

# PROJECT UNDERSTANDING NEWS

A newsletter for the volunteers  
and supporters of Project  
Understanding

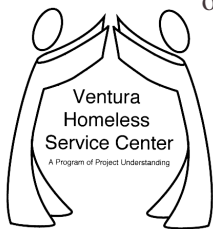
Volume XVIII No. 5

May 2003



## Homeless Center Site Selection Committee Completes Work

The Ventura Homeless Center Site Selection Committee has completed its work and has submitted its report to the board of directors of Project Understanding.



The committee, which was chaired by Ventura City Councilmember Neal Andrews, was comprised of about 20 members who represented various community interests. These included the business and faith communities, the neighborhood councils, members from city and county government as well as the non-profit community.

The committee spent several months establishing the criteria against which sites would be measured. Only after the criteria were adopted did they begin looking at specific sites. In all, nearly 70 sites were suggested and considered. This list was finally refined to what was considered a manageable number of the best sites.

This short list has been submitted to the board of directors of Project Understanding which approved it and has forwarded it to the City Council for adoption and action.

At press time, it is projected that the City Council will address this report at the Council meeting on May 5. We invite our supporters to attend that Council meeting. You need not speak (unless you wish to) but you will be asked to stand and show your support for the Homeless Service Center and for the hard work of the Site Selection Committee.

This day has been a long time in coming and there is still a long way to go. Nevertheless, we applaud this important step toward making the Homeless Service Center a reality. ♦

## Rummage Sale Needs Rummage

Project Understanding is accepting new and gently used working items for their rummage sale to be held on Saturday, May 17, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Eastminster Presbyterian Church at 8180 Telephone Rd., Ventura.

Please call Aina Barber at (805) 642-9171 to arrange for the pick-up of your items or to drop them off.

Sorry, we cannot take large furniture or appliances. ♦

## Congregations Heartily Give Support to People in Need

By Jeannette Longwill  
Homeless Service Center  
Volunteer

*Editor's Note: Project Understanding relies on the generous donations of many individuals and groups. This month we highlight three of the many congregations, businesses and organizations that have supported us during the past year, and we express our deep appreciation to all of our supporting groups.*

The dream of building a Homeless Service Center in Ventura has been close to the hearts of many. Several local congregations have decided to help make this dream become a reality. Sacred Heart Catholic Church is one example.

### Sacred Heart Raises \$11,000

Through the leadership and support of the pastor, Reverend Daniel O'Sullivan, Sacred Heart parish launched a campaign on the weekend of March 15 and 16 to raise awareness, support and funds for the Homeless Service Center. Rick Pearson spoke at all six services,

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## Sacred Heart

Continued From Page 1

informing people about the project and encouraging them to give support through prayer, funds, and later by volunteering at the center. The response was tremendous.

To date, \$11,000 has been donated through the generosity of this parish and a list of 30 potential volunteers has been generated. Father O'Sullivan and his congregation pledge their ongoing support of this important and much needed facility.

This wonderful response is not surprising. Sacred Heart Church has supported Project Understanding over the years in numerous ways. Its members provided meals and volunteers for the Vince Corner Shelter and for Family to Family. Some have served on the board of directors. Others continue to volunteer in the Food Pantry and tutoring program.

Other parish programs demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the needs of the less fortunate. The first Sunday of every month, parishioners are encouraged to bring nonperishable food items. These are collected by a core of volunteers and delivered to Catholic Charities.

Father O'Sullivan's dedication to the poor has inspired the parish to become active in the Saint Vincent De Paul Society. This organization identifies and assists individuals and families on a case-by-case basis. Parishioners donate the funding, clothing, and food throughout the year.

Sacred Heart has also established a Global Awareness

Ministry through which 10% of the monthly collections are distributed to the poor throughout the world. One-third is given to a Third World mission, one-third is given to a Southern United States mission, and one-third is given to a local organization that assists the poor of our community. Sacred Heart and Father O'Sullivan show how a faith community can put the theology of service into action through their commitment and caring. We thank them for their generosity and ongoing support.

