

# Bread of Life

Cultivating attitudes, skills and practices that transform lives, organizations, and communities.

[www.breadoflife.org](http://www.breadoflife.org)

## Bread Basket

### The Practice of Gratitude

*“Grace is that moment of sweet infilling when I am unexpectedly caught up in goodness beyond my own making; gratitude is the response of recognition that flows from the heart back into the world. It’s like the in-breath and the out-breath. Grace received, gratitude shared, and both in the ground of ordinary life.”*

**Sandra Lommasson**

He spoke with the quiet authority of one whose life had come perilously close to ending. He was clear about what had brought him to that dangerous edge: “My own best thinking!” He chuckled. I was not amused. Though young, I had invested considerable energy, time, and resources into studying, into refining my thinking, into understanding whatever could be understood. Wasn’t that the way to freedom?

He continued, “I have learned that I cannot think my way into better acting; I have to act my way into better thinking.” An alcoholic, he had found that his best efforts to figure out why he drank kept leading to

dead ends. His life depended on finding another way: the way of spiritual practice with others of like desire. One of the first practices he learned in the fellowship of AA was how to cultivate a daily attitude of gratitude. It refocused everything.

The practice of gratitude looks for the places of connection and life that saturate every day. Gratitude sees the quiet beauty that is present in this gorgeous planet that is our home. Gratitude allows the heart to be touched by the ‘manna moments’ of an otherwise bleak day. It nourishes and strengthens the soul and expands the mind as well as the heart.

The Bread of Life mission is cultivating practices that transform lives, organizations, and communities because we too have discovered that practices shape the possible. Being human means that we learn a variety of strategies to ‘make it’ and like this man’s ‘best thinking’ they eventually wear out. Albert Einstein said simply, “We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.” Acting – or practicing – our way into better thinking opens doors that weren’t previously apparent, and so we choose to engage and to offer a range of practices that grow us together beyond what we’ve known.

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#### Our Supporters on Gratitude:

*“When I am focused on gratitude and how much I have to be grateful for, I have less time for worry and anxiety.”* **T. Franzen**

*“I am grateful for a wealth of women I have come to call my sisters for each day they live in my heart.”* **Anonymous**

*“I am grateful to Bread of Life for being a place of hospitality and enrichment for the neighborhood and the community. The diversity of offerings makes it a valuable resource to all, a place to nourish the soul and spirit.”* **K. Miranda**

*“I am grateful that the little things make a difference and for the important work I can do in my community. Offering art experiences to the women at the treatment center makes me so grateful.”* **B. Brooks**

**We begin this year with the practice of Gratitude.**



## Thank You to Our 2013 Donors

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## Volunteer Profile

Bread of Life as an organization, and Spirit in the Arts as its most visible program, could not provide the level of service we do without the help of many volunteers. We have volunteer graphic artists, gardeners, cleaners, library organizers, spiritual directors, studio hosts and even a volunteer coordinator of volunteers! We'd like to introduce you to one such volunteer: **Jennifer Berg.**

Jennifer is one of our key volunteers working in the downstairs art studio. She didn't know what to expect when she came; she simply needed a place to give back to the community. In her professional life, Jennifer works in security and private investigations, and she was



struck by how our program exposes her to a completely different, more positive and caring world. In the art studio, she is humbled when she sees how appreciative the participants are to create simple art. "It makes my day when I hear their laughter or I see how proud they are"; just talking about it brought tears to her eyes. "This place feeds me in a way that my regular work

just doesn't! There is no hostility, the music is calming and the work is slow-paced and soothing. In helping others, I find the more peaceful side of myself!" She admits that before she started volunteering, she had not done anything creative since she was seven, but after being exposed to different art forms here, she became hooked on expressing herself in art. When health issues forced her to stop volunteering for several months, "I went into art withdrawal, and started painting on my own at home. I haven't stopped since!" We are so thankful to Jennifer, and all our volunteers, for each individual contribution they make!

