

Donors find need and fill it

Ruth Stafford Peale, the wife of the inspirational speaker Norman Vincent Peale, characterized philanthropy in this way: "Find a need and fill it."

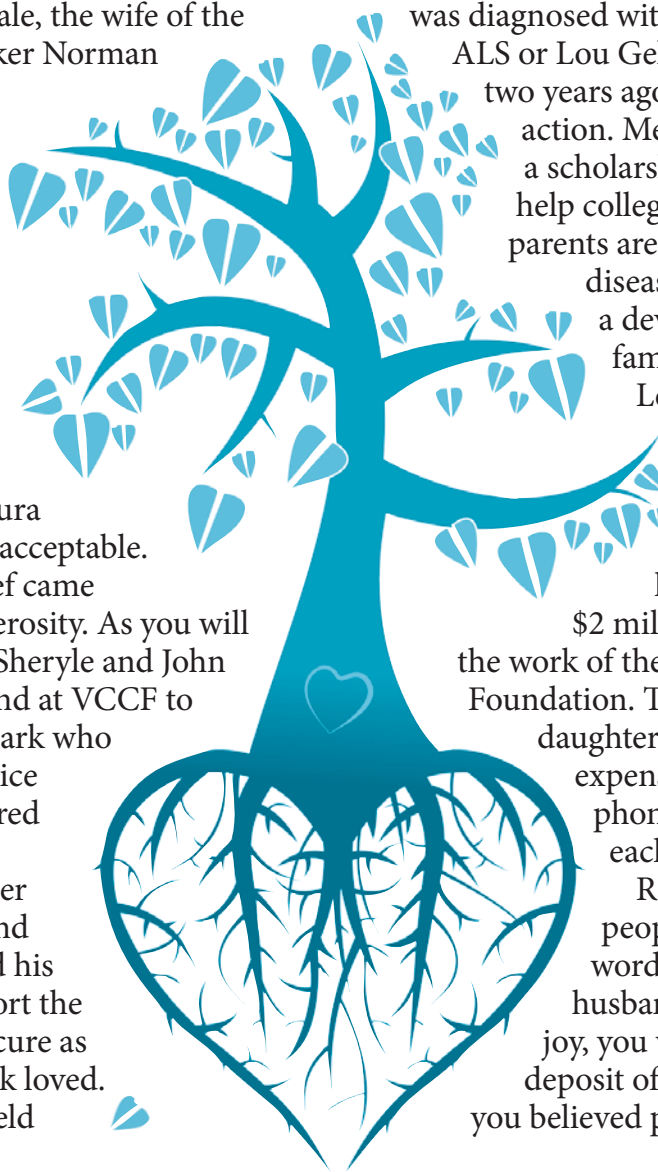
This issue of Highlights tells the stories of passionate philanthropists who found the status quo in Ventura County no longer acceptable.

From great grief came great acts of generosity. As you will read in this issue, Sheryle and John Nelson set up a fund at VCCF to honor their son Mark who was killed by a police officer. Mark suffered from obsessive-compulsive disorder that did not respond to medication, and his parents now support the research to find a cure as well as causes Mark loved.

After Greg Merfeld

was diagnosed with the incurable ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease two years ago, he went into action. Merfeld founded a scholarship at VCCF to help college students whose parents are living with the disease, which also takes a devastating toll on family finances.

Legacies also come from admirable thrift. The late Mary Tash, a legal secretary, left more than \$2 million to advance the work of the Community Foundation. Tash and her late daughter avoided the expense of long-distance phone calls and wrote each other instead. Read about the people who live by the words of Mrs. Peale's husband, "In giving joy, you will accumulate a deposit of joy greater than you believed possible."



highlights

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Turning back time

With a Heritage Fund grant, a local historian introduces a new generation to places of the past.

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A permanent impression

The three-year ArtsLIVE initiative is over. But the creativity lives on in our communities.

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When you see these codes, use your smartphone's QR code reader to visit related online content at vccf.org.

President's Letter



Philanthropy is still what matters

At our recent national conference for community foundations, the VCCF staff and I welcomed the chance to learn from colleagues across the country. We shared stories about what is working well and were challenged by provocative speakers, who raised intriguing questions about our mission, in light of competition from financial institutions, higher scrutiny from the public and the government, the rapidly accelerating pace of change and the growing inequities in our communities.

One question, though, stopped me: Are community foundations relevant to the challenges in our era?

While it is always productive to take a hard look at our mission, I can say with certainty, VCCF is more relevant than ever.

We see it every day at VCCF, where the passions of donors are translated into investments in the work of local nonprofits, and into scholarships that help students gain the skills to succeed in this global economy. We see it where donors pool contributions with others to help farmworkers afford decent housing, to put first-generation Latino students on the college track, to teach women how to prevent domestic violence, to provide training to local nonprofit leaders and to give nursing students the tools to succeed in a competitive academic environment.

That is what charitable dollars invested by local donors in VCCF did this year. And we will do more next year.

In times of great challenge, what makes

our philanthropy relevant? Using funds entrusted to VCCF for community needs, we invested in a local organization working with gay youth and a Santa Paula homeless program. We started a housing trust fund to expand supply of affordable homes in the region. We helped feed and shelter abused horses, gave scholarships to talented young artists and sustained community dialog about long-term sustainability and workforce education. Charitable donations to the Ventura County Together collaborative, where VCCF serves as fiscal sponsor, have helped thousands get food, receive medical care and remain in their houses.

Charity begins at home, so they say. In Ventura County — our home — charity has spawned a network of donors who believe in this community, who invest in a nonprofit system that bridges the gap between public dollars and private disaster. Their generosity nurtures not only institutions but families. Their values remind us a community is more than simply an address.

