



# SAMARITAN CONNECT

AUGUST 2021



## MEET ANYA ABEL, OUR NEW CASEWORKER

Anya started at the Center as a front desk volunteer in October of 2020. After a few months, she started training to be a caseworker and was eventually hired.

She is originally from Indonesia, and immigrated to the United States when she was 25 to attend grad school at Purdue University. She now has two adult children and lives with her husband in Thousand Oaks. Some of her hobbies include drawing, playing piano, traveling, and helping others.

Before joining the Center's team, she dabbled in being a part time translator, as well as running the nonprofit she founded in 2013. *Sahabat Jiwa* - loosely translated as Guardian of Mental Health. It is an organization helping teenagers and young adults in Indonesia using remote counseling. We are beyond excited to have Anya join our team!



## CLIENT CONVERSATION



While you may not believe such extreme circumstances can happen to you, the truth is that any disaster could force you out onto the street with nothing but the clothes on your back. My name is Dana and I became homeless in October 2011. When you get hit by a few things at once, it affects your ability to think clearly. You're putting out fires all the time. Depression saps your energy. It makes it harder to get up in the morning and put together a rational plan. What was supposed to be temporary ended up lasting 9 years.

The first time you are homeless, the intense feelings of fear and uncertainty are impossible to forget. It's difficult to get a job while homeless, which is what is required to become housed again. It's difficult to find a place to live, as they typically require people to have steady income in order to rent. Getting back on my feet was very hard, but I said to myself, "don't berate yourself over your situation."

I have so much gratitude for the Center; they were there for me when I needed them the most. They supported me and gave me a normal life. They protected me and ensured I would have a bright future. There is a nobility in compassion, a beauty in empathy, and a grace in forgiveness. The Center's services and winter shelter program offer all of this with dignity. So many doors were closed to me and the Center opened theirs.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Pancake Breakfast**

August 14th, 2021 | 8AM-11AM  
at St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church  
Buy your tickets online: [bit.ly/3rDq6ev](https://bit.ly/3rDq6ev)  
Or in person at the center!

### **Donor Appreciation Event**

October 15th, 2021  
at The Samaritan Center

### **Bowling Fundraiser**

November 7th, 2021  
at Harley's Bowl, Simi Valley

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### **Breakfast Volunteer**

### **Pantry Sorting Volunteer**

### **Landscaping and Gardening Volunteer**

*Weekly commitment required.*

### **Interested?**

Please contact our Program Manager, Reyna Hernandez, via email at [reyna@samcentersv.org](mailto:reyna@samcentersv.org) or give her a call at (805) 579-9166 ext. 226.

## WANT TO HELP?

The Center needs help looking for a commercial freezer. Give us a call if you have any suggestions or ideas!

Here is our Amazon Wishlist:  
[bit.ly/samcenter](https://bit.ly/samcenter)





## A COMMUNITY EFFORT



At the Center, our clients use the patio twice a day, once in the morning to eat breakfast and again in the evening to eat dinner. In between, it's used for client case management appointments, staff meetings, volunteer orientations, and even for sorting donated items. Our old cloth patio covering was left torn and tattered by the harsh winds of Simi Valley, leaving no shelter from the sun during the day for anyone using it. After soaking up rain from this year's rainy season, our patio tabletops were also left destroyed. With so much use day in and day out, the Center needed help reviving its patio.

Many of our community partners took note and chipped in to give our clients a shaded area to keep cool. The project took months of planning, but was completed on June 12th, 2021, just in time for the summer heat. The Y's Men's Club of Simi Valley bought the materials for the patio covering and helped with the installation. Our new covering is made out of fiberglass, it'll protect us rain or shine and hold its own against the harsh winds season after season. The Simi Sunset Rotary purchased and completed our brand new table bases. Curtis Morrissette singlehandedly formed, shaped, and applied stainless steel to them. Thank you to everyone who helped make this project happen!



### A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE GROUPS WHO COORDINATED DONATION DRIVES THIS SEASON:

**The Pennington Family ▪ United Church of Christ ▪ The Hansen Family ▪ Assisteens of Conejo Valley ▪ T-Mobile Engineering Team ▪ Simi Community Church ▪ Ventura County Animal Services ▪ The Toland Family ▪ Sepideh Stollar ▪ Santa Susana High School - STEM Jeopardy & The Maskateers ▪ Hollow Hills Elementary ▪ Boy Scouts of America - Troop 698 - Annual Scouting for Food Donation Drive ▪ The Linka Team ▪ StoneBridge Community Church ▪ Church of the Epiphany ▪ Code Red Simi ▪ Simi Covenant Church ▪ St. Peter Claver Missions of Mercy ▪ Staples ▪ Pantry Raid ▪ Sandi Stephens 79th Birthday Drive**

## VOLUNTEER CORNER



Sylvia was born and raised in Lima, Peru. After becoming a U.S. citizen, she moved to Chatsworth with her parents. She married a U.S. Army veteran and has two amazing sons, two lovely daughter-in-laws, and five wonderful grandsons. While still in Lima, she graduated from a Travel and Tourism Academy, becoming a flight attendant for a Peruvian airline. The rest of her career in the U.S. has been in travel agencies and corporate travel. After retiring in 2015, she attended the Los Angeles Mission College, receiving her Associate Degree in Culinary Arts, and completed an internship at the Simi Valley Hospital kitchen.

Chef Sylvia still wanted to help in our community, so in March 2021 she started volunteering at our Center, first stepping in for one of our other kitchen volunteers, but is now here more often. She said "seeing all the volunteers putting their hearts into their work" has been her favorite part of volunteering. Our Center would be

nothing without our amazing volunteers, and it is a huge reason why we are able to help our homeless clients get fed, showered, clothed, and taken care of.

Chef Sylvia became very emotional, saying her time here has been "so rewarding and fulfilling." She continued by saying that the great team effort that goes on at our Center gives her even more incentive to put her heart into her work.