



Loaves & Fishes **Survival City**

August 30, 2010-- The address is 1321 North C Street, but it might just as well be known as Survival City. On a typical afternoon last month, nearly 800 people came to the village of services operated by Loaves and Fishes for a nutritious hot lunch, a chance to shower, emergency schooling for children aged 3 to 15, or safe daytime shelter. In all, Loaves and Fishes offers [14 programs](#) – including Maryhouse and Mustard Seed School -- for people who have fallen on hard times. And there are more of them than ever.

“Not only have the numbers of people we are serving increased – men, women and children – but we are seeing a lot of intact families who have never been homeless before,” says Janet Green, Director of Development.

Faces in the line waiting at the entrance to the dining rooms attested to Loaves and Fishes’ increasingly diverse clientele. More were seniors who are having a hard time getting enough to eat. A father carried his little girl piggyback, one of many parents who bring their children to Loaves and Fishes since they cannot afford programs that provide daycare and daytime meals.

The number of people turning to Loaves and Fishes spiked at the beginning of the recession, and has remained high. Individual donors, who provide 70 percent of the nonprofit’s operating funds, have loyally continued to support the organization but have been forced to send smaller checks. Loaves and Fishes is very grateful for the support it continues to receive from United Way California Capital Region as one of its 142 certified agencies in the five-county region.

Pressure on the organization’s resources could be overwhelming, but Janet and other staff members remain hopeful.

Little Nevaeh, just three months old, enjoyed a bottle of formula while waiting with her grandmother Sherri Sumrall for services at Maryhouse. Another Maryhouse client, hearing about the efforts of United Way to raise funds for Loaves and Fishes and other nonprofits, exclaimed, “Just keep doing what you’re doing!”

It can take time, but Janet knows that Loaves and Fishes can make a huge difference in people’s lives. When a woman recently visited with her son, now in college, Janet realized he was Nehemiah, a boy who had been removed by Child Protective Services when he was in third grade.

Nehemiah’s mother survived, pulled her life together, and raised a tall, handsome son who had gone on to college.

“This is a place where people can make mistakes and they’re not going to be judged,” Janet explains. “We serve those who are at a crossroads when they’re not sure where to go.”

Loaves and Fishes was founded by Chris and Dan Delaney, who began by delivering homemade lunches to homeless people clustered in the industrial area alongside Highway 160. “It started out of the kindness of their hearts,” Janet explained. “They wanted to do something.”

Here are some ways you can do something to help homeless men, women and children in need:

- Give through the United Way workplace campaign.
- Contribute to Loaves and Fishes' capital campaign to complete a warehouse that will store supplies for the organization's luncheon meal service.
- Volunteer. It takes about 1,000 volunteers each month to run Loaves & Fishes' many programs. Contact Sandy at volunteer@SacLoaves.org
- Organize a drive through work or a service organization to collect always-needed items such as bottled water, diapers and non-soy-based formula.
- [Donate online](#)