We are privileged at VCCF to steward these legacies. We are grateful for the chance to partner with so many generous people in this region who care enough to invest in the future of Ventura County, for good and for ever. Let us know how we can help you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hugh J. Ralston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hugh J. Ralston, President & CEO

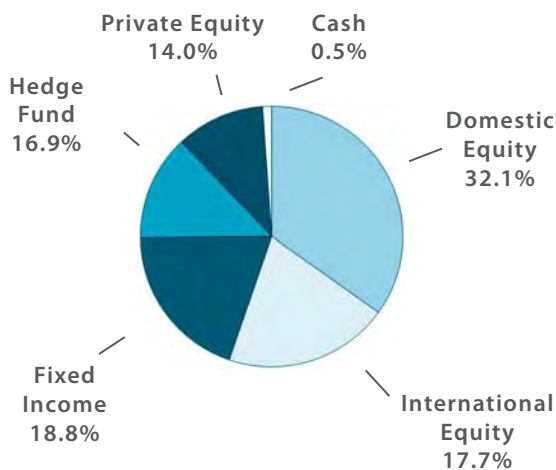
Volatile third quarter cancels out FY2011 investment gains

Performance Summary (net of fees) as of Sept. 30, 2011

VCCF Endowment Portfolio		Policy Index
FY2011	(1.6)	0.8
FY2010	11.0	9.4
Last 3 Years*	4.8	3.9
Last 5 Years*	2.3	1.7
Last 10 Years*	5.9	4.9

*As of 9/30 FYE (net of fees)

Asset Allocation Summary as of Sept. 30, 2011



CHECK THE WEB: Visit vccf.org for more information on VCCF's investment strategies.

Despite slight loss, VCCF remains investment leader

VCCF reported during the Nov. 15 open investment committee meeting that its portfolio posted a modest loss of 1.6 percent for the 2011 fiscal year.

"Significant market declines in the third quarter, ending Sept. 30, pulled back gains posted earlier in the year," said Robert Katch, investment committee chair and board member of the Ventura County Community Foundation.

As global markets bounced back in October, the portfolio posted an 8 percent gain for the month, he added.

The foundation's total assets were \$97.7 million as of Sept. 30.

VCCF and its investment consultant cited volatile investment markets for the 12.1 percent decline in the VCCF portfolio in the third quarter. Shortfalls in VCCF's international-equity assets and its fixed-income portfolio offset strong gains in its private equity holdings.

Declines in the S&P 500 index were nearly 14 percent for the quarter, and emerging market and international indexes were down in the range of 20 percent for the quarter, according to VCCF's long-term investment consultant Bob Cluck, chairman of Canterbury Consulting.

"The third quarter was a rough spot in the road and especially disappointing since our portfolio came back to the levels we enjoyed before the market meltdown in late 2008 and early 2009," Katch said. "At VCCF, our investment strategies are geared toward long-term growth, and we are confident we will bounce back from this market volatility."

VCCF's 10-year investment performance ranked in the 10th percentile of foundations with less than \$1 billion invested, meaning that it performed over this past decade better than 90 percent of its peer group, Katch said.

VCCF's investment performance ranks No. 3 among community foundations with similar sized endowments and ranks No. 8 in the nation for its results over the last 10 years in a field of 90 community foundations with portfolios of all sizes.

Charitable gift annuity: VCCF offers flexibility, local benefit

For One Life
(Yourself)

Age	Rate
60	4.8%
65	5.3%
70	5.8%
75	6.5%
80	7.5%
85	8.4%
90+	9.8%

For Two Lives
(Yourself and another)

Age	Rate
65/65	4.7%
65/70	4.8%
70/75	5.4%
75/80	5.9%
80/80	6.3%
85/85	7.4%
90/90	8.8%

effective date 7/01/11

In these challenging financial times, a VCCF gift annuity continues to offer solid benefits and an opportunity to make a difference for the Ventura County charity or cause you choose.

Only at VCCF can you benefit multiple regional charities of your choice with a gift annuity.

These annuities allow you to leave a legacy in Ventura County while receiving guaranteed life income.

For more information about eligibility requirements and program details, contact Lindsay Smith at (805) 988-0176, Ext. 115, or email her at lsmith@vccf.org.

Mary Tash saved millions on a secretary's pay

In her high school yearbook, Mary Tash stated her life's ambition as "private secretary."

She succeeded at that and much more. The fiery redhead from Broughty Ferry, Scotland, would live a great immigrant story and would rank among Ventura County's most generous philanthropists.

Tash, who died in 2009, willed to VCCF more than \$2 million — a sum amassed during her 55 years working as an executive secretary at the Oxnard legal firm of Nordman Cormany Hair & Compton.

"She was frugal and lived modestly," said her longtime friend Laura McAvoy, now a partner with Musick, Peeler & Garrett in Westlake Village and a founding VCCF board member.

Tash's great loves were her daughter, Mimi, her Scotty dogs and the cartoons of Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Conrad of the Los Angeles Times, said McAvoy, who met Tash 40 years ago.

Tash's was not an easy life. Her parents left Scotland, crossing the Atlantic by ship with Tash and her two siblings. The family settled in Pittsburgh. Tash later became a U.S. citizen, but she remained a proud Scot.

During World War II, she married Robert Thomas Tash and moved to Oxnard to live with his parents while he served in the Pacific. She gave birth to their only child, Mimi, in April 1945. Capt. Tash was killed on a B-29 training mission over Guam in August 1945 — 10 days after the Japanese surrender.

