

Gleanings

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The Leaven is Growing Thanks to You!



The Leaven will be celebrating our second "birthday" in March, but don't let our young age fool you. Thanks to amazing community support and God's abundant blessing, we're reaching more boys and girls in 2011, and moving forward with increasing our capacity yet again.

Grande Circle is the chosen location for the fourth Leaven Center. A neighborhood with a strong gang presence and high police activity, this is truly a community where boys and girls need a safe place to go after school to do their homework and play.

The nearly 500 apartments are home to boys and girls who dream of getting a great education. But, difficulties with English and teachers stretched to the

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Thank You

Thanks to each of you who purchased unique Christmas gifts through our 2010 Catalog for the Children. Soccer balls and basketballs, books, Bibles and field trips were just a few of the gifts given in honor of loved ones this holiday season. Be watching for our spring catalog perfect for Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, graduations and weddings.



New Team Members Join The Leaven in 2011



(Left to Right)

Keli Bilafer,
Director of
Development,

Joseph Lugo,
Director of Church
and Community
Outreach;

and Kara Lugo,
The Groves
Site Director.

The growth of The Leaven has also meant the growth of our team. And, we're excited that God has provided some fantastic people to join us!

You may know Joseph Lugo, site director at The Groves. We're thrilled that Joseph has accepted a new position at The Leaven as our Director of Church and Community Outreach. Joseph will be working with churches in the community to link them with projects at our Centers, and give them the opportunities to show our boys and girls Jesus' love in action.

Kara Lugo is our new site director for The Groves. Kara has seen servant-leadership modeled by her father, Joseph, and brings a passion for working with our kids and helping them excel in school. She joins our other great site directors, David

Bothwell at our Phoenix Drive center, Paulina Polk at our PACE Center, and Maribel Lozoya who is assistant director at the PACE Center.

Keli Bilafer will join the executive team lead by our Director, Mark Lillis. She comes to The Leaven as our Director of Development, following service on our Board of Directors. Keli will be heading up our annual events (golf tournament in June and Wine and Cheese Auction Social in October), as well as launching new opportunities. Keli will also make sure our newsletter, Facebook page, website and blog are updated with the latest Leaven stories, photos and videos.

The work of The Leaven is an answer to prayer, and our new staff is a further blessing from God.

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max keep them from getting the extra help they need for a short time to catch up and begin excelling.

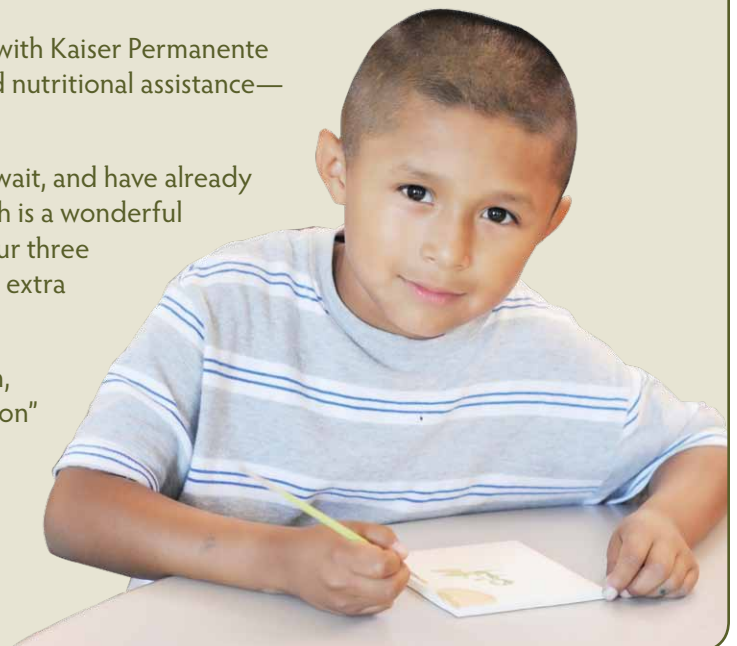
Modeling Christ's compassion for children, our volunteers work one-on-one with boys and girls, focusing on reading, homework completion (and understanding) and math skills. Before long, "I don't get it" turns to "Wow! Learning is fun!" and students begin excelling in their classrooms as they benefit from the love, care and acts of mercy done in Jesus' name.

In addition, our Farm to Families program—a partnership with Kaiser Permanente that provides no-cost fresh produce, health screenings and nutritional assistance—will be a regular feature in the Grande Circle community.

Several individuals and corporations have decided to not wait, and have already begun donating the funding to launch Grande Circle, which is a wonderful blessing! However, we still need sponsors for children at our three current Centers. As a sponsor, you can help us provide the extra services that enrich our boys' and girls' lives.