### Supporting Congregations

The following congregations supported Project Understanding last year:

Church for the Nations  
 Church of Religious Science  
 Church of the Foothills  
 College United Methodist Church  
 Community of Christ Church  
 Community Presbyterian Church  
 Eastminster Presbyterian Church  
 Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
 First Baptist Church of Ojai  
 First Baptist Church of Ventura  
 First Christian Church  
 First Lutheran Church  
 First United Methodist Church, Ventura  
 Grace Lutheran Church  
 Ojai Presbyterian Church  
 Ojai United Methodist Church  
 Our Lady of Assumption Church  
 Sathya Sai Baba Center of Ventura  
 Second Church of Christ, Scientist  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Santa Paula  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Ventura  
 St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
 Temple Beth Torah  
 The Bridge  
 Trinity Community Church  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Trinity Presbyterian Church of Camarillo  
 Unitarian Universalist Church  
 United Methodist Church of Westlake Village  
 Ventura Interfaith Ministerial Association  
 Ventura Missionary Baptist Church  
 Ventura Missionary Church  
 Westminster Presbyterian Church ♦

## Chiropractor to Donate Services for a Day

*Editor's Note: The following is a letter sent by Dr. Alff to his patients. We thank Dr. Alff for his generous support.*

Dear Patient,

You know, not enough people in the world these days acknowledge and appreciate friends and loved ones. Business owners don't appreciate their customers and doctors don't show their



patients that they really care. So, I'm writing to you personally to let you know I'm not like that and to say thank you for being my patient and making my practice and life so wonderful!

Anyway, I have a dream to make a difference in the world and desperately need your help. Here's the deal: I've been blessed with a good year and I want to give something back to this great community.

So what I've decided to do is on April 29 to work an entire day for free and give all the money, every red cent I collect, to charity.

Here's how its going to work: You pick up the phone right now and schedule an appointment and mention this letter. When you come in on that day, you will give me a check for any amount you feel comfortable giving, made out to "Project Understanding." Project Understanding is a local organization whose purpose is

See Dr. Alff, Page 3

## Dr. Alff

### Continued From Page 2

to meet the needs of the less fortunate. Some of these needs include assistance in attaining food and shelter, volunteer tutors for children, and assistance in job attainment and other services.

No insurance will be billed for that day. Your entire day will be covered by whatever amount you would like to donate.

You should also tell as many friends as you can about this because I'll let any of your friends have their first day's services for whatever they want to donate too. That includes an exam, consultation, MyoVision computerized spinal test, X-ray, and whatever else they need. They just have to write a check out to charity.

My goal is to raise at least \$1,500, and I'm confident, with your help we can easily blow that away.

The best thing about this is if you donate \$50 all by yourself, it wouldn't mean much to anybody. But if we have 100 people, all donating \$50, now you can be part of a massive action that changes lives to the tune of \$5,000. Of course, if you cannot donate \$50, any amount of donation will be appreciated.

And, we all know the best way to get something yourself is to help someone else first. Basically, whatever you give, comes back to you in one form or another. No good deed goes unnoticed. So do you really think you can miss the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful thing?

It's time to start reaching

out your hand and helping others who are just trying to survive. Just trying to get through another day. Have enough food for one more meal. I promise, it will be your first step towards a life filled with REAL success and REAL happiness. The first step towards making the world a better and warmer place for us all to live.

Anyway, what you need to do next is call Honey at my office at (805) 648-7987 and tell her you'd like to schedule this special visit and help make someone's dream come true. She will give you the rest of the information you need.

Give her a call right now, before you forget or it's too late. It will change your life.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Steven L. Alff

### Supporting Businesses

The following businesses have supported Project Understanding during the last year:

AAA Club  
Adventures For Kids  
Affinity Bank  
Albertson's, Telegraph Rd.  
Anacapa Bread Company  
Anchor Printing & Graphics  
Aztec Roofing  
Barnes & Noble Booksellers  
Cottage Café, Friends and Patrons  
Gallardo & Associates  
Gumballs Etc.  
Holiday Inn  
IAPES  
Kinko's  
Leslie's Hallmark  
Longs Drug Store  
Lucy in the Sky  
Mission Uniform & Linen Service  
Office Depot  
Ojai Valley Kenpo Karate  
Pierpont Inn  
Pyne Waltrip Lippert & Olson  
Ralphs in Moorpark  
Rite Aid on Thompson Blvd.  
Santa Barbara Harley Club/On Track Ministry  
Stan's Distributors  
Target Stores

Toy Metropolis  
Trader Joe's  
Ventura County Star  
Ventura Pest Control  
Victoria's Jewelers  
Vons Grocery, Harbor Blvd.  
Vons Grocery, Telegraph Road  
Vons Grocery, Thompson Blvd.  
Weyerhaeuser Company ♦

## Boy Scouts Collect Over 17,000 Cans

By Charlie Fletcher, Pantry Volunteer

Once again the Boy Scouts of Ventura County contributed greatly to the Food Pantry at Project Understanding. Their food drive in mid February was highly successful. There were well over 17,000 items contributed, brought in and stored by the scouts and their leaders.