Tash was one to keep her promises. She lived up to her



Photo courtesy of Laura McAvoy

The late Mary Tash, a longtime secretary for one of Ventura County's largest law firms, shared her Oxnard home with her two dogs.

vow to her husband to raise their daughter in the Catholic faith, although Tash was not a Catholic. She also cared for his parents for the rest of their lives.

Tash waited almost 20 years before she married again. Her groom died one year and two days later.

Tash went to work for the law firm in 1947. She gave all new hires a tour of the office and advised them of what was and wasn't done.

One thing Tash did most definitely, said McAvoy, was support her. McAvoy was the first woman hired by the firm who did not work as a secretary. She started as a law clerk and would become the first woman partner in a major Ventura County firm in 1978.

"Mary accepted me. She treated me like the other lawyers," McAvoy said.

After her retirement Tash corresponded with Mimi, who lived in Northern California. They didn't call each other, McAvoy said, to avoid running up a long-distance bill.

Mimi died in 2002, leaving Tash without an heir.

Tash knew of the trust her friend Gladys Daily Coffman and McAvoy placed in VCCF. As a saver herself, she liked the idea of a permanent endowment and arranged to bequeath her money to VCCF upon her death.

"She is a classic American story," McAvoy said. "It is remarkable what Mary saved and was able to leave for charity in Ventura County."

For years to come, Tash's generosity will strengthen VCCF's work in Ventura County.

"She was small in stature but her influence was immense."

— Laura McAvoy

A cause that hits home

As Greg Merfeld tells it, he drew the short straw.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, known more commonly as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, runs in his family. The Agoura Hills resident has lost more than 20 relatives to the neurological disorder.

And in 2010, he was diagnosed with it at age 49. He knows the prognosis. The fatal disease paralyzes patients who eventually die from its complications. The typical life span after diagnosis runs two to five years.

Although the straw Merfeld drew is short, his vision is long term.

He started a scholarship fund earlier this year at Ventura County Community Foundation for college students whose parents have been diagnosed with ALS.

"I know the potential emotional and financial devastation if families are not fortunate enough to have resources like health, long-term care or life insurance and disability plans already in place. They go into heavy debt mode quick," Merfeld said.

Currently only a handful of scholarships in the nation are dedicated to helping pay college costs for children whose parents suffer from ALS; most of them are



GREG MERFELD

awarded to students in a specific region of the country.

The Merfeld Family Scholarship Fund at VCCF is a national award with preference given to students in Southern California and Merfeld's native Iowa, although he has lived in Orange and Ventura counties for almost half his life.

The endowment fund is expected to award a minimum of four scholarships of \$2,500 each in the fall of 2012, and will continue until the disease is cured.

Although Merfeld himself has a business and accounting background and feels capable of running his own foundation, he decided basing his fund at VCCF best suited his circumstances. VCCF will administer

and invest the fund, make the award selections and take any future burden off of his heirs, he said.

He will have no personal part in selecting the winners but will establish the criteria.

While he is still able, he wants to focus his time and energies on national advocacy and public policy work for ALS patients, including fast-tracking potentially helpful medications and motivating pharmaceutical companies to invest more in ALS prevention and a cure.

Merfeld has succeeded in raising \$250,000 for the fund — thanks, he said, to the help of so many people in Ventura County and the Conejo Valley.

"When I was diagnosed with this disease, many people reached out to me and asked what they could do. A few months later it hit me, start a scholarship fund. My goal is now to get this to \$500,000 before I call it a day," he said.

That said, Merfeld hopes to have 20 more birthdays. And he even made a contingency that when the cure is found for ALS, the fund will help students whose parents have another neurological disease.

To donate, go to <http://vccf.org/scholarship/merf>.

Parents honor son who died too young



MARK NELSON

While trying on a shirt or a blouse at Macy's in Bellevue Square, an upscale shopping mall in Bellevue, Wash., customers found small cards in the pockets. On them were words from the New Testament: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Recipients unknowingly were touched by the late Mark Nelson of Redmond, Wash.

Mark had his own mission of slipping "Pass-It-On" cards into clothing pockets at the mall, sharing his love of God.

Mark's good nature and love of life were infectious, but his life was cut short at the age of 24 when he died struggling with the challenges of obsessive compulsive disorder. His parents, John and Sheryle Nelson, and grandmother Clarice Gibbs of Camarillo established the Mark Nelson Memorial Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation to honor him.

"He was a person beyond his years, different in his humility and spirituality," John said. "We miss him a lot."

An Eagle Scout and honors electrical engineering student at the University of Washington, Mark was quite the

Continued on Page 7

Growing stronger together

Reiter Fund aids communities where its workers live

While their parents labor in the fields, the children of farmworkers participate in programs to improve their chances for success supported by the Reiter Brothers Inc. Foundation Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation.

Reiter Affiliated Cos., today the largest berry grower in North America, planted their first crop in California in the early 1900s. Since sowing those first seeds, the family established their commitment to deal with their employees with honesty, fairness and respect. When brothers Miles and Garland took over the business from their father, Joe Reiter, they expanded the company geographically, delving into scientific and genetic research and investing in philanthropy.

“What drives us is supporting our farmworker community, especially their youth,” said Reiter Brothers Director of Philanthropy Yissel Barajas.

Created in 1999, the Reiter Brothers Fund was set up to give back to the farmworker community. Since its inception, the fund has granted over \$469,000 to nonprofits that focus on the health and wellbeing of farmworkers.

Believing children are our future, the Fund focuses on groups committed to developing the leadership, organizational and advocacy skills of children of farmworkers. According to Barajas, the fund granted two nonprofits a total of \$18,000 for projects that went above and beyond expectations in 2010.

The Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy launched the Green and Healthy South Oxnard Project at Hueneme High



Photo courtesy of Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project Tequio, a group of indigenous youth, received leadership training through a program at Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project, a program supported by a grant from Reiter Brothers Inc. Foundation Fund at VCCF.

School. Sixty students built their leadership skills and learned about the environment by conducting a waste and energy audit of the high school.

CAUSE researcher Cameron Yee and HHS teacher Harmony Lane worked with students to develop the “Ghetto to Green” report. This report summarized the key findings from the audit including that two-fifths of the school’s waste that ended up in a landfill was recyclable or compostable.

“Unexpectedly, our analysis also revealed that 14 percent of waste thrown out is food, and the students attribute it to the unhealthy school lunches that are barely edible,” Yee said.

As a direct result, the Green and Healthy South Oxnard students advocated to improve the menus to make them healthier and more appetizing. They worked with the cafeteria to switch the offerings every few weeks for variety. The Oxnard Union High School District promised a daily vegetarian option, a salad bar at HHS and to introduce local produce to the school lunches.

In November 2010, Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing

Project launched the Mixteco Youth Institute, a group of 15 to 20 indigenous and non-indigenous students coming together to improve their community through organizing, leadership training, education and advocacy. The Mixteco Youth Institute decided to make race discrimination its main advocacy issue.

The students now participate in the anti-discrimination campaign MICOP launched earlier this year.

“The kids took a leadership role in the campaign,” said MICOP Associate Director Arcenio Lopez.

Besides their continuing presentations, the students assumed the planning and agendas for their meetings.

“The youth feel so confident running their own meetings,” Lopez said. “I’m so excited for the youth group and our project.”

The Reiter Brothers Inc. Foundation Fund is one of more than 500 funds at the Ventura County Community Foundation. To donate to the Reiter Brothers Inc. Foundation Fund, visit <http://www.vccf.org/donoradvised/reit> and click “donate” by the fund name.

Lascher Fund benefits diverse nonprofits

*Finding a need
and filling it*



ED LASCHER

Edward Lascher was a trailblazing Ventura County appellate lawyer by trade, a man passionate about law and justice and a loving father and husband who wasn't afraid to tell it like it was.

"He was very honest and would tell you what you needed to hear whether you liked it or not," said his widow, Wendy Lascher.

Lascher died in 1991 at age 63 from stomach cancer, but his legacy lives on through the Edward L. Lascher Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation.

Wendy established a fund in her late husband's name in October 1991. Closing in on 20 years, the fund has awarded 49 grants and given out \$13,700 to Ventura County organizations including Planned Parenthood, KCLU and the Ventura College of Law.

"He was very well known. A lot of people were memorializing him in some way, and I thought this would be a good thing to do," Wendy said.

An appellate lawyer herself, Wendy has had familial ties to the justice system: her father was Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge John L. Cole and her

mother, Peggy Cole Darling, graduated from Stanford Law School. Two siblings, a sister-in-law and her stepfather practice law, as well.

Wendy began her career as an associate of Edward's in 1973 where he mentored her in appellate law. In 1977, she became a shareholder in the practice and in 1980, the two were married. The partnership was strong both at home and in the office.

"It was wonderful. I loved the practice. We knew what we were both up to, and we shared ideas," Wendy said. "He did a lot of mentoring and paved the way for me. He was a good person to be around."

Along with practicing law, Edward wrote a well-known legal column called "Lascher at Large." The column was featured in respected publications through his long career, including the State Bar Journal and eventually the Los Angeles Daily Journal until his passing.

After Edward died, Wendy created the Edward L. Lascher Fund as a tribute to her late husband. She grants money to causes that are very important to her, according to her late husband's wishes.

"He urged me to do the things I thought were important to the community," she said. "I think he would be very proud."

Link to Edward Lascher's "Lascher at Large" column archives at <http://www.lascher.com/large.php>. To find out more about the Lascher fund at VCCF, go to <http://www.vccf.org/donoradvised/lash>.

NELSON FUND *Continued from Page 5*

outdoorsman and pursued a variety of interests ranging from cycling and backpacking to four-wheeling with friends in the Cascade Mountains. He drove the 1974 Toyota Land Cruiser FJ40 he restored himself during high school. At age 21, Mark was diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder, an anxiety condition where people have repetitive thoughts or ideas and perform rituals to banish the obsessive thinking. Mark tried different medications and techniques to relieve the symptoms of his OCD, but to no avail.

On Nov. 6, 2005, the Redmond police received a call for help and were dispatched to the Nelson home. John was outside, waiting for the officers to arrive. Mark was threatening suicide.

Mark was holed up in the second-floor bathroom with a knife in his hand. The three young police officers who arrived lacked experience in handling a crisis like this. And with four grown men in a small bathroom, tension and panic started to rise.

Mark started to get out of the bathtub where he was sitting, but an officer took that movement as aggression, as Mark refused to drop the knife. The officer fired his gun at Mark, fatally wounding him.

Despite the hardships the Nelsons endured after Mark's death, John and Sheryle defied statistics, staying together and even keeping in contact with the officers involved in Mark's death.

The Nelsons support programs for police training in crisis situations and believe more lives have been saved because of the training.

They have also taken up Mark's causes, including homeless youth advocacy in Seattle, building houses in Mexico — as Mark did through several mission trips — as well as their biggest passion, the International OCD Foundation.

Visit <http://www.vccf.org/donoradvised/marnel> and click "donate" by the fund name. You can also read more there about Mark's life.

Elderly women saved from eviction

Beatrice was in a world of trouble. The 87-year-old woman lived alone in her Simi Valley apartment for 25 years before her son died. He made sure the bills were paid and the rent was taken care of.

