

PIA Works for Volunteer Coordinator, Mental Health Services

by Mark Ruzon

Now that the Opportunity Center is on its way to construction, a group from the religious community is focusing on ensuring the services in the center are as effective as possible. On May 25, members of the Catholic Community at Stanford, in conjunction with Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA), held a public meeting to announce its vision to create a paid volunteer coordinator position at the center, and to ensure that the medical and mental health services provided are as comprehensive as possible. To help implement this vision, they formed a partnership with CWG President Don Barr, InnVision COO John Holland, and Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss. In addition, Supervisor Kniss committed to assist in finding the resources for the position.

PIA leaders from the Catholic Community stated that, in an era of tight budgets, it becomes more important to utilize the talents and resources of the community to maximize the benefit of limited funds. "Getting people involved will be critical to the success of this center. We also need to remember that when our neighbors live better, we all live better," noted Dr. Julie Weitlauf, a clinical psychologist and PIA leader.

Community Campaign Wraps Up a Success

by Trina Lovercheck

With help from co-sponsors **The Sobrato Family Foundation, Gray Cary Ware and Freidenrich, and The Palo Alto Weekly**, as well as an energetic group of volunteers and broad support from the community, the



Campaign Director Jeff Vamos (left) receiving a check from representatives of Grace Lutheran Church's 50th Anniversary Fund Committee, Pastor Randall Wilburn, Don Ostrus, and Dan Logan (seated).

Opportunity Center Community Campaign has now exceeded its \$1 million goal. Generous support has come from all segments of the community: individuals, businesses, faith, foundations, and government.

To highlight just a few recent gifts: a \$35 contribution from two children in memory of their favorite aunt who recently passed away. From the corporate sector, **HP** put us over the top of our campaign goal with their generous gift, which followed a similar gift from **Agilent**. Local businesses, such as **Mid-Peninsula Bank, Letter Perfect, McKenna Family Dentistry, Phyllis** (women's clothing store) and others, opened up their hearts and checkbooks. We received donations and pledges from campaigns at **First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto** and **Grace Lutheran Church**, as well as being designated as one of the charities for the collections at **Stanford Memorial Church** and **Ladera Community Church**. **The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation**, the **Union Bank of California Foundation** and the **Comerica Charitable Foundation** all made contributions. The **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill** presented us with their second check at the groundbreaking festivities. For the second year in a row, **Lantana House** (the Stanford public service dormitory) students sponsored an arcade night to raise funds for the Opportunity Center and doubled last year's donation.

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Get On Our Mailing List:

If you know anyone who is interested in the Opportunity Center project, please contact us so we can add them to the mailing list!



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Visit www.opportunitycenter.org
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OPPORTUNITY CENTER Newsletter

SUMMER 2004



Community
Working
Group
A COMMUNITY RESPONSE
TO HOMELESSNESS

The mission of the Opportunity Center is to promote human dignity both by providing for very basic needs of persons in our community, and by offering them the opportunity to find housing and a stable life. The center serves the entire community as it responds to the problem of homelessness and poverty, which affects everyone.

A Month of Milestones: Celebrate With Us!



"A Joint Effort". Joining together to turn the first shovelful are: Don Barr, CWG President; Christine Burroughs, InnVision CEO; Bern Beecham, Palo Alto Mayor; Liz Kniss, Santa Clara County Supervisor; Susan Packard Orr, Honorary Campaign Co-Chair; Frank Benest, Palo Alto City Manager; Sherry Simmons, Housing Authority Commissioner of Santa Clara County; and Jim Burklo, outgoing CWG Vice-President. Rev. David Mann, Executive Director of Peninsula Interfaith Action, did the "blessing of the shovel."

Opportunity Center Breaks Ground

Almost exactly six years after the El Nino rains flooded out the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto (UMPA)'s outdoor drop-in center, a group of community leaders turned the first shovel of dirt on the Encina Avenue site that will soon become the Opportunity Center of the Midpeninsula. "We've been waiting a long time for this day to come," said Dr. Donald Barr, the President of the Community Working Group, which formed in May of 1998 for the sole purpose of building an indoor drop-in center for unhoused/at risk individuals.

Over 250 community members came out for the 10am celebration on May 5th to kick-off the construction of the \$24 million facility. At an earlier breakfast celebration, major donors and key partners honored Rev. Jim Burklo for his earlier work with UMPA, and got a detailed report on the architectural and construction process. See pictorial collage on inside pages for highlights.

Capital Campaign Meets Initial \$8 Million Goal

As if by miracle, the CWG Board announced another accomplishment that occurred almost simultaneously with the groundbreaking: the success of its ambitious \$8 million Capital Campaign. A last-minute gift from HP of

\$100,000 put the campaign "over the top," culminating a successful Community Campaign, led by co-chairs Joe Baldwin, Ann Gordon and Trina Lovercheck. Critical to the success were the many major gifts secured earlier, and two additional public awards: a \$2 million grant from the County of Santa Clara, as well as \$1.3 million in additional funding from the state. "We can rest a bit easier now that we've secured the minimum capital to construct the center," said Larry Brown, Chair of the Capital Campaign.

Board Announces New \$1 Million Opportunity Fund Campaign

In the wake of its successful \$8 million Capital Campaign, the Board announced an additional \$1 million goal to create The Opportunity Fund, which will provide essentials for inside the center, such as medical equipment and longer-lasting furnishings, computers, office equipment, etc., as well as expand the endowment to provide housing subsidies for individuals with little or no income. "The Opportunity Fund will make a huge difference in our ability to serve effectively those who come to the center," said Christine Burroughs, CEO of InnVision, which will provide the services for the center.

Dream Under Construction

Images from the Opportunity Center Groundbreaking Celebration



City Manager Frank Benest speaks of the Center as "our legacy."



Palo Alto Mayor Bern Beecham offers official greetings on behalf of the City.



A job well done! Bruce Heister, the Event Chair (Leftmost in the front row) with some of the 30+ volunteers who contributed time and effort to a flawless event. Rosalind Ravasio (Front row, 3rd from left, sunglasses) was the Volunteer Coordinator.



"It has been an honor to work with such wonderful people," said Susan Packard Orr, Honorary Co-Chair of the Capital Campaign.



Don Barr tells of the CWG's beginnings.



Bill Reller honors Jim Burklo for his "trailblazing" work with Urban Ministry of Palo Alto.



Artist Joe Sam and Architect Rob Quigley give a joint presentation.



Christine Burroughs, CEO of InnVision, explains their role in the project. Seated next to her is John Holland, Chief Operations Officer for InnVision.



Special guests Norman Carroll, and Palo Alto City Council Members Jim Burch, Jack Morton and Judy Kleinberg, bask in the perfect weather.



Norm Carroll asserts the Opportunity Center will prevent "houselessness."



Karen King tells of the challenge of being homeless.

Thank you to these businesses for their in-kind donations to our celebration:

- Douce France Boulangerie & Patisserie
- Draeger's
- Hobee's
- House of Bagels
- Izzy's Brooklyn Bagels
- Peet's Coffee & Tea
- The Prolific Oven Bakery & Coffeehouse
- Sigona's Farmers Market
- Town & Country Village Shopping Center
- Trader Joe's
- Whole Foods Market



Tom and Ellen Ehrlich and Ann Gordon (center) check out the architectural model.



LaDoris Cordell gives an award to Jim Burklo. LaDoris was Emcee for both the breakfast and the Groundbreaking Ceremony.



Rev. Frannie Kieschnick, Alex Sanchez and Kathy Espinoza-Howard talk at the Groundbreaking Breakfast