In 1950, St. Anthony Dining Room opened its doors to serve 400 meals. Today we serve nearly 3,000 meals a day, from the same antiquated facility.

Timothy is a police officer who was born and raised in San Francisco. Although he is a little more than 40 years of age, he counts the 1906 earthquake as a significant part of his personal history.

In 1906, Timothy’s grandfather, Thomas, was the handsome child of two newlywed Irish immigrants, whose paths had crossed as maid and bread truck driver at the San Francisco hotel they both serviced. When the earthquake struck and the city was ravaged by fire, their South of Market home was destroyed leaving them with no resources other than each other. For about a year the young family camped with the other 400,000 displaced residents in makeshift camps amid the burnt-out ruins of the city, in Golden Gate Park. At four years old Thomas’ world was a tangled juxtaposition of his parents’ losses and a sense of freedom found living in the manicured wilderness of the park. Timothy believes this emotional duality experienced so young is what led his grandfather to spend the rest of his life returning to Golden Gate Park for solace and retreat, as well as after episodes of turmoil and drinking binges.

Timothy’s grandfather began drinking early, and by 14 was on his way to full-blown alcoholism. He found work in the mines of Nevada, as a window washer and a janitor, a night watchman, and even as a fireman. He met and fell in love with Timothy’s grandmother, a strong Irish matriarch who did everything she could to keep his drinking in check. They gave birth to Timothy’s mother, who sadly absorbed the impact and trauma of her father’s alcoholism. As the years progressed, Timothy’s grandfather came home less and less, until even his family was heartbroken to realize that he had become one of the “winos” who stumbled through the city in the 40s and 50s.

In 1950, St. Anthony Dining Room opened. Timothy’s family later learned that it was there that Thomas would resurface when he was recovering from a binge. From that day on, the family donated food and clothing and other supplies to St. Anthony’s, with the knowledge that at least Thomas was getting a hot meal. Thomas got sober towards the end of his life, and his last breaths were taken at Stow Lake at Golden Gate Park, rosary beads at his side.

Almost 50 years after his grandfather’s passing, Timothy and his family continue the tradition of bringing food and clothes to St. Anthony’s. Timothy determined at age 20 that he would not drink alcohol, and his mentors guided him towards his career as a police officer. In his work he crosses paths with many people with mental health and chemical dependence problems, and has many opportunities to reflect on his grandfather’s path. Through it all, Timothy honors both his grandfather’s history and his mother’s compassion demonstrated through the support of St. Anthony’s, a value he shares with his children today.
Finding Her Way Home, through Service and Struggle

WHEN IRMA WAS A SUCCESSFUL career woman in the 1970's New York City art scene she would never have imagined that one day she would be sleeping in the Trans Bay Terminal bus station in San Francisco. Irma was raised in a hardworking family. Her mother was a pieced-together meals, emergency room visits, and episodes of abuse and violence. CJ's mother was challenged by both her schizophrenia and her addictions. The family struggled to find safe places to sleep at night - sometimes in a church doorway, sometimes in a parking lot, occasionally in a sufficiency hotel on Turk Street. Their life was a maze of Twelve years into a successful career, she felt confident enough to start her own business. After two years of trying to make it work she found herself with no income, depleted savings, and on the verge of eviction from her home of seven years. Irma's transition from thriving to struggling was a startling one that her professional skill set had not prepared her for.

Exhausted by trying to keep her business afloat and ashamed of her efforts being perceived as failure, Irma abandoned everything she knew and boarded a bus for California hoping that a fresh start was what she needed. Irma quickly realized San Francisco's cost of living and job market were no better than at home, and she struggled to survive on the meager $300 she had.

During the early 1980's San Francisco was going through a period of “Manhattanization." Skyscrapers rose and low rent housing disappeared. The Terminal bus station in San Francisco was going through a period of “Manhattanization." Skyscrapers rose and thousands of others were left on the streets, without needed services. CJ spent his childhood amid this chaos, homeless in the Tenderloin.

For ten years, CJ and his family ate nearly every day at St. Anthony's Dining Room, an experience he remembers as much for the feeling of safety, love, and appreciation as he does for the nourishment.

During this time the city of San Francisco began seeing thousands of servicemen coming home from Vietnam with undiagnosed PTSD and addiction problems. State institutions for the mentally ill closed down and thousands of others were left on the streets, without needed services. CJ spent his childhood amid this chaos, homeless in the Tenderloin.

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During the holiday season of her youngest's 16th birthday, she decided that the time had come for her to give back. At the volunteer orientation, Rachel was impressed with the neighborhood history, causes of poverty, and Franciscan ethos were all taught as part of what a volunteer needs to understand personally- that rents in the city can eat up an entire pay check, especially if

one her parents had raised her in. There came a point when Rachel's paychecks weren't covering the rent, food, and childcare. Rachel swallowed her pride and applied for assistance.

It was during this time that Rachel and her children briefly came to St. Anthony's Dining Room. Hungry and not sure how we were treated at St. Anthony's, I noticed it welcomed manner they were served. "I was just struck by the difference in how we were treated at St. Anthony's, I noticed it welcomed manner they were served."

