

Moving forward!

Initiatives 'take' on several fronts; from people to paint: looking good

The January meeting began routinely. But its informational flow soon emerged as a litany of positive developments. Indeed, the sheer weight of multiple improvement efforts--the preponderance of progress--surprised even long-time members.

Now in fast forward are several tangible projects. These include a year-long plant facelift of landscaping and new paint, stucco, and trim color to brighten the entire community of 18 homes. Add to this new home couches (Jacaranda, Willow, Palm--for starters) and mint-condition carpeting to be renewed every 18 months. [Wheelchairs give floor covering a beating.]

The Recreation Platform, which will give leisure here a huge social focus, shifts from planning into building gear--and big donations are coming in. Community outreach to recognize the contributions of staff and residents is similarly humming.

These developments come on the heels of state-wide recognition for Mountain Shadows' staff Superstars Niki Corey and Grandma Helen van Eik--and an unprecedented *five* Merit Superstar award winners (Todd Antrim, Sharon Fabian, Roseanna Gonzales, Stacy Miller, and Wayne Walther). An entire page in the *North County Times* recently honored Mountain Shadows' dedicated employees, CEO Doug Cook announced.

Topping off the good news were three representatives of the Knights of Columbus, Regina-Coeli Council 4953 Escondido. Bill Vergeer, Grand Knight Bob Kunding, and Dean Stewart of KofC presented the Support Group with a check for \$753, proceeds from the fall Tootsie Roll drive. **"Each year we've been able to make a substantial donation," said Stewart, drive chairman. "We know that you'll make the most of it."**

This annual Tootsie Roll campaign involves the active participation of KofC volunteers, Support Group members, and our residents--all working in lockstep. Note that Jacaranda, Palm, and Oak/Elm attended and very much enjoyed the festive KofC Christmas party.

Support Group president Carol Haskin announced that the Recreation Platform is "moving into full swing on its building

fund drive." Three recent donations were announced. They total \$2,300 and top off several thousand in Recreation Platform fund gifts.

As if symbolic in the tide of good fortune, Apple, Plum, and Maple did well in their annual recertification. "Everything went fine," said operations director Stacy Kendall. "These houses have done well, and it's nice to see."

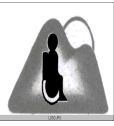
Staff was treated to their own Christmas party, with substantial gifts and rewards. "They've been doing a great job," said Cook. To compensate for a tight county labor market (where job openings are more difficult to fill), staff here have filled the gaps by laboring harder and smarter. **"Our specialist pool is working out well," said Cook. "We continue to be creative in bringing new hires to Mountain Shadows." This includes sharing church computer source networking, renewed recruiting appearances at schools, and attracting mature workers back into the labor pool.**

On another front, Linda Cook, Dir. of Community Relations, is helping the Kiwanis Club connect to its roots and resources. The Club this month marks its 75th anniversary in Escondido, and Cook (a Kiwanis member and director) is among the vanguard of those articulating and promoting the Club's contributions. She's written a personal piece for the Club's history; her story traces how Kiwanis helps our residents gain community recognition.

Kiwanis power the Circus Day food booth and contribute much to Mountain Shadows' Christmas party. "We've had some great Kiwanis volunteers," said Haskin. "And our association with them generates newspaper reports which keep us in the eye of the community," Haskin said. "It's fantastic." [Two articles follow.]

Bolstered by pluses, Haskin asked for members' input. "What do we want to see happen this year?" she asked. Doug Cook said: "It's especially nice when an activity comes here, such as a music or dance show. It doesn't cost a lot, and it gets things really moving around here. Our residents like to socialize and participate together." Support Group talent scouts, keep your eyes open for singers, dancers, bands.

