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HOMEWORK, ENRICHMENT, ACCELERATION, RECREATION, TEAMWORK

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NEWS FROM THE HEART AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Winter 2012

Irene Morse, Editor

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The Pro-Youth Donor Circle was developed to highlight the powerful impact your stewardship role will have on the success of the HEART After-School Program. Your steadfast pursuit fulfills the Pro-Youth purpose of supporting projects and activities that improve the lives of young people and motivates them in making good choices. Through your gifts, you will touch the lives of countless children, providing them with a sense of hope and belonging as they receive nurturing support in educational, recreational and enrichment activities in a safe environment in the HEART After-School Program.



Up in the mornin' and out to school The teacher is teachin' the Golden Rule, American history and practical math, You studyin' hard and hopin' to pass.



First you hear the soft “tuck, tuck, tuck” of a helicopter in the distance.

Then you hear the roar; the high-pitched roar of hundreds of excited young voices, tiny fingers pointing East over the roof of the buildings. They’ve caught sight of a helicopter approaching the school.

As it grows nearer, the heavy “Thunk, Thunk, Thunk” of the powerful Black Hawk drowns out the shouts of the excited kids.

Summer break is over and HEART has gone back to school.

The helicopter drags in, slow, nose high, mighty engine turning giant rotors. It lands as gentle as a touch on the grassy area outside the sports courts.

Five National Guard Troops from Fresno step out of the aircraft and stand facing the excited children at Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary School.



HEART Site Director, Gustavo De Oliveira has planned this thrilling event for the entire student body in honor of Veterans’ Day.

Classes were dismissed early and students are gathered in respectful groups organized by grade level. The exhilaration is palpable and even the principal and teachers are excited.

Every class gets a picture, complete with American flags or hand-drawn signs, next to the massive Black Hawk.

The Guardsmen stand ram-rod straight as the line of students snakes toward them. Often they bend low to high-five tiny outstretched hands.

The older kids throw their own shoulders back and stride forward. Some salute and those salutes are returned.

Every child gets to exchange a few words with the crew.

As his class lines up for the return to their room, a young boy turns and, in a piping voice, shouts, “Thank you, Soldiers.”

Thank you, indeed.



WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY...

“I just wanted to take the time to let you know how GREAT “Miss Tina” is with the children in the after-school program at Veva Blunt.

She is very supportive of the kids and genuinely cares which I believe is the most important quality of hers. She most certainly is an asset to the program.”

Reem Atkins
HEART Parent

Dear Mrs. Isham,

“I like being in HEART because we get to go for field trips. We also get help from our program leaders for our homework. We get to do projects and fun activities.

Melani
HEART Student

Thank you very much for giving us the HEART program.”

Dear Mrs. Isham,

I have fun in HEART. I have fun with my HEART teacher. She has lots of games to do and field trips we go on. We went to the mountains once.

Clarissa
HEART Student

At the end of the year, we get wet and have ice cream. Sometimes people bring animals and let us hold them. One time a park ranger let us touch a dead animal. I am happy that I am in HEART.

CELEBRATING MILESTONES

Annual Community Breakfast

Pro-Youth/HEART celebrated another successful year serving children by presenting a community breakfast hosted by **Buckman-Mitchell Insurance** and **Visalia Community Bank**.

Phil Esbenshade, Tulare County Deputy District Attorney, shared his personal story with attendees.

Phil's story is fascinating; he supported himself through college and law school as a professional skateboarder.

Also sharing his inspiring story was former HEART student, Arian Lucatero.

Arian was left with no family support system when he was in 7th grade.

Throughout the next few difficult years, he stayed in school and even became captain of his wrestling team.

Arian graduated from Mt. Whitney High School in the Spring of 2011 and currently attends COS.

Annual Report 2010-2011

The Annual Report for the organization was distributed at the breakfast as well.

➤ A 27th school was added to the Pro-Youth/HEART family this year

➤ Undersheriff Dahl Cleek reported that, "Locally, it costs \$70 a day to incarcerate an individual and \$7.50 a day for a child to attend the HEART program"

- There are 4,000 students served by 266 dedicated staff
- 52 hours of training were provided to 140 new Program Leaders
- The Winter Conference provided 30 two-hour workshops for 462 after-school professionals
- Each Site Director has oversight for a minimum of 100 students and six program staff – larger sites have many more
- PY/HEART provided family education classes at 13 school sites. 257 parents and 135 children participated
- More than 93% of school principals agree that HEART is having a positive academic effect on students.

In the words of Lou Fernandez, Operations Director:

"Every child is our future – the next nurse who will save a life, the next writer who will make us laugh or cry, the next businessman who will inspire charitable giving, the next scientist who will prepare us for the universe."

Open House

Pro-Youth/HEART welcomed guests to an Open House in the new offices on November 1st.

Guests enjoyed delicious snacks provided by Pita Kabob. Tours of the lovely, large facility were available as well.

ARTS 4 HEART

Save the date – a fun-filled evening is on the horizon for the most romantic day of the year **Valentine's Day**, February 14.

