

Rebuilding Together Oakland Client Profile

A DIAMOND (DHYMON) IN THE ROUGH Rosetta Norfleet, North Oakland



Rosetta and her great-granddaughter Dymon

Rosetta Norfleet has worked all her life. More jobs than she can remember. Sometimes two jobs in order to “pay the rent and have food on the table” for her family. She often comments that if she had more money she would help out the poor and suffering. But at 84 Rosetta still is working hard helping raise a beautiful and thriving eight year great grand daughter named Dymon. She also opens her home up to four other young relatives in times of need.

Rosetta was born on August 4, 1922, in Arkansas. She laughs when she states, “I woke everybody at 4AM.” In 1944 Rosetta moved to Chicago to be with relatives. There she took a job at the Chicago Times working on a newspaper press. She also worked at a cannery stacking canned goods on to rail cars. She says,

“I would do any job I could find.” In her twenties she met her husband working at the shipyards. In 1945 she came west to California to visit other relatives and find better work. She worked at the Oakland Hospital for the Union, Local 250, which was housekeeping. She became a nurse’s aid and did other various jobs at the hospital.

Rosetta has two children: a son who lives in Oakland, and a daughter, Patricia (Pat), who lives with Rosetta and helps her out as much as she can. Unfortunately both Rosetta’s son and daughter have been effected by health issues and cannot help their mom out as much as they would like to.

Rosetta remembers in 1959 when she purchased her home. She smiles as she talks about how they worked so hard to move in for Christmas that year. She has a lot of pride when she speaks of her home. She tells us that the neighbors informed her the Mayor of Oakland, Mr. Silva, lived in the house in 1903.

Rosetta had to quit work in 1979 and stay home to take care of her ailing mother and husband who had taken ill. Her husband passed 21 years ago and since then Rosetta has been the head of the household. She has been blessed with good neighbors who have reached out to help her and Pat with great grand daughter Dymon. Dymon is in the second grade and has the good fortune of having Christopher Waters as a mentor and to help guide her. Christopher lives several houses away and has been the shining light when it comes to getting the neighbors to help with Dymon. They all help out with getting her to school, homework, care taking, and activities. Just recently the neighbors raised enough funds to send Dymon to summer camp. Christopher was a huge help with getting Rosetta signed up for the RTO program, and has helped throughout the entire process.

The house is in much need of some TLC and repairs so that Rosetta and Dymon may live in a clean and safe home. Shorenstein, their various vendor’s, and volunteers will work two weekends in row make this dream come true. They have installed a new hot water heater and will be painting the exterior and interior of the home, fixing broken windows, gardening, replacing the front door and bathroom floor, repairing walls and installing new light fixtures inside and out. The icing on the cake will be providing new furniture for the family to use. They will enjoy a new dining room table and chairs, storage units for toys and books, new curtains, bed and bath linens and a computer table/desk for Dymon to study at.

Rosetta can’t wait to help out on work day as she continues to say, “You have to work for it.”

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A LOVE STORY

Julie and Pascual Quidachay, East Oakland



Pascual & Julie Quidachay

“He gave me my engagement ring when I was 15!” Julie Quidachay exclaimed, beaming at her husband Pascual. For the Quidachays, family comes first, and home has always been the sanctuary for family. Pascual, a Guamanian born immigrant met Julie, a Santa Cruz native, in Hayward, California in 1966. Pascual’s family lived down the street from Julie’s house, so close that they could wave at one another from their houses. “He used to drive by flirting...and we’ve been together ever since.” For over 40 years these two love birds have nurtured a romance.

They have three children: Donald, Darick and Gina, and six grandchildren. Darick, Gina, and Gina’s son, Little John live with Julie and Pascual. “That’s my thing,” Julie said, “Friends and family come first.” Julie, who loves treasure hunting at garage sales and

thrift stores, confesses, “Every time I go and try to shop for myself, I end up shopping for everyone but myself. The grandkids love to go shopping!”

In 1990, Julie Quidachay found out about an opportunity for purchasing a home, and she decided to follow the lead on a lark. She and her husband Pascual had never owned a home before. It was not until 1998 that Julie and Pascual found a home, in East Oakland, close to both of their places of work.

The place was not exactly Julie and Pascual’s dream home. Julie didn’t like the fact that the garage was detached, but Pascual, an avid gardener, was attracted by the large yard, so they bought it. The Quidachays qualified for the purchase through a program for low-income homebuyers that Julie discovered by way of her Hayward School District workers union. Julie’s attitude was hopeful: “Let’s just take a chance. I know we’re low-income; I don’t know if we’ll have a chance, but it’s better to just try. And, I did!”

