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community

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Commendations

May 21, 2005

Continued gratitude

I am very grateful for the continued efforts of our Bobcat family and community for altruistically financially helping my brain-injured daughter, Katie Berke, with her ongoing needs through the Save Katie's Smile Campaign inspired by Ray Moccia.

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For starters, a big thanks to Robert Schoenhofen, the local motorcycle club community, the Alamo Restaurant proprietors, and all the organizers and participants who supported Katie's fundraiser at the Alamo in February. Thank you!

April blossomed with more tremendous efforts at Banyan Elementary with their ongoing endeavors to help Katie. A big thank you to Judie Tetzlaff, Banyan Elementary School principal, for her continued support of the Bobcat family assisting with the Save Katie's Smile Campaign.

Also, I acknowledge that there are many individuals behind the scene making these fundraising efforts possible and to you: Thank you!

April started with the Book Sale Fundraiser. Big kudos to Kenneth Holland, Mrs. Miller and all who participated in donating and buying books. This was followed by a huge rummage sale, and word has it that Banyan Girl Scouts incubated this idea. A bucketful of thanks to Girl Scout Troop (girls, you rock!): Nos. 881, 488, 398, 126, 75, 32; volunteers Cheryl Miller, Debbie Dreese, Kristin Bertrand, Donna Sales, Susie Lambertson; Hollywood Storage, Tedco Printing, and all the participants/ supporters of this great cause. Thank you!

Thanks to the support from the community and caring individuals, Katie slowly makes progress toward the lengthy process of getting her front teeth. She still continues to recover from the first hip-to-jaw bone graft surgery (again fighting an infection) done in January.

She is a trooper and works daily on keeping her spirits up. This month shall reveal the next steps

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toward the goal. While her surgeons continue to emphasize that her case is very severe and complex, we are most thankful to all who are contributing to making her teeth a reality, hopefully, within two years. Thank you!

Traumatic Brain Injury is a silent epidemic affecting all those involved, and there are many families struggling with the ramifications of acquired brain injury as well.

We started a support group for brain-injury survivors and their loved ones. HUGS (Heads Up Group Support) meets every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at 72 Moody Court, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. For more information, call Shawn at 499-4790 or Veronica at 498-6851.

Blessings of peace and good health.

-- Veronica Martain-Haverbeck, Newbury Park

They have a heart

On behalf of the board of directors of Child Development Resources of Ventura County, we would like to acknowledge and recognize the following for their assistance in supporting yet another successful Have a Heart for Kids Campaign throughout February:

- Santa Barbara Bank & Trust, participating branches throughout Ventura County.
- 5th Avenue Salon, Thousand Oaks.
- Rockin' Rose, Westlake Village.
- Adventures for Kids, Ventura.

Child Development Resources of Ventura County provides child-care services to more than 5,000 families countywide. We thank our volunteers for their efforts and dedication, which enable us to continue serving the needs of our children and families.

-- Don Henniger, Interim executive director, Child Development Resources of Ventura County Inc., Oxnard

Dentist will be missed

Regarding the death of Jeffrey Hellman, D.D.S.:

It was a most unlikely location, along busy Vineyard Avenue, just a few blocks north of the Highway 101 interchange. You had to throw out the anchor for a sudden turn into the frontage parking lot, which could only accommodate a few cars, but there was rarely a vacant spot. The patient patients had their priorities in the right place. In contrast, the interior was furnished in high-tech dental equipment, plus a devoted staff of assistants.

A small backyard sported a veggie garden that produced an abundance of tomatoes, carrots, etc., so the dentist not only told you to eat your vegetables, but provided them as well!

His sudden passing was a shock to all who knew him. I'm sure he will be missed by his patients and staff as well as by his family.

-- Lori Herdman, Oxnard

Important service

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The spay/neuter animal network is offering free spay or neuter service for cats, pit bulls and pit-bull mixes of owners who meet certain criteria. Please call 646-1919 for details.

SPAN is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization, incorporated in 1992 to address the problem of pet overpopulation, which was resulting in growing numbers of strays and high euthanization rates. The number of animals it has helped has risen yearly with more than 1,500 dogs or cats neutered in the past year, Among them were 172 feral cats, some of them lucky enough to find homes.

Initially relying on small donations, bake sales and garage sales to raise needed funds, SPAN now has a thrift shop in Ventura on Olive Street (behind Rite Aid/Vons shopping center on Main Street), where donations and volunteers are always needed and welcome.

See Web site: <http://spanonline.org>

While the primary focus is spay/neuter, assistance also is available for veterinary bills and food for pets of homeless people. During the riverbottom camp clean-out a few months back, volunteers assisted with vaccinating the pets.

Working with other animal organizations, SPAN has made quite an impact on the pet population and is to be commended.

-- Marge Hackett, Ojai

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Special postal workers

May 14, I spent the afternoon at the Camarillo Post Office watching the letter carriers bring in food left by the caring people of Camarillo at their mailboxes. These men and women are heroes. They carried this extra load in the hot sun so that those less fortunate in the community could put food on their tables.

There is no way that I can thank them enough for their unselfish giving of themselves, as they do each year. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to you all.

-- Cecilia Rexford, Pantry director, Jehovah Jireh, Camarillo

(The food pantry, Jehovah Jireh, which is Hebrew for "the Lord will provide," is an outreach of Camarillo Community Church. -- Editor)

Huge success

The Rio Mesa High School After-Prom Event at the Regal/Edwards

Cinema was a huge success, thanks to the many volunteers, community members and businesses that have donated money, prizes and refreshments so generously this year.

Special thanks go to Leo Bunnin ("Runnin' to Bunnin"), who donated the senior grand prize of a Saturn SL2; Steve Thomas (BMW), \$2,000 to a senior; George Thompson ("Our Friend in the Diamond Business"), a diamond and sapphire necklace.

Significant monetary donations were made by the city of Camarillo, Meadowlark's, Noontime Optimist Club of Camarillo, Ventura County firemen, Tasco Construction, Pleasant Valley Lions Club, Oxnard and Camarillo Children's Dental Groups, Mid-State Bank & Trust.

Many other large and small donations of cash, prizes and refreshments made this event the success that it was, and we thank our community for its support in helping to keep our students safe on prom night. Your generosity is sincerely appreciated.

-- Kathy Matsumori, PFO president, Rio Mesa High School

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