



# Share Our Selves News

May 2015



## Changing Lives One Bag of Food at a Time

The SOS Food Pantry provides food when families need it most

At Share Our Selves, we distribute an average of 215 bags of groceries every day, Monday through Friday. In 2014, that added up to over 222,000 people fed. Five days a week, volunteer drivers retrieve food from restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries and caterers. Our volunteers then fill each food bag with fresh produce, protein, dairy, and other pantry items, taking into account each client's situation. Many clients face dietary restrictions due to diabetes and other conditions. Still others may not have a refrigerator, or cooking facilities, or even access to a kitchen, so we carefully select the food to fit each person's needs. We also offer hygiene supplies such as soap, razors, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste, which are sometimes items our clients just can't afford.

Once the bags leave our hands, we don't always know the impact they have. In the following letter, one of our clients shares what that food meant to her family.

*Dear SOS,*

*I am writing this letter because my family and I have been struggling financially, my boyfriend was out of work all summer and my work hours were reduced. We are doing better, but still trying to play catch up with our bills, however, we have turned to SOS as our source of groceries.*

*I started to cook breakfast one morning, looked down at the stove (I was also getting a head start on lunch) and realized everything on our stove came from SOS. We were and are surviving thanks to your organization and its staff. I couldn't help but cry! Tears of happiness and gratitude. I am so thankful and grateful that your organization exists and that all your staff is kind and respectful in a time of need that is very difficult for me.*

*A million thank yous couldn't be enough!*



## Reflections

This April has been a most unusual month for me, as several events have caused me both happiness and sadness. I think we are all subject to such times, and looking back can sometimes be helpful. In our family, during April we have three birthdays, sometimes Easter, one wedding anniversary, and the planting of our garden. All of these events signify hope, renewal, joy, family celebrations, and a respite from our daily routines. However, this past month the son of one of our dear family friends committed suicide and briefly brought our lives to a standstill. I was not prepared to hear this news, and it literally took my breath away. The question of why will probably haunt many of us for years to come, and our sorrow will be long in healing. For me, of course, this tragedy is a reminder of why we must be vigilant in assuring SOS continues the mission of response to one another, caring, showing compassion and kindness, and knowing hope must not be lost or dimmed, because the impact can be tragic.

On the front page of this newsletter is a beautiful thank you to SOS, and the simple statement of gratitude affirms that caring for one another is a legacy of strength for the future. I have been humbled this April.

As always you are close in my thoughts.

**Karen L. McGlinn**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Thank You

Thank you to the many donors, community groups, and corporations that support SOS. We appreciate all you do to make a difference!

- **Thank you to Newport Rib Co.** for selecting SOS as their “Giving back to the Community” partner for the month of March
- **Thank you to the Orange County Register** for including SOS in the Golden Ticket program to win free advertising
- **Thank you to the Orange County Community Foundation** for including SOS in the first iheartoc Giving Day

## Awards & Grants

SOS recently received generous grant funding and awards for our programs from the following:

- **Costa Mesa Mayor’s Award**, in honor of SOS CEO Karen McGlenn and her many years of service to the Costa Mesa community
- **Emergency Food & Shelter Program**, in support of food and rent
- **George Hoag Family Foundation**, in support of the clinic and the Healthcare for the Homeless Program



From left: John McGlenn, Karen McGlenn, and Costa Mesa Mayor Stephen Mensinger

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Volunteers Do Make a Difference

Congratulations to Carl Morgan and the OCC Food Riders Club! We honored them as the SOS nominee for the 2015 OC Spirit of Volunteerism Awards on April 14. We are so fortunate to have a partnership with the OCC Food Riders. This group of students retrieves excess food from the Orange Coast College cafeteria and delivers it to SOS weekly. Their commitment to serving those in need and their innovative approach in securing food from the college campus – not to mention their unique delivery method (they deliver by bike!) – exemplify how a small group can make a BIG difference. We estimate that their contributions feed over 100 homeless clients in our food pantry every week. A big THANK YOU to all!



Carl Morgan, left, with food for the SOS Food Pantry and fellow Food Riders.

