



Teamwork!

8th Open House honors contributors, eyes future

CEO Doug Cook told guests from the developmental services industry that "Mountain Shadows is doing very well in some great areas." He also cautioned the 8th annual Open House audience that uncertainties lie ahead in fuel costs, state budget cuts, and the energy crisis.

"We are also three years behind where we should be in rate reimbursement. Together, these looming dark clouds are quite frightening for our industry," Cook summarized. "People in this business, however, do not shirk in the face of challenge. They perform their labor of love because they have a mission they want to accomplish."

The Mt. Shadows mission continues to focus on quality of life, Cook said. "Our mission is driven by staff and dedicated industry officials here today that I am honored to work with."

Cook recounted the history of Mt. Shadows, with parents literally taking over business operations ten years ago after the existing facility foundered in recertification in 1990. "By the end of this year we will should finally be a non-profit organization," he said.

Director of Operations Stacy Kendall talked of "accomplishing our goals" in plant maintenance and upgrades from landscaping to new interior carpeting. She cited recent "excellent" licensing surveys and introduced long-time employees (Lisa Powell, Sharon Fabian, and Fred Lindahl) who continue to "lay the foundation for the great strides we have made."

"Our clients *are* a lot of fun. Each develops his or her own distinct personality and direction," said Kendall. "This is the habilitation and the normalization that Mountain Shadows accomplishes."

Placement coordinator Teresa Simms reported 100% occupancy as of mid May. Activities director Michelle Ridgeway recited a litany of new club and recreational opportunities. ("I can hardly remember all our clubs. They just go on and on," Ridgeway said.)

Additionally, Kendall praised efforts in closing the gaps in staff vacancies: "We became creative in creating job fairs, newspaper ads, and skillful recruiting. What had been 56 DCS openings in August 2000 dropped to 4 full time DCS openings today." Cudos to Toni Albright.

Recognized for teamwork achievements were: Maintenance personnel Wayne Walther and John Terrell; Teresa Simms "for meeting the needs of our clients"; new QMRP James Arp "for his attention to detail". Resident Jake Ibarra was also honored with a bound portfolio of his work as "Poet Laureate of Mt. Shadows."

Plaques went to Pat Brasell "for her everyday work with the nursing staff"; and to Tammy Mang and Toni Albright "for heroic efforts". Mang directs training and orientation. Albright heads HR. B of A's Kevin Clement took the Banker Hero Award "for superstar financial support". Todd Antrim was honored as Employee of the Year. CFO Wade Wilde received this year's Bulldog Award for tireless effort in non-profit restructuring. Stacy Kendall garnered the Leadership Award "for leading a team which has overcome all the adversities it has faced."

Doug Cook televised a new video of residents (a popular Open House treat). It rises from hot air ballooning to ice skating, and interviews clients who work in the office--including Brian "The Shredder", Debbie, and Karen; all three live in Willow. As with past videos, this one is a joy of seeing residents maximizing their independence. For a copy, contact Cook at (760) 743-3714.

Open House people, notes

The May 17 Open House included Sheree Crum of CAHF, from Sacramento. Also present were licensing representatives, agents from DDS, DHS, SD Regional Center, South Coast Regional Project, and CIS; officers of Mt. Shadows Support Group, dozens of staff, and several residents including those who star in the new video. (They *loved* the video action.)

Kevin "Best Banker in the World" Clement is customer service manager for B of A. When Medi-cal checks don't arrive on time from Sacramento, Clement executes transfers and does whatever it takes to keep Mt. Shadows financially fluent. His plaque reads: "For his constant attention to the banking needs of Mt. Shadows Community Homes. We could not do it without you."

Pat Brasell is a family nurse practitioner working with Dr. Michael Markopoulous. Their team handles the medical caseload of some 3,000 persons with developmental disabilities. "My priority is Mt. Shadows," Brasell said. She visits two, three, four times a week screening new residents and consulting. Doug Cooks describes her as "very dedicated," which may be an understatement. Brasell has taken one week of vacation--total--in the past three years.



Bylaw change assists 501.C3 effort

The April meeting started with a long line of youth volunteers filing into an Office annex room for *their* meeting. By count, there were 36 of them, all from the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints (LDS) in Valley Center. And they stuffed into a back room like college kids into a phone booth. Their meeting addressed volunteers' duties in working with clients.

CEO Doug Cook offered an update on Mountain Shadows Inc.'s progress in becoming 501.C3 nonprofit. "Our effort is eleven years from the date we started the original corporation," Cook said. "We are now generating a [tax-free bond] feasibility study, with the probable underwriter Merrill Lynch of New York." A joint-powers arrangement will bridge MSI properties in Escondido and San Marcos. Financial advisor is Ken Melton.

