



# PERSONALIZED CARE FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY

# SHARE OUR SELVES NEWS WINTER 2022



## IN MY LIFETIME

### STORIES OF CASE MANAGEMENT SUCCESS

**A generous supporter of SOS decided that instead of waiting until later in life to contribute to Share Our Selves (SOS), she wanted to donate at the present time 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.**

When 67-year-old Tony first met Share Our Selves' (SOS) Senior Case Manager Yadira Gomez, he was emotionally paralyzed. Sitting across the desk from Yadira, he just didn't know where to start. In addition to struggling with Type II Diabetes, he was recently diagnosed with cancer. His prognosis was very poor and the burden he would place on his family was overwhelming.

Unable to work, struggling with language barriers, and lacking transportation, he couldn't complete medical documents, attend lab appointments and treatment sessions which were located miles away from his Lake Forest residence. His health began to deteriorate rapidly which meant Tony needed more assistance and felt guilty for burdening his wife. For her part, Tony's wife had to reduce her work hours to care for Tony but worried about making ends meet.

As a first step, Yadira helped Tony update his medical documents so that he could continue to seek medical treatments. She then provided him with gas cards to ensure that he could get to his appointments on time. Yadira then met with Tony's wife and learned that the family

could neither keep up with rental payments, utility bills, nor could they procure enough food and other essential household products by relying solely on her salary. The SOS team coordinated efforts and provided the family with financial assistance for rent and utilities as well as hygiene kits and essential household products.

As she navigates the nightmare that is facing her family, Tony's wife shared through tears, "Yadira was the angel that Tony needed to get through this very difficult time." She also shared that she was "embarrassed for taking the handouts from SOS," yet so grateful for this organization at this difficult time in their lives.

The vulnerable and marginalized come to us struggling with unique issues and needs, and as our CEO Christy Ward says, "SOS is always there to catch anyone in need if the floor falls out from underneath them." But we couldn't do our job without the assistance of our donors who continue to support our work financially. We are so grateful to YOU for your donations which allow SOS to help those in need!

*P.S. The yellow home-grown roses on Yadira's desk are contributed by our thoughtful volunteers. So often when clients come through our doors, they may be feeling anxious, insecure, embarrassed, and sometimes working through experiences related to trauma. Something as simple as a bouquet of flowers on the desk helps to provide an atmosphere of care and comfort. An inviting and warm environment is often conducive to a client's sense of safety. We have found that when a client feels safe, they are more apt to share about sensitive and difficult experiences. Little gestures such as flowers, children's toys, clothes, and a bag of food can provide a pathway towards open communication and ultimately collaboration in care.*

# 52<sup>ND</sup> ADOPT A FAMILY A SUCCESS



In December 2021, we hosted our 52nd Adopt A Family program! With the generous spirit of giving from our donors, we were able to distribute a variety of gift cards that provided **1,051 families** comfort and holiday joy during another challenging pandemic year.

The Share Our Selves (SOS) Adopt A Family team planned, coordinated, and delivered the revised program with the help of remote volunteers and committee support. It truly takes a village to ensure this annual program serves the families that are referred to us by 60 participating schools and organizations.

We want to thank the OC Fair & Event Center which has been an incredible partner through the years and worked with us to host a safe and seamless event. On behalf of the adopted families, our program community partners, and our SOS Adopt A Family team, we are profoundly grateful for your contributions.

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## EMPLOYEE MAKING AN IMPACT



Don Hoa had been working with an Orange County hospital emergency management group for numerous years when he first learned about Share Our Selves (SOS) through a county employee. The SOS mission, philosophy and values resonated with Don, and in 2017 when the position of Safety and Emergency Preparedness Manager became available, he readily applied.

While Don enjoyed working in the hospital environment, he was immediately drawn to SOS because of its "caring and service-orientated staff." He really values how employees pitch in whenever and wherever needed, and that kind of commitment appeals to his nature.

Don fondly remembers that when he first joined SOS, he was introduced to a homeless veteran who was suffering from PTSD from the Gulf War and often exhibited irrational behavior. Don explained, "He came across to others as intimidating but he is a really nice guy and just misunderstood." It gave Don great pleasure seeing this veteran transition into permanent housing and improve the quality of his life. To this day, the veteran stops by to say hi to Don and the social services team.

A recipient of numerous services, vision and values awards, Don has been instrumental in contributing to SOS's service-oriented environment and goes out of his way to fulfill the service needs of his colleagues and clients. The Coalition of Orange County Community Health Centers also recognized Don as a "2021 Shining Star" for his instrumental contribution in the SOS vaccination events to ensure equitable access to communities most impacted by COVID.