The drive was so well directed by Cindi Dolan and Jacqueline Boswell, repeating their success of last year.

On that day each year, these Scouts and their leaders work tirelessly. They go door to door collecting food. They carry that food to their vehicles. They unload the food at Project Understanding and count and sort it. Then they put it away so it is readily available for distribution.

We have come to depend heavily on the efforts of the Boy Scouts each year to help keep the pantry shelves filled. We truly appreciate their hard work and enthusiasm.

### Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have supported Project Understanding during last year:

Alliance for the Mentally Ill

See Boy Scouts, Page 5

## Board of Directors



**Judy Alexandre**, President  
**Jackie Manley**, Vice President  
**Barbara Tomblin**, Secretary  
**Don Cline**, Treasurer  
**Karen Campbell**  
**Mary Carr**  
**James Hornstein**  
**Hon. Melinda Johnson** (retired)  
**Roy Schneider**  
**Ann Tobin**

## Staff



**Rick Pearson**  
Executive Director  
**Joe Anguiano**  
Pantry Coordinator  
**Lynn Austin**  
Program Manager  
**Kari Brogdin**  
Business Manager  
**Bobbye Condron**  
Clerical Support  
**Regina Fitz-Gerald**  
Housing Case Manager  
**Kendra Folsom**  
Administrative Assistant  
**Renee Hall**  
SARAH Coordinator  
**Sheila Kay**  
Transitional Housing Case Manager  
**Shari Kempton**  
SARAH Coordinator  
**Kathryn Meza**  
Community Health Outreach  
**Jennifer Richards**  
Morning Receptionist  
**Linda Simson**  
Reception Center Coordinator  
**Marcia Wakelee**  
Tutoring Coordinator

*“What does the LORD require  
of you but to do justice, and to  
love kindness, and to walk  
humbly with your God?”*

*Micah 6:8*

## Our Mission and Programs

### Mission

**P**roject Understanding is a faith-based agency founded and established on the principles and ideals of Judaism and Christianity whose mission is twofold: To do justice by serving the poor, hungry and oppressed with compassion and mercy, and to provide avenues for those who wish to serve others.

### Programs

Project Understanding initiates, develops, and maintains special projects pulling together the efforts of individual local churches and groups to meet the needs of the less fortunate. The programs are:

#### Reception Center

A program that utilizes an intake process with skilled, supportive listeners to minister to and assess the needs of individuals and families in order to make appropriate referrals.

#### Focus on Food Emergency Food Pantry

A pantry program designed to help homeless and hungry people through times of crisis. The Pantry provides recipients with a three-day supply of food.

#### SARAH (Simply Arranging Real Assistance Here)

A source of basic services for homeless people. Services include shower and laundry facilities, a mail and message center for job seekers, and assistance in attaining food and shelter.

#### Ventura County Hunger Coalition

A network of church and community-based groups and individuals committed to eliminating domestic and world hunger through communications, advocacy, networking, education, and action.

#### Tutoring Station

To assist economically disadvantaged children, this program provides one hour per week of extra classroom instruction with volunteer tutors in one-to-one interaction at five locations in Ventura and Oxnard.

#### Religious Coalition for the Homeless

Churches and synagogues joining in faith-based action to provide transitional shelter and a voice for the homeless of Ventura County.

#### Emergency Shelter

Project Understanding is working with a coalition of interested agencies and individuals to provide year-round emergency shelter for homeless people.