Haskin (ph. 909 696-9181) is seeking creative ideas for Valentine's Day, Easter, and July 4. She also asks for new ways to show support for staff dedication. Staff, for example, played a major part in getting gifts (starting in October) that residents wanted; staff shopped for and wrapped (Girls Scouts helped) some \$2,350 in Support Group-funded Christmas presents. Parting thought: revitalize the residents' talent show?



Our 'venue of positive exposure' in Kiwanis

By **LINDA COOK**

Director of Community Relations, Mt. Shadows, Inc.

ARTICLE EXCERPTED FROM KIWANIS 75TH YEAR STORY, PUBLISHED IN *THE NORTH COUNTY TIMES*.

I joined Kiwanis in 1998. My purpose was to gain a venue of positive exposure for the contributions made by our Mountain Shadows residents.

Which is to say: The goal of my membership was broadening understanding and acceptance for persons with developmental disabilities; for, with this, I knew would come a reconnection with the community.

This self-interest posture is okay. Kiwanis itself formed in 1914 without philanthropic purposes.

Not until about the time the Escondido Club formed--in 1924--did Kiwanis turn to "service" as their rationale for social association. And a broad social consciousness soon evolved.

Kiwanis had their internal formula right from the get-go: **Grow the individual, and that individual will grow the community.** Kiwanis took self-interest--and enlightened it. The motto became, "WE BUILD." It meant: Jack-up the man, or woman, and he or she will raise the community.

I must admit that my own early efforts in Kiwanis did not seem lofty, as I picked up acres and miles of highway-blown trash--along with other Club members--on the shoulders of Interstate 15. I was stiff and sore for days.

But gradually, I got caught up in "Kiwanis glow". My confidence improved, and I was elected to the Club's board of directors.

My professional maturation though substantial, however, paled in comparison to what Kiwanis did for Mountain Shadows. Twice in 1999, a small army of Kiwanians swooped into our residential community of 117 persons (including my son, Brian) with developmental disabilities.

The Kiwanians came to our campus, and they volunteered heroically, first manning the *very* busy food and soda booth at Mountain Shadows Support Group's 10th annual Circus Day. In their next visit, the Kiwanians *made* our Christmas Party happen. (Keith Warren of the Club is a dedicated, and theatrical Santa! He took four hours with our residents, patiently visiting individually with each of them.)

Kiwanis helps Mountain Shadows monumentally. The Club's visibility and prestige rub off on our residential community. Though the Pac Bell Pioneers, and AARP, and churches, and business corporations and individuals like Considine & Considine and Jeff Dunham continue to assist Mountain Shadows, Kiwanis carries a fresh brand of support and the familiar influence of eclectic community involvement.

Today, with all these helping hands, our Mountain Shadows residents find open hearts and community acceptance.

Kiwanis' Santa brightens Yule

FROM *N. COUNTY TIMES* (WITH PHOTO OF SANDRA C. AND PATRICIA G. WITH 'SANTA'):

"Santa" Keith Warren, supported by several fellow members of the Kiwanis Club of Escondido, brought a sparkling early Christmas to residents of Mountain Shadows.

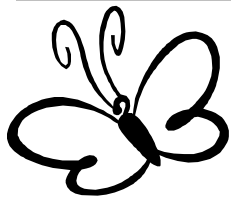
Warren is a veteran Santa for St. Marks Catholic Church, San Marcos, and the Kiwanis. He picked up the acting knack in college, and according to fellow Kiwanian Jim Kelley, "Warren never played it better" than during his visit with 117 Mountain Shadows residents.

"He had the smiling face and credible happy disposition, and of course the height and girth--no filler required--for Santa," recalled Kelley. "Warren set the residents aglow."

"Santa" Warren spent individual time with every resident, hosting some onto his knees, and giving each a wrapped gift from Mountain Shadows Support Group.

Santa and company included Key Club members from Escondido High School, Mt. Shadows recreation director Lisa Shea and her volunteers, Support Groups' Carol Haskin and Portia Bibb. Kiwanians joining in singing carols and distributing punch and cookies were Kelley, Nathan Heard, Joann Overby (and husband Bob), Donald Brown, Jodi Heard, and Linda Cook.

