



EVERYDAY GRACE

Winter 2013



Volunteers
of America®
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
& NORTHERN NEVADA

Offering Hope Through Winter Sanctuary



This is why we do what we do.

www.voa-ncnn.org

***Inside: You Brightened the Holidays for Foster Youth | Share the Love! | The Gift of Transportation
I Feel Like a Real Person Again and more!***

Offering Hope Through Winter Sanctuary

Thanks to you, Winter Sanctuary is open and fully funded through March! For the past few years, Volunteers of America has collaborated with Sacramento Steps Forward and the Sacramento faith community to ensure that men and women living on the streets have safe, warm shelter through the winter season.

Some of the volunteers' favorite guests are the young couples, like Vanessa and Dan. It's a common story, they lost their jobs during the recession and soon after, their apartment.

"I'm still shocked how quickly things changed for us," Vanessa shares. "One day, we're doing alright, and it seemed like the next, we were on the street. I'm just so thankful to be here." They hope to be in their own apartment soon. For now, they are grateful to be safe, and to have access to resources that are helping them get back on their feet. Dan, a man of few words, said simply, "Thank God for you." 🍷



This year marked the 9th Annual Wonderland holiday festival. Over two weekends in December, you showed more than 1,000 foster kids the magic of the holidays. Children had the opportunity to make traditional holiday crafts, write a letter to Santa, play games, and receive cherished gifts.

Holidays can be such a challenging time for children in foster care. Wonderland aims to give these children the joy and excitement they deserve.

Thanks to the incredible sponsors, donors and more than 500 volunteers who made this event possible. You truly embody the spirit of the season, and enriched the lives of some of our most vulnerable neighbors, including "Sarah," a foster child who was so overcome with excitement, she could only smile and utter an emotional, "Thank you" at each Wonderland booth she visited.

To see a more pictures from both weekends of Wonderland, please visit our website at www.voa-ncnn.org and click on the Tours and Events link. 🍷

You Brightened the Holidays For Foster Kids!





The Gift of Transportation

Our Bay Area foster youth program recently received an incredible gift: a 12-passenger van including one year of insurance graciously donated through Mike's Auto Body Annual Benevolence program and sponsored by AAA of Northern California, Nevada and Utah Insurance Exchange.

This gift is truly a miracle for our program and our clients. Many foster youth struggle without access to transportation and so

miss out on valuable life experiences. This generous donation means the youth we serve will be able to attend events, programs, college tours and job shadowing opportunities; youth like "Darius" who will be able to attend Get Set workshops, broadening his visions for the future. Thank you, AAA of Northern California, Nevada and Utah, and Mike's Auto Body. 🙏

Share the Love

Each Valentine's Day, the average American spends about \$128 buying gifts and sweets for their special someone. This year, instead of buying yet another box of chocolates, or fighting the crowds at a chic restaurant, Share the Love through our new online giving campaign. When you give through Share the Love your sweetheart will receive a Valentine, handmade by a Volunteers of America resident. Plus, you can publicly share your sentiments to your Valentine on the Share the Love wall.

There are several donation levels offered, it's simple, convenient, and only takes a few minutes. Best of all, you get to make someone's Valentine's Day sweeter by honoring them with a gift that is unique, heartfelt and caring. They will be thrilled to be your Valentine. Visit voa-ncnn.org to learn more. 🙏





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Above, foster youth participate in the 2012 Get Set Program, which helps youth explore career and educational opportunities.



Opportunities for Everyone

Foster youth are too often constrained by limited experiences and perspective. In the Bay Area, through your support our Get Set program expands foster youths' world views and opens them up to new possibilities. Job shadowing, mentorship and workplace tours help foster youth see a wider world of employment and educational opportunities.

Cleo liked to work with his hands, but struggled in school. Overwhelmed at the thought of going to a four-year college, he didn't believe he could achieve respectable, stable employment.

Through Get Set, Cleo got to visit the Shell Oil Refinery in Martinez. He spoke to a variety of employees, with a range of educational backgrounds. Seeing how many different

choices were available at this one worksite, opened up Cleo's world. He realized that a four-year university is not the only way to find a rewarding career.

During the Shell visit, several engineers discussed the Process Technology Program, a two year certificate program, at the local junior college, sponsored by Bay Area refineries. Cleo's eyes lit up with excitement. He never realized there were so many opportunities for him and that he was only limited by his imagination.

Thank you for supporting the many young men and women like Cleo who have endless possibilities because of your support and compassion. 

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