## Boy Scouts

### Continued From Page 3

Assistance League of the Conejo Valley  
 Blanche Reynolds Open Classroom  
 Boy Scouts of America  
 Buena High School  
 California State Employees Association  
 Camarillo Postal Workers  
 Campus Crusade  
 Child Abuse Thrift Store  
 City of San Buenaventura  
 Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence  
 County of Ventura  
 Delta Kappa Gamma, Oxnard Camarillo Chapter  
 Delta Theta Tau Sorority Zeta Epsilon Chapter  
 East Ventura Lions Club  
 FOOD Share  
 Friendship Connection  
 Girl Scouts of Tres Condados  
 Green Cure  
 Jewish Family Service  
 National Association of Retired Federal Employees  
 National Charity League  
 Native Daughters of the Golden West One Again  
 Pierpont Racquet Club  
 Poinsettia Elementary School  
 Pythian Sisters  
 Rain Project  
 Rotary Club of Ventura East  
 San Buenaventura Women's Club  
 Sheridan Way Elementary School  
 Sons of Norway  
 Soroptimist International of Ventura  
 Teen Challenge  
 Thacher School  
 The Donors Choice Foundation  
 United Way  
 Ventura County Firemen's Firefighter's Assn.  
 Ventura County Public Health  
 Ventura East Lions Club  
 Ventura High School  
 Ventura Unified School District ♦

## More Wonderful Student Tutors

This year the tutoring program has been blessed by many wonderful high school students who have volunteered as tutors. They come from

Buena, Ventura, Foothill Technology, Saint Bonaventure and Villanova high schools. The following tutors are in addition to those Buena students who were recognized in last month's newsletter. Many thanks to everyone!

### Avenue Site

Alek Broude  
 Nicole Buckner  
 Justine Caley  
 Matt Diebolt  
 Liz Gilbert  
 Ashelei Higuera  
 Jessica Minnier  
 Shaun O'Hollaren  
 Miguel Perez  
 Nick Stelzer  
 Aneta Todd

### Eastminster Site

Daniel Ashby  
 Richard Esquerra  
 Miki Hoshimoto  
 Rachel Munyon  
 Hayley Strauss

### Lincoln Site

Marisa Blume  
 Allie Browne  
 Ashley Browne  
 Hailey Loman  
 Chantal McCreith  
 Marla Pontrelli  
 Scarlett Williams

### Saticoy Site

Eliza Kinrose  
 Julianna Lacoste  
 Kelly Olivier  
 Lindsay Sullivan ♦

## Helpers Needed for the Avenue Summer Program

The Avenue Tutoring Center will hold it's annual Summer Enrichment Program from June 30 through July 10.

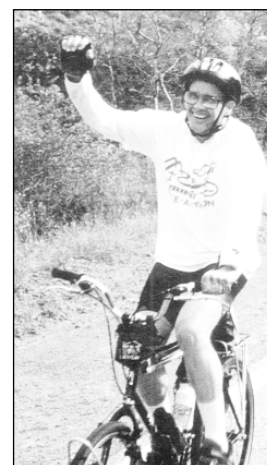
Focusing on the theme of "The Ocean," students will spend some days at the center and will also go on field trips to expand their horizons. Volunteers can help in many ways such as working with students, driving students on field trips, providing healthful snacks, and sharing special talents and skills. People with knowledge of the ocean (tide pools, marine mammals, etc.) are especially needed. If you could help, please call Marcia Wakelee at 652-1326, Ext. 34. ♦

## Norm Hudson to Ride Sea to Summit Once Again

Saturday, May 18, will be the 30th Annual Sea to Summit 100-Mile Bike Ride and, for the 22nd time, Norm Hudson will be a participant.

This is a grueling ride which climbs 8,000 feet in just under 100 miles from near Ventura to the Mount Pinos Summit.

The purpose of the ride is twofold: to test the strength and endurance of the riders and to raise funds for various nonprofit organizations,



Project Understanding included.

Help us give Norm something to ride for this year.

