

# KIDS on the RISE

2 New Leaven Centers – Meet Our New Directors!

SEPTEMBER 2011



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Quail Ridge/Rialto, Grande Circle,  
Phoenix Drive, The Groves, PACE



August 16 was an exciting day in Fairfield, as that was when The Leaven's fourth after-school center opened. Located on Grande Circle, this new center brings opportunities for success in school to even more boys and girls.

Our Grande Circle center received a huge boost by being chosen to receive proceeds from "The Solano Great Race," an event created and hosted by the Leadership Today class of the Chamber of Commerce.

"Through Leadership Today, we received a donation of \$18,601.22," said Mark Lillis, executive director of The Leaven. "This was crucial to the launch of our center on Grande Circle, as were the additional in-kind gifts that the Solano Great Race generated for the center."

Continued on page 2

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Hometown Heroes
- 3 Back to School Special Edition!
- 4 Backpack Backers
- 5 Pete's Perspective
- 6 Meet Our New Site Directors!

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and for the Thunderbirds to select a guy like Mark brings great honor upon Fairfield."

**Harry Price**  
Mayor of Fairfield

## We're Surrounded by Heroes!

On July 28, The Leaven's own Mark Lillis was honored by Travis Air Force Base and the Thunderbirds as a "Hometown Hero."

Fairfield Mayor Harry Price, who nominated Mark for this honor, was on hand for the festivities, along with three of our Leaven children, Reyna, Ernie and Gabi Rodriguez, and their parents. We've had at least one member of the Rodriguez family as part of our after-school program since The Leaven first opened!

But Mark isn't The Leaven's only hero! Our more-than-100 sponsors who donate \$25 a month for our children and our faithful volunteers are certainly heroes! And our kids, who work so hard (even over the summer, when other students take a vacation from reading and homework), are heroes for sure!

A big "thank you" to all our heroes—students, sponsors, volunteers and parents. Together we make it possible for The Leaven to give children tools for success in school . . . and in life!



### Continued from Page 1

Lewis Planned Communities also provided a generous donation for this site, and our church partners are recruited a cadre of volunteers ready to serve.

We're excited about our Grande Circle center because of the amazing support we have from the apartment management and our community, and the needs that The Leaven will be addressing. Maribel Lozoya, a former resident on Grande Circle and Leaven intern at PACE, is site director for our fourth center. You can read more about Maribel and her passion for our Leaven kids on page 4.

Shortly after the Labor Day holiday, we opened our fifth center, and our first one outside Fairfield. Quail Ridge, located in Rialto (San Bernardino County), is the location of this newest center.

Quail Ridge is owned by the same company that owns the complex where we work on Phoenix Drive. The managers invited The Leaven to expand to their Rialto site, totally renovating a 1,000-foot apartment for the Leaven center!

We're excited about the bright, open floor plan of the center, and the safe play area created for our program. Our Quail Ridge students attend Werner Elementary School, so it was a special surprise to learn that Principal Rhea McIver began her career substituting in Fairfield and then taught in Vacaville.

You'll also meet Josh Ortega, Quail Ridge site director, on page 4 of this newsletter, and we'll keep you updated through our newsletter and Facebook page on the great results from both of our new centers!

# Back to School Special Edition!

## Back to School Event Complete with Military FanFair!

On Saturday, August 13, Leaven students from all our centers enjoyed a back to school picnic at Suisun Heritage Park. Our volunteers were joined by airmen and seamen from Travis Air Force Base—and our boys and girls had a day they will long remember!

Hot dogs highlighted the menu, and face painting was a big hit for the children. The event also featured a soccer game with awards presented by service personnel from Travis.

At The Leaven, we teach our children the critical skills to succeed in school, but we also strive to instill in them a love for and appreciation of our country and the freedoms we enjoy. The involvement of our military in the back to school event sent a powerful message to these young citizens, giving them exceptional examples to look up to.

Thanks to our heroes from Travis Air Force Base and our volunteers who make every day special for Leaven children. You are a blessing to our children!



# Backpack Backers Help Leaven Students Prepare For School

Thanks to our supporters, many Leaven students returned to school with backpacks full of the supplies they need for class.

The Leaven's annual Backpack Backers campaign provided many children with pens, pencils, notebooks and so much more, all in a colorful new backpack. For their families, this lifted a huge financial challenge of paying for the necessary supplies, and for the children, it was pure excitement to have new supplies for school.

Umpqua Bank's staff and customers contributed to provide 20 backpacks for the students, and other supports across Solano County provided additional backpacks. A huge thank you to all of you!

What makes our Backpack Backers so special is that they send a powerful message to Leaven boys and girls. These children are determined to develop the skills they need for school. Every day, instead of watching TV or playing video games, they come to our Leaven Center to read, complete their homework and work on math.

Instead of feeling like failures, they know they can succeed! And receiving a brand new backpack says that the community believes in them, too.

If you would like to give a backpack to a student who is still without the supplies he or she needs for class, please complete the coupon below and send it with your \$35 gift. You'll provide a brand-new backpack packed with pens, pencils, erasers, highlighters, a pencil sharpener, a three-ring binder and paper, a spiral-bound notebook, a ruler, pocket folders scissors, crayons, colored pencils, a glue stick, Scotch tape and a wristwatch!

Backpack Backers send children to school with the supplies that spell S-U-C-C-E-S-S. Please join our campaign by going online today to [www.MyLeaven.org](http://www.MyLeaven.org) or mailing your gift with the coupon below.



