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Is My Life Really About Me? *The Journey of Patrisha A. Cherry Mayo*

During our family's trials, the Ecumenical Hunger Program stood as a pillar of compassion and hope. Before the shadow of my mother's stroke fell upon us, it was this organization that extended a hand not merely of aid, but of profound solidarity and support. I vividly recall the warmth and kindness of Mrs. Nevada Butler, who brought sustenance to our doorstep. Her selflessness and empathy were a guiding light during our most challenging times, etching a lasting impression on my soul and profoundly influencing my approach to philanthropy.

In the chorus of life, certain melodies resonate more deeply, echoing the essence of our journeys. For me, Diana Ross's "Do You Know Where You're Going To?" is one such melody. It speaks to my soul, reminding me of my mother's beauty and the faith-driven path I'm on, guided not by my understanding but by the Almighty's hand. As I pen this narrative, I pay homage to God, the cornerstone of my existence and the beacon of my path.

Born in San Francisco and raised in the vibrant community of East Palo Alto, I was enveloped in an era of profound love and neighborly bonds. The 2500 Block of Illinois Street was more than a home; it was a canvas of joyous childhood memories painted with the laughter of neighbors and the innocence of play. As the middle child of Willie O. and Ollie Mae Cherry, my identity as one of "Them Cherry Girls" was stamped early on, a badge worn with pride and a hint of playful defiance.

Our life's melody shifted to a minor key in 1981 with the loss of our brother Rudy, a change that unraveled the fabric of our family's joy. Yet, it was the stroke my mother suffered in 1985 that truly tested our resilience. Her survival against all odds was a testament to our

enduring faith and the strength we derived from our shared struggles.

The Ecumenical Hunger Program's steadfast dedication to our well-being endowed me with a deep-seated commitment to charitable work. This invaluable lesson in the power of kindness has galvanized my determination to pay it forward, fostering within me an unwavering sense of duty to uplift not only my immediate community but also the broader Bay Area. This ethos, that we ascend by elevating others, has become a cornerstone of my life.

Motivated by the Ecumenical Hunger Program's example, I am now zealous in encouraging my colleagues and friends to join me in this journey of altruism. I invite and challenge everyone to become emissaries of hope and generosity, to mirror the profound impact that the Ecumenical Hunger Program has made on countless lives, including my own. Together, let us carry forward this legacy of compassion, ensuring that the light of community support and kindness continues to shine brightly for those in need.

My journey towards educational enlightenment was neither linear nor free of obstacles. The societal shackles of race and single motherhood often seemed insurmountable. Yet, from the age of 12, working for \$2.35 per hour, I learned the value of perseverance. My sons, Patrick, and Antonio, became the well-spring of my motivation, guiding me back to the path of education after years of sacrifice. My academic pursuit culminated at UC Berkeley, where I embraced the interdisciplinary concentration of Public Health, armed with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Palo Alto University.

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Is My Life Really About Me? *(Continued from page 1)*

The essence of my journey is not captured by personal accolades but by the impact I aspire to make. My narrative is a mosaic of lived experiences, each piece a testament to overcoming adversity. As I stand on the precipice of graduating with a master's in public health, my vision extends beyond the accolades. It is rooted in the quest for equality, the empowerment of underrepresented voices, and the creation of a more inclusive society. My mission is to build bridges where walls once stood, ensuring that the tables of knowledge and power reflect the diverse tapestry of our community.

Reflecting on my journey, I am reminded that the essence of life is not solely in the milestones we achieve but, in the lives, we touch and the legacy we leave behind. My path, illuminated by faith and the teachings of Christ, has taught me that serving others is the true embodiment of living. As I navigate the road ahead, I am comforted by the knowledge that I do not walk alone. God's guidance is my constant companion, a reminder that the journey of life, with all its uncertainties, is a testament to the power of faith, resilience, and the enduring spirit of community.

In the melody of my life, the chorus resounds with a message of hope, determination, and the unwavering belief that, indeed, my life is not just about me. It's a symphony composed by divine hands, played out in the hearts and minds of those I've had the privilege to touch. To all who walk this journey of life, remember that the most profound melodies are those that resonate with the soul and elevate the spirit of humanity.



Volunteer Profile: *Noah's Story*



I first went to EHP at a service day my school organized in 8th grade (7 years ago). I liked it, so I went back that summer and went back in the summer after and kept coming back every summer. It's very tangible work that helps real people. As many as 1 in 5 people in Silicon Valley are food insecure and that's not fair. EHP is how I do something about that.

I really like the people here. Everyone is very welcoming and friendly and they are happy to see me no matter what.

Sometimes people call be "brother Noah" which, I mean, almost makes it feel like family. If I'm in a bad mood before, I always feel happy again because I'm just accepted where I am at.



What Does EHP Mean to You? *Nyla's Story*

When asked what does E.H.P. (Ecumenical Hunger Program) mean to me, many positive things come to mind.

Earlier this month my 14 year old daughter Detsiy'ah was in dire need of an electric lift.

She was soon to be discharged from the children's hospital after being an inpatient for four months. She ended up having respiratory failure and a tracheotomy was placed.

Her road to recovery would be different and challenging due to having a tracheotomy, ventilator, and oxygen. With her already having cerebral palsy and scoliosis, just getting out of bed and into her wheelchair and other supportive equipment would have been very difficult.



I was in despair worrying about how I would be able to purchase a full electric lift for my daughter.

I was already denied by insurance. I reached out to EHP in hopes that they could assist me some way. EHP went above and beyond to provide my daughter with a brand new lift the day before her discharge. Their generous donation has helped change the trajectory of my daughters life due to numerous challenges. I am forever thankful and grateful for EHP and the support they have shown us in our time of need.

So when asked what does EHP mean to me... I say a program that gives you hope, when there is no hope. This program continues to serve the community and be a shining light.

Thank you EHP for consistently being present and showing up in every way possible to serve, support, and revitalize our community!

BACK To School

The 2024-2025 school year is about to begin and our children need your help to build their learning foundation! If you would like to lend a hand, a donation of gift cards will go directly to families on the B2S program list and families will be able to shop with their children for Back-to-School gear.

The most requested gift cards are: Amazon, Walmart, Target and Costco.

If you would like to donate items, Backpacks, school supplies and hygiene products would be greatly appreciated. Please go to <https://a.co/6vp4ofA> to access EHP's Amazon wishlist

Thank you for giving our students a head-start to a successful school year!

Donations can be dropped off at 2411 Pulgas Avenue, East Palo Alto,
Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am–5:00 pm

For more information, please call LaKesha at 650-323-7781 x1200 or email: LaKesha@ehpcares.org



Food for Thought ... From July 2023–June 2024, we served:

9,241 households/24,116 individuals provided with in-kind safety-net resources

39,540 food boxes and over 15,400 hot lunches distributed

422 high risk families provided with \$785,275 in direct financial assistance



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SUMMER/FALL EDITION
JULY 2024

Our Mission:

to provide compassionate, dignified
and practical assistance to families
and individuals experiencing
economic and personal hardship.

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Read about Ecumenical Hunger Program on [Charity Navigator](#),
America's largest and most-utilized independent evaluator
of charities, and add us to your charities!



EHP is a Platinum-level [GuideStar Exchange](#) participant, demon-
strating its commitment to transparency. Write a review about us!

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