Said Old Saint Nick Warren (who in real life is sales manager for New Century Mortgage): "You come away just feeling *good* about life." Truly, Warren as Santa Claus cherished this day. Add Linda Cook, Mt. Shadows Dir. of Community Relations (who shot a video record): "The Kiwanis performed more than a service. It was a labor of love."



House Activities

From resident Jake: "In November, the Tangelo boys went to Disneyland, along with Amber, Jonas, Margaret, Sharon and Ysenia who were the staff that went with us. We got up early, ate breakfast, and were on our way very excited to get there. Then finally, after an hour bus ride, we arrived. We walked around while some of us went on rides like Star Wars, the Haunted Mansion, Indiana Jones, and the Mark Twain cruise. They were all fun. We took pictures of our trip. There was a big Christmas tree there sixty feet tall. It was awesome. We had a lot of fun at Disneyland and I hope we can do it again soon. It truly is the happiest place on earth."

TANGELO -- The staff worked hard on the Disneyland trip. Thanks to all! We went to SeaWorld, and we had a great time and staff did a great job again. Travis went to Oregon for Christmas to visit his family. Jake traveled to L.A. to stay with his family over holidays. Ditto Charles, Wayne, Chris (to L. A.). Stacy visited Grandmother in Arizona. Thank you to Portia & Gary Bibb and to Bob and Dorothy Merritt for the gifts to staff and our boys. Laura Iavelli's last day was Dec. 22. She'll be a brand new mother. Staff and clients will miss her a lot. Our new QMRP/Admin. is Holly Hirt for Orange, Tangelo, and Lemon. Tangelo welcomes in the New Year 2000 with No Fears, except for Travis with his flashlight. --S. Fabian

APPLE -- Shirley T, had a birthday on 12/26, same day as our outing to Bell Gardens for a picnic and train ride. On 1/5 everyone saw *Stewart Little*. Also took in *Toy Story 2*. In December, Tamara Smith became the relief house manager and Margaret Hildebrand the H.M.

ASH/CEDAR/PINE -- The holidays came around with all residents of 3 houses enjoying themselves. We had a lot of our residents visiting their own families, including: Larry, Mike Casey, and Memo--all from Ash. Christine and Cathy, from Cedar. And Janell from Pine. Songbirds in our midst: Patty, Jose, Cathy, and Rachel @ karaoke. With Santa being so busy, all the resident from Pine and Cedar went to pay *him* a friendly visit and a howdy-hey. The big night of New Year's Eve came, and all of our residents celebrated and had a good time.

PALM/JACARANDA -- Residents went to the Knights of Columbus Christmas party and the Del Mar fair of Christmas lights. Both houses would like to thank all the groups that came by to visit. Our residents received nice gifts and enjoyed themselves. Thanks all!

MAPLE -- In November, visited Shamu @ SeaWorld and had a really good day. Independent outings to the mall (Connie),

movies (Dana & Rene), Dairy Queen (Julie, Linda), McDonalds (Carol). December: To the UTC Mall for dinner and ice skating. Wow, what a blast that was. Dec. indep. outings to many stores for Yule shopping. Happy b'day to Connie (Jan. 24). Dana is moving to Birch. And, we're going to the movies. (Under consideration: *Music of the Heart, Tumbleweed, Galaxy Quest, Ana & the King, Snow Falling on Cedars, Bicentennial Man, and The Green Mile*).

ORANGE -- The Orange girls had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas. Everyone got to go home. House to Disneyland in Nov. To SeaWorld in Dec. Girls had a great time. We've had lots of independent outings: Christmas shopping, out to dinner, to the movies. Wild Animal Park on Jan. 16. Girls excited with events, and couldn't be more happy. --*Andrea Gary*

CREPE MYRTLE -- Birthday wishes to Arlene and Doug. We had a great set of holidays. Bible study every Thursday.

