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EHP News - Summer 2019

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Jerica's Story

Jerica remembers coming to EHP with her great-grandma when she was just a little girl. Jerica loved spending time with her, but when she was nine, she and her parents moved from East Palo Alto to San Jose. Life wasn't easy after the move. Her father worked three jobs to make ends meet and Jerica didn't get to spend much time with him. She would often return to East Palo Alto to visit and spend the weekends with her beloved great-grandmother. Then life took an unexpected turn when Jerica found herself pregnant at eighteen and without the means to afford a place to live in San Jose. Luckily, she was able to find an apartment in East Palo Alto and moved when her son, Jaylen, was a year old. In the next five years, she was blessed with two daughters, Haleia Michelle and Zenia Renee, now seven and five years old. But with three young children to care for and facing lean economic times, Jerica recalled how EHP had helped her relatives and came seeking assistance.

To help support her family, Jerica currently works as a "traveling" hairdresser, but without vocational training or a degree, it's been a real

struggle. Jerica would like to be a nurse. She's been going to JobTrain sporadically, but hasn't been able to complete their nursing course due to inconsistent babysitters. This will change once Zenia Renee enters kindergarten at Kipp School this fall. In the meantime, Jerica is receiving emergency food boxes to help reduce her expenses. For the



first time, Jerica signed up for the New Shoes and Back to School Program at EHP. She is extremely grateful for the shoes her children received from My New Red Shoes. Her kids can hardly wait for the new school semester to start so they can sport their new kicks. She is also grateful for EHP's daily hot lunch service. Jerica's children are on their school district's free breakfast and lunch program during the

school year, but during the summer break, EHP's hot lunch fills the gap and provides her family with a hearty and nutritious mid-day meal.

Over the years, when money was tight, Jerica relied on EHP for clothing, food, furniture and other household items. EHP never let her down, helping her with whatever she needed for herself and her family. When asked what EHP means to her, Jerica said, "EHP means love. These are people who take the time to take care of people they don't even know. They make sure kids have shoes, Christmas gifts when their parents can't afford to buy them, food, so they won't go hungry." When asked what she wants most, Jerica answered, "Stability. I want a stable life for my kids." Jerica hopes to start the nurse's training program soon, but it is such a comfort to know that EHP has her back and will continue to provide the basic needs with love until the time comes when her family is self-sufficient and stable.



The Magic of the Repair Café



Bill Wall

Although for decades I had heard about the wonderful work done by the Ecumenical Hunger Program, and had donated to EHP, my husband Todd volunteered there for about a year before I did. He is active in Palo Alto's Repair Café, whose mission is to keep things working and out of the dump, and several Repair Café volunteers help at EHP. As a retired Stanford physics professor, he likes the challenge

of diagnosing broken things and fixing them. An impressive range of household goods is donated to EHP by individuals and businesses. Todd helps to make sure they are in good working order before they are passed on to families.

He found his Tuesday mornings with EHP so interesting and rewarding that I started volunteering, but in the clothing area. I was amazed by the variety of clothes and household goods that EHP provides to families in need. I have seen people who have just acquired housing receive beds, bedding, dishes, etc., to furnish their new home. Perhaps the most exciting and inspirational event was when we were able to give a young woman a wedding dress: it fit her perfectly and she was a lovely and very happy bride!

Now I help Todd in the household furnishings area. He does the complicated repairs, but we both assemble furniture and test and repair vacuum cleaners, sewing machines, TVs, heaters, fans, and more. We both work in the morn-



Todd & Sandy Smith

ing, but EHP serves such a large community that it takes more than one or two people to do the assembling, testing, and repairing, so on Tuesday afternoons the effort is continued by Jim Wall, also from the Repair Café. He continues the work of assembling, testing, and repairing donated items. Jim often ends up taking broken items home for more intensive repairs. He says that after retiring from the computer industry he finds it challenging and rewarding to test and mend for EHP. Thank you, Jim!

