

"HANGING BY A THREAD": WEST VALLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES PRESS CONFERENCE TO HIGHLIGHT DIRE NEED DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Roughly 22,000 people live in poverty in the cities of Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga and West San Jose, the area served by WVCS.

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2020
/EINPresswire.com/ -- WHERE
West Valley Community Services
10104 Vista Dr. Cupertino, CA 95014

DATE
Thursday, July 30, 2020

TIME
10AM

WHO
Josh Selo, Executive Director, West Valley Community Services
Majid Amjadi, WVCS client
Walter Becker, lives in Cupertino homeless camp and client
Bisrat Mekael, WVCS client
Josephine Lay, WVCS client
Keith Krugh, Senior Plant Manager, Lehigh Hanson, Inc.



Sign displayed in a homeless encampment in Cupertino, California. It reads, "We look out for each other, Peace in Cupertino, We are Better than that, aren't we?"

San Jose, Calif., July 27, 2020 -- It's one of the most affluent communities in the country, home to tech giants, wealthy suburbs, and coveted school districts.

But West Valley Community Services will hold a press conference Thursday, July 30th at 10:00 a.m. at 10104 Vista Dr. Cupertino, CA 95014 to highlight the explosion in need for food aid, housing assistance, and other support that the nonprofit has been providing since 1973.

Roughly 22,000 people live in poverty in the cities of Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga and West San Jose, the area served by WVCS -- a number set to grow exponentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WVCS is the only social services organization serving this area.

“Many people already living on the margin of poverty are being pushed over the edge,” says WVCS Executive Director Josh Selo. “There has been a 500% increase in the need for our services, just since March.” Rising income inequality had already resulted in a steady increase in demand since 2017, but with the pandemic, the increase is now “beyond anything we’ve ever seen.”

To meet the demand, West Valley Community Services launched its Lift Us Up capital improvement campaign last July to, among other things, double the size of its food pantry, add office space to provide client services, and purchase a new Mobile Pantry to serve those with mobility or transportation issues. The organization hopes to quickly raise the remaining \$309,000 of its \$2,125,000 goal.

“There has been a lot of attention recently on the homeless encampment on Wolfe Road, but the people living there are just the most visible faces of the need in our community,” Selo explains. “So many people here are hanging by a thread, one car accident or medical bill away from economic calamity. Our organization provides a lifeline -- helping them with rent, food assistance, or whatever they might need to keep their head above water until the crisis has passed.”



Clients stand in line, while social distancing, to receive food from West Valley Community Services' food pantry.

“

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Josh Selo, Executive Director of West Valley Community Services

“I didn’t know where else to go,” says Vera, a WVCS client. “I’ve been working as a hair stylist for 29 years, but when the COVID crisis hit, the bottom fell out. Had it not been for the support I got from WVCS, I don’t know what would have happened to me and my family.”

The urgency has never been greater. With no jobs and enhanced unemployment benefits running out soon, many people, even in affluent communities like ours, are desperate for help simply to keep food on the table and a roof over their head.

A fully funded Lift Us Up program will enable West Valley Community Services to:

Expand its free on-site Shopping Pantry

Replace its aging mobile food truck with an improved Park-It Market, enabling the organization to double the number of locations (e.g., transit locations, senior homes, etc.) it can serve

Modernize and expand its current office facilities to enable social distancing and provide a dignified, confidential setting for case management as well as classes, training sessions, and client meetings.

Lehigh Hanson has generously donated \$10,000 to WVCS, so they can continue their amazing work! Lehigh has been in Cupertino for many years and is honored to support their community efforts. "Lehigh is proud to support West Valley Community Services and all of its work serving those in need," said Keith Krugh, Senior Plant Manager at Lehigh Southwest Cement Company's Permanente Site. "While so many – including our own workforce – are facing economic challenges due to COVID-19, Lehigh remains strongly committed to the well-being and success of our community."

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