



PV SHELTER
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services
Ending homelessness – one family at a time
115 Brennan Street ♥ Watsonville, CA 95076 831-728-5649 www.pvshelter.org

**Emergency Shelter,
Transitional Housing,
Educational & Support Services
for Homeless Families**

News from PV Shelter

~Distributed Three Times a Year~

Fall 2009

Lauro Melendrez – A Portrait of Gratitude

Lauro Melendrez worked as a professional painter in Watsonville for 24 years, employed by such major companies as Drager, Northern Design and Brent Garvey. Then four years ago, life changed suddenly.

Lauro became a single parent when his wife passed away suddenly and he was left with two young children to raise. The overwhelming grief and the parental responsibilities caused instability in the family, and over the past 4 years they moved from Watsonville to Los Angeles to Mexico and back to Watsonville. The failing economy made work opportunities scarce and finally, homeless and jobless, Lauro and his children came to the PV Shelter Services.

Now after several months in the Transitional Housing Program he says, "My life has changed completely. My stress and sense of loss have gone away because now I have a home for me and my babies. I can take care of them and look for work and not feel so much stress. We don't have much money right now but we have a home and food. And we have support from the staff who care about us and are helping all of us. Finally, some peace."

Lauro has just found full-time work as a truck driver for a local nursery. When he can he gives his time to the Shelter - helping with the landscaping, minor construction and anything else he can find to do. Before he found his job, he would call the Shelter office every day looking for ways to help. When asked why he volunteers his time he says, "Because my life has changed so much for the better. I want to give back."



Mike and Bertie McElroy – A Portrait of Generosity



Mike and Bertie McElroy have been generous long term supporters, giving to the PV Shelter Services for 15 years. Mike and Bertie started their support for the Shelter Services after he retired from Granite Construction. He is part of the George Wagner and Dick Solari "giving and helping legacy" at Granite. Granite Construction and its employees have supported the PV Shelter Services since the beginning. When asked what inspired him in particular, Mike said, "While touring the Shelter, we saw a lot of enthusiasm from the staff and community for the shelter programs."

PV Shelter Services continues to generate community enthusiasm as people come and volunteer their time, bring donations of clothing, furniture, toys and food for shelter and transitional housing families, sponsor the annual Mother's Day Run, make major gifts through the Silver Circle sustainability campaign, and provide regular financial support through dollar donations.

PV Shelter Services is ever grateful for the support and loyalty of the McElroys and the others who share their enthusiasm and commitment to serving those less fortunate in our community.

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Family Housing Services Manager

Christina Sosa

Weekend Shelter Staff

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*Intake Coordinator / Receptionist
and Family Financial Services*

Welcome New Board Members!

PV Shelter Services added five new board members in 2009, creating a total board of 13 men and women that bring diverse and creative skills to the organization.



*Rev. Mary Lou
McKenney, Minister
Holy Eucharist Church*



*Kirt Vojvoda,
Fire Captain, Fire
Prevention, City
of Watsonville*



*Hilda Diel,
Attorney*



*Juana Uribe,
Office Manager St.
Patrick's Church*



*Joellen Bruce,
retired*

PV Shelter Services to Be Filmed in Documentary

PV Shelter Services was one of eight nonprofits selected by Santa Cruz Community Television for production of a mini-documentary to assist with outreach, marketing and fundraising efforts for PVSS. These projects were funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. Production is expected to begin in late fall.



Donors and Families Acknowledged

Over 100 people attended the second annual **Donor Support and Family Success Partnership** picnic held at the Corralitos Women's Club, as the Surf City Slackers played oldies but goodies. Donors who have supported the PVSS programs dined with families who have benefited from these programs, graduated and are now giving back to the community. Every year three donors and three families are specially acknowledged. One-of-a-kind hand painted platters were given to this year's acknowledged donors: Lucy and John Wat, Diane and Don Cooley and John Petersen; and to this year's recognized families: Brenda Gomez, Veronica Ponce and Lydia and Lorenzo Ruvalcaba.



