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EHP News - Fall Edition 2011

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Letter from the Executive Director, Lesia Preston

“A scarcity of food is rarely the cause of hunger. There is more than enough food to feed everyone in the United States. The supermarket store shelves are stocked to the ceiling. But none of this matters if families have no money in their pockets. Poverty spoils every meal. The lone homeless person may be the most conspicuous image of poverty in the national media. Less conspicuous, but a much larger group, are the families who cycle in and out of poverty. Families most at risk are those that are just a little better off than poor, surviving on low-wage jobs until suddenly they lose their financial footing because the main wage earner's job has been eliminated or one of the family members has a medical emergency. Liberals and conservatives agree, no hard working family should have to raise their children in poverty—and yet the sad truth is that many are. Two-thirds of all children growing up in poverty in the United States have one or more working parents, and one-third have a parent working fulltime, year round.

Three decades ago, a low-wage job was enough to lift a family of three out of poverty; today, it scarcely comes close to get-

ting them to the poverty line, and without food assistance and other government support a family struggling to get by in the low-wage economy would be on the absolute edge of desperation.”

Excerpt from *Hunger, Bread for the World*

The statistics are staggering, 1 in 10 households in America goes hungry or is threatened by the possibility of hunger, 13 million children live in US households that must skip meals or eat less due to economic constraints, nearly 1/3 of single parent families are food insecure and/or hungry. There are no real statistics for undocumented immigrants but those working with these families testify to the fact that children of immigrants suffer the worst: on a daily basis they go without such necessities as meat, milk and diapers. In the Bay Area, this average is compounded by the cost of living, one of the highest in the nation. It is hard to believe but the impoverished face even more challenges in our local community. The face of our clientele has changed dramatically in the past several years. More than 3/4 of our families are working families, most with 2 or more full time in-

comes. We have asked our families to work harder, budget tighter, live smarter ... What more can we ask our families to do?

These families are the motivating force for all of us here at EHP. They are the reason why we keep moving and find ways to make it up that hill, even when it seems impossible.

The statistics listed represent our families and our community. We see them validated every day with each family that walks through our doors. We witness the suffering, the tears and the hunger. We know that our families are desperately in need of food, shelter and other emergency resources, now more than ever. Thank you for your commitment and generosity which has allowed us to help these families survive. I welcome you to come and volunteer at EHP. See our programs in action. Come and take a tour of our campus. I look forward to answering your questions and addressing any concerns that you may have. Please call at 650-323-7781 or email at Lesia@ehpcares.org. We look forward to hearing from you soon.



My Motivation *by Rachel Coleman*

I chose to participate in the Haas Center Fellowship for Spirituality Service and Social Change (SSSC) because I wanted my summer to focus on both thought and action. I chose to work at the Ecumenical Hunger Program firstly because I agree with and want to support its mission of providing tangible help to the community. My secondary reason for working at EHP is because I love utility. As a sophomore at Stanford deciding upon my major and laying the foundation for a future career, I know I want my life to be fundamentally useful; I want to play an active role in helping society, but am not sure what function I should serve. I see my Ecumenical Hunger Program internship as an answer to these questions of functionality--I see it as an incredibly enlightening experience. I know I long for justice in this world, and see working at an NGO as a potential path to take in the future. I try to devote my self to working hard during this internship, and learn all I can about both poverty and the structure and networking of NGOs to try to discern an academic purpose for my the rest of my time at Stanford.

Currently at EHP, my primary focus is running their Summer Feeding Program for children under 18 (to replace the free lunches the children receive during the school year) as well as running EHP's summer camp. This year, from 1pm-3pm every M/W/F, I supervise 10 kids between the ages of 7 and 13. The first week of my intern-

San Francisco at the Treasure Island Sailing Center, where the kids learned about living on the ocean, and how to sail a small sailboat.

When I'm not working with children or collecting food, I serve as an event coordinator for EHP's upcoming BlockFest Party that will occur this August

13. The BlockFest is a way for EHP to reach out to the community and help its neighbors find the services that will help them survive, as well as have a fun day out for the family. We will have activities for children with prizes, food, music and local talent. So far I've worked on creating a site map, ordered porta-potties, called many many organizations to run booths or donate food, and worked with the Menlo Fire Department to make sure we are within protocol for a fair.

Ultimately, the Children's Programs and the BlockFest are my two primary projects that I'm working on this summer and it's been an incredible experience so far. I'm grateful to the EHP staff for teaching this young, and occasionally over-eager college student, the ropes around such a wonderful life enabling organization.



Back: Children participating in the EHP Summer Youth Program

Front: EHP staff member, Carmen Sinclair and Volunteer Rachel Coleman

ship I spent emailing and calling a multitude of organizations from museums to magazines to sailing centers to local gardens, in order to best plan out the field trips for this camp. The camp runs for seven weeks from June 22-Aug 5 and is "health" themed. So far we've planted a garden in the back of EHP, taken a walking pedometer tour, and last week, we spent every day on Treasure Island in the bay of

Make a difference today!



