

ywca SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

our voice



943 No. Grand Ave.
Covina, CA 91724
(626) 960-2995
www.ywcasgv.org

SENIOR SERVICES
YWCA Intervale
24-Hour Message Line:
(626) 214-9465

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
YWCA WINGS
24-Hour Help Line:
(626) 967-0658

eliminating racism
empowering women

December 2009

OUR MISSION • *To eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.*

Visit our **facebook** page and become a fan of the YWCA SGV!

SENIOR SERVICES HOLIDAY DONATION NEEDS

Please consider donating gifts for seniors as shown below. New items only, please:

- Electric blanket (full size)
- Thick blanket or throw
- Robes (the larger the better)
- Toothpaste, mouthwash, Gold Bond Powder (any size container is fine)
- Slippers (unisex, larger sizes are better)
- Scarf and beanie sets
- Larger size knit gloves with fingers
- Sweaters (larger is better)
- Jackets (larger is better)

Please contact Don Herring at (626) 214-9466 if you would like to help.

DRIVERS NEEDED

Volunteer drivers are needed to deliver meals to homebound senior citizens. Contact Blanca at (626) 214-9465 if you can help!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISA BRABO

GIVING AND RECEIVING: BOTH IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT



In this less than prosperous economic time, I want us to be reminded that it is giving and receiving that make the generous heart.

We are fortunate here to receive your many gifts of time, funds, goods, services and love. They have been invaluable in enabling us to not only maintain our work, but to actually blossom in many ways during these tough economic times.

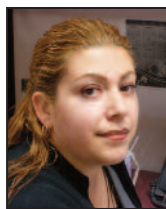
And together, we have, in turn, given shelter, food, comfort, support and aid to those in need, ranging from teens needing support to battered women seeking to escape a cycle of violence to senior citizens who need a little extra help to live comfortably in their homes.

In this issue, you'll read some inspiring stories of receiving and giving – exactly what this holiday season is all about.

On behalf of the YWCA San Gabriel Valley, I want to say "thank you" to all our community partners, staff, volunteers and friends. We wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season and the best of the new year.

STAFF MEMBER PROFILE

STIMULUS FUNDS PROVIDE NEW JOBS



Two years ago, Karla Ruiz, a pregnant El Monte single mother, borrowed \$3,000 and enrolled in an eight-month medical assistant training program that she thought would enable her to support her family. But nearly a year after completing the program, she found herself unable to get a job because she lacked the two years of work experience many hospitals and medical offices were requiring.

Then last September, Karla's luck changed. She was referred to the YWCA SGV by GAIN, the LA County welfare-to-work program that partners with the federal government to create and fund temporary jobs to help young mothers escape the welfare cycle. Because of her prior office experience and ability to quickly learn new computer programs, Karla was hired by the YWCA to fill a brand new position: assistant event planner.

Her job is to research, plan, and execute a regional conference for women to be

VANS NEEDED • Two cargo vans for food delivery are needed by Senior Services, and one passenger van for transporting families is needed by our Domestic Violence program. Please contact Don Herring (Senior Services) at (626) 214-9466 or Edie Norris (Domestic Violence) at (626) 214-9467 if you can help!

WINGS HOLIDAY DONATION NEEDS

In response to many questions about the needs of our clients for the upcoming holiday season, we have developed some program ideas that target specific needs.

Coats for Christmas: Many times our clients arrive unprepared for cold weather. We would like to gather new jackets or coats for our clients.

Santa's P.J.s: New pajamas and night clothes for all sizes and all ages. We will distribute these throughout the year, so if you see a sale on summer P.J.'s those will work too!

Kids' Day Out: We all treasure the times we spend out with our kids shopping and having lunch at McDonald's. Our moms don't have money, so we are asking our friends to consider picking up a \$5.00 gift card. Our staff will gather enough to provide a mother and her kids with that special time together.

We appreciate your support; however we are no longer able to accept other clothing, hygiene items, food or toys. These items have already been provided. Thank you so much!

The women and children of WINGS deeply appreciate our wonderful friends and donors. *Edie Norris, Program Director* (626) 214-9467

hosted by the YWCA SGV in June 2010. Already, Karla has logged dozens hours of on-line and in-person research on conference topics, speakers, venues, and logistics.

"I love my job," says Karla. "I am learning new things every day and every day is different." Her enthusiasm and passion for the work has not only made Karla a valued staff member at the YWCA, but has also brought new hope and inspiration to her family, including her four daughters, ages 1 to 10.

Meanwhile, Karla is already thinking ahead. "I know that the skills and contacts I am gaining will help me get a permanent position when this ends September 16," she says. "I would love to continue to work at the YWCA or work in a medical setting where I can use my training."