Kirt, Peter and Dave work the grill.



Lydia and Lorenzo tell of gratitude.



Lucy tells why she and John have been donors since 1991.



Loads of great food being served up.

SIGNIFICANT GRANTS ARE AWARDED

Major grants were awarded to PV Shelter Services this fall: a two year grant of \$50,000 plus an additional \$25,000 for the current year from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation; \$20,000 from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County and the John and Abby Sobrato Donor-Advised Fund; \$10,000 from the East Bay Community Foundation and \$10,000 from the Richard and Mary Solari Charitable Trust. Without these sustaining gifts PV Shelter Services would not be able to provide the quality or level of support services it does to the 100+ people in its programs every month.

THE SILVER CIRCLE IS FORMED

On August 19th, Diane Cooley and Mary Solari hosted a luncheon at the Rodgers House to inform a group of major donors of the formation of the Silver Circle - a group dedicated to establishing the foundation of financial stability for PV Shelter Services. Those who join the Silver Circle pledge an annual gift of \$1,000 or more for a minimum of three years. To date, \$29,000 has been pledged with some gifts extending to 5 years.

Donors interested in joining the Silver Circle should contact Suzy at 831-728-5649.

Silver Circle Luncheon Hosts Mary Solari (second from left) and Diane Cooley (third from left) are joined by Mike McCauley and Peter and Betty Michelozzi at the historic Rodgers House.



*"No one has ever become poor by giving."
Anne Frank*

Students and Butterflies Help Warm Up a Newborn



Erin Hewitt, a third grade teacher at Starlight Elementary School in Watsonville inspired her classroom to design and create butterfly patches which she then sewed together for a baby quilt and donated to the Shelter. The quilt and wonderful letters written by the students were given to Maria Quezada for her new baby. Pictured left: Pregnant Maria Quesada and her daughter Maria with the quilt; pictured right: students from Starlight School visit the Shelter.



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In this issue:

- **Silver Circle is Formed**
- **Resident is Grateful for PVSS**
- **Welcome New Board Members**
- **Support and Success Partnership Picnic**



PVSS wishes you peace, joy, and the warmth of friends and family for the holidays ahead.

Mission

To assist homeless women, children and families obtain stable housing through temporary shelter and services.

Vision

Pajaro Valley Shelter Services aspires to be a model program that helps women, children, and families end the causes and cycles of homelessness - one family at a time. By lifting their dignity, identifying their barriers, and helping to set their goals, homeless families will develop the skills and attitudes necessary to move on to stable housing and improved personal and economic self-sufficiency.

Help from our neighbors . . .

For current donation needs, go to www.pvshelter.org



The PV Shelter Education Center is transformed every afternoon from 4:00 – 6:00 so that children enrolled in elementary school have extra help with school assignments. The Santa Cruz Office of Education in cooperation with UCSC sends students to shelters to help children who are in shelters or transition house programs.

Evelyn Rivera has been a tutor at PVSS for three years. She has been able to create relationships with children who have gone through the emergency shelter program, then through the transition housing program, and even after they leave PVSS. She continues to visit them at their schools to see how they are doing and support their progress.

Celeste Equihua has been a PVSS children’s tutor for two years. She likes the personal attention she can give to each child. She told about one child who came with “behavioral issues” and received a “most improved” award at the end of the year. She encouraged him every time he came for his tutoring session. Celeste wants to work in this type of “diverse” environment after she graduates. She said, “These are the children that are often, ‘in the background’. It helps them when they are the center of attention every day when we work on their homework.”

Both Evelyn and Celeste began their lives speaking Spanish and help the children make the transition between languages, too. These wonderful tutors make the trip from UCSC every school day to devote two hours to the children of the shelter and transition housing program.

Left: UCSC students/volunteer tutors Celeste Equihua (top) and Evelyn Rivera (bottom) helped five children at PVSS this day.