All of our SOS volunteers deserve to be honored, and I want to take a moment to thank each and every person that volunteers to make a difference for our clients and patients. Thank you to those of you who come on site each week, those of you who pick a project in which to participate, those of you who collect clothing, hygiene items, food, Easter Baskets and much more, for your ongoing support. We have so many opportunities for Share Our Selves and our volunteers, onsite and off, to make a difference every day! If you’ve been thinking you might like to get involved, maybe now is the right time.

- Volunteer drivers are needed to pick up food from local merchants (2 hours/week)
- Food Line volunteers are needed (3 to 4 hours a week/Mon - Fri)
- Summer spots are available in the food warehouse – a great opportunity for student hours
- Back to School opportunities are available for our backpack program (scheduling begins in July)

For more information, please contact Julie Neja at 949.270.2113 or [jneja@shareourselves.org](mailto:jneja@shareourselves.org).

It’s going to be a GREAT summer at SOS! We hope you’ll consider joining us!

## In My Lifetime

### Stories of Case Management Success

*A generous supporter of SOS decided that instead of waiting until later in life to make a contribution to Share Our Selves, she wanted to do it now in order to see the results of her gift in her lifetime. As a result, the In My Lifetime grant was set up to support the SOS Case Management program. This section of the newsletter is dedicated to sharing stories of case management successes.*

A dialysis center recently referred a patient to SOS for help. The patient was a 53-year-old man who is blind, disabled, and must receive dialysis three times a week to manage his diabetes. He also recently became homeless for the first time after the elderly lady he lived with passed away, and her children sold her condominium. He slept in parks and churches for several months, but it was very difficult for him to live this way due to his blindness. SOS Senior Case Manager Yadira Gomez knew what he really needed was stable housing, but it was very difficult for him to find. He was looking to rent a room, but all of the places where he interviewed turned him down because they did not want the responsibility of housing someone who was blind. SOS assisted him during his search by providing him with food, transportation to his dialysis appointments, and a few nights in motels so that he could shower and shave before meeting with potential roommates. He started getting very depressed at his situation, so we also referred him to behavioral health assistance. After a long search, with the help of our case management team, he found a room to rent, and SOS provided him with the funds to move in. He has now been there for a month and is very happy with his new living situation. His one request is for a suit so that he can return to his church.

*If you are interested in making a gift in your lifetime, please contact Kathleen Bruski, [kbruski@shareourselves.org](mailto:kbruski@shareourselves.org) or 949.270.2132.*

# Wild & Crazy Taco Night

Celebrating 22 years of raising funds for the SOS Food Pantry

With 28 chefs and approximately 700 guests, Share Our Selves' 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wild & Crazy Taco Night on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, at Share Our Selves, was a delicious success! Orange County's finest chefs lent their amazing culinary talents to this community event, which netted approximately \$82,000 to support the SOS Food Pantry – helping feed Orange County residents at risk of going hungry.

The VIP pre-event party was a festive affair. Participating guests received early entrance into the event, and the opportunity to sample every chef's taco, Tres Sietes Tequila margaritas, and beer donated by Barley Forge Brewing Co., before the rush.

The general event was as wild & crazy as ever! Guests mingled between the chef stations and bars – enjoying all of the unique tacos, lively chefs, and music from DJ Drew Pierce. Event supporter, David Robins, was the lucky of winner of the opportunity drawing prize – 4 Disneyland Park Hopper Tickets.

In celebration of the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the event, SOS asked guests to participate in the "Fill the Food Bag Challenge" to raise \$2,200 during the three-hour event to support the SOS Food Pantry. Guests generously participated, hitting the fundraising goal by the end of the night.

All of the proceeds from the event benefit the SOS Food Pantry, which collects retrievable food from restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, and caterers to distribute to low income and homeless Orange County residents.

*Top: The 2015 Wild & Crazy Taco Night chefs; Middle: from left: Rich Stasand, Joe Querriera, Felix Yan, and SOS Board Member Larry Kugelman; Bottom: Zov's Restaurant's Blue Crab Ceviche Taco*



## Onion Luncheon

21 years of supporting Share Our Selves

The Onion Luncheon turns 21 this year as the SOS A-Team and Star Team once again come together to celebrate their commitment to SOS. This year's event will be held on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Five Crowns Restaurant in Corona del Mar. The festive event features a live auction, and honors the members of the Star Team, a support guild of SOS.

