



150 volunteers make Circus Day 'the greatest'

By Brian Wiersema

"It was a great Circus Day," said Linda Cook, "perhaps the greatest ever."

The June 8 event attracted 150 volunteers--the vast majority of them from community. Helpers included 60 youth from the Escondido South Stake Mormon Church, 35 Key Clubbers and members of the Kiwanis Club of Escondido, 25 Jr. Girl Scouts and their leaders from Poway, 14 from Hope Worldwide, and nearly a score of parents and staff of Mt. Shadows Community Homes.

"The vast contributions of our many volunteers made the difference," said Cook. "So many more residents were able to team with a volunteer buddy this year. We had terrific one-on-one client involvement."

And, one should add, *better* supervision under parent volunteers like helper dispatcher Cheryl Edwards. "We improved profiles on individual resident likes, dislikes, and abilities. We had better booth map accuracy and written booth staffing requirements," said Edwards.

With new games and new self-standing canopies, Circus Day was physically and organizationally outstanding.

Real heroes were "buddy" Key Clubbers and Mormon youths, and Girl Scouts who gave Circus a fun and focused vitality. This "youth movement" energy was manifested by the Girl Scouts who created, manned, and operated 10 creatively *new* gaming booths. And by the teens who served as escorts for residents.

Event co-chairs were *Friends of Mt. Shadows* president Carol Haskin and staff accounting supervisor Amy Reeh. Reeh and husband Cliff and MSSG Executive Director Wade Wilde and his wife Sheryl also did the heavy lifting of set-up. Reeh was so hands-on involved she even designed the new Circus T-shirts. "Amy Reeh and Carol did a fabulous job," said Cook. "They have revitalized the tradition of Circus for years to come."

The 1 p.m. Parade kicked off Circus Day, but residents were well into it long before that: There was the picture of Frank Sullivan (the Circus king!) helping Wade Wilde

carry set-up tables. There was the image of Activities Dir. Michelle Ridgeway carrying two *huge* bunches of helium-filled balloons--and electric wheelchairs piloted by Jake Ibarra, Kenny Lewis, and Travis Groff in hot helper pursuit of her. Together the foursome spotted the colorful balloons along fences and booths.



Even the inventive election posters--in fairy castle, Old West and royalty themes-- were superior this year. Circus King Frank Sullivan of Birch ran on the Help Platform. His poster promised, "I will help you thrown your trash away. I'll help you with your wheelchair. I will even watch your car."

Vivian Ling of Oak was voted queen [**See story, p. 3**]. Vivian's glitter-filled poster offered that she was "spontaneous, unique, helpful, and cool to be around with." Richard Hobson's wild west/gunslinger poster got him elected as Circus prince. Toni Anthony rounded out the court as Circus princess, with her poster of jolly clowns on bike and stilts, and being shot from a cannon.

Everywhere: something special. In the parade, Queen Vivian radiated happiness like a first magnitude star. "I won first prize!" she said of her title. Also in the parade--and you had to laugh--was a two-man camel (their covered heads were the humps) lead by a man in a fez and followed by a man with a shovel and a bucket labeled "Camel Exhaust".

Even the police car siren and the motorcycle riders were louder this year. Some 18 riders showed up, including a contingent of eight with Mountain Shadows. Those eight came in response to a plea from Anita Griffin, payroll coordinator. Anita and her husband Jeff rode double on a 1957 panhead chopper Harley. Also riding were Tim and Roxanne Willey and Brian and Allison Willey (cousins to Brian Cook in Lemon House).



"Dutch", chapter president of the Warriors of the Cross, said most of his riders drove Harleys. And like parade entrants from Chinese Lucky Lion Dragon Dancers to the Scottish drum and piper band, the popular motorcycle riders stuck around to talk with residents and soak up the action. "The residents are fantastic," said Dutch. "They are some of the greatest people I've ever met."

The parade (called "the best ever" by Doug Cook) was led by the popular 42nd Highlanders Regimental Pipes and Drums--seven strong among pipers and [**Continued**]



... greatest Circus

(Cont. from page 1) drummer under the direction of Pipe Major George Hall. The band is from Long Beach and is the official pipe band of the Queen Mary. One of the pipers is Greg Cook--Doug Cook's brother.

Following were long-time Mt. Shadows supporters in their formal Knights of Columbus capes and festive hat plumage. Ringmaster Greg Cook (Doug and Linda's son) escorted Miss Escondido 2002. And then came radiant Queen Vivian with a cross-country smile that outshone her silver tiara.

Add the famous camel, juggler, clowns and a *lot* of movement and energy. The two Chinese dragons are so animated that their personnel must be frequently changed and freshened along the parade route.

