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Mountain Shadows
Special Kids Homes

Mountain Shadows Support Group

FALL ♦ 2008

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Charity Car Show Raises More than \$2,000 for Special Kids

The good old days cruised back to life recently at a charity car show sponsored by the Chariots of Southern California Car Club. The event was held at Frisco's Drive-In in Downey, California. Frisco's is a 1950's inspired drive-in complete with roller skating carhops.

"The Mountain Shadows Special Kids and staff all got to enjoy hamburgers and fries served 1950's style by roller skating waitresses," says Shelly Dawson, Development Coordinator, MSSKH/MSF. "Songs like 'Blueberry Hill', 'Sixteen Candles', 'Who Wrote the Book of Love,' and 'At the Hop' played in the background. There were lots of classic cars on display - '55 Chevys, coupes, roadsters, you name it! It all made you feel like you were back in time.

"It was a great social outing for the Special Kids and staff. They had the opportunity to walk around the 80-plus classic cars and had the chance to meet and greet some of the car owners and Chariots of Southern California Car Club members. A few of the kids even got to sit in these nice classic cars!"

Many thanks to the Chariots of Southern California Car Club, all of the car enthusiasts, and Mountain Shadows staff members who made this event a success. A great time was had by all, and, thanks to the generosity of all those involved, our Special Kids residents received a donation of \$2,044! ■

What's Inside...

Developmentally Disabled Caught in Cross-Fire during California Budget Crisis	2
Henry Hoang: Halbrook House's Resident Superhero?	3
Jenda Reed: After the Harvest.....	5
Jessie Pimentel Leaves Memories of Joy.....	6
Special Kids Celebrate the 4 th of July in Red, White & Blue Style.....	7
Special Kids Jungle Safari Picnic	9
Special Kids Fire Department Visits Spark Excitement.....	10
Special Kids Traveling Art Project Gains Momentum.....	12



Developmentally Disabled Caught in Cross-Fire during California Budget Crisis

“It was once said that the moral test of Government is how that Government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.”

—HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

When Arnold Schwarzenegger was sworn in as Governor on November 17, 2003, in his inaugural speech he said, “I am humbled, I am moved, and I am honored beyond words to be your Governor. To the thousands of you who came here today – I took this oath to serve YOU. To others across this state – Democrats, Republicans, Independents – it makes no difference – I took this oath to serve YOU. To those who have no power – I took this oath to serve YOU. I say to everyone here today and to all Californians ... I will not forget my oath and I will not forget you.”

In the same speech he continued, “In recent years, Californians have lost confidence. They’ve felt that the actions of their government did not represent the will of the people. This election was not about replacing one man or one party. It was about changing the entire political climate of our state. Everywhere I went during the campaign, I could feel the public hunger for our elected officials to work together, to work openly, and to work for the greater good.”

Unfortunately, the recent record 85-day California budget debacle suggests that rather than alleviating this hunger, our leaders have led us deeper into a state of political famine – and the ideal of working together for the greater good and for those who have no power has been all but forgotten.

The state is mandated to halt all payments to government service providers, which includes Medi-Cal, until the state legislature hammers out a budget agreement. Medi-Cal is California’s version of the Medicaid program, and it provides 65% to 70% of the funding for facilities for the developmentally disabled and nursing homes. Due to the budget impasse, this mandate spurred the California Department of Health Care Services to stop all

payments to providers of small, community-based Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled (licensed as ICF/DD-H and ICF/DD-N) in the state effective July 2008. Mountain Shadows Support Group Homes, comprised of both ICF/DD-H and ICF/DD-N homes, fell under this mandate.

“While Mountain Shadows Support Group was well prepared for the crisis and, unlike probably 90% of the other providers, we still could have held out without payments for another month at least, the industry as a whole suffered greatly,” said Wade

Wilde, Executive Director, Mountain Shadows Support Group/Mountain Shadows Foundation.

In a plea to ensure continued care of the developmentally disabled population across California, Dennis Mattson, President of Developmental Services Network, said in a letter to the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency in the

beginning of September, “Our ICF/DD-H and ICF/DD-N facilities provide services to more than 1062 disabled adults and children in the state of California and we employ more than 1817 Californians. Our only source of revenue is California’s Medi-Cal program. Due to the lack of a state budget, beginning in September, we will be unable to continue to support the infrastructure needed to continue to provide services. We will be unable to pay the 1817 Californians we employ and will therefore be unable to provide the basic health, residential and habilitative services we are mandated and committed to provide to 1062 individuals with developmental disabilities.”

