



## Foothill Unity Center

*Neighbors Helping  
Neighbors*

*Serving Monrovia,  
Arcadia, Duarte,  
Bradbury and  
Sierra Madre*

### *Our Mission*

Our goal is to help local people in crisis attain self-sufficiency by providing food, clothing, crisis services and referrals for other critical services to qualified individuals and families.

We help with love and dignity, as neighbors helping neighbors—offering a hand up, not a hand-out.

We are committed to making the most of every contribution, large or small, in order to provide the best possible assistance to our clients.

By doing so, we hope to become the charity of choice for those seeking ways to help others in our communities.

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Summer 2002

[www.foothillunitycenter.com](http://www.foothillunitycenter.com)



## Making “Back to School” Special for our Children

Do you remember how exciting the first day of school was when you were a child? Usually you had new clothes right down to your shoes and underwear. That first day meant fresh new pencils and pens. Whatever the items, they were new, and therefore special, and you felt special and ready for school!

With your help, we can give our low-income clients’ children that same feeling of being special. A “good” start can begin a good year. Last year we helped 500 children and that number may climb up to 900 children this year.

Our Back to School Distribution will be held on Thursday, August 29th at the Monrovia United Methodist Church. In addition to clothing and school supplies, we will provide free haircuts and even a drawing for a renovated computer system. The smiles and the excitement of the children as they prepare to start school, are very moving.

We hope to supply each child with a new uniform, shoes, socks, underwear, and school supplies. We need your help to get our neighborhood low-income children off to a “good start” this school year.

We need your help with the following items:

- New school supplies such as backpacks, binders, paper and calculators
- New school uniforms, socks and underwear
- New clothing for high school students (who don’t wear uniforms)
- Good, clean used uniforms (for a second set of school clothes)
- Funds for needed items—\$20 per child will help supply the basics

If you or your organization, business or friends can help, please drop off your contributions, as soon as possible, to Foothill Unity Center, Monday-Friday, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Thank you!

If you would like to join the fun and help with preparations or volunteer at the distribution, call Betty McWilliams at (626) 358-3486.

Help a Needy Child Get a Good Start Back to School.



## From the Executive Director...

Dear Friends:

I was aware that we were serving more people lately, but I was blown away when I discovered the actual increase in clients Foothill Unity Center has experienced since 9/11—38.5%. That's really a HUGE jump!

As we see so much abundance around us, it is really difficult to believe that Los Angeles County is the Hunger Capitol of the USA. It's true! As I shared with you in an earlier issue, we have almost as many poverty-level folks here in the San Gabriel Valley as there are in the South Central or LA Metro areas. Unfortunately, the San Gabriel Valley lacks many of the services, shelters and other resources found in these other areas.

We are now preparing for our Back to School program, to help low-income children start the new school year with a new uniform, shoes, socks, underwear, backpack, school supplies and even a professional haircut. This year is different. It is much more serious. There are many more children needing help. Last year we helped 500 children; this year we are preparing for 900 children.

If by helping a child to start school with the basics, just like the other kids have, maybe—just maybe—that child will have a better school year. And maybe—just maybe—if more people become more aware of the problems of hunger, poverty and homelessness, changes will be more likely to

happen. Just like air and water, food is necessary for a person to survive. Air and water are available at little or no cost; perhaps food should be as well. It seems wrong to have so many hungry people in our abundant society.

As we help those around the globe, let us also help those in our own communities who need a hand up. Children and seniors are the most vulnerable, and represent over 70% of the people we serve.

We depend on donations from individuals, churches, service clubs, business and foundations. Less than 25% of our funds come from government sources—and they are being cut daily. Nearly 90% of every dollar we receive from you goes directly to our programs. As the number of people needing assistance climbs to unprecedented levels, we really need your support. Please join us in helping our neighbors in need with a contribution to Foothill Unity Center today.

Thank you,

Love,




Joan Whitenack,  
Executive Director

## Miller Brewing Company Matches \$25,000 Challenge Grant

In a generous response to our appeal for funds to match a challenge grant from The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation, Victor Franco, Western Region State Affairs Manager for Miller Brewing Company, recently presented a \$25,000 check to Foothill Unity Center. The Miller donation fully matched the Berger Foundation funds, securing \$50,000 for the Center.