Not wanting to bother her surviving family members to help her with her finances, Beatrice's back rent piled up. She owed \$4,200 and was facing eviction before her grandson found out and went in search of aid.

Beatrice (not her real name) received the help she needed thanks to the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging and a grant it received from the Women's Legacy Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation.

The VCAAA serves the 60-plus age group in the county and, with the \$5,000 grant, the agency saved seven elderly women from becoming homeless. It also provided eight women with incontinence supplies and two with nutritious food staples.

According to Supervising Care Manager Monica Neece, the VCAAA was looking to assist those who were unable to get help otherwise.

"Most people need to wait on a list, but with a grant, you can get it as soon as possible," Neece said. "We're also really concerned with what's going on at the federal level. If seniors don't get their Social Security checks, it could be devastating."

The situation for low-income seniors has

"Most people need to wait on a list, but with a grant, you can get it as soon as possible. We're also really concerned with what's going on at the federal level. If seniors don't get their Social Security checks, it could be devastating."

— Monica Neece,
Area Agency on Aging

been grim for quite some time, Neece said. VCAAA has found more seniors are living with their children, but when the economy faltered and their children lost their jobs, things soured. In other instances, the elderly have been taken advantage of by their own kids.

Neece sees many Ventura County seniors in what she calls "the middle class crunch."



A grant from the Women's Legacy Fund helped pay for emergency rent, food and incontinence supplies for Ventura County women.

Destino grants invest in youth

Hispanic students accounted for 18.3 percent of the national dropout rate in 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Although the college enrollment rate after high school graduation has increased for Latinos since 1972, the numbers have been significantly lower than their white schoolmates from 1985 to 2008.

With such a dispiriting outlook for Latino students, Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund has changed its grant priorities to better prepare Latino youth for college.

"We find there are too many students dropping out right now," said Destino Vision Committee Chair Hank Lacayo. "Our focus the next few years is to prepare students to go into higher education."

Destino grant priorities have included reading literacy,

English as a second language and youth development. The new priorities emphasize three points that directly boost the students' abilities to succeed through college preparedness. They are:

- Programs offering curriculum that measurably increase academic achievement and college preparation;
- Programs educating Latino parents and youth about the college admission application process, scholarship and financial aid opportunities;
- Programs proven to increase access to Advanced Placement and college preparatory courses.

This year, Destino awarded four organizations a total of \$57,000 to focus on college-bound Latino youth. They are California Lutheran

Continued on Page 9

Philanthropic Stewards for Ventura County.

Finding a need and filling it



Photo illustration

by Fund at VCCF covered
nence supplies for elderly

They have enough money to pay bills and rent, but, if an emergency arises, the financial balance tips. At the same time, they are not low-income enough to be covered by Medicaid or other voucher services.

With these needs in mind, the VCAA applied for a grant hoping to assist elderly women. The program not only provided immediate solutions but also educated the women on their options for the future. Two of the women they helped qualified for Medicaid but never knew it.

The eviction-prevention assistance was the greatest success of the VCAA's program, Neece said. The organization tries to keep seniors in their own homes as long as possible for their own comfort.

"When you're in a nursing home you give up a lot of freedoms we take for granted. Seniors' No. 1 concern is that they will end up in a nursing home," Neece said.

Beatrice did not want to be confined to a nursing home. By negotiating with her landlord, the agency was able to make an arrangement to let Beatrice stay in her apartment and help pay off her debt.

Said Neece, "She is still in her apartment, doing well and is happy she could stay, thanks to this grant."

Smith Foundation kicks off 2012 grantmaking

The Martin V. & Martha K. Smith Foundation is inviting letters of inquiry for its 2012 grantmaking. Letters are due by 4 p.m., Friday, Dec. 16.

The mission of the Martin V. and Martha K. Smith Foundation is to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Ventura County, with a strong preference for serving the Oxnard Plain. The foundation does this through focused grantmaking in these areas of interest:

- Basic Needs/Safety Net Services such as food, shelter, clothing, access to health care, support for former foster youth (including housing, job/life skills, education), mental health services for homeless individuals and families as well as information and referral services.
- Beautification of Oxnard such as open-space preservation, parks, community gardens, planting trees and community clean-up projects.
- Practical Higher Education including business leadership, business education, entrepreneurship, and career and technical training (such as nonprofit trade schools, regional occupational programs and community college programs.)

To review the grant guidelines for the timeline and additional eligibility requirements, and to download the letter of inquiry form, visit <http://www.vccf.org/grants>.

Electronic submissions are not accepted. Completed letters of inquiry must be received by the deadline at VCCF offices, 1317 Del Norte Road, Suite 150, Camarillo.

DESTINO Continued from Page 8

University's new Puente Hacia El Exito (Bridge Toward Success) Program working in seven local high schools; Padres Promotores de la Educación program of El Centrito Family Learning Centers, a peer parent-to-parent education program; Many Mansions' Sin Limitaciones (Without Limitations) program, which educates Latino youth and parents living in Many Mansions properties on college preparation; and Project College Bound from the Moorpark Unified School District, which will assist Latino students with Advanced Placement testing.

Along with awarding the yearly Destino Scholarship, established in 2006 for Latino students pursuing higher learning, the fund will focus grantmaking on higher education for the next two years.

VCCF President and CEO Hugh Ralston believes the focus on teens in high school will benefit them and the community in the long run.

"The change in Destino's grantmaking priorities is designed to expand opportunities for Latino youth to succeed," Ralston said. "Investing in their education will help many to go on to bigger and better things."



LEARN MORE ABOUT
DESTINO'S 2011 GRANTEES
Use your smartphone to
access the page with
this code or go to http://www.vccf.org/funds/destino_fund/pdfs/DestinoGrantHistory2011.pdf.