Sponsoring a child through The Leaven is only \$25 a month, but gives you more because you'll see our projects "in action" since we are right in your community.

Make it your New Year's resolution to become a Leaven Sponsor. To sponsor a child, give us a call or log on to MyLeaven.org and click on "Sponsor a Child."



Make 2011 a “Year to Change a Child’s Future”



Have you ever wondered what the big deal is about sponsoring a child?

At The Leaven, we think our sponsors are one of the top reasons we’ve been a success. Their monthly gifts are invested right here in our community to help boys and girls.

Every sponsor dollar stretches further because we have received grants for some of the work of our tutoring centers. But, sponsors are “the frosting on the cake,” as it were, providing the extras for children on the path to success in school.

For only \$25 a month, sponsors give a boy or girl books that encourage a lifelong love of reading; curriculum to improve math and reading skills; computers and educational software in our on-site computer labs that enhance schoolwork; and opportunities to participate in sports and field trips.

But there’s one more thing that may be the most important thing each boy or girl who is sponsored receives—knowledge that another adult cares and believes he or she will succeed.

Please consider making 2011 the year you become a child sponsor and help change a child’s future. Log on to MyLeaven.org, or give us a call to learn how your monthly gift can benefit a boy or girl—and perhaps change your life, too!

Peter’s Perspective: A Message from the President of the Board

2010: a year that will live on in Leaven history. . . .

Looking back on the last 12 months, I feel a bit out-of-breath. After all, it was an amazing year for The Leaven!

Opening up a third Center was tremendously exciting—certainly for us, but even more so for the parents who were overjoyed that their boys and girls would have a safe place to go after school to work on homework and get one-on-one tutoring.

Our Wine and Cheese Auction Event was a tremendous success; who can forget the fast-paced bidding and the wonderful endorsement from Dr. Phil?

And we launched our first-ever Catalog for the Children—a unique way to give a gift to The Leaven while honoring a family member or loved one.

Psalms 127 begins with this reminder: “Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” That’s why we at The Leaven make prayer an important part of every board meeting and planning session we hold. The Leaven helps children here in Solano County because of your support, and we don’t want to invest your gifts in anything that is “in vain”

Thank you for being part of our work for the boys and girls we serve. I can’t see into the future, but it’s exciting to think that one day, the leaders of our city, our state and perhaps even our country might be the “Leaven Kids” we are helping today.

Peter M. Gaudet
Board President





Trees + Toys + Christmas Dinner = Christmas Joy

Last month, caring people, businesses, churches and groups provided some very special gifts for Leaven children at all three tutoring centers.

The dad of a student at our Groves Center cashed his last paycheck before Christmas, planning to use the money for food and Christmas gifts for his children. However, his wallet was stolen, and all his hard-earned money was gone. He and his wife prayed for a miracle, knowing that there couldn't be a "merry Christmas" in their apartment without God's help. Caroline Elverum and Jackie Mulhern from the Wednesday Club had decided to help someone in need this Christmas, and God led them to this family—even though they had not heard of the financial loss the parents had suffered.

The result was a Christmas that won't soon be forgotten! The family received gifts, decorations and a complete Christmas dinner, as well as the joy of seeing how God met their needs. What a wonderful way to teach their children that God hears and answers prayers, and desires that each of us have a life filled with joy.

The Delorefice Family—true heroes to neighbors in need—provided gifts for another one of our Groves families, while the Green Valley Moms Group donated gifts for all 27 of the children at our Phoenix Drive Center and Parkway Church hosted a Christmas dinner for families at our PACE Center.

Our boys and girls at the Groves Center received toys donated by Hope Church and the Fairfield and Suisun Twilight Rotary Club. C3 Church and The Wednesday Club donated items for our "store"—a place where the children select gifts for their parents and siblings, and purchase them using the "Good Samaritan" points they had accumulated throughout the year.

On the business front, the employees at Peet's Coffee & Tea donated their tips on Christmas Eve, and encouraged their guests to also support The Leaven. And, the staff at Knotty Hair Salon created a festival of trees, auctioning them off and donating the proceeds to our programs.

Of course, our 2010 Catalog for the Children was supported by many local families, and dozens of soccer balls and basketballs, books, field trips and hours of tutoring were provided.

At each of our Leaven Centers, our children heard the real Christmas message—that God sent His Son to earth that first Christmas to bring us salvation. That's the greatest gift of all!

We're grateful to all our donors who made Christmas 2010 bright for our boys and girls, and helped us show the love that comes from the baby in the manger.

