

VIJAY WIJESUNDERA APPLIES FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT AT HASK!

Vijay Wijesundera, a slender man with a youthful spirit, was born in Sri Lanka. He studied Electrical Engineering, and graduated with honors. But the political upheaval rendered him a refugee, and he became a sojourner, a permanent resident, and soon to be a citizen of the great USA.

Long ago, he would, not even in his dreams, have imagined applying for the Development Assistant position at the largest emergency food program in New York City. But he is uniquely qualified for the task, in every possible way, and how he ended up in this spotlight is living testimony to Divine Providence, echoing Proverbs 16:9.



Vijay (at the far end) posing with a group of volunteer friends at Holy Apostles

Assets that he brings

- Been Homeless and Hungry
- IT & Database Expertise
- Eye for Photography
- Spirit of Service



“A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.”

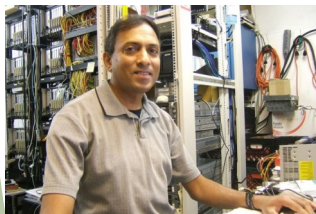
Social Service has been an indispensable part of Vijay’s life for the last 15 years. But his entry into the field was necessitated by first-hand personal circumstances rather than an upwelling of charity. While pursuing his refugee application, he found himself exhausted of his savings, and jobless. Having lived at city shelters as well as at a drop-in center for over an year, he was earnestly looking for progress. That day dawned on August 14th 2002, when he walked into the social services trailer right here at Holy Apostles. Having understood Vijay’s situation, Lorenzo, the volunteer Social Worker, referred him to a shelter for men operated by the Missionaries of Charity Sisters in the Bronx. His career in charitable service sprung forth into high gear right away.

Vijay started volunteering at Queen of Peace in Bronx, Gift of Love residence for HIV+ men in the West Village, and at the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen. At Fifteenth Street Quaker Meeting, he became a shelter volunteer as well as a member of the Peace Committee. To this date, he keeps the database for them and produces the annual directory of members and attenders. By Divine Providence, he found the Christ House Residence for Refugees and Asylum seekers, then located in Bronx, and stayed on as an Assistant Director for many years. After Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, a city where he had previously lived for 8 years, he served a few months with Common Ground Relief, doing recovery work in the Ninth Ward. He was a regular Friday volunteer at HASK for almost 6 years, until he took a full-time job at the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Innocents on West 37th Street in 2009.

As the Parish Manager at Holy Innocents, Vijay has been in charge of diverse aspects of parish operations and management, as summarized on his résumé. His skills and experience cover the full spectrum of data management and communications expertise needed in a nonprofit development position.

Vijay recently became a Member of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (FAPC). In addition to the Meals on Wheels, Skinner Shelter and the Coffeehouse ministries at FAPC, Vijay continues to volunteer at two homeless shelters run by Catholics and Quakers. He is an avid blood donor, and has donated blood over 80 times, including 68 times, so far, with the New York Blood Center. He also helps with the Tuesday lunch program at St. James’ Episcopal Church on Madison.

Vijay has a decade-long commitment to the cause of the homeless and hungry. He is well-versed in print & digital communications media, and, especially with his Engineering and science background, is highly tech savvy. He is adept at using commercial donor and constituent relations management programs, as well as designing necessary databases from scratch. Having worked at a church front desk, and also been a member of the parish council, he feels at home interacting with, and reaching out to, people of all statures. With all this, it looks like Vijay is a good match for the position of Development Assistant at HASK. Now he needs good luck, and prayers!



Vijay counts computer hardware and apps too among his friends, without whom he would not have been able to express much of his creativity.

Ozanam Hall Nursing Home in Queens had many databases, including an Infection Control Database, designed from scratch by Vijay. He also paddled Canoes with Native Americans in the Puget Sound, and lived to tell beautiful stories with video documentaries made by himself for the AFSC.

An endless learner, this year he learnt & received an **A** in “Stewardship Development” from Villanova University ☪