Fallout from the state’s longest budget standoff on record rippled throughout California, with scores of providers on the brink of bankruptcy and closure. Cash-strapped service providers took out personal



(Please see BUDGET on page 4)

Henry Hoang: Halbbrook House's Resident Superhero?

Trinidad: *Are you a superhero?*

Nightcrawler: *Sure.*

Trinidad: *But you're a mutant.*

Nightcrawler: *That too.*

Trinidad: *You're not ashamed of that?*

Nightcrawler: *Why would I be? Are you ashamed of being born blond and blue eyed?*

—X-MEN COMICS

As any of you who are X-Men fans know, Nightcrawler is a blue-skinned, three-toed and fingered, yellow-eyed, prehensile-tailed, mutant of German extraction. For those not familiar with the Marvel comics phenomenon, the X-Men stories are set in a near future where Darwin's Theory of Evolution has veered slightly off course and some human children are now being born with a twist in their chromosomes, an X-Factor in their genes, which often gives them unique abilities and sometimes mutated appearances. The seeds of a new Holocaust are sewn as the "normal" humans begin to fear and persecute the mutants. A group of mutated X-Men bands together with the vision of creating a world where both humans and mutants can co-exist in peace.

The character Nightcrawler is a member of the X-Men and uses his special powers only to help others and for good purposes. He is a happy-go-lucky jokester whose ability to cling to and crawl up and down any surface rivals that of Spiderman. Despite his Blue Man hue, he is charming and gallant, and loves the ladies. He carries a personal holographic device that allows him appear as a normal human to others. He has a heightened sense of night vision and can teleport almost instantaneously by displacing himself temporarily into an alternate dimension. A loud "bamf" noise – the sound of air rushing to fill the space he was previously occupying – can be heard whenever he teleports.

Editor's Note: It has been rumored that, due to his ability to jump into alternative dimensions, Nightcrawler can live out different lives in different dimensions. Some say he is living out many lives simultaneously in various dimensions even now. If this is true, with his holographic device, he could appear in any shape or form. Could it be possible that you have met the mysterious Nightcrawler ... and didn't know it? In the realm of the X-Men, anything is possible ...

"I can still picture Henry as an eleven-year-old

combat crawling on the floor at his first Special Kids Home, Cami House," says Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator/Development Coordinator at MSSKH/MSF.

Henry Hoang moved to Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes in 1999. "Henry would, on a regular basis, somehow *crawl* out of his bed in the *middle of the night* to socialize with the night staff. Then he would begin *flirting with the girls* by *charming* them with his cute smile and by blowing them kisses."

"Henry does *like the ladies*," adds Duane Dahlin, QMRP at MSSKH. "He likes to *joke* with and *tease* them. There's also a special lady reporter, Jillian, he likes to watch on the news channel. I think he really likes her."

"Henry lived at home with his family until he was eleven-years-old," says Shelly. "Then he came to live and play at Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes. Since he's been at MSSKH, his parents have always been very involved with his care. They live in Texas now, but visit him as often as they can. Henry's father, Mr. Huong Hoang, and Henry's brother flew out this June to visit him at the Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes Safari Picnic. They spent the day strolling the park, I mean safari, looking at all of the jungle animals made by all of the children of Special Kids Homes. There were snakes, turtles, spiders and lizards. The Safari Guides also had live snakes and lizards and they let Henry and his family pet them. They really seemed to enjoy petting the snakes and lizards (perhaps because of the *prehensile tails*??). All in all, Henry and his family had a jungle of a good time!"

Hmmmm ... An unstoppable penchant for crawling in the darkest of the night? A jokester who loves to charm the ladies? A fascination with the tails of snakes and lizards? Could it be so? These things alone may not convince the reader that the mysterious Nightcrawler creeps the halls of Mountain Shadows Special Kids



Mr. Hoang and Henry

(Please see HOANG on page 4)

■ BUDGET *(continued from page 2)*

lines of credit and hit up friends and relatives for personal loans to keep businesses afloat. Said Betty Ann Honda of Care Van, Inc., a non-profit that transports 200 patients with severe kidney problems to dialysis appointments, “It is crazy what they are doing. They are putting people in the position of having to deny patients services they need to live.”