“As our economy struggles through difficult times, our organization has seen a major surge in families seeking our services. Through their generous contribution, Miller and its people are making a tremendous difference for local families in need at a very critical point,” said Executive Director Joan Whitenack.

In presenting the check,

Franco noted that Miller Brewing Company is committed to being an active, positive corporate citizen in the communities where its employees live and work. “Being a good neighbor starts at home, which is why so many of the programs we support are community-based,” he said. “We believe we have the responsibility to be the best neighbors. In fact, we consider it a privilege.”



*"We enjoy great satisfaction from helping people in need."*

—Henry and Lou Thedinga

This month, our spotlight falls on Henry and Lou Thedinga, two of our most dedicated volunteers.

This fun-loving couple first connected with Foothill Unity Center in 1998 and has not missed an opportunity to help out since. They are welcome additions to many of our major events, including the Back-to-School, Thanksgiving, and Holiday Distribution efforts. At last year's Holiday Distribution, Henry played the part of traffic director, while Lou helped with the distribution. They also share their talents with us in October during our annual requalification, a hectic time (to say the least) when we update information on all our clients and get the time to talk in depth about changes in their lives. Lou provides much-needed support to us and a kind ear to our clients as a Reviewer, while we keep Henry busy photocopying all the new information we gather.



Lou and Henry Thedinga

Henry and Lou help out 52 weeks a year. These days, they come in on Monday mornings at 7:30 to distribute bread, sweets and USDA items to our clients. Henry also helps clients take their heavy carts to the door, while Lou runs from the kitchen to the USDA room, spotting and supplying anything lacking. Most importantly, though, they are a never-ending source of hugs, kisses, smiles and caring words. Our clients love them, and so do we. Thank you, Henry and Lou. (By the way, they've been married for 58 years!)

## A Note from the President

By Charlotte Schamadan

Whenever I have been installed as president of a not-for-profit organization, as Foothill Unity Center is, I find my thoughts wandering back to the old days and remembering why I became a volunteer in the first place.

At the age of 15, when most of my life spun around playing volleyball and becoming a great artist, I was asked to participate in a project called Operation Headstart, in Glendale. My then 16-year-old buddy, Larry Weinstein, had already been a "giver," donating his spare time to working for the good of others, whenever, wherever anyone asked.

He was an admirer of my cartoons, and asked me to paint some "funny animals" on a church wall which faced a local school playground where the Headstart children came to learn and play. It took me two Saturdays of drawing and slapping donated paint onto the stucco wall. It was hard work, and I wondered just who would care that I was doing this.

As I finished putting long, curling eyelashes on my giraffe, I turned around to see a little boy watching me. "Can I do that?" asked six-year-old Johnny. "Uh, okay, how about we put a bow on the elephant's tail?"

So I penciled in a bow, filled the brush with red paint, and hoisted Johnny up to reach it. He put the brush to the wall and filled in the bow. When he'd finished, he was happy and I got wonderful "payment" for my work...a kiss on the cheek and the most beautiful smile I'd ever seen.

My point in telling you this story is to entice your service with Foothill Unity Center. Come visit and we'll make a happy volunteer out of you.

Join our regular weekly distributions, help pack food boxes, give out toys and clothing during our holiday and back-to-school giveaways, or volunteer in the office to spell our overworked staff to complete other tasks. If you have the will to give, we will have a job for you.

I promise if you'll give it a try, you'll see the smiling faces of all the little Johnnys your heart can hold.



Charlotte Schamadan

# Kids Helping Kids . . .



. . . Is something you see a lot of at Foothill Unity Center, where over 50% of our clients are kids.



The helpers are . . .

Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies, Interact Clubs, Key Clubs, Honor Society, Monrovia Youth Commission, Explorer

Scouts, Eagle Scout projects, church youth groups, and school kids from primary to college age. Many are helping on their own initiative.



Their projects include . . .

Food drives, food sorting, packing for distribution, toy drives, clothing drives, garden projects, special events, and more.



They even hold bake sales, car washes and other projects to raise money for our programs.



We say. . . .

