



FOOD4THOUGHT

OCTOBER 2015



FIGHTING HUNGER
FEEDING HOPE

OVERWHELMED, SHE PAYS ITS FORWARD

When Daysi first arrived at the Elvate Church food distribution, she did not know what to expect. She had been to a few food pantries before and figured that this one would be the same as all the others. Little did she know she had come across an answer to one of her prayers.

The first thing that caught Daysi's attention was the abundance of fresh food. She had never received so much produce anywhere else. As the head of a family of eight, Daysi said she depends on any assistance she can get in order to ensure that her family is well nourished. The money she saved

by not having to buy produce allowed her to buy other essential items for her household.

Daysi also commented on the love that the volunteers had as they gave out the food. She mentioned that she had never been so encouraged or welcomed before. The happy vibes of the first food pantry visit are what encouraged her to return the second month. When asked what she would like to say to the Valley Food Bank, she wished to express how blessed and thankful she is for the food. In fact, she was so overwhelmed with the whole experience, she decided



to pay it forward. She gave some the produce she had received to other families that she knew were in need.

MY STORY...FROM THE VALLEY TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP



I am a mother of two who, not long ago, lost my job and my marriage within a short period of time. Due to my former husband's alcoholism and other addictions, we had to get out of an abusive situation and move to a room for rent situation. I went from a home to a room for me and my two daughters, with no job and no source of income or support...certainly not the American dream. If it were not for our faith in the Lord and organizations like Valley Food Bank we would not have survived.

The Valley Food Bank was able to help with food and hygiene items that we could not afford to buy. Eventually I found employment but, without a car, traveling for quite a distance via public transportation consumed the little money I was earning. The Valley Food Bank did not abandon me. They continued to provide for me and my girls through the toughest time in of our lives. We will forever be grateful. Thank you for making a REAL difference in people's lives.

FROM FALLEN ANGEL TO ANGEL OF HOPE...

Angel is 24 years old; his short time on earth is no indication of the hard road he has endured. Born into a humble family in Mexico, he is the youngest child in a family of five. Like many families, they have faced many economic and social challenges just to keep food on the table. As Angel describes it, for a time life was good, coming to the United States in his late teens, he soon acclimated and made friends and all in the family set out to work and make a living.

After the loss of both of his parents, (details of which he does not readily share yet) the once tight knit family began to unravel. Suddenly, Angel found himself both the recipient and the cause of much family discord. The constant arguments, anger, and sadness towards his older siblings and their circumstances seemed to spurn Angel to make one bad decision after another.

Soon, Angel found himself in a very dark place; running with the wrong crowd, which only seemed to add to his problems and eventually opened doors to delinquency, addiction, and homeless on the streets of downtown Los Angeles. In a short period, Angel was all alone, feeling rejected, and addicted to Meth. Ironically, his strong family work ethic seemed to be the only thing still working for him. Angel would sell black market items to feed his

addiction. As he put it, "I would work to earn enough money for my next score and then I would buy my 'stuff' and go back to the streets."

Fast forward... one key outreach that we partner with and supply goes right into "those streets." This group collects, cooks, and distributes food to individuals that many

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refer to as "those people." Through their caring and consistent labors of love to serve as many as they could with a hot meal, a sandwich, a bottle of water etc., Angel came to the attention of one of the directors. There just seemed to be some-

thing special about him. This eventually led to Angel being asked to come back and join the program where he was given the gospel, a warm bed, food to eat, and much support. Now, almost a year later, as a result of Angel giving his life to Jesus, as well as a "life on life" mentoring strategy and the support of his church family, Angel has come to be set free from his addiction problems and is now growing and thriving like never before.

Angel has a restored relationship with his sister and is able to be a financial and spiritual support to her and her daughters who love him. He has also gone back to the streets with outreaches that are bringing light and hope to those same dark streets that he once found himself bound to.

