



InnVision Shelter Network is dedicated to helping homeless families and individuals return to permanent housing and self-sufficiency. [www.ivsn.org](http://www.ivsn.org)

# Good News

Spring 2014 Newsletter

Volunteer Edition

## Sisters Volunteer Year After Year

**For the Mascali family, volunteering is a family affair.** Sisters Madi, 17, and Kinsey Mascali, 13, have been volunteering since they were toddlers, tagging along with their mother to serve dinners to homeless families at IVSN.

It wasn't long before the two sisters launched their own volunteer initiative. In 2006, they started *Packs With Love*, collecting gently-used backpacks and school supplies to donate to IVSN families and to other homeless and foster children in the Bay Area.

### PACKS WITH LOVE

Madi and Kinsey wanted their donations to make children feel extra special, so they recruited more volunteers to help clean the backpacks to look fresh and new. The volunteers also put inspirational notes in the backpacks, along with notebooks, colored pens, and other school supplies.

"A kid's backpack is their identity on the first day of school. It makes you fit in," said Madi. "If a kid feels equal to other kids on their first day of school, they have a chance to do well."

Last summer, the sisters collected 75 backpacks for homeless children at IVSN and distributed hundreds more to children throughout the Bay Area.



Sisters Madi, 17, and Kinsey Mascali, 13, have been volunteering at IVSN since they were toddlers.

### SPREADING HOLIDAY JOY

The sisters enjoy getting to know the children at IVSN through their volunteer work. They recalled one fall evening while they were setting the table for dinner, when they asked what the children at the shelter were going to be for Halloween. They were stunned to hear that they didn't have costumes.

"People think of homeless kids at Christmas, but who is helping them with a great Halloween costume or an Easter basket?" said Madi. The sis-

ters immediately began plans to host Easter and Halloween parties for the children at IVSN.

Each spring, Madi and Kinsey recruit their friends to host an egg hunt, serve dinner, and donate an Easter basket to each child. For Halloween, the girls come in costume, bringing dinner, games, and a costume for each child. They spend weeks collecting detailed costume requests, so that the 5-year-old who wants to be Batman gets his wish, cape and all.

"We love IVSN because that is where we learned to volunteer."

### VOLUNTEERS FOR LIFE

Madi and Kinsey spend over 450 hours a year volunteering their time to benefit IVSN. But their impact doesn't stop there. They spread the volunteer bug throughout the community, recruiting their friends and soccer teams to join them at volunteer projects.

Kinsey says, "I get asked all the time why I waste my summer volunteering. Then I spend the whole summer getting that friend to volunteer with me and converting them into a lifetime volunteer."

The sisters have recently been awarded a special Volunteer Recognition Award from the Junior League of San Jose. They plan to continue their volunteer service at full speed, even as Madi begins to apply to college.

"We love InnVision Shelter Network because that is where we learned to volunteer," said Kinsey. "We saw how just cooking a warm meal and playing with kids would make the moms smile. It makes us feel like we're actually touching someone's life."

To donate a backpack and school supplies to Packs With Love, contact [packswithlove@yahoo.com](mailto:packswithlove@yahoo.com). ■



## Thank You, Volunteers!

Over 18,000 volunteers come through our doors each year. That number amazes and inspires me!

Volunteers are changing lives at IVSN each and every day. Many IVSN volunteers complete “done in a day” group projects with their friends, family, company, or civic group. These projects range from sorting donations, to serving meals, painting a bedroom, and much more. Hundreds of group volunteer projects are completed each year, amplifying the impact of donated dollars with donated time.

IVSN also has “marathon” volunteers, who come back week after week, month after month—some for 15 years or more! They take on leadership roles in **IVSN Support Committees**, becoming mentors for clients, and filling in where help is needed most. They have invaluable institutional knowledge about our organization, and provide continuity and stability for both staff and clients.

Each and every volunteer is invaluable to us. “Done in a day” volunteers tackle the *breadth* of needs, while the “marathon” volunteers offer *depth* from their long-term service. Together, they provide a sturdy foundation, by leveraging the work of our staff, to assist clients along their journey to secure housing, employment, and to live self-sufficiently.

