CHALLENGES OF MOBILE LIVING

For many years, the Mountain View apartment of Alberto Resendiz was his castle. Last year, his rent unexpectedly skyrocketed. He now lives in a shared minivan. Like many others who are priced out of the Bay Area rental market, Alberto is a hard-working, productive member of the community. Since 2000 he has been associated with the Day Worker Center, where he is affectionately and respectfully known as Don Beto.

Weekdays at 6 AM, Don Beto rises and walks to the Center where he applies his gardening and construction talents to keeping the grounds tidy and welcoming. Don Beto chats with other compañeros while enjoying the Center’s breakfast and hot lunch, and his greatest joy is teaching his valuable gardening skills to younger workers.

At the end of the day, Don Beto relaxes in a nearby park before heading back to his friend’s minivan. Then it’s a long evening of waiting for sleep before rising to do it all over again.

We don’t think about industrious workers like Don Beto losing their homes. But most renters — particularly here in the Bay Area where affordable housing is scarce — are just one major life event away from being uprooted.

Living in his friend’s minivan is now Don Beto’s only option to stay in this area. While grateful for the shelter his friend’s generosity provides, living in a vehicle presents hardships. Storing and preparing food is difficult. And there’s no running water, no shower, no toilet.

Life for people who are forced to live in vehicles may become much more difficult in July 2020 when a new Mountain View law will prevent RV parking on most city streets. For Don Beto, it may become impossible to stay in his adopted city.

In the rugged mountains of Xilitla in the state of San Luis Potosi, Mexico where he was born, paying work is scarce and poverty rampant. Don Beto emigrated to the Bay Area to seek work and provide for his family. He has had no problem finding work here. “Work is available, money and food,” he says, “but housing is almost impossible!”

Being separated from family — including 15 grandchildren who are the apples of Don Beto’s eyes — can be lonely. The respect and camaraderie he finds at the Day Worker Center goes a long way toward easing that loneliness.

Good Neighbors Build Fences

Workers recently donated their time and skills to take down old wire fences and reconstruct new ones at Rancho San Antonio and Picchetti Ranch. Both parks are maintained by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, who thanked our crew for the productive day: “We appreciate their time and hard work!”

Other events where you may have seen our workers in teal shirts this year include the Diwali Festival, the Los Altos Garden Club, Oktoberfest, Run for Zimbabwe, and many others.
Our newest program is receiving rave reviews! Local seniors can sign up for two free hours of labor offered by a senior from the Day Worker Center. A generous grant from the Kiwanis Club of Mountain View pays $40 to cover two hours of the worker’s labor.

If you’re 65 or older and need a hand with a household task, call 650.903.4102 to sign up for two free hours of help. Call at least a day in advance to make sure a senior worker is available for your project.

My 93-years-young neighbor told me about Seniors Helping Seniors. What a wonderful program! I could have never done the work myself. My little yard is glowing, now that the leaves have been picked up. I can’t say enough good things about the gentleman that you scheduled for me. He did a terrific job, and was so pleasant and polite and kind. I feel good about this program being able to also help him and the other workers.

This program is a lifesaver. I feel so blessed! — Kathleen Mathias, employer

Support your community when you buy your Christmas tree, wreath, garland, and more at the Kiwanis Tree Lot.

Through a generous grant from the Kiwanis Club of Los Altos, the Tree Lot offers our workers a whopping 1,043 hours of employment, so crucial during slower winter months when jobs are scarce due to bad weather.

Workers also feel the satisfaction of contributing their efforts to a worthy cause. Depending on the size of the tree purchased, the Kiwanis Club of Los Altos will donate $5 or $10 to your favorite school’s PTA.

Choose your tree in front of Lucky’s at Foothill Expressway and Arboretum Drive in Los Altos. For more information, call 650.735.1552 or visit Kiwanis Tree Lot on the web.

Above: Executive Director María Marroquín recognizes former board president Craig Sherod. Below: Folkloric San Martin dances for the gathered crowd. Photographs by Jack Owicik at Pro Bono Photo.

23 YEARS OF SERVICE!
Feed Hungry Workers

Did you know the Day Worker Center provides a hot, hearty meal to around 40 workers a day, five days a week? Workers grow vegetables for our meals that are prepared by other workers. You can help our bounteous garden with a $2,000 donation to install an irrigation system.

To feed the hungry crowd, our kitchen magicians could use an industrial blender ($1,000), a commercial mixer ($650), and a set of mixing/serving bowls ($125).

Thank you for helping to provide meals for the workers!

BRUSH UP ON YOUR SPANISH

Does your Spanish begin and end with “adios”? You can learn to speak Spanish at the Day Worker Center! One of our newest programs, Spanish as a Second Language is an all-around “win” for students and teachers alike. Students learn Spanish from a native speaker, and gain understanding by walking in another’s shoes, learning about the teacher’s individual story and culture.

Teachers who may no longer have the strength for physical labor are eager to share their language skills and give back to the community. Each eight-week course has a slightly different focus. Find out more at DayWorkerCenterMV.org.
HIRE YOUR OWN HERO! Is your home ready for holiday guests? Yard in shape for the winter? Get help with these chores and many more! Call 650.903.4102 today.

A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RESILIENCE
As we enter our 24th year of service amid the country’s social upheaval and division, I’m reminded of the wonderful resilience of our workers — both individually and as an organization — as well as the community we serve.

Here at the Day Worker Center, problems become opportunities to learn, and that learning grows into positive action. We cherish and build on the friendship and social support the Center offers, including nurturing workers and our neighbors through classes and programs that promote the betterment of the whole community.

Above all, we thank you for your friendship and support. You are a huge part of our success!
— María Marroquín

Did You Know…?
About 650 volunteer hours a month keep our center running with classes like English as a Second Language and many others, as well as translating, courier, and office help. That’s not counting the 270 worker hours each month that keep our building and grounds in ship-shape.

We serve more than 65 workers every day, and those workers provide about 7,900 hours of labor a month to registered employers!