Cook introduced attorney Erick Altona, of Lounsbury, Ferguson Altona and Peak. The firm is handling the "team effort," in Cook's words, at a substantial fee discount. Cook: "The move to 501.C3 is going very well. This stabilizing business restructuring will insure the future for residents and employees of Mountain Shadows, and it will help us secure additional grants and funds."

As part of the legal framework, our support group unanimously voted to convert MSSG to a non-membership organization. (Our membership transfers automatically to Friends of Mountain Shadows.) "This bylaw change allows the bond financing, which has to be board driven, to occur," Cook explained. Attorney Altona called the matter "a formal change rather than a substantive change"--meaning Friends continues in the role of funding and supporting life-enhancing resident activities.

It was announced that a memorial service was set for Richard Kamelhar on May 10, with a release of balloons containing flower seeds. Richard had been a resident of Willow House.

A photo album featuring a floppy-eared giant rabbit (Activities Dir. Michelle Ridgeway) passing Easter goodies to the residents made the rounds--to rave reviews. "She was as good as the photos," said Pres. Carol Haskin. "Michelle Ridgeway has really increased the opportunities for our residents," said Dir. of DS Ops Stacy Kendall.

"We now have someone dedicated full time." A \$100 check was authorized for Ridgeway "to make our appreciation felt," Haskin said. "Michelle has really made an impact."... Some \$400 was okayed to fund a dance for residents May 18 at the Knights of Columbus hall.

CFO Wade Wilde said an effort fell short to acquire van-bus transportation via grant. "Application is a learning process," said Wilde. "We learned how to maximize our grant points, and next year I think we have a good chance of getting transport."

Licensing surveys continued to be outstanding, said Kendall. Olive and Ash houses each received only *one* deficiency. Average is about 5 statewide, for six-bed homes. Olive has 15 residents. "This is amazing for Olive," Kendall said. "Michelle Decker, Rosie Motta, and staff deserve a lot of credit." Among home improvements: Elm House was freshly painted and received new curtains and carpet. Orange House has new kitchen dining room flooring--described as "durable, affordable," by Cook. "The physical plant keeps improving."

Attending were: Eleanor Kendrick, Amy Reeh, Harry and Dorothy Cook, Robert Lundgren, Portia Bibb, Andrew Golleher, Carol Haskin, Mary Lou Swarner, Brian Wiersema, Wade Wilde, Dick Marrs, Doug and Linda Cook, Beverly Atkins, Erick Altona, Stacy Kendall, and Bob and Maralynn Dowell.

Marathon man: Gorman logs 26.2 miles, *and* a day of work

Thomas Gorman, Lemon House relief house manager, got up at 5 a.m. June 3 and drove from his Oceanside home to San Diego. There, he took off running at 6:45 a.m. for his first-ever marathon, the Suzuki Rock and Roll. Sustaining in "the middle of the pack," Gorman finished in 4 hrs. and 48 mins. Then he hastened directly to Escondido, where he coached Challenger baseball in the afternoon--running the bases and mentoring Mt. Shadows Orioles with co-coach Doug Cook.

From the ball game Gorman went directly to Lemon House, where he pulled a 4-8 p.m. shift. Tired? "Not really," said Gorman, a enthusiastic and bright-smiling 3-year Mt. Shadows staff veteran.

Gorman, 25, surfs (often with his father Tom, who owns an electrical contracting company) and runs. His daily log shows about 8 miles jogged, on average. His longest training run prior to the San Diego marathon: 12 miles.

"Once you run a 26.2 mile marathon, you feel like you can accomplish anything," Gorman said. Of course, "my legs were a little sore for a few days," Gorman added. He attends Palomar College, heading for Cal State U San Marcos in the fall. "He is the inspiration for all of Lemon House," said Cook.



A wealthy life

'Moral keel' Harry Cook, 82

Harry Cook--a man described by KUSI TV as "an Escondido institution"--died May 27 at age 82. "He exemplifies everything that was great and right in America," KUSI said in television news coverage of Mr. Cook's second retirement last year. "He was role model to everyone who came into contact with him."

A long-time bulwark of Mountain Shadows Support Group, "Harry Cook was our moral influence and tremendous supporter from day one," said former Support Group president Mary Lou Swarner.

In eulogy, son Doug Cook (Mt. Shadows CEO) said: "Without my father's example to live by and live up to, I'm not sure I would have made it. I'm not sure Mt. Shadows quality of life would be the same. I'm not even sure if Mt. Shadows would exist today."

Symbolically, Mr. Cook--"our moral keel"--served as Ringmaster of Circus Day. He was also Circus Day's most bona fide connection to the real thing as a 1930s trapeze artist.