VCCF thanks its volunteers



Photo by Hannah Davey for VCCF

The winners of the 2011 Ventura County Community Foundation President's Awards are, from left, Rich Burlingham of Moorpark, Kerry Roscoe of Ventura, Dao Minh Doan of Newbury Park, Mary Ann Krause of Santa Paula, Sandy Smith of Ventura, Nicole Tanner of Ventura, Dave Shearer of Ventura, Risa Littman of Oak Park, Stan Carmichael of Thousand Oaks, Rebecca J. Merrell of Moorpark, Susan Lacey of Ventura and Douglas H. Green of Santa Paula. Not Pictured: Betsy Chess

Thirteen volunteers received the Ventura County Community Foundation's President's Award for their time, dedication and effort given to better Ventura County.

Presented at VCCF's biannual volunteer reception on July 19, the award recognizes individuals whose

commitment furthered the success of VCCF programs and services for the county.

If calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics standards that one hour of work has a monetary value of \$21.36, these volunteers alone have generated \$202,279 worth of assistance to their fellow county residents.

VCCF Datebook

Nov. 29: Donor Holiday Party, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., VCCF Community Room, 1317 Del Norte, Suite 150, Camarillo. Info: lsmith@vccf.org or phone (805) 988-0196, Ext. 115.

COMING IN 2012

Feb., May: Donor Education Seminar

April: Community Leadership Awards

May/June 2012: Scholarship Awards Reception

September: Women's Legacy Fund Grants Reception

Achievement-gap expert Ferguson to speak Dec. 9
Harvard education professor Ronald Ferguson and community



leaders will explore the challenges facing youth, educators and policymakers in preparing Ventura County's young people for the 21st century workforce.

The Dec. 9 event features Ferguson, described by The New York Times as the leading authority in the nation in the achievement gap between white and Asian students and their Latino and black counterparts.

Sponsored by the Ventura County Civic Alliance — a VCCF initiative — the Ventura County Community College District and the California Community College

State Chancellor's Office, this conference is aimed at employers, educators, policymakers and young professionals.

It will be held from 8 a.m. to noon at the Ventura County Office of Education, 5100 Adolfo Road, Camarillo.

Information: Ventura County Civic Alliance at (805) 988-0196, Ext. 114, or visit www.CivicAlliance.org.



LISTEN IN
Hear the stories of VCCF donors and scholarship winners at vccftoday.org.

Philanthropic Stewards for Ventura County.

And the kudos go to ...

Talented teens wow judges

Hunched over scholarship applications for hours, VCCF volunteers rejoice when they discover students with wonderful stories to tell or who are committed to helping their community. But what happens when the volunteers fall in love with three applicants but have only two awards to give?

That happened this year to the Young Artists Scholarship judges. Unable to decide which student to leave out, the judges pooled their own money and awarded all three scholars \$2,500 each.

Adrian Carcione and Trevor Mauk, both of Santa Susana High School in Simi Valley, and Alexandra Phelps of Foothill Technology High School in Ventura were honored with the 2011 Young Artists Scholarship.

"The work they've done in the arts is astonishing," said ArtsLIVE consultant Susan Scott. "On the arts side, they have multiple strengths. These young winners have shown strong engagement in the community as well. It's a strong and well-rounded story."

The Young Artists Scholarship Fund was introduced as part of the ArtsLIVE in Ventura County Initiative — funded in large measure by The Irvine Foundation — to provide annual financial aid to send our best young artists to the best arts programs and schools.

Even as the initiative comes to a close, VCCF continues the campaign to endow the fund permanently.

When the endowment is fully funded, it will award \$15,000 a year for scholarships, according to Scott.

While the fund has reached \$60,000, VCCF hopes to raise \$375,000 and more fund-raising events are in motion. VCCF plans to partner with the Thousand Oaks Philharmonic to promote the scholarships. Since its inception in 2009, the scholarship has sent seven young Ventura County artists to schools including Northwestern University and the Boston Conservatory.

Donors hope the recipients will come back to their community as masters of their craft and share their work and skills with local residents.

"I hope they pay it forward," said Scott. "All of the young scholars today are doing that, often bringing their arts to bear in the community. I hope the scholarship encourages them to redouble their efforts."



READ BIOGRAPHIES AND SEE PHOTOS OF THE NEWEST YOUNG ARTISTS SCHOLARS. Use your smartphone to access the page. Or go to <http://www.vccf.org/scholarship/yasf>.



Dallas Woodburn, left, and Janet Bridgers won the two new awards at VCCF's Community Leadership Awards ceremony. Woodburn took home the Next Generation Leader Award; Bridgers was honored with the Kesa Ryono Award for grass-roots leadership in her community.

Photo by Ed Haas

VCCF honors stars of local philanthropy

What does philanthropy have to do with starfish? Young Ventura writer Dallas Woodburn made the connection at the second annual VCCF Community Leadership Awards in June.

Woodburn, who accepted the new Next Generation Leader Award, shared a story about a man who came upon a beach covered with stranded starfish. As he threw them back in the sea, a beachcomber happened by and observed it was impossible to save all the starfish. How could the man hope to make a difference? "Well, to this starfish," the second man

said, holding one of them in his hand as he prepared to toss it into the waves, "I can make a big difference," Woodburn said, pointing out that story summarized her feelings on philanthropy.

VCCF honored the service and leadership of five individuals and a local foundation at the Community Leadership Awards in June at the Museum of Ventura County's Smith Pavilion.

