For people without food, safe and stable shelter, or clarity about their futures, being treated with thoughtfulness can lead to Healing. We nurture this in the work we do and the way we do the work. Humbled both by the generosity of our donors and the resilience of our guests, St. Anthony’s recognizes our role in a much bigger drama. Watching this drama unfold, we are drawn into a Gratitude that in turn is poured back into the work and the lives of the people who are part of this community.

The Franciscans have always recognized that the values that guide them are common to many people. From the beginning, those attracted to this service may not have worn Franciscan garb, but they were led by Franciscan hearts. About 25 years ago, the Franciscans established a board of directors composed of lay people. They still guide the organization through a board of friar trustees who help us reconcile practical solutions with the greater vision of St. Francis, and a few friars are on staff. St. Anthony’s board, staff and regular volunteers are widely diverse, culturally and religiously. What binds us together is our respect for the dignity of each person.

For sixty years St. Anthony’s has transformed the abundant gifts of the community into effective service for those in need. Guided by the promptings of our Franciscan hearts we will transform these decades of success into a future filled with possibilities.

Upon reaching the 60-year milestone, St. Anthony’s has looked back over decades of service and recalled the people and events that account for this “Miracle on Jones Street.” Two defining realities stand out: a constant commitment to serving those in need with dignity and respect and an abundance of generosity on the part of hundreds of thousands of loyal donors. Every morning we open our doors and every morning we can be sure that through them will come the people who trust us with their need and the gifts that make this work possible. Sixty years of attending to the guest and sixty years of relying on the gift.

The real miracle is how we hold the two together, how a dedication to the guest converts the gift into service. It is no coincidence that St. Anthony’s Dining Room opened the doors on the Feast of St. Francis, October 4, 1950. On day one and ever since, the direction of St. Anthony’s has been set by the vision and values of St. Francis and the friars who follow him: Community, Healing, Respect, Justice, and Gratitude.

Community for St. Anthony Foundation includes donors and guests, volunteers and staff. Few organizations have as faithful and extensive a community of donors who year in and year out make sure that there is always food on the table and clothes on the racks. Generations of donors have come to trust that a gift shared with St. Anthony’s is really a gift shared with their brothers and sisters on the streets. And as generations of Dining Room volunteers will attest, their gift of time and talent in turn enhances the life of the giver. “It is in giving that we receive.”

St. Francis and his followers believed that the gifts bestowed on us by a generous God are meant to be shared with all. Our donors have proven them correct. People of many beliefs keep the work going, not out of pity, but from a desire to restore a balance upset by policy or fate, giving from a sense of Justice.

To chart the success of a 60 year-old organization, we look at the measure by which any Franciscan effort is judged: how our poorest brothers and sisters are treated. At St. Anthony’s, the answer must be “with dignity and Respect.” The commitment to honor our guests and their inherent dignity presents us with the practical guidelines that direct our work.

Recently, we’ve reconfigured the service line in the Dining Room so that we can serve ever more low-income guests without crowding or rushing them. The Free Clothing Program is designed to emulate a shopping experience, giving men, women, and families some measure of choice in the clothing they select. St. Anthony’s security staff are trained in de-escalation techniques so that the fears, anxieties, and anger of guests with mental or addictive illness don’t necessarily have to lead to a confrontation.

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everyone can give this gift

It costs nothing, requires no wrapping, is easily transportable, and will never fade, break, or go out of style. The holidays are still a few months away, but a lot of giving is going on at St. Anthony’s, and the gift of the season is hope.

During our 60th anniversary year, our guests, volunteers, and staff have reflected on what has sustained our organization over the last six decades. What has made our work on behalf of San Francisco’s poor and homeless people possible in the face of difficult odds? What unites our incredibly diverse community behind a common goal? The answer is simple: We are united and supported by hope.

This summer, St. Anthony’s invited members of our community to share their messages of hope at www.igavehope.org. Messages were as simple as a statement on what makes the contributor hopeful, or as rich and complex as a colored drawing, a poem, a favorite quote, anything that could be rendered two-dimensionally. For St. Anthony’s culminating 60th anniversary event, a Tenderloin block party, we transformed these messages of hope into decorations for 10,000 guests, those with and without incomes, with and without homes. In this way, the original creator of the message passed on the gift of hope to someone else.

Many of these messages were contributed by regular guests of St. Anthony’s. “When I come here to St. Anthony’s,” one guest message reads, “I receive a lot of hope from the staff, helpers, and also the people I share my time with at the table. May God bless us all each day.”