Mr. Cook was born August 21, 1918, in Los Angeles. He frequently was forced to miss school by an abusive father, who had Harry digging cess pools as ultra cheap labor. Discovered by Pop Matthew (while Harry was illegally somersaulting on the Matthew Brothers Troupe practice trampoline), Harry left home and his father's beatings and became the daring young man on the flying trapeze, a circus-act superstar with the Troupe.

Mr. Cook fought as an army soldier in combat for the Philippines and New Guinea in World War II. For four battle-tested years, Harry wrote to his future bride--courting Dorothy from his fox holes.

Doug recounted that his father worked hard from age 14 to 82 "as hod carrier, carpet layer, chem-mill operator, school custodian." (As a 146-pound hod carrier, he carried the *large* hod.)

Mr. Cook first retired in 1983. He then took up a late career as a near full-time substitute school custodian for the Escondido Union School District.

"He loved the kids and entertained several generations of families with his imitations of Donald Duck and Goofy," said Doug.

Grandson Greg Cook (Doug's son), speaking before a packed Westminster Presbyterian Church funeral service, described how he visited all 18 schools in the district to personally relate Mr. Cook's passing. The news brought every school office to a silent halt.

Known for lively blue eyes, distinguished white hair, and grace, Mr. Cook was not without his flaws. "He couldn't be trusted to pick out a decent Christmas tree on his own," Doug told mourners.

Mr. Cook, always chipper and optimistic and described as "strong as an ox," was an athlete into his 70s as a professional-level roller skating talent. "He could do the Charleston on skates," said Swarner.

Bond between Mr. Cook and grandson Brian of Lemon House was something special. Mr. Cook lavished time on Brian, whether horseback riding or at frequent family dinners. He set the standard for kin involvement, suggested Swarner: "Brian was truly cherished by Harry and Dorothy."

"Harry was not a financially wealthy man," said Greg. "His most treasured possession was his family." And his most valued asset was his integrity. (Influenced by Mr. Cook's example, Swarner still returns every shopping cart back to its store queue.)

Perhaps appropriately, Mr. Cook died in the bosom of family, stricken with heart failure at a family gathering. The family did not let him go easily. There was the funeral home viewing, an extra evening cruise in the hearse down Grand Avenue, services followed by *two* receptions, and finally burial.

"My dad was truly a man's man, a man of the times both past and present," said Doug.

The family suggests memorial donations go to Mountain Shadows Support Group, 2067 West El Norte Parkway, Escondido, CA 92026.



Stiltbirds steal Circus Day; Harry honored

Circus Day (June 9) officially began in somber tone, with a presentation to the Cook family in memory of patriarch Harry, a son of real circus acts and Ringmaster to our Circus Day since 1991. "In loving memory of Grandfather Cook," read the tribute. "He touched the lives of all our residents." A bagpiper played *Amazing Grace*. Also feted in the opening ceremonies were Rich and Lisa Shea, long-time co-chairs of Circus Day. "We couldn't have done it without you," praised CEO Doug Cook.

The parade was acknowledged as "the best ever," with popular troupes such as returning Lucky Lion Chinese Dancers. However, the show-stealer was a new French import: two 10-foot tall Stiltbirds. "Elaborate, amazing," said Wade Wilde as he stood transfixed by the "birds" illusion. That magic is two men on stilts each wearing a Stars Wars-like bird frame. The effect is their "riding" the creatures like mounted Mongolian cowboys.



Mountain Shadows Support Group

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(Reins are the control mechanisms to neck pulleys and levers. Riders in full makeup are costumed in feather eruptions and leather.) One bird pecked the dunk tank's target button, and down went RN Vicki Federici. Vicki got back up on the dunk seat. The bird pecked again and sent her under water anew.

Both birds worked the games Midway in the afternoon, neck nuzzling to absolutely delighted residents--including Jacob Ibarra, who draws poetic on the experience. And feeding on tree branch leaves. Even grabbing in one beak a writer's notebook. "This is a tremendous day for the residents," said one first-time visitor.

Rides were added this year, with two tickets buying a ride in a miniature wagon pulled by two diminutive Jerusalem Donkeys. Mike Anderson's motorized train also kept guests (such as maintenance chief Wayne Walther and grandchildren) moving.

Distinguished Knights of Columbus in plumes and capes added a regal touch. Some 50 volunteers signed in from the USMC, LDS Church, and Kiwanis. Another 50 staff and parents ran the "mind theater" of Circus from inception to takedown. Bill Merrit of Ash and Tori Lyn Taylor of Jac. paraded as King and Queen. Grandson Greg Cook filled Harry's Ringmaster shoes; Ring Mistress was Kristin Atkins Scharnhorst (Miss Escondido 1994, and Greg's cousin). In all: "the day of days" here.