## What's New at Spirit in the Arts (SITA)



Our SITA open studio has a brand new welcome sign to help direct people into the program and we are

simply thrilled by how well it is working for us! When the studio is closed, anyone entering our building would see the stunning oil painting of flowers done by one of our regular artists, Gabriella Bargellini. She willingly offered to paint an original masterpiece when we approached her for help, and the array of flowers is cheerful and bright. When the studio is open, the picture swings out from the

wall, and our welcome sign greets everyone who enters. With this two-sided sign, we keep the hallway floor space free for our physically challenged participants and provide beautiful art for all the groups that share our building.



If you are interested in volunteering at the Art Studio or for any other program, send us an email to [volunteers@breadoflife.org](mailto:volunteers@breadoflife.org), or call 916-648-1803, Ext. 15. We'll give you a tour and orientation and you'll open a door to an experience that will change your life in unexpected and wonderful ways.



## Why I Believe in Bread of Life



The drawing power of an organization’s mission is as strong as the enthusiasm for it – nourished and shared with others by staff, friends and supporters. One person with such unbounded enthusiasm for *Bread of Life’s* mission is Cameron Gibbs whose relationship with the organization goes back to the beginning.

A retired civil engineer, Cameron considers herself fortunate in her career. Aside from the sense of accomplishment it gave her, it taught her to think and visualize in space. When she was ready to retire and start a different kind of work, Cameron discovered spiritual direction – and Bread of Life.

Bread of Life led her, in a non-judgmental way, onto an amazing journey of discovery. Sandra, her spiritual director suggested soul cards (journaling with pictures)

which provided an opportunity to develop her relationship with God and the spiritual in a non-linear way while, at the same time, feeding her creative urge. Gradually, that led her to transformative art and she started participating in a Wednesday night Women’s group which continued for 8 years. In her reserved but enthusiastic way, Cameron told us that this experience was like nothing she had done in her life; to her, creating transformative art is “a great way to be known by others and by one’s self”.

Since then, Cameron has sampled everything *Bread of Life* has to offer. She has volunteered her time and talents, and has been a loyal and generous supporter. Her en-

**“Bread of Life offers you a relationship that will change your life in the most effective way for you; you will become part of a group of people who consider friendship and compassion a major part of their – and your - spiritual journey.”**

**“The offerings of Bread of Life can help you grow into what you can be if you only opened your mind and heart to them.”**

thusiasm for the organization is fueled by her belief in its purpose and her gratitude for the tolerance and care with which she has always been greeted there. She values the non-imposing and non-intrusive way in which *Bread of Life* has been guiding her on her spiritual path.

She also believes that *Bread of Life* serves an important role in the community. It helps disadvantaged and marginalized people be themselves while they try to pull themselves up from despair and hardships. *Bread of Life* is stepping up and providing a spiritual safety net.

That’s why Cameron Gibbs supports *Bread of Life*; because it touches all who come into contact with it. It offers compassion and acceptance while challenging people to grow by using their skills and developing new ones. Ultimately, it offers a variety of ways to be fulfilled and whole.

## Thank You to Our Donors Who Supported Us In Honor or In Memory of Loved Ones

### “In Honor of” Gifts

- Kay Duren
- Lisa Smoley
- Margo Hayes
- Shirley Connors
- Stephen & Katie Hayes
- Margo & Gil Hayes
- Jean Holsten
- About Change Counseling Services

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- Judy Morhar
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### “In Memory of” Gifts

- Elanor Jackson
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## The Blessings of Contemplative Dialogue

by Gloria Marie Jones, OP  
Dominican Sister of Mission San Jose

Contemplative  
Dialogue 

Sometimes gratitude comes upon you like a bubble bursting. Other times it unfolds gradually, and in the unfolding the gratitude deepens and expands in unexpected ways. And the best part is-- the unfolding keeps happening. For us, the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, Contemplative Dialogue (CD) has brought about a similar experience.

In 2010, our new leadership team and the directors of our Motherhouse departments (lay and religious) participated in the 4 day introduction to CD led by Steve Wirth (Centre for Contemplative Dialogue) and Jean Holsten (Bread of Life). We ended the days realizing our work had just begun. Since then we have continued our growth through regular sessions

with Jean. The work has strengthened our relationships and created a shared stance supporting our various roles of leadership. We continue to grow into a real learning community!

