



FALL 2015 NEWSLETTER

PLANNING FOR GROWTH — AND BRIGHT FUTURES

The last several weeks have been exciting ones for The Leaven as we opened new after-school centers and welcomed students back from the summer break. We're thrilled that God has provided so many opportunities for us to have an impact on children who might otherwise not have the kind of support that will help them make good choices for the future.

We're expanding our services, with new programs in Ontario and coming soon to Napa; but we're also strengthening our ties in Solano County, where our programs began, with two new centers at Burgess Point in Benicia and Signature in Fairfield.

But a Leaven center is more than a location — it's the people who stand behind it with financial and prayer support, it's the volunteers who invest time to mentor and tutor the students, and it's the site director who becomes part of the neighborhood and the children's lives.

This fall, one of our new site directors — Rod Kenney at our Marina Vista center in Vallejo — has a very special reason for wanting to help our Leaven kids thrive in school and in life. He wasn't much older than they are now when he was arrested.

Rod told us that this was a turning point in his life because he realized, "The world I was living in was not the world to be in." He turned his life over to God and went on to complete high school and college and have a fulfilling career.

But when he heard about The Leaven, he knew he had to help children who might otherwise end up making the same bad choices he did when he was a pre-teen. "When I saw the Leaven kids, I saw myself at that age," he said. "These kids need someone to look them in the eye and stay focused on them. God has equipped me in a way that specializes in helping kids."

We're thrilled to be equipping at-risk children for a bright future. Thank you for making The Leaven possible — because together, we can help kids and communities rise!

Joe Allio
Board President

CURRENT CENTER LOCATIONS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Fairfield/Suisun

Groves
Parkway Gardens
Phoenix Drive
Signature at Fairfield
Grande Circle
The Village

Benicia/Vallejo

Marina Vista
Marina Heights
Burgess Point

Vacaville

Alamo Gardens - *Coming Soon!*

Napa

Woodland Community
- *Coming Soon!*

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Rialto
Ontario

For more information, or if you'd like to volunteer at any of our centers, please visit MyLeaven.com or contact us at hello@MyLeaven.com.

I'M PROUD TO BE A LEAVEN KID!

Yamile, a high school sophomore, recently visited our Groves center in Fairfield to talk about her experience as a Leaven student — and how The Leaven helped her build a brighter future. She recalled how we "helped me get through elementary and middle school because I learned how to do a lot of things . . . how to read, math, and science."

But help with her homework was only part of what Yamile learned at The Leaven. "The Leaven helps you with your schoolwork, and it helps you be responsible. I learned to take care of other people and not just think about me."

"After a while, everybody turns into family instead of just friends," she continued. "I was going to get ear surgery and a lot of people prayed for me. It turned out fine and I can hear from both ears. The doctor said it was a miracle because they didn't think it was going to work out like that."

Yamile's younger brother and sister became part of our Leaven center, too, and today all three siblings are helping their mom who is working on her GED. "I think one of the reasons I like The Leaven," Yamile said, "is because we're able to help her with her homework now!"

Yamile's mother is also a strong supporter of Yamile's desire to go to college to become a nurse. "I want to make my family proud by going to college and doing something different that they didn't do. My mom doesn't want me working part-time jobs like she does. She says I should have a different lifestyle (than she does).

"I'm thankful for being able to be part of The Leaven because it helps a lot with your schoolwork and to be responsible. I used to be a Leaven kid, and I'm still proud to be one. I really love The Leaven!"

HOLIDAY GIFTS TO INSPIRE HOPE

Christmas is a special time of year for many of us. It's a time when we can not only celebrate with our loved ones, but also reflect upon the blessings we have received all year long. But for many Leaven families, Christmas is a time of struggle and even sadness. These hard-working families will often spend the holidays apart, working hard just to provide for their families' basic needs.

But you can make the Holidays brighter, and provide hope for the year to come for these families through The Leaven's 2015 Catalog for the Children.

This colorful booklet's pages are filled with great gift ideas for the whole family, each guaranteed to inspire change in communities throughout California. You'll also find inspiring stories of hope and reminders of the change your support of The Leaven has helped to inspire this year.

Please consider giving one or more of these fantastic gifts — each carefully selected to make a big difference in the lives of our Leaven kids — as a gift to honor someone in your life. You'll find

creative offerings like art supplies for our centers, or sports equipment to inspire healthy outdoor play. You can also provide memorable experiences like field trips or help us with our basic operating needs, like gas for our van.

Our catalog is full of gifts that are perfect for friends, co-workers, pastors and family; and it's also a great tool for teaching children about the joy that is received when you give generously to those who are less fortunate. If your children or grandchildren are looking for great gift ideas, be sure to show them our special Kids Give section in the catalog, full of items that children will love to share with other boys and girls!

You can also choose to sponsor a child, or even an entire center, for a direct impact on the lives of Leaven kids right in our communities. Child sponsorships are a fantastic opportunity to ensure a Leaven student receives all of our award-winning programs year-round, including Summer Success, for just \$25 a month!

No matter what gifts you buy from our Holiday Catalog, they are sure to provide joy and hope to you and your loved ones, as well as the children and families The Leaven serves. So be watching your mail box for your chance to give gifts of hope this Christmas.

"SUPER" PROOF THAT THE LEAVEN WORKS!

After more than six years working within our community, we've seen proof that building community partnerships is key to helping communities rise. And when big events happen in our region, it's an exciting opportunity for all of us as a community to make big changes!

This winter, San Francisco will play host to Super Bowl 50, and to celebrate, the organizers of the event have created the 50 Fund to ensure the legacy of this Super Bowl extends far beyond four quarters of play.

We are proud to announce that The Leaven has been chosen as one of the 50 Fund's partner charities for Super Bowl 50, receiving a very special \$10,000 grant to put to use to help communities rise in Northern California.

This is an exciting opportunity for The Leaven to join with other organizations and communities throughout Northern California, and to inspire lasting change in the lives of children and hardworking families.

We are so honored to have been recognized as a community partner and given this exciting opportunity by the 50 Fund. We know this would not be possible without the support of our entire community. We just can't wait to see the change that the 50 Fund creates in the lives of families throughout Northern California.

When you watch this year's Super Bowl, we hope you are reminded about all the excitement that is taking place behind the scenes in communities like ours, because together we are helping kids and communities rise.

EXCITEMENT IS GROWING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Since The Leaven opened its second Southern California center, we've been thrilled with the response of community leaders in San Bernardino County. In August, Fairfield Mayor Harry Price and former City Manager of Fairfield, Sean Quinn, joined our executive director Mark Lillis in Ontario to welcome supporters of our work in Rialto and Ontario.

Some of our honored guests included Mayor Paul Leon of Ontario; Mayor Paul Eaton of Montclair; Ontario

Fire Chief Floyd E. Clark; Greg Christian, Executive Director, Kaiser Permanente, Fontana and Ontario Medical Centers; Randall Lewis, Lewis Homes; Steve Pontell, National Community Renaissance; and hosts Gary Ovitt, former San Bernardino County Manager, and Sue Ovitt, a trustee for Chaffey Joint Union High School District.

We are thrilled to be part of San Bernardino and look forward to opening more centers in the future so boys and girls can benefit from The Leaven's award-winning program.