Thank you, thank you, we love you!!



Kids are helping to make the world a better place. We can learn a lot from them!





## 5th Annual Golden Plate Awards Luncheon First National Hunger Awareness Day

Distinguished KABC news reporter Henry Alfaro, who himself has been honored with an array of broadcasting and humanitarian awards, was the keynote speaker at the Fifth Annual Golden Plate Awards Luncheon held on June 5 at the Holiday Inn, Monrovia.

Monrovia Police Chief Joe Santoro received the event's top honor, the 2002 Heart in Hand Humanitarian Award. Chief Santoro was nominated for a wide array of activities, from his work with young people (including the Soap Box Classic and D.A.R.E) to his advocacy for seniors (Monrovia Providers Group) and his development of MILES (Mental Illness and Law Enforcement Systems). Santoro's commitment has also extended to needy families and the homeless. Each year he, his wife Jeannie, and at least one of their granddaughters work tirelessly at the Center's Back to School, Thanksgiving and Christmas distributions.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors Awards for extraordinary support to Foothill Unity Center were presented to Tina Gray Aluzzi—Volunteer Award, Foothill Unity Center; John & Yvonne Jorgensen—Volunteer Award, Rainbow's End; Daneisha Ross—Youth Volunteer; Aztec Hotel—Brass Elephant, Kathie Reece—Business Award, Foothill Unity Center; The Dollmakers, Pam Fitzpatrick & Family—Business Award, Rainbow's End; Church of the Good Shepherd, United Methodist—Faith Organization Award; Miller Brewing Company—Corporate Award; and Methodist Hospital of Southern California—Community Organization Award.

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank director Michael Flood, gave an update on hunger in Los Angeles County as closing remarks. Many thanks to all those who attended, sponsored tables, provided opportunity prizes and especially to our sponsors—Adelphia, Samuelson-Fetter, and Sierra Autocars.

## Duarte's Local Harvest & Public Safety Program

Neighborhood trees full of ripe fruit beckoning to be picked are the focus of the Duarte Local Harvest. Young people in this program pick the fruit every second and fourth Tuesday and deliver it to Foothill Unity Center so that it can be given to low-income families. This is a much better solution than allowing the fruit to fall to the ground to spoil.

This innovative program is just one way Duarte Public Safety Department programs are helping Foothill Unity Center and Duarte youth offenders.

Under the guidance of program director Abby Lai, these youths, who must often perform community service required by the court or their probation officers, benefit from the positive community involvement of helping others. During the past six months, they have sorted food for our holiday programs, worked in our warehouse, packaged food for distribution, answered phones, done clerical work, worked at our store and much, much more. It is a positive experience for everyone. Betty McWilliams, Assistant Director, says, "What a great bunch of kids. Thank you, thank you for all your help!"

If you'd like Duarte Local Harvest to pick your fruit for us, please call Abby Lai at (626) 359-5671 ext. 475.

## Foothill Unity Center Auxiliary Helps Needy Children

**Aux...** The Auxiliary is a very active group of caring women, who are making a huge difference.

**Talks!** In the past two months, they have sponsored ten of our children for the Monrovia Soap Box Classic—our kids took a first and a third place! The Aux has helped many of our children go to summer camp and has been downright serious about generating funds and support for 2002 Back to School Distribution.

To generate funds to help the Center, the Aux had booths at the Hoop Challenge, Monrovia Days and Sierra Madre's 4th of July, where many good things were sold (Caramel Apple Sundaes, Hot Dogs, Krispy Kreme Donuts, homemade fudge and more!). The gals also worked at the Santa Anita Mall wrapping Mother's Day gifts. They work hard and they have fun doing it!

Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month, at 6:00 p.m. at the Mayan Room of the Aztec Hotel. A light supper is provided. Meetings are open, please feel free to come. For more information, call President Jan Noto, at (626) 444-6030.



## Berger Bros. Return to Work Program Is a Win-Win-Win!

Berger Bros., Inc., is a large plastering contractor that employs hundreds of people. It has found that when an employee is injured, both the company and the employee benefit if the firm pays the employee to do modified work at a non-profit organization, like Foothill Unity Center.