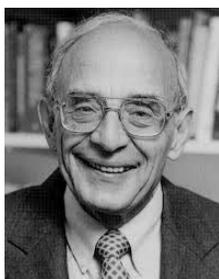
From the beginning, the blessing of CD started unfolding like a ripple throughout our congregation as Jean worked with our local community leaders, school administrators, newer members and sisters. It has become an integral part of our commitment to relational living. And most importantly, it has given us new skills to deal with the everyday challenges that emerge in communal life.

In a world in which the pace and demands of life only seem to increase, CD continues to call us to

slow down and to pay attention. We have learned to treasure the beginning and ending ritual flowing from CD: we begin with a contemplative sitting followed by our checking in and sharing what we're noticing, and conclude with a sharing of what we are most conscious of as we end the day.

The blessings of CD have become woven into our life experience and keep unfolding in new and engaging ways! How grateful we are!

**"Thanks to  
Contemplative  
Dialogue, we  
continue to grow  
into a real learning  
community!"**



In Nov. 2013, **Chris Argyris**, whose teachings served as one of the pillars of Contemplative Dialogue, died at the age of 90. Though saddened by the news, we celebrate the lessons he taught: the curiosity and courage it takes to sustain learning; the hope and humility it takes to create a better world; and the unbounded generosity it takes not just to create new ideas, but to forge collaborations. But Chris' unique ability to empathize with people's experiences and circumstances—while still holding them accountable for changing them—is what affected people the most. His legacy is far-reaching. May he rest in peace!

### Thank You to 2013 Donors

#### S (cont'd) - Z

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## Meet Roseanne Lopez



Roseanne Lopez first connected to *Bread of Life* when a friend invited her to participate in a 4-day Contemplative Dialogue immersion training. She found it so powerful that when urged to join the two-year practicum for trainers and facilitators she said “Yes!” The result? “It’s brought a different perspective on life. There’s so much that is our choice – how we choose to react, if we choose to enjoy, and how willing we are to reflect. I can choose how active, proactive or reactive I want to be,

and the tools of Contemplative Dialogue help me to do that”, she shares excitedly.

Although Roseanne has lived in North Sacramento for nine years, discovering *Bread of Life* was a surprise. “Bread of Life is this little hidden gem that needs to have more visibility! Its service is incredible, and yet I’d love to see it involved in the bigger community where it can be a real change agent. For example, there are four ‘Chambers’ leadership training programs in Sacramento. I could see *Bread of Life* as a neutral place with no agenda convening a conversation about why this is so.” Helping *Bread of Life* bridge from where it is now to

what it can become is Roseanne’s passion. Joining the Resource Development Committee and becoming a regular donor herself was a perfect way to help this happen. If you or anyone you know is interested in joining the committee, let us know at [emilia@breadoflife.org](mailto:emilia@breadoflife.org).

***Bread of life is this little hidden gem that needs to have more visibility. Its service is incredible and yet I’d love to see it involved in the bigger community where it can be a real change agent.***

## New People Joined Bread of Life



Our new Volunteer Coordinator, Amanda Holloway, moved from Riverside, California, to Vacaville a year ago

where she now lives with her family. She decided to build on her AS in Social and Behavioral Sciences, by obtaining another degree from Sacramento State. She is excited to see where her career takes her and ultimately wants to become an LCSW. She views her part-time position at *Bread of Life* as a valuable experience to serve an organization that is unlike any other she has ever known. She is looking forward to learning everything she can and is grateful and proud to be a part of this organization committed to growth and transformation.

Emilia Godwin joined *Bread of Life* as the new Director of Development and Communications. She brings more than 15 years of experience in development, communications and nonprofit management. She has Master’s degrees in History & Cultural Anthropology and in Business and an eclectic collection of personal interests (ethnic cultures and food, travel, photography, roses, stamp collecting and tapestries). Born and raised in Bulgaria, Emilia moved to the United States in 1995. She is drawn to the rich opportunities



for personal discoveries and learning that *Bread of Life* has to offer.