Yes, I want to be a Backpack Backer!

Enclosed is my gift of

\$35 to give a backpack    \$70 to give 2 backpacks    other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed    Please charge my gift to my credit card:

Visa    MasterCard    Discover    American Express

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code (CVV): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this coupon and your gift to: The Leaven | 2397 Heath Drive | Fairfield, CA 94533

Give online-quickly  
& securely at  
[www.MyLeaven.org](http://www.MyLeaven.org)



## Peter's Perspective: A Message From the President

Summer, Leaven-style... There certainly wasn't much time for lying in the hammock, sipping lemonade!

We hosted Summer Success at three sites — PACE, Phoenix Drive and The Groves — giving children additional help with reading and comprehension so they could go back to school ready to succeed. Students enjoyed a soccer program led by Vacaville Christian High School, and went on field trips to Lake Berryessa and the Fairfield-Suisun Wastewater Treatment Plant.

It's exciting to us when we can see students have that "ah-ha" moment, when the letters on a page start looking like words, the words form sentences, and the sentences tell a story. Giving children the gift of being readers is a lifelong treasure. For that reason, opening our two new centers is particularly exciting. Grande Circle is a neighborhood in Fairfield where children need some extra help to get a good start in school. Our volunteers will be impacting them for life; what an amazing privilege!

The Rialto center represents a stretch for us. We didn't set out to "export" The Leaven to Southern California, but God clearly opened that door for us. The generosity of the Oracle Management Group to provide the space and renovate it to our needs and the enthusiastic welcome we've received from

the city officials and the school board make us feel "at home" in Rialto already! Local pastors are welcoming us and are eager to partner with The Leaven to help their community's children, and Azusa Pacific University has been a great support as we launch this center.

But make no mistake — The Leaven is not an "institution." Instead, we're like a big, extended family. A lot of us live in Solano County, and we give our time and our money to help kids in Fairfield succeed in school. And now we're joined by a "branch" of our family from San Bernardino County—people who are just as passionate about helping children grow up with the educational foundation they need to become productive citizens.

You are critical to The Leaven. Without your prayers, donations, time and encouragement, we couldn't do what we do for our boys and girls. You make The Leaven possible.

Thank you. Two simple words, but they are packed with our deep appreciation.

Peter M. Gaudet, Board President





Josh Ortega joins The Leaven as the site director of the new Quail Ridge Center in Rialto, CA.



Tables are filling up quickly for The Leaven's Annual Wine and Cheese Auction Event on **Sunday, October 9, 2011**. Don't miss out on this signature event! Contact Keli Bilafer (keli@myleaven.org or 707.631.6852) today to reserve your sponsorships and tables .

Presented by:



Sponsored by:



## Meet The Leaven's New Site Directors!

We're excited about our two new Leaven sites (see page 1), and we're thrilled to welcome the Site Directors who will direct our work at these locations.

Maribel Lozoya is the Site Director of The Leaven's newest center in Fairfield, located on Grande Circle. She's not a stranger to The Leaven, having interned at our PACE center prior to taking over the leadership of Grande Circle.

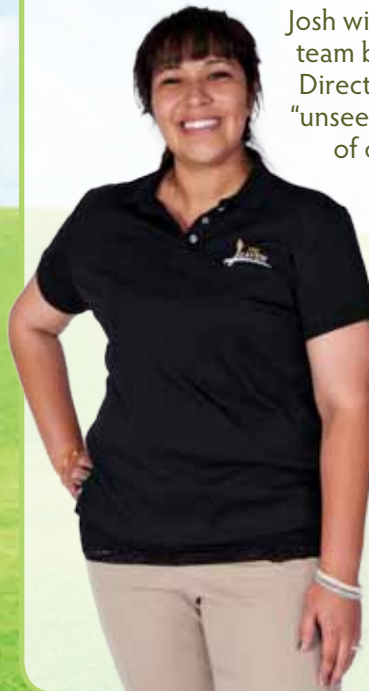
Maribel grew up in a situation similar to that faced by our Leaven students, and has a first-hand understanding of the challenges children experience from living in low-income, under-served communities.

"I don't always feel very qualified," Maribel humbly says, "but the Lord has put me in this place. He's chosen me for this awesome opportunity at The Leaven, and I am so blessed!"

Maribel studied at Briarcrest Bible College (Canada), worked in preschool education and volunteered at a shelter for homeless youth. She and is currently enrolled in the Criminal Justice program at Solano Community College. She enjoys scrapbooking and photography, and will be getting married later in the summer of 2012.

Josh Ortega is our Site Director at Quail Ridge, The Leaven's first tutoring center in Southern California. A graduate of Azusa Pacific University with a Master's degree in Theological Studies, Josh also has a degree in Biblical Studies from Life Pacific University.

Josh is a native of Southern California, and an accomplished musician. He also is a volunteer leader in the youth program at his church, where he leads the worship music program.



Josh will be joined on our Southern California team by our Southern California Operations Director Pamela Barden. Pamela is also the "unseen voice" for The Leaven, writing many of our brochures, newsletters, ads and other materials. Pamela, a native of the Chicago, hung up her snow shovel and moved to Southern California in 2006. She and her husband, Gary, enjoy hiking, biking, Disneyland and travel.

Maribel, the Site Director of the Leaven's newest center in Fairfield, located on Grade Circle