Mike and Loretta Merewether of Ventura shared the 2011 Philanthropists Award. With service on a number of boards and as visible supporters of issues such as affordable housing and

2011 Community Leadership Award winners

Mike and Loretta Merewether
Philanthropists Award

Smith-Hobson Foundation
Outstanding Organization Award

Dallas Woodburn
Next Generation Leader Award

Janet Bridgers
Kesa Ryono Award

Joseph Brown
Founders Award

Continued on Page 12

VCCF grant revives tales of 'forgotten' places

Over the years, progress has paved over places in the Conejo Valley, but local historian Miriam Sprankling is making sure what is gone is never forgotten.

The curator of history at the Stagecoach Inn Museum in Newbury Park is writing a book about locales known only to the oldest of the oldtimers. Most Californians of a certain age have heard of the Jungleground wild animal park on Thousand Oaks Boulevard but fewer may recall the Meadowbrook Plunge swimming pool, Robling Military Academy or the Tantony gift shop.

Her "Tales and Voices of the Old Conejo Valley" will have firsthand accounts taken from oral histories and will be distributed to schools and libraries throughout the county.

Sprankling has undertaken this project with the aid of a \$7,854 grant from the Heritage Fund at the Ventura County Community Foundation

"The most interesting part of this project is interviewing people who visited these places," Sprankling said. These oral histories add richness and color to her book, she said.

Denny Robb, who grew up in Thousand Oaks and whose family owns Robb Hardware, knows where the bodies are buried.

"As a kid Denny used to hike all over the valley. One day he discovered what was probably Thousand Oaks' first graveyard," Sprankling said.

The cemetery was overgrown and the markers had fallen over so then-11-year-old Robb pulled the weeds and uprighted the tombstones of this graveyard which inhabited land across from the Thousand Oaks Post



The Oakdale Market on Thousand Oaks Boulevard has gone through several transitions during its long history. It will be featured in a new book, "Tales and Voices of the Old Conejo Valley," a book underwritten by the Heritage Fund at VCCF.

Photo courtesy of Miriam Sprankling

Office on Duesenberg Drive.

Robb later learned it was known as the Russell Cemetery, after one of the early ranching families of The Conejo.

One day, Robb reported to Sprankling, he ran into Joe Russell and said, "Hey Joe, I found your cemetery."

To which Russell replied, "I didn't know it was lost."

The book also will feature places that still exist but not for their original purpose. What is known as the Oakdale Market started as a dance hall in the 1930s and today is a paint and décor store.

"There are people who want these things remembered. That's why VCCF gave us this grant," she said.

Sprankling hopes more longtime residents step forward and share their recollections with her. Those who wish to be interviewed for this project can reach her through the Stagecoach Inn at (805) 498-9441.

Learn more about the work of the Heritage Fund at http://www.vccf.org/funds/heritage_fund.

COMMUNITY LEADERS *Continued from Page 11*

the arts, they have formulated creative solutions for the local nonprofit community.

"The main message we hope to convey by being recognized for this award," said Mike Merewether, "is that we hope to inspire others to use the VCCF resources or other similar vehicles as a partner to manage donations so they might enjoy seeing the fruits of their work in their own lifetime."

The Outstanding Organization Award for 2011 went to the Smith-Hobson Foundation for the philanthropic leadership the foundation and members of the Smith and Hobson families have shown for two decades. The foundation established one of the earliest funds at VCCF

and has awarded over \$1.6 million to local nonprofits.

Former VCCF board member Joseph Brown was honored by the current board with the 2011 Founders Award, which was established to honor a longtime VCCF leader. A founding member of the VCCF board, Brown — who was hospitalized at the time and unable to attend — has been instrumental in the advancement of VCCF as well as other nonprofits throughout the county. He served as a chairman of the Conejo Future Foundation and as a regent for California Lutheran University.

Serving as event sponsor was Verizon. Santa Barbara Bank & Trust was the award sponsor, and Zestnet Inc. was the foundation sponsor.

Philanthropic Stewards for Ventura County.

ArtsLIVE leaves its mark on our communities

As the ArtsLIVE in Ventura County initiative came to a close in September, the Ventura County Community Foundation looked back on the projects grantees created, leaving an indelible ArtsLIVE mark on the area.

Tesi Sanchez-Halpert of Moorpark partnered with the Ventura County Animal Shelter to create animal sculptures for the shelter grounds. The welded scrap metal pieces greet visitors as they enter the gates of the shelter to adopt a pet.

Sanchez-Halpert believes metal scraps and shelter animals both have another chance at love.

“Just like these parts that used to be very viable and useful and were later tossed, so are the animals at the shelter, and I think that they all have a second chance, or another chance, for love,” Sanchez-Halpert said.

Director of Ventura County Animal Services Monica Nolan believes Sanchez’s sculptures symbolize the idea of the shelter.

“What we’re trying to say is that if you take home animals and you give them another chance, they can be wonderful pets,” Nolan said. “It was a true collaboration of what she’s created and what we’re about here.”

Arts for Action’s Paint Not Prison Program taught at-risk youth, including those on probation for graffiti violations, about the history of graffiti and how they can turn their tagging into constructive art. The six-month program offered a series of workshops on art theory and practice that culminated in the production of a public mural in south Oxnard.

According to Arts for Action Program Director Tomas Hernandez, the program is not only a community service option for youth on probation but also a beautification project for Oxnard.

“It doesn’t make sense for them to tag where they just put in hard work,” he said. “It’s also given a start back to public art and giving back



This friendly denizen of the sea greets students, teachers, parents and visitors on the campus of Pacific High School in Ventura. Artist MB Hanrahan worked with students to create the mural, which was tied in with their biology curriculum.

to our city.”

MB Hanrahan of Ventura worked with the students of Pacific High School in Ventura on an interdisciplinary project that would end with a multi-dimensional mural. To create the concept for the piece, students studied marine life of the Central Coast.