Wish List

School is back in session! Please help EHP kids start this school year off with a bang! We need:

- Fully stocked backpacks
- New clothes & shoes
- Gift cards to Walmart, Target & Costco (no membership needed with gift cards) for supplies & uniforms
- Other miscellaneous supplies
- Cash donations to purchase back-to-school Supplies

Many of our families are trying to keep up with home repairs and are in need of supplies. Home Depot gift cards would be greatly appreciated!

Drop off your back-to-school or home repair donations at EHP or call/email LaKesha for more information at (650)323-7781
LaKesha@ehpcares.org

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Makes an Impact in the Community

Founded by Dr. Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg in 2015, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) is helping solve some of the world's toughest challenges – from eradicating disease, to improving education, to reforming the criminal justice system. We're proud to call San Mateo County home, and believe our mission starts here. We partner with, learn from, and support local organizations in their work creating a brighter future for everyone in our community.

CZI supports the Ecumenical Hunger Program in its efforts to provide compassionate, dignified assistance to families and individuals experiencing economic and personal hardship.

EHP's commitment to individualized care, and belief that those impacted by challenges should be at the center of solutions, aligns with CZI's vision for a future for everyone where people have the power to shape their communities. We're inspired by EHP's longtime service in the community, and are honored to play a small role in their work.

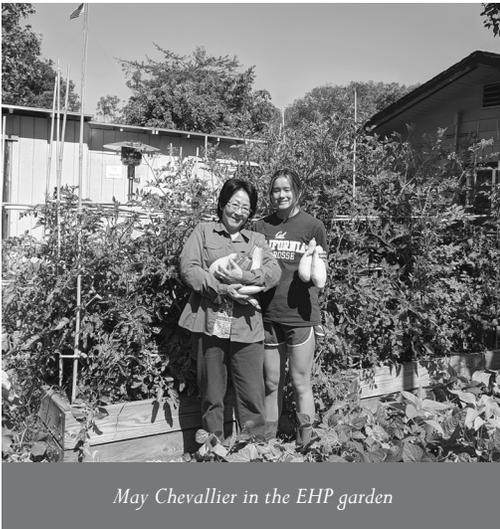


Members of CZI volunteering at EHP (Photo by Dale Ramos)



CHAN
ZUCKERBERG
INITIATIVE

The Art of Horticulture at EHP



May Chevallier in the EHP garden

When May called asking if we needed gardening help, I thought we had found someone willing to help with weeding and trimming our bushes. Little did I know May would soon take over our community garden and transform what was a series of barren planter boxes

filled with straggly weeds into a burgeoning community farm, producing a bounty of fresh vegetables this summer for our families.

Each week, we'd notice something new happening within our garden. First there was the absence of weeds, then seedlings started to appear. Before long, a drip system was installed, then trellises were built to support the growing tomato plants. May would slip in very quietly, working away in our little garden,

often bringing along a friend or two to help her turn our dirt plot into a mini vegetable farm.

As we got to know May Chevallier, we discovered she has a great deal of experience in horticulture. As the owner of an olive grove, she has been in the agriculture business for 12

years. Once her daughters were grown, May wanted to help local people in need and when she learned about EHP, the idea of creating a working community garden that could provide fresh food was born. So far this summer, our little garden has produced 25 pounds of green beans and bags of summer squash. The tomato plants are thriving and the grape tomatoes are almost ready to pick. Asked why she decided to volunteer at EHP, May said "I'd like to augment the food pantry with fresh organic vegetables for the clients". Here are May's plans and her thoughts on EHP. "I would like to teach people to grow organic vegetables and eat healthy food. I see the EHP like the little engine that could. It is a small organization but it is able to help so many people. I'm absolutely humbled by the caring and hardworking staff and volunteers."



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EHP NEWS - SUMMER 2019

Our Mission is to provide compassionate, dignified and practical assistance to families and individuals experiencing economic and personal hardship. We offer material help, support services, and advocacy for our neighbors in need, in a challenging and rapidly changing environment.

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The 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 with 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, 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 even when hardship seems overwhelming.

Neighbors helping neighbors!
Food and so much more!