As always, one lucky live auction bidder will walk away with a bag of the Imperial County Sweet Onions for which the event was named.

For more information or to RSVP to the event, please contact Kathleen Bruski at 949.270.2132 or [kbruski@shareourselves.org](mailto:kbruski@shareourselves.org).

Thank you to the A-Team and Star Team for your many years of support.

## Dealing with the Drought SOS installs drought-friendly landscaping

SOS has upgraded the landscaping at our Costa Mesa site to reflect the need for Californians to reduce our water usage. The beautiful new landscaping includes succulents and other drought tolerant plants, and a drip irrigation system to conserve water. We can all do our part to protect this precious natural resource.



*New landscaping in front of the SOS Costa Mesa site*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Save the Date

### Share Our Selves Back to School Program

### August

Volunteers are needed to stuff backpacks and sort supplies. Scouts, church groups, and other community organizations are welcome. It's a great way for high school students to collect community service hours! For information on volunteering please contact Julie Neja at [jneja@shareourselves.org](mailto:jneja@shareourselves.org) or 949.270.2113.

## Wish List

The need for support continues all year. Here's how you can help:

- Donate a suit for our *In My Lifetime* Case Management client
- Donate a small refrigerator for a Case Management client
- Donate your car with You Pick You Save
- Toothbrushes, dental floss, toothpaste
- Baby Items – clothing, food, and diapers in all sizes
- Hotels & Motels – consider donating toiletry items or half-full shampoos, lotions, etc.
- Food – Hold a food drive in your neighborhood (canned goods and dry goods)
- Hygiene kit items – socks, travel size toiletries

#### Facility Requests

- 3 outdoor umbrellas, 10 ft.
- 8 crowd control stanchions
- 2 small benches, for 2-3 people
- 4 small desk fans
- toaster

To donate any of the items above, please contact Vanessa Ontiveros at 949.270.2150 or [vontiveros@shareourselves.org](mailto:vontiveros@shareourselves.org).

## Calendar of Events

Please join us for our upcoming programs and events:

- May 20 SOS Star Team Onion Luncheon
- August 12 We Care Wednesday School Supply Drive at the OC Fair  
12:00pm-3:00pm
- August SOS Back to School Backpack Distribution
- October 30 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrity Chef Dinner
- November 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual SOS Sleep Out on Superior

For more information on any of our events, please contact Katie Santore at 949.270.2134 or [ksantore@shareourselves.org](mailto:ksantore@shareourselves.org), or visit our website at [www.shareourselves.org](http://www.shareourselves.org).

To receive our newsletter by email, please contact Katie Santore at [ksantore@shareourselves.org](mailto:ksantore@shareourselves.org)

## Share Our Selves

# 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Back to School Backpack Distribution

For many of us, our fondest memory of starting a new school year was picking out new pencils, notebooks, and a new backpack! Unfortunately, for many Orange County children whose families are facing economic hardships, this is not a reality.

In 2014, SOS distributed 3,700 backpacks filled with school supplies. To the children that received them, it is much more than a backpack filled with goodies. It's the tools they need to succeed in school, but most importantly, it is a boost of confidence.

The happy faces of children receiving backpacks from SOS speak for themselves. You, too, can help SOS empower children to be the leaders of the future! Every gift makes a difference in the life of a child.

### Back to School Underwriting

- \$25 will provide 5 children with a new backpack
- \$50 will provide 10 children with a new backpack
- \$100 will provide 20 children with a new backpack
- \$250 will provide 50 children with a new backpack
- \$500 will provide 100 children with a new backpack

### How to Donate

- Visit our website at [shareourselves.org/donate](http://shareourselves.org/donate)
- Mail a check made out to Share Our Selves to:  
1550 Superior Avenue  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

For more information about the SOS Back to School Distribution, please contact Veronica Rodarte at 949.270.2142 or [vrodarte@shareourselves.org](mailto:vrodarte@shareourselves.org)