Above a detailed drawing of a house complete with garage, another guest writes, “Live your dreams thru your art. Expand your boundaries!”

“Hope, esperanza, is to be thankful… every day. Is to give yourself a chance. Es tener fé en Dios todos los días.”

And another guest quoted Emily Dickinson from memory: “Hope is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul/That sings the tune without the words/And never stops at all.”

All kinds of people are part of St. Anthony’s community. Some can quote Dickinson from memory. Some draw astonishing pictures. Some write prayers and poems. At St. Anthony’s, we find reasons to be hopeful, and our reasons are as diverse as our community itself. We are all able to come together to pursue our mission because we share the belief that a better tomorrow is possible for all.
“My life before coming to St. Anthony’s and getting sober was horrible. I was lucky, I wasn’t homeless, but I was close to losing my home. I was in a one-bedroom apartment, I lived in filth, I drank all the time, I didn’t answer the door.”

Melanie started volunteering at St. Anthony’s Dining Room on the advice of a mentor when she was newly sober and on permanent disability. At St. Anthony’s she found stability in a routine, and got a chance to meet with other folks who she discovered were not so different from herself.

“I didn’t know that there was a Recovery Program at St. Anthony’s,” she says, referring to the Fr. Alfred Center. “I was 30 days sober when I started. More families, I’ve seen more kids.”

Like other guests, clients, volunteers and staff of St. Anthony’s, Melanie is excited about the new building scheduled for construction next year. St. Anthony’s Dining Room will move out of the 100-year-old former auto repair shop next winter and eventually move into a new, larger, safer, more efficient Dining Room on the same site. The new building will help St. Anthony’s accommodate the ever growing numbers of people who need help and bring the Dining Room, Clothing Program and Social Work Center together under the same roof for the benefit of our guests.

“I’ve been excited about St. Anthony’s new building for years,” Melanie says. “I’m hoping the new Dining Room aisles are real wide so that when I’m old and in a wheelchair I can still work. I plan on working here forever.”

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SHARI ROESELER

Hope has a firm foundation

Over the past twelve months, St. Anthony Foundation has held various events to commemorate our first sixty years of service. The celebration culminated in September with a block party and barbeque. We received hundreds of messages of hope that were on display at the event and that will continue to inspire us for a long time to come. In these days of continued economic uncertainty the need for hope and perseverance is great. As we embark on our seventh decade of service, we remain steadfast in our solidarity with all who hunger and thirst for justice and peace, and with all who join us in feeding, healing, sheltering and lifting the spirits of those in need.

Here at St. Anthony’s our Dining Room is the primary gateway of hope for thousands of people. Each and every day, staff and volunteers strive to express respect for each person’s human dignity: the personal “hello” at the doorway, the nutritious meal prepared by our staff, and the table service provided by our volunteers. It is a message that proclaims to our guests, “You are worthy of respect.”

For sixty years, our guests have entered the same doorway on Jones Street, walked down the ramp of the old auto-body repair shop and shared a meal with others in a facility that has now grown very worn and outmoded. The limited space makes it increasingly difficult to serve the growing number of guests with dignity and respect.

For our beloved guests who take that courageous step to rebuild their lives by walking through the doors of our Dining Room, we will soon have a permanent message of hope: a new building at the corner of Golden Gate Avenue and Jones Street. Here our guests will be able to enjoy a meal in our expanded dining room. They will also be able to select clothing and receive counseling at this location, as we will move our Free Clothing Program and Social Work Center into the new building. Hope will have a firm foundation.

In the coming months we will invite our guests, volunteers, and donors to join us in closing our old Dining Room and breaking ground on the new building. We begin the next sixty years of service with the same commitment established by our founder, Fr. Alfred Boeddeker, OFM, “To show our guests that we welcome them, that we respect their dignity as human beings worthy of love and goodwill... that life is worth living.”

Shari Roseler

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Photo: Carson Lancaster

From A New Life To A New Dining Room

“People see me out on the street, even without the earrings on, and yell, ‘It’s the earring lady!’ I love that.”

The earring lady

Affectionately nicknamed “The Earring Lady” because of her collection of novelty jewelry, Melanie began seeing volunteers and guests alike outside of the Dining Room. No longer isolated, Melanie had found a community of support she hadn’t expected.

“People see me out on the street, even without the earrings on, and yell, ‘It’s the earring lady!’ I love that.”