Pro-Youth has formed a partnership with Arts Visalia to join in their popular Annual Sofa Art Show.

Thirty local "celebrities" have agreed to create original art- work, following the themes of ARTS 4 HEART and a sofa.

Beginning on February 1st, the art will hang in the Arts Visalia Gallery and be available for viewing, along with the usual Sofa Art images.

Among the ARTS 4 HEART volunteers are CEOs, City and County officials, business owners, medical professionals, the clergy and other well-known local citizens.

Although none of the participants are professional artists, the works are sure to be creative and full of whimsy. There may even be a budding Picasso among them.

MC/Auctioneer Amy Shuklian will ensure that the reception on February 14th will be filled with fun and laughter. Proceeds from the sale of these one-of-a-kind works will go to support the HEART program.

Come and bid on art-work by such local luminaries as Joe Alshulte, Sandy Beals, Nina Clancy, Greg Collins, Phil Cox, Mary T. Hill, Bob Link, Lindsay Mann, Colleen Mestas, Amy Pack, Karen Tellalian and many, many more.

You may even find something that "goes with your sofa."



Meet the Board...

"2, 4, 6, 8, who do we appreciate!" These are the cheers of an enthusiastic crowd backing their team. As a former cheerleader, I feel the same *emotions* when I talk about Pro-Youth and all its programs, especially HEART. What a success story!

It is one of 15 in the state recognized by the California Regional Learning Center Program as a *premier program*– in fact, it is the *only* one in central California.

Pro-Youth is thankful to be a part of a community that supports worthy causes. We continue to thank you for your part in helping us accomplish our mission.

May my enthusiasm for Pro-Youth/HEART be catching so that you, too, will be cheering on our team.

"Go, Team, Go!"

Betty Johnson
Board of Directors

Betty was born and raised on a peach farm in Fowler. She graduated from Fowler High where she was, yes, a cheerleader.

Betty has been married to Tom Johnson, former CEO of Kaweah Delta Hospital (Health Care District) for 43 years. They have three grown children and nine beloved grandchildren.

Tom and Betty met at UCLA where she was in her senior year and he had left the "snowy land of Minnesota" to attend graduate school.

Following Tom's service in the army on Okinawa (where their first two children were born), they returned to finally settle in Visalia.

Betty taught kindergarten at Highland School for eleven years.

Following his retirement, from KDHC, Tom joined the Arnold Schwarzenegger cabinet as Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; an experience that Betty describes as, "an interesting sojourn in our life."

Both are "retired" now and spend most of their time traveling and visiting their grandchildren.

Son, Matt, and his wife, Katie, live near Geneva, Switzerland with their two daughters. He is a writer and she works for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Daughter, Robyn is married to Boomer Batchman. They live in Visalia with their three active boys.

Daughter Lindsey lives with her husband, Jeff Winter, and their four towheaded boys in Seattle.

When not hanging out with their grandchildren, the Johnsons love foreign travel, especially bike trips – "not the grueling kind, but the sightseeing kind."

In 1998, Tom took a sabbatical to Scandinavia, where they traveled extensively for two months. While there, they visited the families of the three exchange students they had hosted.

There are still many destinations on the Johnson's Bucket List. They do manage to take each grandchild on a trip to the US state of his/her choice after they turn ten.

Betty relates, "I am on the Pro-Youth board because I believe so strongly in its mission and am so proud of the quality of the program."

After retirement, Betty visited after-school programs in five different counties and saw a huge variety of approaches. "Even then," she says, "the HEART program was head and shoulders above the others."

Betty continues, "I think we are so blessed to have such a dedicated leader in Laurie Isham." Laurie believes that the program is fortunate to have such a dedicated board member as Betty Johnson.

Meet a Donor Circle Contributor...

Dr. Margarita Prado-Borrego and her husband Dr. Rodolfo Borrego own Human Resource Associates and are long-time supporters of Pro-Youth.

Born into farm-worker families, both grew up and attended school in the Central Valley. Following their college and graduate studies at USC and Columbia University, they returned to the Valley and began establishing their path to a purposeful life. Today they are both well-known for serving their community and supporting lifelong learning for all children.

Dr. Prado-Borrego was identified as an outstanding student early in her schooling and, as a result, was given many opportunities to excel.

She has not forgotten those lessons and has chosen the HEART program as a recipient of her donated time and professional expertise as well as her financial support.

"For me, education has always been an integral part of my life," reports Dr. Prado-Borrego.

The HEART program provides "a forum for children to have an opportunity to excel. Appropriate values...and behavior allows HEART children to deal with the challenges facing their day to day lives.

Dr. Prado-Borrego believes that the HEART staff is well-trained and very effective. She says, "the more children are exposed to good role models and enjoy enriching opportunities in the community, their education will take them beyond the school setting as they become contributing citizens and exceed their own expectations."

*Real, everyday people
who believe in our organization
are our bread and butter.
Don Gilles – Board Director*