SPRUCE -- Happy b'day to Mike and Richard. We've had plenty of sunshine, and the guys are in good health. Outings include 7-11, Target, Dairy Queen, movies, and for coffee.

Briefly noted

Circus Day planning begins in February, with chairs Rich and Lisa Shea. Recreation Dir. Lisa flew back briefly from vacation to minister to the Christmas party... **Support Group membership renewals are lagging. Please put a check in that envelope... New carpeting for homes is on a 18-month rotation. Every month, a House gets new floor cover...** Tammy Bailey, Olive QMRP since 9/99, observed Jan. membership meeting. Also, faithfully attending were: Doug Cook, Carol Haskin, Mary Lou Swarner, George Kanno, Gretchen Merritt, Genna Kappler, Gracie Adams, Stacy Kendall, Lisa Shea, and Robert and Maralynn Dowell. **Next MSSG meeting: 11 a.m. Sat. Feb. 5.** ... Toward the Recreation Platform building fund: \$1,000 from Gretchen Merritt, \$1,000 from the Sampsell Survivor's Trust (that's Kristin Weller's grandfather's estate), and \$200 from Cari and Ken Graham (she's Doug Cook's niece)...**Manuel Alvarado is Oct. Employee of the Month.** Alvarado, 83, came to Mt. Shadows looking for part-time work. Over the past year he's picked up so many shifts, he's nearly full time. Manuel is well liked by Pine clients... "He insures that each task is done well," says Toni Albright, HR director...**Tammy Bailey**, Olive Q, graduated with distinction from SDSU. She's a vegetarian and enjoys making pottery and reading... **Holly Hirt**, Q for Lemon, Orange, Tangelo, spent a year in Germany tutoring English before coming here. She's married, is working on her master's degree, and enjoys skiing and kayaking... *The Rita Coolidge* "really outdid herself" when she took time to congratulate our Super Stars Niki Corley and "Grandma" Helen van Eik at the annual CAHF convention, reports Gary Macomber, CAHF president. "She [Rita] was a star among stars," adds Macomber.



Parting words

By **Laura Iavelli**

As I sit at home in the very late stages of pregnancy--anxiously awaiting the birth of my first child--I reflect back. Certainly there are paths I have taken and decisions I have made that I would change if I could. But career-wise, I believe I was meant to serve at Mt. Shadows.

In 1991, I was fresh out of college, struggling to find my niche in life. I had a degree in biology [UCSD] and was in my 5th year working at a school in Mission Valley for kids with severe behavioral challenges.

Through a friend, I heard of an opening at Mt. Shadows, and with no experience in residential care, I applied for and was offered a position as QMRP.

So many memories are tied up in my years at Mt. Shadows. So many great experiences, most centered around the residents and staff who taught me patience and understanding--and how to find joy in a job that can be so emotionally draining.



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Daily, what kept me coming back were my residents, who showed me perseverance and what unconditional love truly means. There are easier ways to make a living in jobs that you can put behind you come evening. Residential care is with you 24 hours a day. But it's also the most satisfying thing that I've done.

As my life takes a new course, marriage and family, I have made the very difficult decision to end my position as QMRP/Admin. I know that having a child will change all my priorities, and my residents deserve an administrator who will make them top priority. But the things I have learned and the person I have become through my years at Mt. Shadows have readied me for my new life.

Most important I think is what I have learned from CEO Doug Cook. He's taught me what family and commitment truly mean. He has challenged and pushed me to become a better person, and I will always be in his debt.

He once asked me what it would take for me to leave my residents. Well, I can say now that only having my own child could make me do that. But in truth, my residents will always be a part of me.

Laura (former QMRP/Admin. to Lemon, Orange, Tangelo) gave birth to Adam Joseph, a 9 lb. 5 oz. boy, on Jan. 11.