In the near decade that Melanie has been volunteering, she has seen an increase in the number of people coming to St. Anthony’s to eat. “There’s more people, way more people than when I started. More families, I’ve seen more kids.”

Like other guests, clients, volunteers and staff of St. Anthony’s, Melanie is excited about the new building. They will also be able to select clothing and receive counseling at this location, as we will move our Free Clothing Program and Social Work Center into the new building. Hope will have a firm foundation.

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Peace and all good,
rooted in experience, building toward the future

she describes as “Kaiser for the uninsured.” While the majority of patients come in with chronic conditions, Dr. Valdes strives to implement a preventive approach that involves patients in the treatment and management of their chronic conditions. The goal is to provide high-quality care with limited resources.

Dr. Valdes, together with a dedicated staff, has built a system of low-cost programs for low-income people who suffer from diabetes and COPD/Asthma, two chronic diseases that affect the poor disproportionately. Combining culturally appropriate health care with one-to-one health coaching and peer support group meetings, these programs engage low-income patients in active self-management of their disease.

The diabetes and asthma programs have become a template for other outreach, screening, and coaching programs, such as obesity prevention. Currently, thanks to the Susan G. Komen Foundation, the Clinic is replicating this proactive treatment model for women’s breast health to prevent or identify breast cancer and other diseases early on.

While St. Anthony’s programs continue to help almost 2,000 people every day with food, clothing, and counseling, staff and volunteers have been quietly preparing to build a new Dining Room.

Several generous lead gifts and pledges have already come in from the Koret Foundation, Catholic Healthcare West, Chevron, David and Joan O’Reilly, Craig and Maureen Sullivan, the Walter & Elise Haas Fund, the Hellman Schwab Foundation, the Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation, the McKesson Foundation, Nhibi Brothers Construction, and St. Anthony’s Board of Directors. St. Anthony’s is blessed to have such generous partners in this endeavor.

When announcing the support of Catholic Healthcare West, Lloyd Dean, President and CEO, remarked: “Catholic Healthcare West is committed to collaborating with partners to create healthy communities and provide safe places for food, medical care and social services. St. Anthony’s honors and respects the dignity of each person in their programs, especially the Dining Room. CHW is a proud supporter of St. Anthony’s and its commitment to direct services for the most vulnerable in our city and to work for systemic change and social justice. We are pleased to be able to be a lead supporter.”

Our campaign has also been blessed by angels. The late Richard K. Birnie left a trust to help feed many people in the years to come. The late Richard K. Birnie left a trust to help feed many people in the years to come.

Any way you add it up, our 60th Anniversary block party and barbecue on September 24 was an impressive success. Almost 12,000 meals served, 400 volunteers, 96 checkered picnic tables stretching down Golden Gate Avenue, one amazing live 9-piece band, a whole lot of dancing, countless smiles, and Never-Ending Hope. It was undoubtedly a special day, and in some ways also typical. Like the other 364 days a year at St. Anthony’s, people come together to share a meal in an environment of dignity and respect. Staff and volunteers brought the food, the tables, the planning and the set-up, but our guests brought the party. Said one guest, “I haven’t danced that much in years.”

60th anniversary block party for 10,000

Since coming to the Clinic in 1988, Dr. Valdes has transformed St. Anthony’s Medical Clinic into a medical home for the uninsured and underinsured, the working poor, new immigrants, and low-income families with children that

The San Francisco Business Times awarded St. Anthony Foundation Medical Clinic Director, Dr. Ana Valdes, a Healthcare Hero award this July. The award honors professionals who go above and beyond to make the Bay Area healthier by delivering quality care, advocating for patients, innovating new technology or educating the community about health issues.

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Selling stocks or real estate, donors can transfer them to the trust, receiving an immediate income tax deduction and relief from capital gains tax. Instead of selling stocks or real estate, donors can transfer them to the trust, receiving an immediate income tax deduction and relief from capital gains tax.

MAKE A GIFT FOR THE FUTURE AND RECEIVE FIXED INCOME NOW

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GIVE YOUR HOME AND KEEP IT, TOO

A charitable life estate agreement allows you to give a personal residence to St. Anthony Foundation while retaining the right to live there for life. Nothing really changes except that you receive an income tax deduction based on the current fair market value of your home.

For more information, please contact: Barry Stenger, Director of Development at (415) 592-2735 or bstenger@stanthonysf.org.

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