On Friday, September 19, 2008, a budget protest march was held in front of California State Senator Dutton’s office in Ranch Cucamonga. “The rally’s cause,” said Shelly Dawson, Development Coordinator, MSSKH/MSF, “was to get our California State Senators and our California Governor to see the urgency to get on task and complete the state budget. By the date of this protest, it had been 80 days that we, Medi-Cal state funded care providers, had gone without funding. Several facility care providers had staff working at half their pay, many had maxed out their credit and loan limits, and several had vendors and contractors working on deferred payment. Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes staff and disabled clients attended the protest march to support the cause.”

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the 2008/2009 California Budget on September 23, 2008. Just days after the new state budget was signed, the

nation’s financial storm on Wall Street threatened California with a new crisis – the state’s inability to obtain financing. According to State Treasurer, Bill Lockyer, California’s cash reserves will be exhausted by October 29th if the state continues to find itself unable to obtain short-term financing due to the credit crunch. Exhausting California’s cash reserves could have dire consequences. “Payments for teacher’s salaries, nursing homes, law enforcement *and every other state-funded service* would stop or be significantly delayed.”

Only the citizen can bring our political and governmental institutions back to life, make them responsive and accountable, and keep them honest. No one else can.

—JOHN GARDNER

Perhaps our moral test as citizens is whether we hold our leaders accountable to the standards of governing that we set. As guardians for those who have no power – whether they be in the dawn, the twilight, or the shadows of life – our mandate is to ensure our elected officials, in the words of Governor Schwarzenegger, work together, work openly and work for the greater good.

It would seem we have a big job ahead of us. ■

■ HOANG *(continued from page 3)*

Homes, but this writer knows the truth.

Following the interview with “Henry” for this story, I said my goodbyes and left him alone in his room at Halbrook House. As I closed the door, I heard a loud, strange sound come from inside his room ... was it a ... BAMF!? I quickly opened the door and stepped back inside. The room was empty ... Henry was nowhere in sight.

The sun was setting as I got in my car to leave Halbrook House. And as I squinted into the rearview mirror ... I saw ... was it a streak of blue? Near the House’s front door?... I scrambled to get out of my car ... but the streak was gone ... and by the door was Henry ... and he was smiling broadly as he blew me a kiss ...

Nightcrawler: *Perhaps you are right. I’ve had a pretty easy life so far, I guess – not at all like you. For example, I never had to worry about having optic beams for eyes. I’ve only been blue and furry since I was born.*

Cyclops: *You trying to be funny?*

Nightcrawler: *Merely making a point. We are what we are. Wishing won’t change a blessed thing. I learned very early on to accept what I am. You know, in the Munich circus, I was known as the Incredible Nightcrawler. But, outside of the circus, most people were afraid of me. But I didn’t hate them. I pitied them. Do you know why? Because most people will never know anything beyond what they see with their own two eyes.*

Does the Nightcrawler watch over our Special Kids with his super powers? Well, this reporter’s eyes have been opened wide. And I believe anything is possible in the realm of the X-Men ... and in the halls of the houses of our very own Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes ... if only we allow ourselves to see beyond our own two eyes. Bamf! ■

Jenda Reed: After the Harvest

*Hearts starve as well as bodies;
Give us bread, but give us roses.*

—James Oppenheim

Every gardener like Jenda Reed knows that after the digging, after the planting, after the long season of tending and growth, the harvest finally comes. Many harvests have come and gone over the past 19 years for Jenda at Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes. She has planted and tended to the growth of seeds of many kinds. As House Mom at Laurel Park House, she came to learn the parallels between cultivating the soil and nurturing the human soul – and she excelled at reaping the magnificent and unique bounties of each.

“Jenda was the first Direct Care Staff (DCS) member hired at our very first Special Kids house,” says Jenny Ramkissoon at MSSKH. “She basically raised all of the children at Laurel Park and became a mother figure to all of them. Jenda is so strong, yet she has such a gentle spirit. She led the house and cared for the children with her heart.

