reporting very low food security.

Nearly **THREE** million U.S. veterans and their families don't have enough to eat each month.



Jim partners with the food bank because, "not enough people are donating" and he's interested in doing more and giving more. He simply states, "It's the right thing to do. It's important to give with your heart and not to expect anything in return. You do it because you want to do it and because it makes you feel good."

In today's society when needy people and families in poverty are struggling, Jim believes it is his and our moral imperative to speak up, give, and make a positive difference. "I don't want to see people, especially children, go hungry when there is so much resource around us."

Jim has a huge heart and an incredible sense of love and compassion for others. He says we should strive to love others unconditionally, not judge, and provide support in whatever way we can. This is his motto and how he lives his life...paying things forward.

## From Meager to Meaningful

For decades, the St. Bridget of Sweden Community Food Pantry, now affectionately known as Martha's Pantry, had been open to the neighborhood, providing meager offerings such as canned goods, dry rice, and beans to 5-10 visitors each week. That all changed in 2008 when the church was introduced to the Valley Food Bank by local bank manager and longtime St. Bridget of Sweden parishioner, Tony Rodriguez.

Tony volunteered to pick up food from the Valley Food Bank in Pacoima and deliver it to Martha's Pantry in Van Nuys. With the support of the food bank, Martha's Pantry now serves on average 60 plus families each week, representing about 1,000 individuals each month. The Valley Food Bank can consistently supply the pantry with fresh produce,

cheese, eggs, milk, canned goods, pasta, meat, bread, and pastries.

On Tuesdays, the pantry staff works diligently to make sure that each visitor is served compassionately and with respect. The Parish prays each day that their partnership with the Valley Food Bank is long lasting, so the good work may continue.



## Boomerang in action

A semi-retired child social worker and mental health counselor, Richard lives in Sherman Oaks and volunteers up to three times a week at the Valley Food Bank. Rich is reliable and supportive of the work at the food bank. He also volunteers some weekends at a group home for the needy.



Rich came to Valley Food Bank, met with the director, and instantly felt a great connection. "I enjoy volunteering and Will is a great listener, he's fabulous to talk to. He's a gem and then some," explains Rich. "Low-income people live in the moment

and are unable to plan ahead, but there is still a place for them in this world. I'll help them when I can." Some of Rich's mental health clients are low-income and he supplies them with food and other essentials.

He likes to discuss what he calls the "boomerang effect." Rich believes in the theory of what goes around, comes back around. There was an instance when Rich was helping a homeless man and giving some goodies to his dog. The man had some construction skills and, because of Rich's generosity, offered to build a gate for Rich's yard. "It's about having a generosity of spirit," Rich says.

Rich is generous with his time and talents to ensure that families in need get resources that provide some relief to their difficult circumstances, and that brings joy to Rich. "Seeing folks exercise a sigh of relief when they get food is truly all the paycheck I need."

### DONATIONS NEEDED

*New & Gently Used Clothing • Shoes • Purses • Toys  
Books • Small appliances • Household items*



**For Donation Pickup CALL**

**(800)417-5678**

**100% of all proceeds help feed, shelter, and clothe the homeless**