It was a “fixer-upper.” And they did indeed fix it up. Little by little, Pascual would make improvements both inside and outside the home. Julie would fix problems as they came up as well, taping up drafty windows when they let the wind inside, or patching up drywall when their grandson, Little John accidentally made a hole in the wall. Little John would try to help too, like the time he went under the home and ‘helped’ his grandpa do some electrical work by cutting the telephone line to the house.

Meanwhile, bigger problems came up: a few walls in the bathroom and kitchen were crumbling from dry rot. There was mold on the walls in the bedrooms, and Julie suspected that it was responsible for her grandson’s sickness. A bigger intervention was necessary. Julie had heard of Christmas in April, now Rebuilding Together Oakland, and decided to apply to get her house rehabilitated.

The Rebuilding Together Oakland Team led by volunteers from Pyatok Architects in Oakland plan on doing several major improvements to the home. They will replace the broken wall heater with a central heating system, replace all of the windows, replace the entire bathroom, and repair the kitchen. House Captain Ann Panopio says “We have put together a great team this year and we want to do everything we can to make a difference in this family’s life, not just aesthetically, but health-wise too.” All three generations of Quidachays are looking forward to the Rebuilding Together renovations.

For more information please contact:

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HELPING HANDS FOR KIDS

East Oakland Boxing Association / Smart Moves



Stanley Garcia with student

As the children troop in, they are directed to the library where they are required to read for at least a half hour before they can partake in any of the EOBA/Smart Moves activities, which include art projects, drama, dance, computer instruction, sports or boxing. The children also take cooking classes where they learn about health and nutrition. The program also distributes over 100 free food bags to parents and community members each month.

Recipients of Barbara Boxer's "Excellence in Education" award, Smart Moves strives to help the young people of this East Oakland community meet challenges in the classroom, and encourage them to excel in all aspects of their lives. Working with a small, dedicated paid staff, a group of students from UC Berkeley, and community and parent volunteers, the EOBA/Smart Moves program has provided services to over 20,000 young people ages 6-20 and their families since they opened their doors.

The East Oakland Boxing Association was founded in 1987 by longtime community resident and former professional boxer, Stanley Garcia. Stanley was a Golden Gloves champion who went 23-3 before ending his professional career to start a gym. An East Oakland native, Stanley founded the boxing association in 1989, and expanded the after-school program, Smart Moves, in 1993. Stanley says "boxing helps the kids with their frustration and anger. I believe fear breeds violence. Because you're scared, you fight back with a gun. You challenge fear each time you box." A mission of the East Oakland Boxing Association is to offer kids a safe haven where they feel cared for and respected, and they are taught how to manage and channel their fear and frustration through mandatory violence prevention and anger management classes.

A unique group of organizations in the East Bay has come together to take on the renovation of the East Oakland Boxing Association/Smart moves facility under the banner of Rebuilding Together Oakland. Temple Sinai, Pulte Construction, the Head-Royce School, and the East Bay Community Foundation have pooled their resources, expertise, and volunteers to tackle a project that includes repairing holes in the roof, building a new weatherproof, insulated wall with windows, installing a roof fan for summer ventilation, building a new wood fence around the perimeter of the facility, painting a new mural on the EOBA exterior wall, and completely replanting and restructuring the garden to include a small stage for drama productions with an audience seating area, new tables for arts and crafts projects, a new secure tool shed, and creating new paths and beds for an organic garden. In the barn raising spirit of Rebuilding Together Oakland, a warmer, dryer, and more beautiful facility will greet the children at the end of April. With smiles on their faces the children will know that many hands in the community have joined together to make the East Oakland Boxing Association/Smart Moves a safe haven in their neighborhood.

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It's a cold, rainy day in December—a perfect day to visit the East Oakland Boxing Association/Smart Moves facility in the Elmhurst district of East Oakland. The facility is comprised of two rundown buildings, and an overgrown jungle of a garden surrounded by a weathered chain link fence topped with rows of barbed wire. Water is leaking in through a wall constructed of plywood attached to a chain link fence, and the staff is walking around in rubber boots, getting ready to serve a hot snack to the 50+ kids who congregate at this community facility every day after school. The kids are used to wet floors and no heat. They come for the warmth of the people

who care for them, and the mentorship they receive to help them prepare for a better future.