Visit us online at  
[shareourselves.org](http://shareourselves.org)

Find us on Facebook  
[ShareOurSelves](https://www.facebook.com/ShareOurSelves)

Follow us on Twitter  
[@ShareOurSelves](https://twitter.com/ShareOurSelves)

# CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERISM



*Pictured from L to R: Hodge, Hans, Marion, Margie*

UCI undergraduate student Hans enjoys volunteering at Share Our Selves (SOS) when he is not poring over his biochemistry and molecular biology books. Volunteering is not new for Hans who spent many years giving freely of his time at other non-profit organizations. When asked why he continues to volunteer at SOS, Hans commented, "SOS is unique, its reach is far, and its impact is tremendous."

Pictured alongside Hans are siblings Hodge, and sisters Marion, and Margie. All three had volunteered at a food shelter in Orange, California, and when that shelter closed its doors, the siblings were elated in finding SOS where they could once again volunteer at a food pantry. Margie started volunteering in 2015, and a year later convinced her sister, Marion to join. Recently Hodge retired and came along for the ride. All three commend SOS in serving those experiencing homelessness, and truly enjoy working with the dedicated SOS staff.

For Marion, who has a grandson who is homeless and afflicted with mental health issues, SOS holds a special place in her heart. She shares, "I feel blessed that I can help." SOS is so fortunate in having these wonderful volunteers, some of whom have been with us for so many years. They really brighten our day with their dedication and twinkle in their eyes.

*Learn about our volunteer opportunities, please email:  
[volunteers@shareourselves.org](mailto:volunteers@shareourselves.org)*

## MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

Your support helps to restore individuals and families to a state of well-being and keeps our neighbors healthy at home. And it is through your generosity that SOS can continue to meet the growing needs of the low-income, homeless, and marginalized populations in Orange County.

### CHECKS

Make payable to Share Our Selves, and mail to:  
SOS Foundation, Share Our Selves  
1550 Superior Ave  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

### CREDIT CARD

Donate online by clicking "DONATE" on our website:  
[SHAREOURSELVES.ORG](http://SHAREOURSELVES.ORG)

### WIRE TRANSFERS

Please call Jay Donoghue at 949.270.2171  
for details and instructions

### RETIREMENT

Contract your IRA representative to transfer your IRA  
distribution directly to Share Our Selves.

## WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT!





1550 Superior Avenue  
 Costa Mesa, CA 92627  
**shareourselves.org**  
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# SAVE THE DATE

**29TH ANNUAL WILD & CRAZY TACO NIGHT**  
**MAY 19, 2022**



Taco Night is back! Get ready for a fun and festive evening in which OC's most creative and generous chefs prepare wildly unique and crazily delicious tacos. Proceeds from this event will support Share Our Selves (SOS) and the vital services we provide addressing issues such as food and housing insecurity, and overall wellness. See insert for more details!

Follow us on social media for more updates



## WISH LIST

**THE NEED FOR SUPPORT CONTINUES 24/7.**  
**HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DONATE & HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

- Toiletries and Necessities – unopened bottles of shampoo, lotion, and toothpaste. Gently used blankets, sleeping bags & backpacks
- Clothing (Adult) – gloves, hoodies, sweaters, jeans
- Pet food – cat and dog food
- Food – hold a food drive in your neighborhood (canned goods and dry goods)
- Volunteer – donate your time in service to others.

Contact [volunteers@shareourselves.org](mailto:volunteers@shareourselves.org)

Please drop off donations at:

1550 Superior Ave., Costa Mesa, CA. M-F, 8 am- 3pm

Any questions? Contact Stephanie Harrington,

[sharrington@sos-fdn.org](mailto:sharrington@sos-fdn.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Mar. 24 SOS Dine Out Night @ Pitfire Pizza, Costa Mesa
- May 19 29th Annual Wild & Crazy Taco Night
- July Summer Family Service Night
- October Soirée on the Shore
- November Family Service Night

For more information about our upcoming events, please contact Elizabeth Hopkins, [ehopkins@sos-fdn.org](mailto:ehopkins@sos-fdn.org).

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn for more updates

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## A MESSAGE OF HOPE

As we enter 2022, we have seen yet another surge of COVID-19 that has heavily impacted Share Our Selves (SOS) clients and employees on multiple levels, including illnesses. These challenges have made it more difficult to return to normal operations and deliver the level of service expected in our community while also focusing on the resilience and retention of our staff and volunteers. Although the impact of our work is energizing to our teams, the constant state of COVID in all our professional and personal lives takes a toll on energy levels.

However, we never lose hope and know that we are moving to an improved future state. We remain laser-focused on trying to be a part of our community's healing process. SOS has worked hard as an organization and in partnership with other community organizations to provide testing, vaccinations, direct services to reduce illness, as well as social services to reduce the burden placed on so many individuals and families in need of help. Through these efforts our hope is that we can be an integral part of helping to move our community out of the pandemic and into a state of wellness.

We know that so many in our community see SOS as a place of hope in routine and urgent care and social services as they are faced with struggles along the way. SOS couldn't perform all the array of services without the generous assistance from those in the community that have supported our work over the last 52 years. We are so grateful for the passion and love that you bring to support the current and future work of SOS.

**Christy Ward**, Chief Executive Officer

[shareourselves.org](http://shareourselves.org)