

ACTION MATTERS

Area Christians Taking Initiative on Needs

A PERIODICAL FROM THE ACTION FOUNDATION

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Community Christmas Shoppe 2015

SERVE. TOGETHER.

Perspectives...Why do you do Christmas Shoppe?

A pool of spiritual gifts...

While members of StoneBridge have long had a heart for serving the community, hosting Christmas Shoppe has galvanized interest in serving the underserved and taken participation in mission to a new level. Through Christmas Shoppe, hundreds of our members have experienced the joy of using their gifts to serve God by serving those in need. Members with organizational gifts work with ACTION to administer the program. Those with the gift of hospitality welcome guests to our campus. Members prepare meals, provide childcare, serve as personal shoppers, pray, provide for the security and safety of our guests, translate, and more. Christmas Shoppe offers an extraordinary opportunity for our members to offer and pool their spiritual gifts to show God's love in a practical way. Serving with folks from other churches has enriched our members' appreciation of the larger Body of Christ. It is a highlight of the holiday season, if not the whole year, blessing those who serve as much as those being served. Christmas Shoppe has helped us to experience and extend the hope of the gospel as we celebrate the birth of Christ in a powerful, life-transforming way.

- Jeff Cheadle, Senior Pastor StoneBridge,
Community Church



From recipient to leader...

The reason I choose to be part of Christmas Shoppe is because when I was a child growing up my mother at one point was a single mother of three children all under the age of 5 years old. During this time in our lives we were living in Section 8 housing and receiving government assistance which did not leave much disposable income for Christmas. I vividly remember a Christmas where my mother had my siblings and I wait in the car with a friend while she went into a "store", yet we were not allowed to join her. As we played in the car my mom walked to the car with a black trash bag full of items and clearly told us "you better not open that bag or look inside it!". Now as you know when you tell a child not to look inside a bag during the holidays their eyes fill with joy as they know it must be their Christmas gifts!! Of course I looked in the bag when she was not looking and saw TOYS!! I was so happy and so couldn't wait to tell my brother he had gotten a Ninja Turtle that I knew he wanted!! Christmas came and went and we were very excited about the gifts our mother had gotten us never thinking about how she could afford them since we were so young.

Now years later at the age of 24 years old I began to work in Social Services and learned of the amazing programs offered over the holidays season. I was introduced to the Christmas Shoppe by Judy Alexandre who had been part of the Shoppe for many years and asked to me volunteer. My first year volunteering I saw the guest exiting with the BLACK TRASH BAG, the same BLACK TRASH BAG my mother so many years before had carried out to our car and told us not to look in. That is when I realized that I too was one of these children and my mother was one of these mothers. For this reason the Shoppe will always hold a special place in my heart!

- Ericka Bigger, Ventura Christmas Shoppe, Chair

SERVE. TOGETHER.

Jill's Joys

By Jill Upson, Executive Director



"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." Mother Teresa

Coming off Community Christmas Shoppe and the Christmas holidays, have you ever wondered how the recipient of your gift felt? I can't help but believe that it's not the gift that makes the difference, but the love behind the gift – the love the gift giver gives. Did the person give thought to what they gave? Was it given in compassion and love rather than obligation? Imagine if God gave us Jesus out of obligation or without thought of us?



At Christmas Shoppe I had such joy watching the gift givers love on our guests... each one sharing the love of Christ in their own special way. One volunteer explained it like this: "I was able to share some expertise for parenting special needs children, creative techniques that come directly from the Holy Spirit." And a guest said "God was evident in the generous way in which everyone *gave of themselves.*" Wow... amazing gifts!

Now that makes me want to love and give more! I thank God for His example of what gift giving really looks like. No better gift have I received than the gift of Jesus Christ! Join us as we continue gift giving all year round through our Serve Every Day program. (actionvc.org) Or give a gift to ACTION allowing us to send more gifts in the form of Jesus' hands and feet to those in need in our community. (actionvc.org) As one of our guests plainly said, "I felt the love of God."

Praise the Lord!

Jill

Be A Sender!

The dictionary definition of sender is; to dispatch someone to do an errand or convey a message. ACTION's definition is the same, except, the "or" becomes an "and" because when we send someone out to a project the errand is the practical need and the conveyed message is Jesus Christ. Become a "someone", become an ACTION volunteer, become a SENDER and help meet practical needs throughout the community while sharing the love of Christ. There are projects being done all year long including; moving a low income woman out of an abusive home in Moorpark to a safe place in Ventura. Helping a disabled senior couple de-board their Simi Valley home. Repairing a leaky faucet in Camarillo, clearing a fire hazard hillside in Thousand Oaks, and building a handicap ramp in Oxnard.

Each one of these projects is waiting for a special volunteer just like you to become a sender, to be the difference, to impact change on one persons life for the better. Find your opportunity at www.actionvc.org today!



Action Foundation



@Actionvc



Interested in getting involved?

Want to find out more?

ACTION will be hosting a "Be A Sender" event coming in March! Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks!

**Impact a life...
BE A SENDER!**