“I renewed my life from one that I once so feared. I met people that I would never have met, and I have a career that makes a difference. I will never forget the part that St. Anthony’s played in my journey.”

When asked if she needed help, Irma meant to say “no” but out of her mouth came “yes.” Yes to a hot meal, yes to a safe place to sleep, yes to help getting back on her feet.

He fondly recalls Fr. Boeddeker, Fr. Floyd, and Fr. Louise's care and concern.

"I remember one of my first meals in the Dining Room when I was about 5-years-old. I remember feeling so grateful that we were eating that day and that we were eating together. I was so happy to be in a place that someone cared.”

When asked if

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When asked if she needed help, Irma meant to say “no” but out of her mouth came “yes.” Yes to a hot meal, yes to a safe place to sleep, yes to help getting back on her feet.
Irm started in the St. Anthony Dining Room, where she had lunch and later spent the night in the temporary women's shelter that opened in the evenings. The sounds and struggles of the mentally ill women and women with substance abuse problems was new and unnerving, yet she was grateful for the safe place to stay.

Irm went from sleeping in the shelter to participating in the employment program and procuring part-time domestic labor. Even with graduate-level education the only work she could find was scrubbing floors. She volunteered and worked at the shelter, and after a couple of years secured a temporary office job that developed into a permanent full-time position.

Her St. Anthony's social worker and confidante, Marsha, helped her secure funds for transportation to her new job. When Irm's savings permitted a move to a room at a Civic Center hotel, St. Anthony staffer Lindsay was there for her as well. Arlene, a barber at the shelter, was also a friendly and supportive addition to Irm's life. Little by little, Irm was regaining community, stability, and self esteem.

Today, Irm is a Senior Program Manager for a well known housing corporation and is on her way to being a home owner. She remembers her hard times vividly, and is grateful for the person those struggles have made her.

“I renewed my life from one that I once so feared. I met people that I would never have met, and I have a career that makes a difference. I will never forget the part that St. Anthony's played in my journey.”

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SHARI ROESELER

This is a special year for St. Anthony Foundation. It is our 60th Anniversary.

We are planning a number of activities and programs to honor the work and to celebrate the people of San Francisco who have made St. Anthony Foundation a pillar of compassion and hope for our most vulnerable citizens.

I am particularly excited to kick off our 60th year with the announcement that we will rebuild and expand our beloved Dining Room. The new Dining Room will position us to meet the challenges of the new economy and the growing numbers of low-income people who need our help to navigate these difficult times.

The new building will house the Free Clothing Program and the Social Work Center on the second floor, bringing three vital programs into one location for our guests. Above that, Mercy Housing California will build affordable housing for seniors, addressing another critical need in the city. We are proud to partner with Mercy on this effort.

We have witnessed a great increase in the need for our services throughout the year. The Dining Room now serves nearly 3,000 meals every day, more children and families utilize our clothing program, and over 100 new clients come to the Tenderloin Tech Lab* each month. The guests who I’ve had the opportunity to meet tell me how needed these programs are for them as they work to regain a sense of stability in these uncertain times.

As I settle into my role as Executive Director, I am impressed with the breadth of experience and expertise of the staff, the energy and drive of the many volunteers, and the unparalleled commitment of all to the guests and clients we serve.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet more of you, our dedicated donors, friends and community partners at upcoming 60th Anniversary celebrations for St. Anthony Foundation. I am excited and honored to join you and the board, staff and volunteers of the Foundation as we usher in the next decade of service, ever more committed to a world where every person has adequate food, clothing, and shelter and is treated with the dignity and respect all human beings deserve.

Peace and Blessings,

* The Tenderloin Tech Lab is a collaborative project with San Francisco Network Ministries.
A New and Better Network

BY THE TIME JESSE WAS 22 YEARS OLD, he had a rap sheet that included a couple of DUIs, theft, and resisting arrest, among other things. It was when he was in county jail facing a possible term in state prison that he heard about St. Anthony’s drug and alcohol recovery program.

What he did not know at the time was that it is the only free year-long recovery program in San Francisco, which has guided thousands of people through their first steps of recovery and into successful and stable lives. What he did know was that he was ready to get help.

A few days after his release from jail, he reached out to a program coordinator he met in jail, who picked him up at 4am and drove him directly to the St. Anthony’s intake office. That day he took his first steps toward his recovery.

Jesse worked regular shifts alongside other men from the recovery program in the St. Anthony Dining Room, as he developed and reclaimed skills and behaviors to maintain employment and relationships, including punctuality, personal responsibility, teamwork, and how to be of service. In the evenings, Jesse attended to what might consider the “real work” of recovery, exploring his addiction through 12-step based on-site recovery meetings and counseling sessions at the Fr. Alfred Center. After six months in the recovery program, he immersed himself in what was then known as St. Anthony’s Employment Program and Technology Lab (today part of the Tenderloin Tech Lab, a partnership with San Francisco Network Ministries).

