

The Rising Tide

The Official Newsletter of North Valley Caring Services, Inc.

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Summer, 2006

Special points of interest:

- Saturday Child Development classes for Adults will begin in July.
- 8 children graduate from the Early Childhood Education Program to begin Kindergarten.
- Elected officials present certificates to Bike-a-thon organizers—36 cyclists receive medals.
- 28 parents graduate from PCILA Parent Education Training.

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Challenges Meet Opportunities at NVCS

A Message From **Becky Haase**, Board President.

The residents of North Hills face many difficult challenges—crime, poverty, unemployment, language difficulties, and more. In the midst of these challenges, opportunities abound for NVCS to improve the quality of life of our neighbors.

Our **varied programs** provide education in language skills, computer use, healthy lifestyles, social interaction, and parenting. Our **dedicated staff** serve as role models as they deliver services with care and compassion.

NVCS hosted its Second Annual Bike-a-thon event on April 1st. Leading the 43 cyclists was United Methodist Church **Bishop Mary Ann Swenson**. Riders included 81-year-old Chatsworth UMC member Alma Hartman, who commented, "I felt immense support from everyone the whole time I was riding." The "Onion" (Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society) bike riders ranged from age 5 to Onion member Ad Lockwood who is in his 80's.

Starting point was the NVCS campus with **Councilman Alex**

Our **committed volunteers** allow us to provide expanded services well beyond what staff could do alone. And our **generous donors** undergird it all.

NVCS faces the **continual challenge** of funding these important services. We are **grateful for the foundations, agencies, churches, and individuals** who provide ongoing support. We **invite you to take the opportunity to work with us** by being a donor or volunteer. **Opportunities meet challenges at NVCS.**

A Message From **Leonora Barron**, Executive Director

The last six months has been an exciting and rewarding time for NVCS. We have strengthened our core operations, expanded services and the future looks even more promising as we embark on new collaborations and pursue new funding. Highlighted in this Newsletter are some of the changes taking place on the NVCS campus.

Riding for a Cause

Padilla and Assembly member Cindy Montañez wishing everyone safe riding on this 26-mile route through the San Fernando Valley. Riders stopped briefly at several Churches where refreshments and well wishers cheered them on. The last leg was into the Paseo Sepulveda Shopping Center

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Councilman Alex Padilla (left) and Assembly member Cindy Montañez pose with riders.

Families enjoyed themselves at the Teacher and

SPECIAL CELEBRATION

On May 11th NVCS celebrated Teacher's Appreciation Day, giving English as a Second Language (ESL) students a chance to give back to their teachers. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful catered lunch, refreshments, and cake. Mother's Day was also celebrated and parents received hand-made gifts and cards.

Janet Martinez poses with her children during celebration

Riding for a Cause, (Cont.)

where fun events, free giveaways, and delicious food courtesy of Don Chente's Restaurant awaited the now-weary riders. The day ended for the riders with a Medal Ceremony conducted by NVCS Board Treasurer **Ken Ellis** and PrimeStor co-partner **Leandro Tyberg**.

The event raised over **\$12,000** which will benefit

NVCS programs. We are grateful to our co-sponsors: **United Methodist Churches, PrimeStor Development, and Galpin Motors**. A special thanks to the Paseo Sepulveda merchants who provided so many goodies to all those who came to join in this event. NVCS looks forward to next year with high hopes of repeated great success.



Rider Alma Hartman with Bishop Mary Ann Swenson.

Sending Food to the Hungry

On Saturday, May 13, NVCS sponsored its 4th Annual Food Drive made possible by the **Agoura Hills Post Office**. Residents were asked to place non-perishable food items by their mailboxes for letter carriers to pick up. Breakfast Program volunteers, clients, staff Board members, and NVCS friends all worked together loading 3,000 pounds of food for the NVCS food pantry.

The food collected will go directly to over 1,100

homeless and low-income families that receive a warm breakfast and bags of groceries through our Breakfast and Food Pantry programs. The Early Childhood Education Program will also receive a portion to provide snacks for children 0 to 5 years. Thanks to the generous donations of residents in Agoura Hills, the postal workers who collected the donations, **Galpin Motors** for donating the rental trucks that made the pick up possible and all the volunteers that helped

out, many families in the North Hills area will receive much needed food.



Food drive volunteers pose for picture.

