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Los Altos Town Crier

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Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Community news for Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Mountain View since 1947

Vol. 60 No. 46 • 50 cents

Helping hand

Town Crier's 2006 Holiday Fund
gets under way

Town Crier Report

The 2006 Town Crier Holiday Fund is making a list and checking it twice as it begins its annual fundraising drive in support of 14 small, local non-profits that serve the needy throughout Silicon Valley.

The \$151,445 raised last year helped to finance many diverse projects: A teacher in East Palo Alto took her class on a field trip to the Aquarium of the Bay; a group of leadership students from Alta Vista High School visited local middle schools to train students in trust building and problem solving; and a woman, who prepared to return to the work force after three years of disability with only one pair of shoes and one pair of nylons, was able to select an appropriate professional wardrobe.

This year, the Town Crier's goal is to exceed last year's total, raising funds to support the children, families, homeless and seniors served by our grantees. Three new groups have been added to the Town Crier Holiday Fund's list of recipients: Jeremiah's Promise, which provides services for foster youth entering the adult world at 18; RotaCare, which provides basic health care for those without health insurance; and Partners for New Generations, which matches at-risk youth with adult mentors and tutors.

The aim of the Holiday Fund, in its seventh year, is to help small non-profit groups that have minimal overhead and make the most of their revenue to help the neediest residents. In other words, the goal is to help groups for which a little goes a long way. The value of each donation is enhanced by the Town Crier staff, which absorbs all overhead and ad-

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JOE HUNT/TOWN CRIER

Three new non-profit organizations have been added to the Town Crier Holiday Fund in 2006, including Jeremiah's Promise. Above, Executive Director Kim Woody, right, and client Chary Pugh stand in the home for those who still need support beyond the foster-care system.

Colehower steps down; council seeks new member

By Megan Ma
Town Crier Staff Writer

The remaining councilmembers and city staff have begun the process to replace Los Altos City Councilman Kurt Colehower, who announced Nov. 8 his resignation from the five-member council to pursue a new business opportunity.

Colehower said he is leaving for a senior position in a "global technology company" that offers "new and exciting challenges" but could not disclose details until the company schedules a press conference later in the month.



Colehower

Los Altos Mayor Ron Packard said he has recommended a few options outlined in the council norms for such cases. To avoid the expense of a special election, councilmembers can select an appointment process to fill Colehower's seat. After advertising the opening in the local newspaper, Packard suggested the council hold the first round of interviews in the next few weeks and install the new councilmember by Dec. 8, a state-mandated deadline.

In a special public meeting Saturday, the council listened to public comments. Some backed the mayor's suggestion to move forward with the appointment process, while others supported an alternative option, a mail-in ballot that would allow residents to vote on a choice of candidates. Finally, some residents opted for the city to appoint current Plan-

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Warshawsky, Kerr win Los Altos Hills council seats

By Eliza Ridgeway
Town Crier Staff Writer

Los Altos Hills residents re-elected Dean Warshawsky (2,031, 36.9 percent) and Breene Kerr (1,833, 33.3 percent) to four-year terms on the city council. Challenger John Vidovich (1,640, 29.8 percent) finished third, 391 and 193 votes behind Warshawsky and Kerr, respectively, as of this week.

The Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters will declare final election results Dec. 5 after the

remaining absentee and provisional ballots are counted.

Turnout was high for Los Altos Hills, which had 5,578 voters registered for this election. Each resident could cast votes for two candidates, but many chose to vote for one candidate only. This came as little surprise, as Warshawsky and Kerr had run complementary campaigns and were politically distinct from challenger Vidovich, particularly



on the issue of pursuing a separate school district for the town.

"To me, it was kind of a referendum on redistricting and redistricting won, although not by a large margin," said Councilman Mike O'Malley. He said that compared to the two previous elections, this one had been less rough in terms of negative campaigning.

"It was a campaign that got

a little personal at times," Kerr said, referring to letters written by former Councilman Steve Finn, which accused Kerr of conflict of interest. Kerr said he would ask the council to evaluate measures the city of Santa Clara took to set strict expenditure limits and reduce negative ads after it gained a reputation for nasty campaigns.

"I hope that in 2008 we try to attack the issues, not the people," Warshawsky said. "Fortunately, I'm not going to be running in

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ministrative costs. One hundred percent of each person's donation goes into the fund for disbursement to the organization.

The Community Foundation Silicon Valley serves as the fiscal agent for the Town Crier Holiday Fund. It provides the tax-deductible status for the fund, and each contribution to the Town Crier Holiday Fund will be acknowledged as a 501(c)(3) gift.

Again this year, a group of donors has pledged challenge grants to match community donations. Matching donors as of press time include the Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Charles and Nan Geschke Foundation, the William and Gay Krause Foundation and Los Altos resident Ed Dowd.

Following is a look at the new organizations that will benefit from the 2006 Town Crier Holiday Fund.

