

Volunteer Spotlight - October 2010

Bob, Anne and Andy Jensen

Now more than ever, young people, working professionals and families are looking to make an impact in their communities. Over the past year, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) has seen an increase in families volunteering together, looking for opportunities to spend time together and make a difference. Bob and Anne Jensen and their son Andy are one of those outstanding families actively involved as volunteers at SFBFS.



In January 2010, the Jensen family was looking for a volunteer opportunity where they could all help at the same time. Bob had recently retired from his job as a psychology instructor at Sacramento State University, so the timing was right. Bob and Anne were both raised in families where volunteer work was a part of life, so as soon as Andy was old enough, it was natural for the family to find opportunities to contribute and give back. Andy, now in his junior year of high school, is homeschooled providing the Jensens with lots of options to volunteer. It was Anne who steered the family toward SFBFS. She had heard a lot about the variety of

programs offered, but one night when they were in downtown Sacramento enjoying the Second Saturday art walk in January, they saw a group of SFBFS volunteers dressed as a bridal party promoting the Raffle for the Rock fundraiser. Meeting the enthusiastic volunteers "Sealed the deal!" Anne laughs. The family attended orientation and started right away.

Every Friday since then, Bob and Anne volunteer in the Clothing program, while Andy assists in the Guest Services area, receiving donations. Bob and Anne started in Clothing because it was the area of greatest need at the time they started and have grown to love it. "I want to ensure this is a comfortable place for folks that need clothes," says Bob. "It's really funny," adds Anne. "Bob couldn't care less about clothing at home, so it's kind of ironic how much he enjoys it here!" The couple helps sort and hang donated clothing, keep the entire program clean and tidy and assist guests in finding specific items they need. They have even recruited Anne's nephew Kyle to complete his school-required volunteer hours with them at SFBFS over the summer. Anne recalls one homeless teen who had been asked to the prom, but had nothing to wear. They spent extra time finding a nice outfit for him and recall how grateful he was. "He left happy and looking great," Anne recalls.

Andy, whose interests outside of volunteering include engineering and design, enjoys his post at the back door in the Guest Services area. He assists donors by helping unload donations, sort donated goods, write receipts, answer questions and assist clients. "I like answering all their questions," Andy says. "We're helping people who have lost everything to find the things they need." Chelsea Williams, Guest Services Coordinator, has worked with Andy over the past six months. "I love the way that Anne and Bob have

set such a positive example for their son Andy by teaching him how important it is to have compassion and service incorporated into everyday life," she says. "In turn, Andy has set such a positive example for not only the donors, clients and volunteers of SFBFS, but for young people in general."

The Jensen family has inspired SFBFS by illustrating the impact of family volunteering, not only on the clients and donors served, but on family itself. They plan to continue their volunteer work together while Andy is in high school. They all agree that their time at SFBFS has been a great experience. "The staff and volunteers that we've interacted with are committed to the services and the community," says Bob. "They're always interested in what changes might better the community and the people served. I'm just glad SFBFS is here."