The company benefits by incurring lower insurance costs and litigation rates, reducing temporary disability payments, returning injured workers to work faster and much more. In addition, the company doesn't have to create "modified" work for injured employees or deal with other employees who resent that these workers are getting paid for doing "modified" work.

The employee takes home more money than temporary disability would provide, continues to accumulate union benefits, doesn't use up accumulated time off for medical purposes, recovers quicker, and returns to work sooner.

The non-profit, of course, receives the benefit of gaining a dedicated "employee" to do modified tasks. It is an innovative way of solving a problem—one where everyone wins.

**KELLY'S KORNER**



Greetings! As some of you know, June 28th was my last day working at the Foothill Unity Center, which makes this installment bit-sweet. I will miss all the high's, low's and just plain excitement of day-to-day life at the center. When I started last October, recently graduated from Pitzer College (a "socially conscious school"), I quickly realized that Pitzer's education had nuthin' on the Foothill Unity Center.

**By Kelly Downes**

In nine short months, I have had many memorable days, both for positive and not-so-positive reasons. I have been made more socially aware of the need in our community than, sadly, most people ever will. On the other hand, I have played an important part in educating our community, and will continue to do so. And I have worked with a wonderful team of clients, volunteers and staff—thank you Joan, Betty, Russell, Ron, Leonor and Pabla! Thank you, readers, for your continuing support, which enables the Center to keep going strong. As I embark on my next adventure of teaching English in Taipei, I will miss you.

**Remember our Rainbow's End Boutique!**

It's a super place to find bargains, antiques, organs, new wedding gowns and much more!

Yes, Organs—we have three to choose from and the prices are right!

Please remember us when you have good items that you no longer use or need!

Support Foothill Unity Center either by shopping, donating or volunteering at the Rainbow's End!

Stop by today and say "Hi" to Leonor and Pabla!

Located at 346 W. Huntington Dr., Monrovia.



**Foothill Unity Center**  
*Neighbors Helping Neighbors*

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**FOOTHILL UNITY CENTER**  
*NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS*

415 W. Chestnut Ave.  
Monrovia, CA 91016



Telephone: (626) 358-3486  
Fax: (626) 358-8224  
Web: www.foothillunitycenter.com  
Email: foothillunityctr@cs.com

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***Neighborhood News Staff***

**Editor**

Kelly Downes

**Contributing Writers**

Charlotte Schamadan

Betty McWilliams

Linda Taubenreuther

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**Publisher**

John Peters

**Wish List!**

It would be nice to have ...

- ♥ **Help to Install Lights** in the dressing rooms at the Rainbow's End—people must see to buy!
- ♥ **An Answering Machine** to take messages after hours at the Rainbow's End.
- ♥ **Fresh Fruit** from local trees, it's a shame for it to fall to the ground and be wasted! Low-income families would enjoy it a lot.
- ♥ **Canned Meat Items** Tuna, chicken, stews, high protein foods that families can serve as a main dish for dinner.
- ♥ **Storage Space—an unused garage or?** (Hopefully free—for food and Rainbow items.) We really need storage space!

**Did You Know ... ?**

- ... that during the past five years, Foothill Unity Center has provided crisis services to over 4,000 unduplicated local families?
- ... that Foothill Unity Center works with Welfare to Work programs Gain and WEX to provide on-the-job work experience that helps prepare people for full time jobs?
- ... that Foothill Unity Center collaborates with other agencies to provide ..
  - ... groceries to victims of domestic violence in the San Gabriel Valley?
  - ... after-school snacks to 600 low-income children daily via Monrovia Village Centers?
  - ... breakfast to 40 hungry children a day, at the Boys & Girls Club of the Foothills?

**Your support is vital! Get involved! Make a difference!  
Help your neighbor's in need! Donate or volunteer today!**

**Yes, I want to help local children and families in crisis!**

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of  \$25  \$50  \$100  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my donation only to fund the Back to School Program.

Please use my donation to fund programs for families in crisis.

Please charge my donation to:  MasterCard  Visa  Discover

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Foothill Unity Center, Neighbors Helping Neighbors (Non-Profit ID #95-4310817)  
415 West Chestnut, Monrovia, CA 91016 Telephone: (626) 358-3486