Jeremiah's Promise

Each year, an average of 200 young people in Silicon Valley "age out" of court-appointed foster homes as they turn 18. According to Kim Woody, founder and executive director of Jeremiah's Promise, it is estimated that within one year, 63 percent of them will be homeless, in prison or dead.

Jeremiah's Promise, a non-profit transitional living facility in Palo Alto, helps these young people navigate the passage to independence. It offers housing, mentoring, educational tutoring, psychological counseling and life-skills workshops, Woody said.

Currently operating in a rented four-bedroom home, the organization houses five women between the ages of 18 and 21, emancipated from foster care but not yet equipped to assume adult responsibility.

"Our mission is to aid former foster youth who have recently aged out of the area foster-care system," Woody said. "We are looking for the good kids (the most emotionally stable, those without drug and alcohol problems) — the good ones are completely ignored. And they have the best hope to fit back into society."

Woody said children are placed in foster care when the parents die or when they cannot care for their children because of neglect or emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Many of these children are separated from their siblings and placed in separate homes.

Woody named the organization after the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah.

"Jeremiah was a prophet from ancient Israel who spoke a promise that has remained true through the ages. 'For I know the plans I



RotaCa is one of Los Altos Town Crier Holiday Fund's recipients. RotaCa provides health services for low-income families.

TOWN CRIER

have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you, not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future," Woody said.

Since the opening of Jeremiah's Promise in December 2003, 10 young women have completed the two-year program and are living successfully on their own, she said.

"The girls are going to college and saving their money," Woody said. "The young people we see two years later are completely unrecognizable." Woody attributes the positive change to the support the young adults receive at Jeremiah's Promise.

With the assistance of two East Palo Alto organizations, Jeremiah's Promise is planning to operate an East Palo Alto facility that can accommodate up to 12 young men.

"It's the same format as the women's program," Woody said. "It's in the planning stage ... the target date to open is in 2008 or 2009."

The organization also intends to buy a house to shelter young women by raising \$500,000 by June 2007 to match a donation of that amount from an anonymous Los Altos donor.

When asked what she enjoys most about her work, Woody said, "watching a kid with so little self-esteem become someone who

laughs and smiles and finishes her degree ... and who knows that she will never be alone again."

Jeremiah's Promise has an annual budget of \$303,000.

For more information, call 843-1769, e-mail info@jeremiahspromise.org or visit www.jeremiahspromise.org.

Partners for New Generations

For many young people who live in dysfunctional families or in low-income households where the importance of education may be sidelined, imagining a successful future is a daily struggle.

Partners for New Generations, founded in 1995, is a community-based organization whose mission is to support at-risk community youth through mentoring and tutoring. The overall goals are to encourage students to continue their education and maintain a positive outlook.

Trained adult volunteer mentors meet with students on an "as-needed" basis a minimum of twice a month. They serve as guides, friends and advisers to students doing poorly in school or engaging in risky behavior. During the past year, Partners supplied mentors for 120 students in the Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District.

Tutors meet with children struggling in reading, science,

math or other subjects in Los Altos and Mountain View elementary schools.

"This school year we plan to expand into local (public) high schools with tutoring mentoring, while maintaining at least the same momentum high school level," said Pi co-founder and board member Bob Adams.

Adams said that improvement in grade-point averages for tutored youth were "stunning" that absenteeism and discipline problems have diminished well.

Partners' annual budget is approximately \$69,000 a year.

Partners received a \$10 grant from the Packard Four in 2002 that will be exhausted by year end. The organization is applying to foundations, corporations and individuals for more assistance.

Supporters and PNG include Mona Armistead, chairwoman, co-founder Bruno, and longtime volunteer Cindy Luedtke and Nancy Cant. Partners began a tutoring program for grades K-5 a small mentoring program Vista High School, sponsored the Los Altos and Mountain Rotary Clubs. The Holiday Fund focused on supporting Alt mentoring and tutoring programs.

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Town Crier Holiday Fund honored

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), Silicon Valley chapter will honor the Town Crier Holiday Fund at its annual awards luncheon on National Philanthropy Day Friday.

The association will recognize the Holiday Fund among more than two dozen fundraisers at the event, scheduled at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose.

Two beneficiaries of the Holiday Fund, Sunday Friends and Career Closet of Santa Clara County, nominated the Holiday Fund, now in its seventh year.

Leslie Williams-Hurt of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which disburses Holiday

Fund contributions, suggested the Town Crier nomination. Williams-Hurt is also board treasurer for AFP.

"Because of my role here at the foundation, able to attend the (Holiday Fund) reception (in March), where they (the Holiday Fund) award 13 non-profits," Williams-Hurt said, "and I think the work that the Town Crier is doing is really wonderful, and it needs to be recognized publicly."

AFP comprises more than 200 members working to advance philanthropy through advocacy, search, education and certification programs.

For more information, visit www.afpsv.org