Jenda: *As a House Mom, I oversaw the Activities of Daily Living (ADL) for each child and ensured the house was run efficiently. On a typical day, I made sure everyone was up, bathed, fed and ready for school. While they were at school, I performed the chores of the day – cleaning, ordering supplies, etc. When the children came home, we had snacks, helped with homework, and had dinner. During the evening, when the children had leisure time, we played games and did crafts. On weekends, we often went on special outings.*

“Jenda really did a great job of taking care of the children and the house,” says Duane Dahlin, QMRP at MSSKH. “They always had everything they needed. She really cared a lot about the kids. To her, they were *her* kids. They were her life.”

Jenda: *My favorite part of being the House Mom at Laurel Park was the relationship I developed with the kids. Over the years, I saw them grow up. The children amazed me. I felt blessed to be able to watch them grow up and was impressed they became the fine young people they are today. They are such great kids.*

I learned so much from the children. Each one of them has severe physical limitations, and yet they were always happy and didn't complain. I complain when I have a headache! They are just so loving and giving and caring. They are also very sensitive to other



Jenda Reed and Jason Tyler

people's feelings. If I was in a bad mood, they would sense it, and come up to me and say, "Hey, I think you need a hug." Being with them always lifted my spirits.

Jenda was happily married for 42 years. “When my husband passed away, the children got me through it,” says Jenda. “I always felt better when I was at Laurel Park working with the children, talking with them. I didn't want to sit home alone and grieve. The children sensed how I felt. It was amazing. They could always make me smile.”

Jenda was raised by a single mom. “We had quite a difficult time,” says Jenda. “My mother worked in a fish cannery. We had no car, so our lives revolved around the bus schedule. The most important thing I learned from my mom was to never give up and to do the best you can all the time. That never give up attitude helped me overcome polio when I was a child. And it led me to working with physically challenged children as an adult.

“Polio crippled me as a child. My body was twisted to the right. I was confined and couldn't go out and run and jump and play with the other children. During recess, I had to go lay down in the nurse's office. With some luck and lots of patience and hard work, I was able overcome the physical challenges. I wore special braces for two years.

Please see JENDA on page 8

Jessie Pimentel Leaves Memories of Joy

*The greatest gifts you can give your children
Are the roots of responsibility and the wings
Of independence.*

—DENIS WAITLEY

Jean Paul Richter once said, “There are souls in this world which have the gift of finding joy everywhere and of leaving it behind them when they go.” Jessie Pimentel, resident at Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes for nearly 22 years, is such a soul.

“Jessie was one of our first kids at Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes,” says Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator/Development Coordinator, MSSKH/MSF. “He was just a year old when he came to live with us in 1986. He’s now twenty-two years old!”

“I saw Jessie grow up,” says Jenda Reed, former House Mom at MSSKH. “As the House Mom at Laurel Park House, I was with Jessie from the time he was two years old. I feel blessed to have watched over and worked with him. He has grown into such a fine young man.

“When Jessie was young, we always played together. He loved to play cards. We built bridges and roads and played with cars in the dirt – things that little boys like to do. As the years passed, one of our favorite things to do together was to watch the sunrise. Laurel Park House has a nice view. We got up at 5 a.m. each morning and ooh’d and aww’d at the beauty of it. We always looked forward to that.”

“Jessie has Spina Bifida,” says Jennie Ramkissoon, Staff Developer at MSSKH. Spina Bifida is a disabling birth defect in which there is a failure of the spinal column to close properly. It is the most frequently occurring, permanently disabling birth defect, affecting one out of every 1,000 newborns in the U.S. More children are affected by this condition than muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and cystic fibrosis combined. “Due to the effects of Spina Bifida, Jessie was paralyzed from the chest down, but he was cognitively our highest functioning resident.”

As most young men his age do, when Jessie matured and entered his teenage years, he began to feel the need for more independence. Says Duane Dahlin, QMRP at Laurel Park House, “Jessie was such an interesting young man. He wanted to learn about life and try new things. When I came to Laurel Park eight years ago, we knew it was time for Jessie

to experience new things. He wanted to become more independent. Over the years, he learned to cook and began to feel more empowered. He even voted in the last Presidential election.”

“Jessie grew to have many interests,” says Jenny. “He loved listening to music. The oldies stations were his favorite. He liked the Beatles, the Eagles, the Beach Boys and anything from Motown. He loved to watch old movies like *South Pacific* and he enjoyed playing Video Poker.