A recent graduate from Sac State with a B.S. degree in Business, Jenny Tran started at *Bread of Life* as an administrative volunteer. While at school, she specialized in HR Management and found working on administrative projects a rewarding opportunity to use her skills. She immediately felt welcomed and surrounded by positive energy, support, and kindness at *Bread of Life*. After graduating, she took the position of Assistant for the Dialogue program. Quiet, quick-thinking and focused, Jenny has been an enormous help for this continuously expanding program. While helping the program grow, she has been obtaining new knowledge and skills and is excited about the possibilities for personal and professional growth.



## Listen to Your Life

### Why Listen to Your Life?

When you have what you thought you wanted, and it isn't enough... it's time to listen to your life. When you don't have what you've set your heart on, and are wondering why... it's time to listen to your life.

Why listen? Because there's more to life than what's on the surface. Listen deeply and you'll find your sacred story woven through the ups and downs of ordinary life. *Listen To YOUR Life, A Sacred Voice*

*Is Calling* is a 9-month foundational experience for discovering anew who you are and for growing in response to the call of God to offer your gifts in the world.

We anticipate beginning ongoing spiritual direction groups this fall for those who have completed the *Listen to Your Life* year and are seek-



ing to live life as a ministry. This annual offering of *Bread of Life* is prerequisite for the 2-year program in the Art of Spiritual Direction.

We are now accepting applications for the new program which begins September 2014. You can download the basic brochure and application at [www.breadoflife.org](http://www.breadoflife.org) under "Leadership Programs." Please send your completed application to [office@breadoflife.org](mailto:office@breadoflife.org) by March 1, 2014.

### What participants are noticing ...



"I'm becoming much more interested in my creativity."

"Listen to Your Life has opened my heart up to a deeper sense of God's abundance... and has renewed Jesus' call for myself to find more abundant life of body, mind & spirit especially in the elder years of my life."



***"I am greatly supported by the community for the inner work of deep looking that leads to transformation... though alone at my computer, I know I am connected to those who are in this community. That makes it easier to face the resistances and difficulties, as they arise. We are not alone!"***

### Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

To say that the volunteers at *Bread of Life* make it all happen would be an understatement. Their dedication to its mission is inspirational! To celebrate our volunteers, we welcomed the holiday season last November with a volunteer appreciation dinner.

None of the volunteers knew what to expect because they were asked not to come early and help with the usual planning and set-up. For them, it was an evening to sit, enjoy delicious food

and gracious company and be celebrated for being the driving force behind everything *Bread of Life* does. We hope they know how grateful we are for the precious gift of their active presence.

If any of you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at [volunteers@breadoflife.org](mailto:volunteers@breadoflife.org), (916) 648-1803, X15. The rewards will surprise you in the best way possible.

***"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."*** Mahatma Gandhi





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## Ready for more offerings from Bread of Life?

Our workshops and classes are a wonderful opportunity to treat yourself or a loved one to unique learning, life exploration and spiritual growth. Many of them are eligible for Continuing Education Units (CEU) credit from the California Board of Behavioral Sciences.

For more information about our registration policy and CEU options, or to register for any of the classes, please visit [www.breadoflife.org](http://www.breadoflife.org) and click on "Register for Workshops" in the menu, or contact us at (916) 648-1803.

### Think Tuesdays and Thursdays at Bread of Life!

(but don't forget those special Saturdays!)

#### **Sacred Story Offerings:**

- \* Writing Groups (2)
- \*Wisdom of Fairy Tales
- \* Living Grottos: Creating Sacred Space
- \*Soul Collage

#### **Health and Spirituality Offerings:**

- \*Loving Your Brain As a Spiritual Practice
- \*Serious Illness As Pilgrimage
- \*Art of Healing (using SoulCollage)



**For questions, comments or suggestions related to this newsletter or if you would like to support the important work of Bread of Life - contact us at (916) 648-1803, Ext. 13 or [emilia@breadoflife.org](mailto:emilia@breadoflife.org). Please let us know if you would like to receive the newsletter electronically (in full color).**