New to NVCS: Project Amigo

Starting on June 14, Project Amigo, a Neighborhood Watch Program geared toward the Spanish-speaking community, will be on NVCS campus. The purpose is to keep the community apprised of crime issues in this area, with participants encouraged to be the "eyes" and "ears" of the police in order to reduce crime. **Senior Lead Offi-**

cer Ed Dominguez, of LAPD Community Liaison will be leading the meetings and plans to give the community a voice in crime prevention. Meetings will be held at 6:00 pm on the **second Wednesday** of every month at the Sepulveda United Methodist Church Gymnasium.

Next Meeting of Project Amigo will be held on July 12th We Hope to see everyone there!!

A Personal Word from One of Our Sponsors:



PrimeStor Development co-partner Leandro Tyberg, poses with Tomas Dueñas and Yency Rosa during Medal Ceremony.

There is a difference between "being a resident in a City" versus "being part of a community". A "community" is built by people who care for one another and care about their children's futures. The Bike-a-thon was a "community event", not a race. It brought people from as far as Pasadena (the Bishop), Anaheim (some bike riders), Pastors from Van Nuys, State Assembly member Cindy Montanez, City Council member Alex Padilla, and local residents together to make a statement that what North Valley

Caring Services does makes a difference in people's lives, that what they do matters. They are taking care of our community.

PrimeStor is proud to be a sponsor and be a part of this event. We are committed to doing this next year as well. Personally, I enjoyed meeting all the riders, seeing the huge smiles on their faces at the finish line, and am proud to be a part of the revitalization happening in North Hills.

On to the Next Level for ESL Students

In February 2006, North Valley Caring Services (NVCS) proudly announced a **classroom expansion** for ESL students. In collaboration with Van Nuys Adult School, instructor **William Harvin** is on NVCS campus to teach this new class. 28 students passed the CASAS language proficiency exam and are now ready to begin Intermediate level classes. This expansion also includes a **new Early Childhood Education**

Room. Grouping of children has been adjusted: 18 months to 3 years in one classroom, older 3-5 year olds in a second classroom, with children 0 to 18 months remaining in the infant room. The **Northridge United Methodist Women's Group** has generously contributed new furniture including a rocking chair, cubbies, book shelves, tables and chairs, as well as books, toys and puppets. Parents, children and NVCS staff

are very thankful for these donations.



Pat Small from the Northridge United Methodist Women's Group with 5-month-old Axel Santiago in rocking chair donated for the Infant Room.

It Takes One to Know One

Luis Contrerasdiaz grew up in the North Hills community. He admits that as a teen, he was often skipping school and getting into trouble. To get away from negative neighborhood influences and "get back on track", Luis chose a career in the Army, where he served for 7 years. Returning to school, he studied Computer Engineering. Soon after, Luis decided to come back to his community with the hope of helping

other troubled youths like he had been. He began fulfilling his dream by becoming a



Luis (center) poses with his NAP kids.

volunteer computer recreation teacher at NVCS two years ago while working on his own higher education.

Today, Luis is the Youth Services Program Director for the After School Program at NVCS. He is directly involved in designing and leading the activities which include homework assistance, computer instruction, arts, and crafts, and

The youngsters who attend his program are from lower income families, have academic problems, and need a constructive alternative to their otherwise hectic lives. "I feel enormous gratification when I see my kids earning better grades, improving their reading, and having an overall positive attitude," said Luis.



FIRST CLASS

North Valley Caring Services, Inc.

15435 Rayen Street
North Hills, CA 91343

Phone: (818) 891-0481

Fax: (818) 830-2007

E-mail: lbarron@nvcsinc.org



Special Thanks to the Churches that Supported the Bike-a-thon

from our clients, staff, and the Board of Directors

Sepulveda United Methodist Church

Trinity United Methodist Church

El Mesias United Methodist Church

Valley Korean United Methodist Church

Northridge United Methodist Church

St. John's in the Valley United Methodist Church

Valley Central United Methodist Church

Reseda First United Methodist Church

Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society

North Valley Caring Services, Inc.

WISH LIST

After School Program

- Books for children 6 to 12
- Stereo
- PG Rated Videos

Preschool Program

- Spanish/English Dictionaries
- Tricycles for children ages 3 to 5
- TV with VCR & DVD Player

Breakfast Program

- Towels
- Hygiene supplies (e.g. shampoo, soap)
- Perishable Food (e.g. eggs, margarine)

Contact our new Outreach Coordinator
Ivette Pineda; more about Ms. Pineda in our next issue.