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Please help our group by signing up today!

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Ecumenical Hunger Program

500001021

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Help Our Kids Get Back-to-School!

We at EHP believe that every child should have access to the necessary tools that make learning possible! New clothes and shoes may seem like a superficial issue. However, low self-esteem is an overwhelming problem for many of our children coming from disadvantaged families. Believe it or not, a new outfit or the necessary school supplies can make all the difference in the world.



child ready for school. You can make a difference in the lives of these children by making a cash donation, “adopting” a child for the back-to-school program, purchasing gift cards to Target or Walmart or by purchasing a back pack with supplies. The average cost of a backpack with supplies is \$50.

Every donation makes a direct impact on a child’s reality. It is only with your generous contributions that we can help these children begin their school year with the tools and esteem they need for success!

You can help! We estimate that it costs approximately \$200 to get a

Contact us at 650-323-7781 or info@ehpcare.org for more information on how you can get involved in this critical program!

EHP Back-to-School Wishlist

- New fully stocked backpacks
- Gift cards to Target & Walmart
- Gift cards to Payless & Footlocker
- Gift cards to Safeway
- New clothing (larger sizes)
- New shoes (athletic/large sizes)
- Cash donations
- Child sponsorships (“adoptions”)

June 2011 - Program Statistics

492 Food Boxes Served (1,739 Individuals Served)
504 Individuals Served Fresh Produce
206 Supplemental Food Boxes Served
344 Monday Night Meal Hot Meals Served
314 Furniture Items Distributed

24 Referrals Made
1040 Volunteer Hours Donated
435 Walk-in Closet Visits
48 Clothes Closet Appointments
\$85,161 in In-kind donations received

My Success Story *by Michael Crump Johnson*

We were fortunate enough to meet Michael when he started coming to EHP to take advantage the TAP (Technology Access Point) center. He became a regular fixture in TAP and although his home is in Arizona, he still spends a lot of time in East Palo Alto. Whenever he is in town, he makes sure to visit EHP. We are so happy for his success!

My name is Michael Crump - Johnson and I am very grateful for EHP because I have received a lot of help and support from this program, ever since I was little. Whenever I didn’t have any supplies for school

or food to eat, EHP always assisted me and my mother during the time she was alive. My mom passed away



in 2008 of kidney failure / heart attack, I was 17 at the time. Because of EHP, I am a positive young man who currently lives in Arizona and attend-

ing the Chandler-Gilbert Community College. My focus is on pursuing my degree, attending school and staying focused. Besides school, I love assisting my friends, my family and my church.

Right now, I am currently a minister, I sign and write gospel music and host my annual gospel music conference and revival in the city of East Palo Alto, CA, where I was born and raised. I love EHP and my community EPA! The best of success and blessings to the EHP staff. Thanks for being a gift of help to me and my family and the entire East Palo Alto Community.



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EHP NEWS - FALL EDITION 2011

Our Mission:

to provide food, clothing,
household essentials,
support, and referral
services to those in need.

Our Vision:

EHP is a sustainable
resource within the
community working to
break the cycle of
poverty.

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Maleah Choi
Gloria Wallace

EHP PLEDGE

EHP is a special kind of community, a neighborhood of committed individuals and groups. In our neighborhood, people care for one another. We look after each other's welfare. We lift up those who are down. We express confidence in those who are disheartened. We support one another in a host of tangible and intangible ways. We believe in each other and encourage in those around us the self-respect needed to live in dignity. Through the relationships that our neighborhood provides, we can achieve the degree of self-sufficiency and self-worth that we all need to live useful and meaningful lives.

The foundation of the EHP neighborhood is a moral concern for the well-being of those around us. At our core are a dedicated staff and volunteers who give many hours of service. In this spirit, we welcome all people of goodwill to join in the common cause of providing assistance to people in need. Those of us who give as well as those of us who receive are strengthened and sustained within this community.

For many people engaged in the struggle to keep body and soul together, a sudden crisis can prove overwhelming. We believe that appropriate and timely assistance can often prevent a temporary crisis from becoming permanent, thus interrupting what has been called "the cycle of poverty." In any situation, the way forward is one step at a time. Very often, the first step is to meet basic needs, making further steps possible.

Providing for more than material needs, EHP seeks to be a companion to ("sharing bread with") those who are experiencing difficult times. We work directly with individuals and their families to help them find the strength and resources they need to face the turmoil and despair that can threaten to overcome them. We offer both a helping hand and a supportive relationship. We seek to keep hope and spirit alive even when hardship seems overwhelming.