Whether you volunteer for 2 hours, or for 15 years—we thank you. Your gift is needed, deeply appreciated, and valuable for our entire community.

*Karae M. Lisle*

Karae M. Lisle  
CEO



Noemi attends volunteer-led workshops on financial literacy and life skills, helping her on the path to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

## Homeless Mother Focuses on Mental Health Stability

As the mother of four boys between the ages of 3 and 10, Noemi has a quite a full plate. She had a steady job as a Medical Assistant at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, when domestic violence forced her to find a new home for herself and her children.

Noemi plans to find a new job as a Medical Assistant once she and her sons stabilize their mental health.

Strained by their unstable family situation, Noemi and her boys began to suffer from anxiety and depression. Noemi's psychological health was so disabling that she was no longer able to work. With no job and no place to live, the family came to InnVision Shelter Network.

Noemi's Case Manager immediately connected her family with a psychiatric counselor. Her children received therapeutic counseling and participated in educational afterschool programming.

Noemi attended regular group therapy sessions and workshops that teach “life skills” such as financial literacy, interview skills, and parenting—all led by IVSN volunteers.

Noemi plans to find a new job as a Medical Assistant once she and her sons stabilize their mental health. With the help of her Case Manager, Noemi learned how to budget and save money. She has already put her tax refund into a savings account, which she plans to use for a deposit on an apartment and as an emergency fund—so that she and her boys never face homelessness again. ■

## Volunteers Prep Clients for Career Success

“I couldn't have gotten my job without IVSN's help. This one application was so long that I almost gave up on it. Thankfully I didn't, and I was hired as a store manager!”

May, a new store manager, is one of the many clients at IVSN working hard to get a job, or to find a better-paying job. Nearly half of the clients entering IVSN's interim shelter programs are employed. Yet the majority work in low-wage, service sector jobs that don't pay enough to cover the high cost of living.

To help clients advance their careers, IVSN hosts regular **Job Fair Prep Clinics** with the help of volunteers in the community. Volunteers conduct mock interviews, review resumes, give free haircuts, and help clients select donated business attire. The goal is to prepare clients to enter career fairs and job interviews with confidence and dignity.

IVSN's upcoming Job Fair Prep Clinics will be held **May 21** at Montgomery Street Inn (San Jose), **June 3** at First Step for Families (San Mateo), and **June 5** at Haven Family House (Menlo Park). To make a donation or volunteer, visit [www.ivsn.org](http://www.ivsn.org). ■



Volunteers are vital to helping IVSN clients prepare for career fairs and job interviews.





Children at IVSN shelters are exposed to STEM—science, technology, engineering, and math—through summer camp activities and field trips.

## Summer Camp Promotes STEM Education for Homeless Children

**IVSN's Summer Adventure Camp** is an on-site camp for homeless children staying at family shelters throughout the Peninsula and Silicon Valley.

The camp is staffed by volunteer high school students and college interns, with direction from IVSN staff. All summer, IVSN campers engage in fun, educational activities on-site and take weekly field trips to parks, museums, and local attractions.

Much of the Summer Adventure Camp curriculum, as well as year-round children's programming, is based on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. The American Chemical Society hosts hands-on chemistry workshops at the shelters. NASA scientists and engineers volunteer their time to share their experience with IVSN children. Last year,

an Eagle Scout created a day devoted to "Tech Camp," in which he brought in computer equipment and taught programming, computer literacy, and other technology skills.

In addition to on-site activities, campers go on field trips to local destinations that expose children to STEM in Silicon Valley. Past field trips have included Microsoft, the Tech Museum in San Jose, Facebook, the Hiller Aviation Museum, and the CuriOdyssey Museum & Zoo.