Mary Lou Swarner was a well-deserved Grand Marshal. Writer Ven Griva covered the festivities for the North County Times with photo and story.

In post-parade ceremonies, thankyou awards went to Amy Reeh ("effective in Circus planning and execution"), the Knights of Columbus, and to Liz Jones. Jones has long labored behind the scenes, writing birthday cards and sending holiday gift certificates to Mt. Shadows residents without family. Jones' daughter works for SD Regional Center and helped to create Liz's "orphan" card list.

What's interesting in all of this splash of Mt. Shadows biggest annual event and showcase party (in its 13th year) is that the Circus Committee also meets *after* it's over to critique and fine tune the event for next year. Suggestions for improvements go into a three-inch thick binder. It works.

Many thanks and much appreciation go to Ted Jackman, president of the south Escondido stake Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints. Annually, Jackman organizes the church youth who serve so vitally as resident escorts. The Girl Scouts were everywhere with zealous enthusiasm. There was Lisa Shea's troop 8447 from Poway along with three other troops (#'s 8119, 8447, and 8199--all from Poway). Some of the girls such as Stacey Shea, Lauren Brenner, Brenna Jones, and Melissa Ordway (all age 11 and now in 6th grade) have been coming to Mt. Shadows to lend a hand since they were in 1st grade. That's six years of wrapping Christmas presents and conducting Easter egg hunts and now promoting Circus success. Girl Scouts ran the Sponge Toss, Wheel of Fortune, Treasure Chest, Fish Pond, Hula Toss, Duck

Pond and more. And the Scouts were there as wet parade watchers.

The vitality of Circus

John Steinbeck, the novelist, once wrote a story essay entitled "Circus". It has strong parallels to our Circus Day. An excerpt:

"Oh! We had plenty of good holidays in Salinas when I was growing up, but none of them could compete for a certain day in the late spring... when suddenly in a night the roadside barn walls would blossom with tigers and elephants, with clowns and lovely equestriennes.

"Our insides would begin to churn simply trying to remember how a circus was. And we could not because the old year's circus was as vague as a dream.... We did not sleep the night before." And the reason is that the circus is change of pace. Every man and woman and child comes from the circus refreshed and renewed. What doctor can do as much?"

More on Circus Day Seems

that by 12:45 p.m. the Jr. Girl Scouts (Kala, Elizabeth, Olivia, Jessica, Emily and Amrita) were all soaking in their bathing suits from having thoroughly tested the Sponge Toss equipment (sponges and water buckets). "They got the jump on having a lot of fun," said their leader Laurie Zimmerman.

Other highlights were a concert by the 42nd Highlanders band, and Jody Trax (her son Josh used to live in Tangelo) pocketing \$1,135 cash in the 50-50 raffle with a total pool of \$2,270. As in index of Circus popularity, that winning amount has doubled in 2 years.

Other thanks go to the all-seeing John Deardorf, our world famous Fortune Teller; and Rich and Lisa Shea who continue to make Circus Day a hit long after their years as co-chairs.



Volunteers: Hope Worldwide & Kiwanis

Volunteers by name: Manning the Hope Worldwide Nachos and Icecream booth were: Carol Ann Potter,



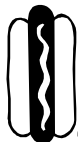
David Geary, his daughter Diana, Nancy Kingsley and her daughter Katelyn, Gina Pates, Hannah Lundy, Stefani

Ellen Alton. "And we have come to feel a real affiliation with Mountain Shadows."

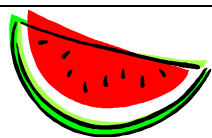
... Volunteers

Spolar and sister Alexis, Daniela Trujillo, Cleto Cortez, and Angela and Fayette Kelley.

Operating the landoffice-busy Hotdog and Pizza both were these Escondido Kiwanians and Key Clubbers (**in bold face type**) from Valley and Escondido high schools: Jo Overby, David Geary, Carl Wiegman, Nat Heard, Jack and Sandy Lehberg, Don and Mary Brown, Len and Mary Ellen Alton, Victoria Jones, Mike Spencer, Al Serrato, Lori and Art Perez, Terry Ambrose, and Bob Whiting. Also, Joyce Wells, Howard Madden, Chris Wittpenn, Sheri Kolb and family, Steve and Ann Jacobs and family, Ryan Ferrgison, **Stephanie Payne, Dinh Lu, Aaron Josh, Metz Jemenez, Maria Juacas, Celia Farias.** Kiwanis also donated \$500 for food costs. Some Kiwanis' families spanned three generations of helpers including Len and Mary Ellen Alton with daughter Jennifer Davis and her children Kaley, Brooke, and Abby Davis.