You can support Norm by sending us a pledge in his name (either per mile ridden or flat rate for the whole ride) and help

## Thank You to Supporters of Project Understanding

**Thank you to the following people and groups who contributed cash during the month of March:**

**Individuals**

James & Joanne Abing  
Brenda Absmeier  
Carlos & Oralia Acuna  
Judy Alexandre  
Richard & Judith Allen  
Aureo & Lourdes Alviar  
Ruben & Terrie Andrade  
Mary & Thomas Anthony  
Helen Archer  
William & Dorothy Asano  
Roy & Mary Lou Ash  
Lorraine Ballance  
Marion Baranowski  
Thomas & Ruth Barragan  
Patricia Barrett  
Loye Barton  
Robert & Marilynn Batelaan  
Denise Baylor  
Beverly Benitez  
Oskar & Anne Benzel  
May Lee Berry  
Elizabeth Blanchard  
Donna Boeck  
Glen & Sue Bolton  
Barbara Born  
Edward & Mary Bozek  
Violet & James Brodie  
Robert Bronson  
Martha & Richard Brunner  
John & Eleanor Buchanan  
David Burgeson  
Bill & Loretta Burton  
Jimmy & Linda Bushong  
Martin & Janice Cafarelli  
Richard & Laura Calzada  
Jeff & Karen Campbell  
Thomas & Joan Carr  
Margaret Castor  
Ray & Idolina Ceniseroz  
Rose Chacon  
James & Susan Cheek  
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Walter Clark  
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Dominic & Frances Destito  
Diana Dillaway  
Thelma Dionne  
Helen Dirkes  
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Charles & Margaret Dunn  
Alfonso Duran Jr.  
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Ed & Beverly Eidson  
Thomas & Christine Ellis  
Patricia Ellison  
James & Lelita Emch  
Florence England  
Fred & Martha Engle  
Yvonne Esler  
Duane & Joan Essex  
Frederick & Lynda Evans  
Betty Lou Evans  
Kayte Evans  
John & Ruth Farnham  
Robert & Lynne Farrow  
Warren & Ardella Faue  
Joe & Kim Fiano  
Howard Finnegan  
Kenneth & Deirdra Finning  
Bryan & Carrie Fisch  
William & Beverly Flothmeier  
Edris Fowkes  
Sue Ellen Fowler  
Miriam Fraser  
Judy Friedland  
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Robert & Barbara Garrison  
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Charles & Paige Giacchi  
Brian & Ingrid Giammichele  
Ricky & Cheri Gibson  
Robert & Betty Gips

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Albert Goldberg  
Carmen Gomez-Lee  
Luciano & Maria Gonzalez  
Candy & Paul Gooding  
Glen & Lisa Gorski  
Richard & Christine Goulette  
Gene & De Lois Greer  
William & Doris Greig  
Iris Gruwell  
Christoph Haar  
Ronald & Pickens Halt  
William & Catherine Hannah  
Robert & Shirley Hargarten  
Ivan Harkey  
Wilma Hays  
Jane Helm  
Susan Henderson  
Brendan & Tracey Hendrick  
Harry & Dorothy Hicks  
Barbara Hill  
Ruth Hiltermann  
Jymmye Hitch-Banhart  
Charles & Vicky Holmstrom  
Wylie Horn  
Mark & Odette Huber  
Ronald & Barbara Hudoba  
Carroll & Dorothy Hudson  
Norman & Ann Hudson  
JoAnn Jackley  
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Laura Longwill  
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Mary Lozano-Garcia  
Candida Lucy  
Lupe Lujan  
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Jean Nussman  
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Joann Ontiveros  
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Joe & Lu Parr  
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Wallace & Hope Pearson  
Hector & Maria Perez  
Nicholas & Nita Perkins  
Louise Perry  
Michele Pierpoint  
John & Mary Poindexter  
Greg & Kathy Potenza  
John & Anna Powell  
Ventura & Natalie Prado  
Sharron Price  
Tom & Pamela Prinz  
Virginia & Gilbert Quinonez  
Pascual & Sylvia Ramirez  
Nancy Reed  
David & Thayer Reese  
Bruce Reeve Family Trust  
Diane Rennell

## Thank You to Supporters of Project Understanding

Iris Reznick  
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 John & Laura Whyte  
 Barbara Wiggins  
 Indranee Wijesekera  
 Robert & Victoria Willard  
 Doris Williams  
 Sharon Williams  
 Lorena Willis  
 Walter & Anne Wilson  
 Kathleen Wilson  
 Ted Yzaguirre

In honor of:  
 Bill & Roz Sherman  
 Given by:  
 Bruce & Signe Smale

In honor of:  
 Carol Dawes  
 Given by:  
 Norma Jean Schneider

In honor of:  
 Cynthia Hashbarger's  
 "special" birthday  
 Given by:  
 Les & Judy Vielbig