Summer Adventure Camp is only made possible by contributions from the community. You can support a homeless child's camp experience by donating funds, items, or volunteering. A \$500 donation will fund one child attending 10 weeks of camp. Visit [ivsn.org/summercamp](http://ivsn.org/summercamp). ■

### How You Can Support Summer Camp

**Volunteer as a Teen Camp Counselor:** High school students: apply now at [ivsn.org/summercamp](http://ivsn.org/summercamp)

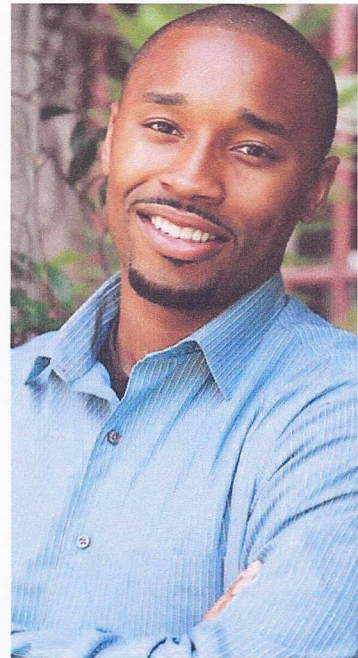
**Donate Funds:** Make a financial donation online at [ivsn.org/donate](http://ivsn.org/donate) or call 650-685-5880 ext. 123

**Donate Items:** Donate new or gently-used sports equipment, craft materials, backpacks, and more! View our Wish List at [ivsn.org/summercamp](http://ivsn.org/summercamp)

## Program Graduate Joins Board of Directors

"Joining the Board with a client perspective is an important role for me," said Marquise Murphy, a graduate of IVSN's programs and recently-appointed member of the Board of Directors. "It shows people that if you take advantage of IVSN's services, great things can happen."

Marquise's resume includes a 6-year career in banking with companies like HSBC, JPMorgan Chase, and Wells Fargo. His passion had always been to work in real estate, so he moved to Florida to join his brother and pursue their dream of a family-owned real estate business.



Marquise Murphy, a program graduate of IVSN, was recently appointed to the Board of Directors.

Marquise took advantage of all that IVSN had to offer, including meetings with his Case Manager, workshops, and connections to employers.

When his brother was offered a new job he couldn't refuse, the family business folded. Marquise followed his back-up plan and secured a banking job in the Bay Area.

Just as Marquise arrived in California, he discovered his job was no longer available. His financial security rapidly deteriorated, and he found himself homeless, waiting in line at a social services center. He was referred to IVSN's Maple Street Shelter for adults in Redwood City.

Each person Marquise met at the shelter defied his preconceived notions of homelessness. He met people who were hardworking and

employed, struggling to keep up with rising housing costs. "It was a humbling experience," he said.

Marquise took advantage of all that IVSN had to offer, including meetings with his Case Manager, workshops, and connections to employers. He started working two part-time jobs, in addition to securing his California real estate license. With the help of his Case Manager, he eventually found an affordable studio apartment in San Carlos.

Marquise is now self-sufficient, working as a realtor with Home Smart Platinum Living. He also serves as Vice Chair President of the Young Professionals Network of SAMCAR (San Mateo County Association of Realtors).

In February, Marquise joined the IVSN Board of Directors as a client graduate representative. "I want to give back. If I can inspire one person in a similar situation, I will feel very accomplished." ■





Congresswoman Speier has been an advocate of IVSN's homeless services since the agency was founded.

# Congresswoman Jackie Speier Spends Night in a Shelter

**Rep. Jackie Speier recently** spent a Friday evening at IVSN's Maple Street Shelter in Redwood City. She arrived with a large bag of winter coats to donate and stayed up until 1:00AM speaking with the residents, listening to their personal stories and struggles before going to sleep in an available bed in the women's sleeping quarters.

"I met a man who was my age and had been in real estate for 30 years in the East Bay. He was a veteran—there were a lot of veterans there," said Speier to the San Francisco Chronicle.

IVSN staff noted how clients gravitated toward her in a natural way, and how she remarked that each story was complex and unique. Her experience shattered any preconceived ideas about what "homeless people" are like.

Since her visit, the Congresswoman has challenged her colleagues in Congress to spend a night at a local shelter in their own district. Her experience reflected the critical state of economic inequality in our community and throughout the country. ■



# Young Professionals Form NextGen Board

**IVSN is thrilled to announce** the creation of the NextGen Advisory Board! This new initiative brings together socially conscious, young professional leaders to increase awareness about the severity of homelessness in our community.

