

The Canticle

The newsletter of Santa Maria Urban Ministry, San Jose, CA June 2008

A New DVD Tells All About Santa Maria Urban Ministry

Santa Maria Urban Ministry is a safe place of welcome, service, and positive transformation. This is the theme of a DVD just released telling the SMUM story.

The DVD is introduced by the Reverend David Brewer, Convener, who speaks of the history of SMUM and encourages viewers' participation in the ministry.

Viewers see volunteers at work and programs in action. There are brief glimpses of food distribution, ABC Playtime, Studio 17, tax preparation assistance, and special occasions. Several interviews are shown involving volunteers and a client.

The 9-1/2 minute DVD was photographed, edited, and produced by Jack Gorham, a parishioner at St. Mark's in Santa Clara. He undertook this project, at no cost to SMUM, because he thought that a DVD would be a "good vehicle to show outsiders what SMUM was all about."

When asked what he learned in working on this DVD, Mr. Gorham said, "I learned several things. I learned about the wonderful talent and support given to the ABC School and the number of volunteers SMUM depends upon to carry out its programs. I only met a few, but those were very dedicated and talented. I also became aware of the number of services that SMUM provides."

The DVD is being distributed to churches in the diocese for their use in informing parishes about SMUM. It will also be used in outreach presentations with a variety of community groups. If you have a group that would be interested in viewing the DVD and having a short presentation about SMUM, please contact Lawrence Robles at 408-292-3314.

Why Two Canticles in the Same Mailing? Christmas News Now?!

When the January issue of this newsletter was printed and ready to mail, the SMUM computers refused to print labels with addresses of everyone on our mailing list. Several alternatives were tried and failed. Finally a new database was developed and is ready for use with this issue. Rather than discard the old newsletter, we decided to mail the January issue along with this one. We apologize for the delay (and any confusion) and hope that we will have better luck in the future. Thanks for your patience.

--The Canticle Editors

ABC Playtime Receives Grants, Other Assistance

The children who attend our ABC Playtime program will soon have a much-improved, much nicer place to play, thanks to generous grants from the Episcopal Church Women and the Junior League of San Jose. Edy Unthank, SMUM grant writer, says the grants will help us provide better playground equipment and a safer, more attractive play space.



ABC Playtime children in their classroom at SMUM

In addition, St. Mark's Santa Clara provided each child with an Easter basket, and Anne Briggs, an ABC Playtime teacher, applied for and received a grant from the Leonard Charitable Foundation. Bravo!



ABC Playtime students with their mothers at a graduation party in late May

WHAT CAN YOU DO? GIVE A LITTLE, HELP A LOT

In previous issues of *The Canticle* you were encouraged to become a Friend of Santa Maria by making a contribution of any amount on a monthly basis, or whenever you can. What would your contribution mean to the clients of Santa Maria? How might your donation be used? Examples are offered below:

\$5 a month---gasoline for a truck to pick up clothing for 10 needy people or heavy-duty stockings for the cold months

\$15 a month---70 pounds of food from the Food Bank or one week of snacks for the youth in Studio 17

\$25 a month---3 months of supplies for ABC Playtime or 38 dozen eggs for hungry families

\$50 a month---350 pounds of food from the Food Bank or PGE expenses for Studio 17

\$100 a month---rain ponchos for 35 individuals or insurance payments on the trucks used to pick up food and other necessities

\$200 a month---warm winter blankets for 28 people or 1 month of electricity for our warehouse freezers

As you can see, there are many needs. The list above is only a sample. To paraphrase Mother Theresa, if you can't help a hundred people, then help just one.

Join the Friends of Santa Maria. A little or a lot, your gift to SMUM will go a long way towards helping the ministry carry out its mission. You can join by sending a check to:

Santa Maria Urban Ministry
778 South Almaden
San Jose, CA 95110

Please write on the memo line that the contribution is for Friends of SMUM.

SMUM Director Ordained as Priest

Lawrence Robles, SMUM's Executive Director, was ordained as an Episcopal priest on March 29. The joyful ceremony, presided over by The Right Reverend Mary Gray-Reeves, Bishop of the Dioceses of El Camino Real, took place at St. Stephen's Church in Gilroy.

More than 200 people celebrated the occasion with the Reverend Robles, who said he found it an inspiring event and was glad to be surrounded by his family, colleagues, and friends. The best part of the ordination, Lawrence stated, was the gathering of God's people officially validating his call in the communion and presence of God and His Church.

When asked why he wanted to be ordained, Lawrence said, "After several years of 'running from' God's call to be in an ordained ministry, I was given the opportunity and support to respond to His call through the Episcopal Church. Whether I wanted to respond or not is not important. What is significant is that God and God's community made it possible for me to respond. Now, I gladly serve the poor, the under-privileged and families in need through ordained ministry."

"Since my ordination, I still feel like the same person, yet I think people have an unspoken expectation or hope as I relate and share with them. People really do seek the mysterious and the spiritual part of life. I think this expectation offers the greatest change in my post-ordination life."

At an April clergy conference in San Juan Bautista, the Reverend Robles was warmly accepted by his colleagues. He reported that this was a wonderful surprise because he had no idea so many members of the clergy actively supported his ordination.

Santa Maria Urban Ministry REALLY Needs a Treasurer—How About You or Someone You Know?