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

LOCAL COUPLE GRANT WISHES TO SENIORS



There are some senior citizens in the San Gabriel Valley who think they have met the real Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. They're going by the alias of Jerry and Marci Smith, a married couple who operate a dental office in Covina (he's the dentist, she's the office manager and nurse) on weekdays. But by night and on weekends, the Smiths have been repairing homes, doing odd jobs, and donating grocery store gift cards to low-income

seniors served by the YWCA SGV.

"These are people who would otherwise fall between the cracks," said Marci, who says she has always had an affinity for older people. "With huge cutbacks from the state and the economy being the way it is, it's been difficult for some seniors to get by--and we are happy to help."

The daughter and granddaughter of Japanese-American internees at the Poston, Arizona Internment Camp during World War II, Marci says she was profoundly influenced by her grandmother, who, despite the forced evacuation and loss of her family business, never was bitter or angry. "She was always practical and focused on what she could do to help others," says Marci.

As longtime Meals on Wheels volunteers, Marci and Jerry have delivered special restaurant meals to seniors on Christmas Eve for ten years as members of the Covina Rotary Club. From her experience with the Meals on Wheels program, Marci saw the kinds of living situations many poor, homebound elderly endure.

That's why she didn't hesitate when she heard that an 87-year old client would soon be evicted from his mobile home park if repairs and debris cleanup were not completed on his long-neglected unit. With other volunteers from the Rotary Club, Marci and Jerry spent several days clearing brush, painting, cleaning, and installing a new water heater. Their hard work, along with several hundreds of dollars in donations for equipment and supplies, managed to bring the senior's home up to code and helped him avoid eviction.

"It was hard work, but the look of gratitude from the senior made it all worth it," says Marci. She and Jerry have rolled up their sleeves on several other occasions to make minor repairs on other seniors' homes, and often donate funds and gift cards for emergencies.

During the holiday season, when we remind ourselves that it is better to give than to receive, the Smiths say they feel doubly blessed to know they've made a small difference in someone's life.

If you'd like to help the YWCA-SGV save money and communicate more efficiently with you, please sign up (via one of the three options below) for our free email newsletter.

Sign up instantly at
www.ywcasgv.org

Email us at
maryannborer@ywcasgv.org

Give us a call at
(626) 214-9440

KEEPING WOMEN SAFE IS HER CALLING



Glenda Gomez, legal advocate for the WINGS domestic violence program, files 35-40 restraining order packages every month with the Pomona Superior Court. These filings, asking a judge to issue an order of protection to keep victims of domestic violence safe are part of her job, but also what she considers her calling in life.

As a child living with an alcoholic father, Glenda says she had no idea that the kind of abuse she and her mother suffered for nearly two decades could have been stopped. "I didn't realize that there was help--we could be protected from him--until I went to community college," says Glenda. Once she found out what services for victims were available, she helped her mother get a protective order and her mother sought a divorce after 25 years in an abusive marriage.

As a result of her own experience, Glenda decided to devote her life to helping other women escape their abusers. She earned a BA in social work, and started as an intern and later joined the YWCA SGV's domestic violence staff. Over the past six years, she has racked up a nearly 100 percent batting average in obtaining restraining orders for women who seek her help.

"I want to make sure that women know that they have options," says Glenda. "No one has to stay and take it year after year like my mother did." She notes that when her mother spoke of leaving her father, he often used the threat of reporting her to immigration officials whom he said would then deny her citizenship if she were divorced.

"It's important for people to know that their immigration status would not be affected if they report abuse or leave the abuser," says Glenda. "It's all about education, and sometimes, it's simply about a language barrier." The YWCA SGV provides domestic violence hotline assistance directly in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and offers translation for other languages such as Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.

The 24-hour confidential DV helpline number is (626) 967-0658.

CHINESE VISITORS IMPRESSED WITH YWCA SGV PARTNERSHIPS

The YWCA SGV hosted 18 health and government officials from Hunan Province, China, on November 11, as part of a professional and cultural exchange program organized by the International Asian Chamber of Commerce.

During the visit, Lisa Brabo, executive director of the YWCA SGV, described in detail how the organization serves a large and diverse population of senior citizens, women, and children through its partnerships with public and private entities. Since there is no counterpart to the YWCA model in China, the visitors said they were intrigued by the YWCA's ability to develop and sustain these partnerships over more than seven decades.

"When I heard that the YWCA has people who have been volunteering regularly for years--delivering meals or making quilts for victims of domestic violence, I was astounded," said one delegate, a family planning official. "In China, we would expect the government to provide these services."

Lisa explained that although the YWCA receives about 75 percent of its funding from the county (through state and federal programs), a substantial part of the organization's work is only possible through private donations of money and time. "We are fortunate to have an amazing network of individuals and companies who enable us to continue to serve despite funding delays and cutbacks," said Lisa. "Having spent time in China myself, I know how unusual this sounds, and why the Hunan group was so surprised."

The visit ended with group photos and a promise to continue to keep in touch.