The founding cohort of 12 diverse members work for a variety of companies, including Google, Zynga, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Bessemer Venture Partners, and the Oakland Raiders. The group will leverage their experience in technology, social

media, and innovative thinking to support IVSN's mission and promote awareness about homelessness.

"It's important to recognize that millennials have so much to give, even early on in our careers," said Julia Duncan, a Googler and Co-Chair of the NextGen Board. "I'm excited to effect change at IVSN by fusing our business and tech knowledge with IVSN's expertise in homeless services."

For more information about the NextGen Board, visit [ivsn.org/about/nextgen](http://ivsn.org/about/nextgen). ■



IVSN's NextGen Advisory Board brings together young professional leaders who are socially conscious and striving to make an impact.

# Villa Shelter Re-Opens After Fire

**IVSN's Villa shelter in San Jose** has re-opened after a fire last year displaced 50 homeless children and adults, who were relocated to other shelters within IVSN's network.

The community sprang into action to support IVSN clients. Volunteers and the Red Cross donated three meals a day to the clients at the Villa, in addition to blankets, clothing, toiletries, and much more. Donors contributed over \$80,000 to support the site renovations and fire relief efforts. Spiteri Builders contributed

nearly \$20,000 worth of construction labor and materials.

Volunteers have been integral to renovating the Villa and supporting our clients during the transition. Volunteers painted murals, planted flowers, and prepared the site for move-in day. They also planned holiday parties and a "welcome home" celebration when the shelter re-opened.

On behalf of IVSN and residents of the Villa, thank you! Your support demonstrates the generosity of our community. ■



# Mid-Peninsula Volunteers Serve Meals and Improve Lives

**Long-term volunteers** are invaluable not only for their time and skills, but for their wisdom, as they carry forth IVSN's legacy year after year.

In the mid-peninsula, volunteers are the bedrock of IVSN's meal programs. Volunteers manage the **Food Closet** based out of All Saints Church, providing fresh produce and groceries to homeless and low-income individuals, as well as **Breaking Bread**, serving hot meals out of churches in Palo Alto and Menlo Park.

IVSN is focused on building a network of meal service

volunteers. A recent forum brought together volunteers and donors from every corner of the meal service system, so that the Monday volunteers could share knowledge with the Thursday volunteers, corporate partners could meet civic leaders, and so on.

"It's my favorite volunteer job," said Joy Sleizer, who has been a Breaking Bread volunteer with First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto since 2001. "I have always enjoyed cooking for a crowd. One man wrote a poem about my soup because he liked it so much!" ■



Many volunteers with IVSN's Breaking Bread and Food Closet have been volunteering for over 10 years!

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Volunteer Directly with Clients

- Teach a Life Skills Workshop
- Prepare and Serve Meals
- Host a Community-Building Party
- Become a Support Committee Leader

### Volunteer With Children

- Tutor Children and Youth
- Lead Children's Activities
- Work With the Teen Program
- Teens: Staff the Summer Camp

### Improve a Shelter Facility

*Great for Groups!*

- Organize Donations
- Maintain and Beautify Facilities
- Decorate Shelter Apartments
- Tend the Organic Garden

### Advocate and Educate

- Host a Donation Drive
- Outreach to the Community
- Students: Apply for an Internship

► Sign-ups and more info at [www.ivsn.org/volunteer](http://www.ivsn.org/volunteer)

Save The Date!

**October 9, 2014**  
**Benefit Breakfast**

Hyatt Regency Hotel  
Burlingame, CA  
[www.ivsn.org/breakfast](http://www.ivsn.org/breakfast)





Helping homeless families and individuals return to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

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silicon valley  
**gives**

**SVGives** is the first-ever  
24-hour **day of giving** to  
benefit local non-profits.

Make a donation on **Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>** and take  
action to support the causes you care about.

Donate on May 6<sup>th</sup>  
▶ **ivsn.org/svgives**

## Why Do You Give?

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