In memory of:  
 My grandmother, Olivia  
 Gussner  
 Given by:  
 Robert & Sharon Fleur

In memory of:  
 Stephen Skoe  
 Given by:  
 Jerry & Bernice Baird  
 Jean Kenworthy  
 Luther & Kay Tolo  
 Hazel Kay

In memory of:  
 Elsie Carr  
 Given by:  
 Jeanette Ross

### Churches & Organizations

Church for the Nations  
 Church of the Foothills  
 City of San Buenaventura  
 County of Ventura  
 Eastminster Presbyterian  
 Church  
 First Assembly of God of  
 Ventura  
 First Baptist Church of Ojai  
 Head Magazine  
 Jenkins Drywall, Inc.  
 Kinko's  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
 of Ventura  
 Trinitas  
 United Way of Central  
 Maryland  
 United Way of Los Angeles  
 County  
 Westminster Presbyterian  
 Church

**Thank you to the following  
 people and groups who  
 contributed food and other  
 items to our program in  
 March:**

### Individuals

Robert Anderson & Rose  
 Marie Voelker  
 Lawrence & Teresa Barker  
 Lisa Bower  
 Art Cox  
 Scott Cramolini  
 Jeanine Faria  
 Ted Heath  
 Fannie Hutchison  
 John Lomagno  
 Don & Lucy Lyman  
 Helen O'Donnell  
 Jessica Smith  
 Zera Waggoner

### Churches & Organizations

Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
 Anacapa Bread Company  
 College United Methodist  
 Church  
 Community of Christ Church

East Ventura Lions Club  
 Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
 First Christian Church  
 FOOD Share  
 Grace Lutheran Church  
 IAPES  
 Leslie's Hallmark  
 Longs Drug Store  
 Longs Drug Store, Victoria  
 Ave.  
 Mission Uniform & Linen  
 Services  
 Ojai Valley Kenpo Karate  
 Rain Project  
 San Buenaventura Women's  
 Club  
 Sons of Norway  
 Soroptimist International of  
 Ventura  
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
 of Ventura  
 Trader Joe's  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Trinity Presbyterian Church  
 of Camarillo  
 Unitarian Universalist Church  
 Ventura Missionary Church  
 Vons Grocery, Harbor Blvd.  
 Vons Grocery, Telegraph Rd.

## Donate Your Car



## Cars4Causes

**The Charity That  
 Gives to Charities**

Donate your car, truck,  
 boat or RV to benefit  
 Project Understanding

**1-800-766-2273**



Rheto-Rick

## Put It There, Partner

By Rick Pearson  
Executive Director

“Partner.” My earliest memory of the word is from television westerns where the word was usually pronounced, “pod-ner” and was used to refer to anyone who was not addressed as “Ma’am.”

I remember being particularly confused by the phrase, “Put it there, partner,” when cowboys offered to shake hands.

But recently I have developed a new and deeper appreciation for the word “partner” and the relationship it describes.

As you will read elsewhere in this issue, the Homeless Service Center Site Selection Committee has produced a short list of primary sites for the placement of the center. After some five years of efforts it is beginning to look like the center might become a reality.

We still have a long way to go but we have come to where we are because of our many strong partners. Partners like the Ventura Social Service Task Force to whom the original vision of the center belongs. And partners like our nonprofit colleagues who have continued to share that vision with us. And partners like our many supporters who have shared the walk with us.

But I especially want to lift up our partnership with the City of Ventura. A little over a year ago, the City Council made the creation of a year-round homeless center one of the 15 points in their two-year action plan. Toward that end, the City Council appointed Council-member Neal Andrews to serve on the Site Selection Committee. And City Manager Donna Landeros made available city staff members Peter Brown and Nicole Doner to assist in the process where they could. We deeply appreciate this partnership.

To all of our partners in the effort to create the Ventura Homeless Service Center we say, “Put it there, partner.” ♦

## Highlights

**P. 1:** Homeless Center Site Selection Committee completes work.

Rummage Sale needs rummage.

Congregations heartily give support to people in need.

**P. 2:** Chiropractor to donate services for a day.

**P. 3:** Boy Scouts collect over 17,000 food items.

**P. 5:** More wonderful student tutors.

Helpers needed for the Avenue summer program.

Norm Hudson to ride Sea to Summit once again.



Project Understanding  
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