“Jessie went to Norte Vista High School. He was our first resident to graduate from a public high school. He went to the prom in both his junior and senior years. Jessie wore a tux. He was SO proud! He took Johanna, a girl that also lives in Laurel Park House. Several staff members volunteered their time to get her ready. You would have thought someone was getting married with all the excitement! The ‘Special Kids Paparazzi’ was waiting outside to snap pictures of the couple. It was so cool!”

*In the process of personality development,
First comes a declaration of independence...*

Thanks to the generosity of MSSKH’s Consulting Pediatrician, Dr. Rao, Jessie was given the unique opportunity to attend a major Spina Bifida conference in Minnesota. “Jessie was very excited about meeting other people with Spina Bifida,” says Duane. Jenny Ramkissoon and Jenda Reed went to the conference with Jessie. “It was fun, but it was also a lot of work,” says Jenny. “Because of his condition, Jessie has to travel with lots of big, heavy equipment. There were many ‘firsts’ for him on the trip. He was frisked for the first time at the airport, he went on his first airplane flight, first train ride, first bus ride. It was in many ways his first real taste of independence. It was a good experience for Jessie – but it was also an eye opener, not only for Jessie, but for all of us.”

“Jessie wanted to test his independence and



Jessie

Please see JESSIE on page 8

■ JENDA *(continued from page 5)*

After that, I walked on crutches for a long time. I knew it was important for me to stay physically active and eventually I started to take dance classes to strengthen my body. It helped. Today my body is strong and I walk without a limp!”

Jenda retired, after 19 years of dedicated service, on May 15th, 2008. “Jenda is a caring person with a gentle soul,” says Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator/Development Coordinator at MSSKH. “She was a loyal, responsible, model employee for many, many years. We’ll surely miss her very much!” Adds Jenny, “The children still miss her too.”

“I wish she would come back,” says Duane.

“It was very hard to leave Mountain Shadows,” says Jenda. “I really enjoyed working with the children and being a part of their lives, but it was time for me to leave. The physical demands of taking care of the children became too much for me to handle. It is time for me to take joy in other things now. I love gardening and play in my garden

everyday. I helped the children at Laurel Park grow vegetables – tomatoes, zucchini, and squash. Now I grow vegetables and flowers in my garden at home. My favorite flowers are roses. My specialty is a red and white tipped rose.”

Jenda planted and tended to the growth of seeds of many kinds at Mountain Shadows. She cultivated the soil in our garden and nurtured the souls of our children at Laurel Park house – and in the process we all reaped the magnificent and unique bounties of each.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to you, Jenda, for after your last harvest at Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes, neither a single heart nor body starved, for you gave us all both bread and roses.

*Let us be grateful to people who make us
happy; they are
The charming gardeners who make our souls
blossom.*

—Marcel Proust

■ JESSIE *(continued from page 6)*

investigate things on his own at the conference,” says Duane. “He didn’t want the staff with him.”

... Then a recognition of the need for interdependence.

—HENRY VAN DYKE

“After unsuccessful attempts to use the elevator at the hotel by himself, and then to purchase some things at the hotel store, Jessie realized he *thought* he was more capable of being independent than he really was,” says Jenny. “It was a good learning experience for all of us,” adds Duane. “Making choices, knowing one’s own limitations isn’t easy. Overnight independence doesn’t work. We had to reevaluate, take things more slowly.”

*Interdependence is and ought to be as much
The ideal of man as self-sufficiency.*

—MAHATMA GANDHI

During the next several years following the conference, our MSSKH family worked together to build a strong foundation upon which higher levels of independence could be built. Jessie began to make progress, but after a time, “he became very aware that he was different from our other Laurel Park residents,” says Jenny. “The other residents

really couldn’t play with Jessie and he felt like he wasn’t challenged enough.” Adds Duane, “The other residents of Laurel Park do not have the high level of cognitive functioning that Jessie has.”

Jessie needed and wanted a peer group that was more like him and he was ready for more independence. With the support of the MSSKH staff, Jessie chose to move to the Walker House, a 6-bed, adult facility, managed by Horrigan Enterprises.

“Jessie will surely be missed at Laurel Park house!” says Shelly. “He’s been a big part of our lives for so long. Jessie says he misses all of his friends Laurel Park, but he’s enjoying his new life journey.”