A wonderful opportunity to serve awaits someone with accounting skills, commitment, and some free time to give to Santa Maria as Treasurer. Sharron Strang did an excellent job prior to her resignation at the end of 2007, and Joanna Shreve, who served in this position for a long time in years past, is filling in until a permanent replacement can be found. Unlike some accounting jobs, this one can be done on the Treasurer’s own time, at home or at SMUM, and includes training in how to use the straightforward program Quickbooks and assistance as needed. While it does not include a salary, its rewards are great—the satisfaction of making a truly significant contribution to the community and the sincere gratitude from SMUM’s Executive Director and Board. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please contact Lawrence Robles for more information. We need a Treasurer!

Other Volunteers Needed

Santa Maria always needs more willing helpers, for as little as one hour a month or one hour a week or more. Here are some of the current needs:

- Front desk workers who greet, register, and serve clients who visit Santa Maria. Spanish language facility is helpful but not required; training is provided.
- Teachers and assistants for ABC Playtime. The program will soon end for the school year, but some preparation will be underway this summer. Background as a teacher is preferred but not essential. Again training is provided.
- Warehouse workers to help pick up, move, and store food in our Food Pantry. Strong backs and stamina are needed although we do have handcarts, forklifts, and other equipment to make the work easier.

If you can help, please call Lawrence Robles or stop by Santa Maria.

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch Honors Important Helpers at SMUM

The approximately 50 volunteers who carry out the day-to-day work at Santa Maria were honored with a lunch at SMUM recently. Carmen Robles and her helpers prepared a delicious lunch.



Some of SMUM’s volunteers at the thank-you lunch

Lawrence Robles awarded certificates to each volunteer as one expression of appreciation.



Leo, a volunteer in the Food Pantry, with his certificate

A short training session followed the lunch, to review procedures and ensure high standards of service.

**EL MINISTERIO URBANO
DE SANTA MARIA
SANTA MARIA URBAN MINISTRY**

778 South Almaden Avenue
San Jose, California 95110
Phone: (408) 292-3314
Fax: (408) 292-0728
Website: www.smum.org

E-mail: smum83@gmail.com
Executive Director: Lawrence Robles

The Executive Director of SMUM Describes a Recent Client

One Saturday morning, “Anna” appeared at the SMUM welcome desk, asking for help. She was in obvious distress, tearfully sharing that her husband had physically attacked her the night before. After receiving treatment at the hospital for physical trauma (bruised ribs, fractured hand, and contusions to her leg), she contacted local police and the women's shelter. Housing at the shelter for Anna and her children would not be available until Sunday afternoon, however, so Anna sought refuge at a local motel along with her three children (ages 4, 6, and 10 years). Anna stated that she was having difficulty keeping her job due to personal problems in her relationship. She had missed several days of work (common among victims of family violence), and she was expecting to be fired on Monday morning. Now, Anna was requesting help from SMUM to pay for her motel bill for just one night (\$66), until she could gain access to housing in the women's family shelter.

SMUM was able to provide funds to cover her motel bill and a food package that would help feed her children for the coming week. Young women like Anna (perhaps in her early twenties) and their children present real-life problems more frequently than people in our general community may imagine. The issues that contribute to family violence are varied and complex and include unemployment, economic stress, and increased drug/alcohol abuse. For women who are victims of abuse, physical, and emotional violence and trauma, agencies like SMUM are usually the first choice for help because clients are familiar with their services. Often women seek a safe place of refuge to gain access to services and obtain real help with their immediate needs. Because SMUM is open to serve the community on Saturdays, we are often called upon to provide unique aid in cases of urgent need when other agencies and services in the area are closed or not available.

Normally, these clients gain relief from stress and anxiety simply because their voices are heard and their immediate concerns are attended and managed. Being available to serve urgent needs

helps us build trust and take the first steps toward meeting our mission: “Provide immediate needs and support long-term transformation.” Being with, and genuinely helping, families like Anna's addresses long-term transformation, one family at a time.

For more information about how you might participate and make a difference by aiding families like Anna's in a concrete and genuine way, please contact SMUM via our website: www.smum.org; email: smum83@gmail.com; or phone (408) 292-3314 (please ask for Lawrence). Our office hours are 9 am – 12 noon, Monday through Saturday. Thank you.

--Lawrence Robles, Executive Director

Sources of Protein Needed – Getting Donors Can Be EGGSciting

With food costs rising each week, SMUM is finding it difficult to provide its usual levels of protein sources in food boxes. Contributions of eggs, canned tuna, jars of peanut butter, and frozen chickens are particularly helpful, and of course financial contributions are always good as they enable SMUM to buy such items.

St. Francis Episcopal Church in Willow Glen tried one strategy for increasing protein that you might want to try in your church or organization. The St. Francis Outreach Committee, working with Fr. Chris Creed, designated a Sunday in April as “Egg Sunday,” and asked parishioners to either bring cartons of eggs or make contributions in special “yolk-colored” envelopes. Terrible puns like “EGGstraordinary” and “EGGScellent opportunity” helped publicize the day, and as a result St. Francis collected eight and a half dozen eggs and \$534 to buy more.

Why not have a Peanut Butter Sunday (“spread it around”) or a “Tuna in June-a” activity? Such events require only a little effort, raise consciousness, and facilitate outreach while helping SMUM’s clients improve their diets. If you need assistance in transporting items to SMUM, a call to Lawrence Robles is all it takes.