"Kiwanis served 200 cans of soda, 900 bottles of cold bottled water, 450 hot dogs, and 50 pizzas. Hope Worldwide served six *large* bags of tortilla chips, 18 pounds of nacho cheese sauce, four pounds of hot peppers, and 350 ice cream bars.



Kiwanis: service bridge to understanding

Quietly over the past four years, the Kiwanis Club of Escondido has made the Hot Dog and Pizza both a quintessential Circus service and a bridge to community.

Four years ago, the Kiwanis labored with 8 volunteers. That number has grown yearly to nearly 40. Teenage Key Clubbers also pair up with residents as escort buddies, while Kiwanians *and* their families offer FAST food. The food line really moved along this year while handling the largest volume of food in memory. "Working among persons with developmental disabilities is inherently broadening for all of us," said past Kiwanis president Mary

Oak's Circus Queen

Persons with developmental disabilities are not disabled

By Linda Cook, Dir. of Community Relations

Here is an important aspect of life that few people see:

Oak House on a Saturday morning: Vivian Ling (just before she was elected our Circus Day Queen) and House Manager Ann Boyer sit with a visitor at the dining room table. Five roommates go about their business nearby in the living room, but with eyes or ears cocked to the table conversation.

Focus is on Vivian, a youthful looking 52 who has mental retardation. She has a big, enthusiastic smile, blue eyes, brown hair in a pageboy cut, and pink nail polish. With great animation, Vivian says: "I go to school." That's her day program.

But Vivian does a *lot* more than that. She has made herself almost indispensable as the woman who helps her roommates make their beds, does the dishes, reminds staff of timely chores, vacuums the floor, sets the table, separates and folds and puts away the clothes, and makes sure everyone has a jacket on when they go out.

"Vivian is observant of--and responsive to--others' needs," says Ann Boyer. "She *anticipates* what has to be done."

Within Mountain Shadows Community Homes (MSCH), with no shortage of observant and helpful residents, Vivian is famous for giving assistance. And like many, she derives her identity, her self-esteem, her satisfactions from doing things for others. The bonus is: Vivian herself is an inspiration. She is a constant, positive spark.

"Vivian is full of life and curiosity," summarizes Boyer--who is as much *House Mother* as *House Manager*.

There is no lack of wants in Oak House. JoAnn, 61, needs assistance with her self-help skills; Norman, 73, and Kathy, 73, do not talk. Jerry, 61, is blind. And Joy, 52, has major spacticity and does not articulate well.



"I help her [Joy] say the words," offers Vivian. Vivian is Joy's voice. She is also the sight for Jerry, a pal to Kathy, and comfort to Joy, Norman, and JoAnn. **[Continued]**

... Oak's Circus Queen

[Continued] Oak is known as the Retirement Home among the 18 MSCH group homes; yet, Oak runs on a high octane of activity. Residents are on the move. Kathy gets up and opens the front door. Norman moves out of his chair and immediately closes it.

In behavior and living, the residents complement themselves. "Sometimes, they amaze me," says Boyer. Boyer demonstrates with a clothing protector. This is Norman's department. If one is discarded, it's Norman's responsibility. And Norman is on it in an instant and carries it to a hamper in the garage.

"Vivian sets the example and meets a real need," says Boyer, citing Vivian's picking up anything on the floor that shouldn't be there. "She keeps the floors free from any debris because she knows there's a danger of people tripping on it."

Mothering instincts and friendly big-sister qualities in Boyer are the models for Vivian. Boyer has been house



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manager/mother to Oak for a year, but before that she was the live-in house manager for Good Shepherd in Laguna Hills. There she was 24/7 for 17 years-- "And loved it," says Boyer.

Vivian recently had her maternal instincts revved with the pregnancy of Oak nurse Kelly Piazza. Boyer and Vivian sat down and had a long chat about why Piazza was getting larger and larger around her middle. Vivian understood. After baby Christopher Piazza was born, Boyer and Vivian visited mom and tot. Vivian presented a gift (a clown rattle, which she bought with her savings as Oak's paid document shredder). She also got to hold the baby and sing to it--and Vivian stayed enthralled for the entire 90-minute visit.

"Vivian with that baby was just tickled pink," says Boyer. "All ladies love to hold babies," says Boyer. "And Vivian is a 'Lady's Lady'--all grown up. This is the kind of normalization that occurs in a nurturing environment."

Oak House is a functional family. They demonstrate that persons with developmental disabilities are *not* disabled. In fact, they are rich in abilities.

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