Jessie enjoyed his last sunrise at Laurel Park house on July 22, 2008.

*Some people come into our lives and quickly go.
Some stay for awhile and leave footprints on our
Hearts. And we are never, ever the same.*

Thank you Jessie, for sharing your gift of joy with all of us at Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes. We wish you only the best in your new life journey at Walker House. You will be forever in our hearts. ■

Special Kids Jungle Safari Picnic Boasts Lions & Tigers & Bears – Oh My!

Nearly 250 Mountain Shadows residents, family members and friends were recently treated to an exotic jungle safari-themed picnic at the Riverside Veterans Park.

“Everyone had a blast!” says Jenny Ramkissoon, Staff Developer at MSSKH. “We sent everyone handmade invitations that looked like real passports. All of the Special Kids Houses participated in a fun contest to decorate their ‘safari huts’ based on a jungle animal. We had the Cami Crocodiles, the Juniper Jaguars, the Darlene Dragonflies, the Glen Giraffes, etc. The residents and staff really outdid themselves. The Darlene House Dragonflies took first place. They created a great dragonfly costume which was worn by one of the residents. It was great!”

“It was a really great event,” says Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator/Development Coordinator at MSSKH. “The kids had a really fun time! They participated in a puppet show and had their faces painted.” Adds Jenny, “We also had a treasure hunt. We placed foam animal footprints all around the park and the children followed them to find treasures.”

“Everyone really enjoyed the day,” adds Duane Dahlin, QMRP at MSSKH. “The decorations were great! The whole event was very well organized. The children got to see live snakes, lizards, spiders and turtles. I think they really enjoyed that. Music was played and the residents had fun playing all types of games throughout the day. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed everything!”

There was enough scrumptious food to feed your average bear, with BBQ chicken, carne asada, rice, beans and even sno cones. “Many of the food items were donated,” says Shelly. “We also had a raffle to raise funds for the Fourth of July picnic. Several local businesses donated raffle items and we were able to raffle off coffee baskets, massage and facial baskets, and 2 beautiful handmade quilts. Altogether, we raised \$103 in the raffle.” Many thanks to all who contributed delicious dishes or donated raffle items for the event!

“Hey Boo-Boo! Let’s go get us some pick-a-nick baskets.”

—YOGI BEAR



Special Kids Fire Department Visits Spark Excitement

What is a firefighter? He's the guy next door. He's a guy like you and me with warts and worries and unfulfilled dreams. Yet he stands taller than most of us. He's a fireman. A fireman is at once the most fortunate and the least fortunate of men. He's a man who saves lives because he has seen too much death. He's a gentle man because he has seen the awesome power of violence out of control. He's responsive to a child's laughter because his arms have held too many small bodies that will never laugh again. He doesn't preach the brotherhood of man. He lives it.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

It is perhaps every little boy and girl's dream to be a firefighter. To drive the big red fire engine. To sound the engine's horn. To save people. To be a hero. Recently, thanks to the kindness and generosity of the Moreno Valley Fire Department, several of our Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes children have been able to see their dream in action.

"The fire department accepted our request to tour the fire stations and meet the firefighters during their busiest firefighting season, in the heat of the summer in Riverside County," says Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator/Development Coordinator, MSSKH/MSF. "Residents from our Special Kids Homes visited Moreno Valley Station #91, the Rubidoux Fire Station, and the Downtown Riverside Station. All of the firefighting men and women were



so hospitable and warm!

"The firefighters showed the children all around the fire stations. They let the children see their fire retardant uniforms, the water hoses, the fire trucks, the firefighter's offices and even the bunks where they sleep. Before we left, they gave each of the children Smokey the Bear coloring books and crayons, and firefighter badges. The children loved it!"

Many thanks to the hard-working, brave firefighters who selflessly gave their time to ignite the dreams of our Special Kids children.

What you call a hero, I call just doing my job.

—UNKNOWN FIREFIGHTER

Perhaps that is precisely the sentiment that makes all firefighters heroes. ■

Riverside County Fire Department Top Ten Fire Safety Tips

1. Install Smoke Detectors

WORKING SMOKE DETECTORS can alert you to a fire in your home in time for you to escape, even if you are sleeping. Install smoke detectors on every level of your home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area. If you sleep with the door closed, install one inside your sleeping area as well.

