

Whats Happening at the Upper Room Dining Hall



Fall 2022

More Than Just a Meal



Karen Stinson

**Upper Room
Operations Director**

It's been a busy year at the Upper Room! Since the summer of 2021, we have served 53, 511 meals! We continue to provide daily meals and many additional services to members of our community, never missing a day of service despite COVID, devastating fires, and rolling power outages. Over the last year, we have expanded our services and developed several new programs:

Day Shelter: Our hours have expanded. We now offer a Day Shelter that provides a welcoming place to rest, seek resources, and escape extreme weather conditions.

Mobile Shower Program/Haircuts: In partnership with District Church in El Dorado Hills, we are able to provide a shower every other week to our guests. We provide the shower supplies, towels, clean clothes and, most recently, a haircut to anyone in need. A simple shower is a luxury many take for granted and an important factor in restoring a feeling of dignity and hope to our guests.

Portable Toilets at Encampment: Earlier this year, the Upper Room rented and placed 2 portable toilets by the largest homeless encampment in El Dorado County. This is a big step in supporting basic hygiene and improving the environment for our community.

Hill Encampment Cleanup: On two separate occasions, partnering with both Placerville Public Works, our volunteers, and residents of the encampment, the Upper Room took on the task of bagging and disposing of over 15 tons of garbage! A huge task made possible by the commitment of many dedicated people working towards a cleaner community.

Fire Support Services, Caldor and Mosquito Fires: Two devastating fires have rocked our community over the last year. Both fires have seen our volunteers rise to the occasion and offer 100's of hours of time and hands on support. Meals, support services, laundry, clothing, survival supplies. Over 4500 meals were provided to individuals impacted by these fires.

In addition to our new programs, highlighted in this newsletter is the wonderful, and very first, wedding at the Upper Room! Such a lovely event made possible by the generosity of our many volunteers! Be sure to check out that article.



Be a part of the Upper Room. Donate Today!

Upperroomdininghall.org

You can also donate through [Amazon Smile](#)
Help the Upper Room each time you make a purchase on Amazon.com

An Upper Room Romance



Five years ago there were two people who would frequent our dining hall. Jossette and Tim didn't know each other at that time. They were homeless, hopeless and addicted. They suffered terribly because of their addictions and both were unable to find their way out of their predicament. Ultimately, they both were encouraged to join a local drug and alcohol program and that's where they met and fell in love. The program refused to let them continue as a couple and they soon found themselves back on the street. Together they fought for the life they wanted and through perseverance and their faith in God, they were able to completely change the course of their lives.

Fast forward 5 years. Sober. Housed. Employed. Business owners. Regular volunteers at the Upper Room (because they want to give back) and they asked if they could have a wedding ceremony at the Upper Room, a place that loved them and cared for them

throughout their journey...and this was that day! Surrounded by guests and volunteers, they exchanged wedding vows in a beautiful ceremony.

This was a lovely day and we are incredibly grateful for the many volunteers and local businesses that made this possible. Maria Brugger and the Placerville Garden Club for the gorgeous flowers and decor, Off the Vine Catering for the wonderful food, Pat Maher for the beautiful programs and music, and Lisa Nunes for officiating this ceremony. Thanks to so many others who had a hand in making this such a special day for this deserving couple.

Congratulations to Jossette Lee-Yetter and Tim Cramer, here's to many happy years together.





Carla Milhomme

Upper Room
Vice Chairperson

Four years ago, I retired after a long and rewarding career in big corporate America. After putting in a full year of catching up on household projects, traveling with my husband of 43 years, and entertaining thoughts of new hobbies, I knew I had to find a place to plug in and use the talents and gifts that I had been blessed with to do something worthwhile. After all, one can only purge so many closets, travel so many roads and leave so many unfinished crafts before it's time to do something different.

Deciding to donate my time was easy; deciding where to donate my time proved to be a lot more difficult. There are so many worthy causes out there for us to get involved in. Finding the right fit, the place that inspires us to try to change the world, can be daunting.

As with many of the most important decisions I have made in my life, the answer seemed to find me. One day, I was listening to a group of people passionately sharing their opinions about homelessness. Anyone that knows me knows that I am not without an opinion on most things, but I do try to make sure that my opinion is at least grounded in some level of awareness of the issue. I decided I needed to do something to increase my understanding of the people who find themselves homeless and the issues that they face. You see, my own father had been a victim of drug and alcohol addiction when I was young, and I saw what recovery and community could do to change a person. During his 60 years of sobriety, he went from homelessness and addiction to being a highly respected member of the community that helped thousands of others on their road to recovery and healing.

At the same time, having been raised by a single mother who was frequently faced with wondering how she was going to feed her five children, I also knew that I was drawn to do something that would help in the fight against hunger and food insecurity in the community that I called home. Imagine how excited I was to find the Upper Room Dining Hall! This small organization with a huge heart and a mission to provide food and other services to the most vulnerable members of our community seemed to be the place that my heart was calling me to be.

My intention was to help serve meals just one day a week. I thought it would ground my week, give me a way to connect, learn, and give back. Fast forward three years and here we are. I find myself giving almost as much time to this amazing organization as I did to my career before I retired. That's what happens when you find the place where you are meant to serve. It fills your time, but it also fills your heart in a way that nothing else can.

Over the next few months as the holiday season approaches, we will all be asked by many nonprofit organizations to give of our time and our resources. My wish for all of you is that you find the organization that pulls at your heart like the Upper Room Dining Hall and all the people who serve and come here have pulled at mine.



An Interview with Christopher

Upper Room Guest, Christopher talks about what it's like to be homeless.

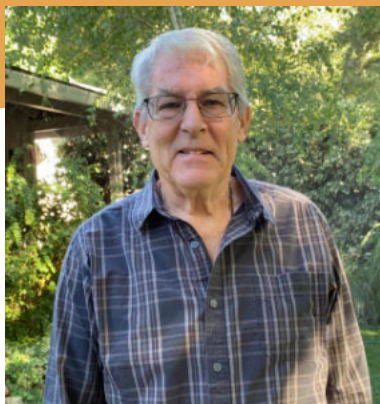
See the Interview on YouTube
<https://youtu.be/X5eJwunep4U>

Or access it through our website:
upperroomdininghall.org

UPPER ROOM DINING HALL

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Upper Room Mural painted by Chris Olexio



Jack Carman Upper Room Volunteer

In late Fall 2019, my wife Shelley and I attended an Empty Bowls fundraiser. Along the sidelines we met Charlie and Karen at an information booth for the Upper Room. We offered to serve meals and clean up on Thanksgiving Day and had a great time. I volunteered to work the following Wednesday and I heard Karen say with a fist bump, “we got him!!”

Before retiring from teaching high school in 2017 I had a serious habit of swinging down Broadway almost daily for a Frappuccino. I would notice a handful of homeless guys hanging out on the street every morning, rain or shine. The irony of paying big money for my gourmet cup of coffee hit me hard as I passed by men who may not have had a dime. I gave them coffee and a meal once in a while, but it did not feel like enough. I promised myself that after retirement I would try to do more.

On that first Thanksgiving serving at the Upper Room, I met a handful of men and women who I now think of as personal friends. My eyes were opened to the variety of personalities and their incredible life stories. Karen and Charlie gave me permission to hold some lowkey creative writing sessions with anyone who was interested, so in particular I got to know Chris and Frenchie...artists, storytellers, ambassadors for the “unhoused”, and friends.

Now I wash dishes and hang out for a bit with my friends almost every Wednesday. The experience has been both gratifying and humbling. I have met countless men and women—among the homeless and the volunteers—with big hearts and a true understanding for selfless giving.