

Monument Crisis Center is there for clients in Tough Times

By Vanessa Fortney

This year has been especially difficult for Gabriel Verduzco, although he has lived in the United States for more than 20 years. His wife has been in the hospital for months, and his son lost his house forcing the entire family to move. Despite the trying times, Gabriel says he is "very happy with MCC" and has become part of the MCC family. Gabriel is a dedicated student of our ESL class and stays after to help families carry food out to their cars. He also participates in the Senior Moments bingo program and recently serenaded us with a song! One of the highlights of Gabriel's year was that he became a citizen this fall. Gabriel said he wanted his US citizenship to "feel valid in this country and be able to vote!" To celebrate, Gabriel came to the Center with his certificate in hand. "I am very grateful for all the support I get from the Monument Crisis Center," he says.



Senior Moments

By Juan Carlos Perez

This was an exhilarating year for our seniors! Senior Moments is a twice a month event for our clients to socialize, play bingo and enjoy morning refreshments, before picking up food. At the Halloween party the seniors participated in a Halloween costume contest, which quickly transformed into a dance party! During Thanksgiving on Senior Moments everyone wrote what they were thankful for, on a piece of paper. "I'm thankful for the people who are in charge of our being entertained, given food stuffs, and other good and wonderful things," wrote Carmelita. "Thank you also for those who generously donated." Carmelita's sentiments were shared throughout the crowd.

Special thanks go out to all the volunteers who helped make each Senior Moments a spectacular success.

A Hollywood Star comes to The Monument Crisis Center!

By Karla Villarando

On Tuesday, December 23, 2008 the Monument Crisis Center's staff, volunteers, and clients were delightfully surprised with the arrival of Hollywood star Rita Moreno! The famous celebrity was the leading actress in the musical "West Side Story" and came by bearing holiday gifts and toys for the children. As she made her way through the crowd and into the Center, she was greeted and serenaded for her birthday. As she toured the Center, she learned of the various programs we provide. She also became aware of the vital role the Center plays in the community of Concord and surrounding areas by meeting the necessary needs of its people. We are truly appreciative for Rita Moreno's kind generosity and look forward to her return!



Youth Advisory Board

By Nallely Marquez

The Youth Advisory Board started in February of 2008. We meet once a week and talk about problems that are going on in our community and what we can do to help. We've had a carwash and a bake sale to raise money for the center. We've also helped making food boxes, with the kids' summer program, and at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. We've had a chance to work at the Old Spaghetti Factory with the Concord



Police Department to raise money for MCC. We wrote letters to the Airborne troops in Iraq and gave them to the Blue Star Moms. And my most favorite of all is getting the chance to meet Erin Gruwell, teacher of the Freedom Writers, and receiving a book signed by her. It was very inspiring to be able to meet such an amazing person, who I know has changed the lives of many. I can't say I would have ever had these opportunities if I hadn't been in YAB; it's incredible how each and every one of these is a meaningful and life changing experiences for me as well as everyone else in it. I'm grateful for being a part of something that I know is making a difference with everything we do.

Monument Crisis Center Turns 5!

By Vanessa Fortney

Just weeks before we celebrated our 5th Anniversary we received a very special donation. Madison came into the Center in her little pea coat carrying an envelope. Instead of asking for presents for her fifth birthday, Madison chose to ask for donations for the Center. Her brother had also donated in the past. On August 21, Madison and her family came to celebrate our 5th Anniversary with clients, volunteers and staff. The event was one to remember as children danced ballet folklórico, teens performed hip-hop and food was shared. As Madison blew out the 5 candles on the Monument Crisis Center birthday cake, she knew that her donation really made a difference. Although Madison may be small in stature, she has a great heart and is a wonderful example of the many ways we receive community support.



Monument Futures Donation

By Martin Segobia



Monument Futures is a non-profit organization, that connects people with job opportunities and provide education such as ESL classes, construction skills and other workshops. One of the workers from MF is our friend Tony Esparza. Tony has been a volunteer in our center for two years. When we put out a flyer about our food pantry being low on food, Tony went back to Monument Futures and told everybody. When they heard the news, all the workers agreed to raise money for our center. They donated the equivalent of an hour of their work; they organized a car-wash, and worked with local churches to host a food drive.

Their contribution is very appreciated, especially since it's coming from people who don't have much themselves. Their altruism is an inspiration for all of us.