Test detectors every month, following the manufacturer's directions, and replace batteries once a year, or whenever a detector "chirps" to signal low battery power. Never "borrow" a smoke detector's battery for another use—a disabled detector can't save your life. Replace detectors that are more than 10 years old.

Please see SAFETY TIPS on page 10

■ SAFETY TIPS *(continued from page 9)*

2. Plan Your Escape from Fire

IF A FIRE BREAKS OUT in your home, you have to get out fast. Prepare for a fire emergency by sitting down with your family and agreeing on an escape plan. Be sure that everyone knows at least two unobstructed exits—doors and windows—from every room. (If you live in an apartment building, do not include elevators in your escape plan.) Decide on a meeting place outside where everyone will meet after they escape. Have your entire household practice your escape plan at least twice a year.



3. Keep an Eye on Smokers

Careless smoking is the leading cause of fire deaths in North America. Smoking in bed or when you are drowsy could be deadly. Provide smokers with a large, deep, non-tip ashtrays and soak butts with water before discarding them. Before going to bed or leaving home after someone has been smoking, check under and around cushions and upholstered furniture for smoldering cigarettes.

4. Cook Carefully

Never leave cooking unattended. Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles and wear clothes with short, rolled-up or tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. Turn pot handles inward on the stove where you can't bump them and children can't grab them. Enforce a "Kid-Free Zone" three feet (one meter) around your kitchen stove. If grease catches fire in a pan, slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames and turn off the heat. Leave the lid on until cool.

5. Give Space Heaters Space

Keep portable heaters and space heaters at least three feet (one meter) from anything that can burn. Keep children and pets away from heaters, and never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to bed.

6. Remember: Matches and Lighters are Tools, Not Toys

In a child's hand, matches and lighters can be deadly. Use only child-resistant lighters and store all matches and lighters up high, where small children can't see or reach them, preferable in a locked cabinet. Teach your children that matches and lighters are tools, not toys, and should be used only by adults or with adult supervision. Teach young children to tell a grown-up if they find matches or lighters; older children should bring matches or lighters to an adult immediately.

7. Cool a Burn

Run cool water over a burn for 10 to 15 minutes. Never put butter or any grease on a burn. If the burned skin blisters or is charred, see a doctor immediately. Never use ice.

8. Use Electricity Safely

If an electrical appliance smokes or has an unusual smell, unplug it immediately, then have it serviced before using it again. Replace any electrical cord that is cracked or frayed. Don't overload extension cords or run them under rugs. Don't tamper with your fuse box or use improper-size fuses.

9. Crawl Low Under Smoke

During a fire, smoke and poisonous gases rise with the heat. The air is cleaner near the floor. If you encounter smoke while you are escaping from a fire, use an alternate escape route.

10. Stop, Drop and Roll

If your clothes catch fire, don't run. Stop where you are, drop to the ground, cover your face with your hands, and roll over and over to smother the flames.

**Taken from the Moreno Valley Fire Department Website.*

Special Kids Traveling Art Project Gains Momentum

At Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes, we celebrate and support the creative spirit that resides within each of our children. To advance our mission of encouraging and inspiring our children's creativity and imagination, we have launched a collaborative Special Kids Traveling Art Project. The first brush strokes immortalized on this exciting, interactive traveling painting were made during the Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes Fourth of July celebration.

Ruth Hill, RN Consultant at MSSKH, and Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator/Development Coordinator at MSSKH/MSF, assisted all of the children at the Fourth of July event, one by one, in creating their own unique stroke of artistry on the canvas. "It was a fun time!" says Shelly. "The children living at Moreno Valley Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes weren't able to attend the Fourth of July cel-

ebration at Laurel Park House, so the painting has been traveling for the past month to all of the various Moreno Valley Homes. So far, the painting has been taken to Sheila Marie, Maggie Marsh, Darlene, and Lindley Lane Houses.

"The children in each house have made their personalized brush stroke and have imprinted the work with their individual handprints. Several children living in the Riverside area still need to leave their special touch on this heartfelt work of art in progress. The Special Kids Traveling Art Project is scheduled to be completed in September of 2008."

Art is unquestionably one of the purest and highest elements in human happiness. It trains the mind through the eye, and the eye through the mind. As the sun colors flowers, so does art color life.

—JOHN LUBBOCK, SR.



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