“St. Anthony’s is an incredible resource to the community. By providing you with food and shelter, St. Anthony’s recovery program creates a safe place for people to really focus on the 12-step work. By working in the Dining Room you learn to be of service before you even realize it,” Jesse recently shared. While still living at the Fr. Alfred Center, Jesse worked with employment counselors and completed a resume, began job hunting, and practiced interview skills. Jesse built confidence in his newfound skills, and decided to enroll in the challenging A+ certification program, an internship which provides comprehensive training in computer repair, maintenance and networking. In this intensive, hands-on program, technical work towards obtaining A+ Certification, the industry standard for entry-level computer technicians.

After five months of rigorous textbook and hands-on diagnostic training, Jesse felt prepared to take the test required for the A+ as well as the Network+ certification. He successfully passed both tests and decided his next steps would be to give back to the programs that helped him achieve this new level of self-sufficiency and self-esteem. He was hired to help set up and maintain the Employment Program’s 12-station networked computer lab, the same lab where he himself had been trained, and provided coaching to other students who sought to follow in his path.

Equipped with a stable and supportive path of recovery, job-seeking skills, and the successful completion of industry-wide benchmarks that recognized him as a professional computer technician, Jesse applied for, and accepted a position as a Systems Administrator with a downtown computer consulting firm.

Jesse has been clean and sober since 2005, something he does not take for granted. He and still credits St. Anthony’s for being there for him when he was ready. “Not only did I receive love, tolerance, and kindness from St. Anthony’s, but I have learned love, tolerance, and kindness as a result of being a part of the Foundation. I see St. Anthony’s as a group of people that are honestly trying to help people and make a difference. There are not a lot of organizations and resources out there like St. Anthony’s.”

Celebrating 60 years of service to those in need means celebrating the generosity evidenced by millions of donors who have made this work possible. While most of that support has come through regular annual or monthly gifts by faithful donors, the generosity of people who love St. Anthony’s sometimes finds unique expression.

In the late 50s a Hawaiian cruise ship company donated all the food left over when their cruise ships returned to port.

One of our donors bequeathed to St. Anthony’s part of the residual payment she received from an appearance in the Steve McQueen film, Bullitt.

In the late 70s the iconic columnist Herb Caen pledged the case for our efforts to install the much appreciated awnings that came to be known as Caen’s Canopies.

In a San Francisco judge auctioned off his extensive tie collection at his retirement and raised thousands of dollars for St. Anthony’s.

Willie Brown literally threw his hat in the ring to be auctioned at our annual Penny Ring Drive on Saturday, November 20.

More than a Meal… New Dining Room a Gateway to a Better Future

After 60 years and more than 36 million meals, St. Anthony Foundation is set to build and expand our Dining Room. Over the past few months the number of meals served in the St. Anthony Dining Room has surged to nearly 3,000 every day, although our current Dining Room is built to serve only 2,000. The seniors, veterans, families and people with special needs who come to us are trying to address serious challenges. When they come to the Dining Room, the meal is just the beginning.

Through our food program our guests are able to connect to counseling services, recovery assistance, clothing and medical services, and technology programs. Miracles happen every day in the St. Anthony Dining Room. We need to build a bigger, more efficient Dining Room so that those miracles can continue to happen.

With your support, we can complete our new Dining Room by 2014. In the coming months we will share with you ways to get involved in this exciting campaign to serve the most vulnerable in San Francisco. We look forward to partnering with you to build the new St. Anthony Foundation Dining Room – the gateway to better futures for our guests.

ST. ANTHONY FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Basic Services and Community Outreach

Dining Room
Free Clothing Program
Justice Education, Volunteer/Intern and Advocacy Program
Health and Rehabilitation Services
Free Medical Clinic
Tenderloin Tech Lab (with Network Ministries)
Fr. Alfred Center Residential Drug and Alcohol Rehab Program
Social Services
Social Work Center
Madonna Senior Center and Residence

60 Years of Giving Outside the Box

Celebrating 60 years of service to those in need means celebrating the generosity evidenced by millions of donors who have made this work possible. While most of that support has come through regular annual or monthly gifts by faithful donors, the generosity of people who love St. Anthony’s sometimes finds unique expression.

As an individual or group, you are able to connect to counseling services, recovery assistance, clothing and medical services, and technology programs. Miracles happen every day in the St. Anthony Dining Room. We need to build a bigger, more efficient Dining Room so that those miracles can continue to happen.

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Curbside Service for Your Food and Clothing Donations

Our new Executive Director, Shari Roeseler, will be present to kick off St. Anthony Foundation’s 23rd Annual Holiday Donation Drive on Saturday, November 20.

Make your donation then, or join us on one of those days when greeting supporters at the door and unloading their cars of much needed donations.

DATES: Nov. 20–25, Dec. 18–24
HOURS: Weekdays 8AM–6PM
Weekends 9AM–3PM
DONATE: Turkeys, bulk food, canned goods, ready-to-use clothing and unused toiletries.

VOLUNTEER: As an individual or group, to unload donations from arriving cars; organize donation drive at your school or worksite.

Call 415-592-2829 or write atrowbridge@stanthonysf.org