Volunteers

Hi! My name is Annalee. I am 10 years old. I started volunteering here when I was 5 years old. My first job at the center was helping to clean up the kids' area. My dad, Mel, volunteers at the center every Wednesday and Thursday. I love everyone at the center! I also love working here.

-Annalee Sasahara

Summer Fun with the Lindsay Wildlife Museum

By Ashlee Hebel

In August of 2008 the Lindsay Wildlife Museum held summer day camp for 30 of our children and many of our at-risk teens were their counselors. The weeklong camp was filled with learning activities, healthy snacks and loads of fun. The camp included learning

about the wildlife that lives around them, how to treat these animals and what makes them tick. Each day campers learned about different body systems like the digestive system or the cardiovascular system. They would then connect this knowledge with the animals. The campers not only learned in an academic environment but also worked hands on with some of the animals to connect the ideas they had learned that day. At the end of the program both the campers and the counselors that attended said it was an experience they will never forget. And, we have just been invited back for Summer 2009! The week ended with a splash when 100 Monument children were treated to a special pool party at Pleasant Hill Park thanks to the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation. A delicious bar-b-que was hosted by the Diablo Vista National Charity League moms and daughters. It was a great end to our Monument summer!



BOOKKEEPERS CORNER

Thanks to everyone who has donated, a special thanks to those who utilized the PayPal link to donate through our website. It has kept me hopping.

-Tina

Please e-mail us your current address and phone number at:
mcc1280@sbcglobal.net

My Experience as a College Intern

By Annalyse Banister

I am a college intern at The Monument Crisis Center. I've been working here for about 4 and half months now, and I do a lot of administrative work to also helping with client intake. I answer phones, open the mail, and help in the food room. My experience here has been great, the staff is phenomenal. They brought me in with open arms. It's amazing how everyone helps in the community whether it's donating food, money or volunteering their time here. I think this organization is great; it gives hope to the community and everyone around the environment. I live in the neighborhood and I see how the Monument Crisis Center helps the community in so many ways, not only food but other assistance as well. I love working here it's my first real job and it's fantastic.

2008 Statistics

By Jeff Allen

- 17,414 food boxes distributed
- 4,700 packs of diapers distributed
- 1,774 new clients (150 per month)
- More than 66,000 people helped with food
- 37% increase in terms of food distribution since 2007
- 7,000 volunteer sign-ins
- 16,000 volunteer hours, nearly 2 years worth of time
- Volunteer time equal to \$250,000 donated
- Over 200,000 lbs (100 tons) of food donated
- Food donations equal to \$350,000 donated

Nothing we've done this year would have been possible if not for the support of the community. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have so many people who support us in our mission.

2009 Upcoming Events:

- *Heartfelt, Saturday February 14.*
- *Monument Crisis Center 6th Anniversary in August.*
- *Art Show. Second half of the year.*

Have you ordered your Birthday barrel yet?



Now you can order a barrel from Monument Crisis Center to host a Food Drive on your birthday. Giana already ordered hers for her third birthday!

2350 Monument Blvd. Ste. B. Concord, CA 94520
Phone: 925.825.7751. Tax ID #: 41-2111171

website: www.MonumentCrisisCenter.org
You can now donate on our website through PayPal

Monument Crisis Center February 2009 Newsletter

Ring out the Old and Welcome the New

On a recent cold December afternoon, a visitor to the Monument Crisis Center dropped off a generous check donation. During his visit he and his wife observed the center in action and met several staff, client and teen volunteers. As he left the center I shouted "Have a Merry Christmas!" He turned back with a gleam in his eye and said, "Thank you, I just did." His response truly shows the spirit of the season. We are so fortunate to have charitable donors who support the center with cash donations, volunteers that enthusiastically donate their time and energy, and groups, churches, businesses and corporations that creatively approach new ways to support the Center. Our staff deals with some of the cruel realities of life but each day we are also rewarded with the best of the best: children making holiday cards, teens spending their afternoons tutoring, a grandpa bringing his grandchildren to help others, moms teaming up with their daughters, men finding common purpose and camaraderie in the hectic hustle and labor of the food room, octogenarians cheerfully preparing food baskets, and clients working alongside them all! It is with this paradigm that we move forward into a new year. We appreciate and need you right by our side.



Visit our new website! MonumentCrisisCenter.org