“The curriculum tie-in engaged the science students and art students as well,” Hanrahan said. “This project, as well as in other curriculum tie-in art projects that I have done with students and schools, gets faculty involved and provides thematic direction.”

The mural greets guests as they enter Pacific High School’s administration building. The wall’s facelift has been a popular addition to the school.

“Students who worked with me on the mural, faculty, district personnel and other students who have attended Pacific always praise that mural,” Hanrahan said. “The youth love it. It is dynamic, professional looking, site specific — at once educational, traditional and unusual.”

ARTSLIVE BY THE NUMBERS

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED
IN TRAINING AT VCCF

33

NEW OPERATING SUPPORT
FOR THE ARTS AS A RESULT OF
TRAINING

\$902,441

NEW DONORS FOR THE ARTS

2,657

YOUNG ARTISTS SCHOLARSHIP
FUND HAS RAISED

\$60,000 of \$375,000 goal

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO
BUDDING ARTISTS

7

GRANTS TO ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

\$180,000

GRANTS TO ARTISTS THROUGH
INITIATIVE PARTNER, THE
VENTURA COUNTY ARTS
COUNCIL

16 totaling over \$70,000

Shedding light in stormy times



Photos by Fred Bauermeister
Dena Jensen, director of VCCF's Center for Nonprofit Leadership, pays tribute to the people and organizations that help the center support the local nonprofit community.

CNL honors its benefactors

Calling the Center for Nonprofit Leadership a safe harbor for nonprofits in stormy economic times, CNL Director Dena Jensen paid tribute to the individuals and organizations that support it at the October appreciation event at the Museum of Ventura County's Smith Pavilion.

This year's honorees were Sydney Weisman and David Hamlin, veteran publicists who donate hours for their popular Mastering the Media course; AT&T, a key funder of the Center and a trusted partner to Ventura County nonprofits; The McCune Foundation, which supports the Center's efforts to train leaders in the social justice community; and the California Consumer Protection Foundation, which supports technical training for emerging nonprofits.

As nonprofits struggled to stay afloat in a turbulent economy, they took advantage of the classes offered by the Center in record numbers. Jensen announced the center offered 125 workshops that served 500 nonprofit organizations in Ventura County.

Josh Addison, executive director of the Bell Arts Factory, called the Center "a gift to the community."

"It's an honor to be involved in the good work done for the benefit of the community at the Center," he said.

Addison told the audience he had been a developer before deciding to take the helm at the arts center on the west side of Ventura that had once been a mattress factory owned by his family. Once he made the decision to devote himself to nonprofit work, he wasted no time in signing up for as many classes as he could at the Center.

Jensen announced plans for the Center to explore how to fill the void left when the Nonprofit Support Center of Santa Barbara closed its doors. "Stay tuned," she said.



Center for Nonprofit Leadership

Engage. Learn. Transform.

2011 HONOREES



Sydney Weisman and David Hamlin, volunteer faculty

Sydney Weisman, David Hamlin, Weisman Hamlin Public Relations

For the numerous hours of workshop instruction they give each year for their Mastering the Media course and the marketing and communications module of the Board Leadership Institute.



Mike Silacci, of AT&T and a VCCF board member

AT&T

A key funder of the Center's initiatives, namely the Technology Works for Nonprofits program and more recently in the Building Board Leadership initiative, AT&T is a trusted partner and supporter of building the capacity of nonprofits in Ventura County.



Claudia Armann, of The McCune Foundation

The McCune Foundation

For a generous, thoughtful partnership and financial support of the Center's efforts serving the grassroots and social justice community of nonprofit organizations and for providing support that has allowed the Center to offer nationally recognized speakers.



Stephen Guine, accepting for the California Consumer Protection Foundation

California Consumer Protection Foundation

For financial support that has allowed the Center to host 179 workshops dedicated to advancing technology literacy in the nonprofit sector. More than 1,300 attendees have benefited from the workshop programming. Twenty-five organizations have received on-site consulting through the circuit rider program.

Philanthropic Stewards for Ventura County.



MAKSIMUK

PEARSON

CASON

SMITH

SCHMALZEL

DAVEY

Colleagues: VCCF adds, promotes staff

The Ventura County Community Foundation recently welcomed three staff members.

Katrina Maksimuk came to VCCF as the program associate to the Ventura County Civic Alliance. Working closely with the VCCA Executive Committee, Maksimik has aided the organization in its convenings. She oversees a project to engage young people in sustainability for Ventura County.

Rick Pearson is VCCF's new special projects officer. Funds and programs he assists with include the Homeless Transition Fund and the Social Justice Fund for Ventura County. He will manage grantmaking for Ventura County Together, the Ventura County Veterans Fund and VCCF initiatives.

Colleen Cason joined VCCF in October as director of communications and marketing. Her job will be to share on as many platforms as possible VCCF's impact with the community through its success stories.

These colleagues received promotions after dedicated service:

Lindsay Smith, former donor relations officer, has been promoted as of Oct. 1 to director of donor relations. Her new duties include furthering VCCF's planned giving initiative with field-of-interest fund holders, charitable gift annuities and assisting with planning donor education forums and receptions.

Jerusha Schmalzel, who started as a development associate in July 2010, has been promoted to director of fund development. In her new role, Jerusha will implement online giving strategies and raise the foundation's profile with financial advisers and donors.

Hannah Davey joined the foundation as an intern to create and maintain a social networking website for VCCF scholarship recipients. Davey was hired part-time in September as a communications assistant to write, photograph and create digital media for VCCF publications and vccf.org.

Read our new staff bios at <http://vccf.org/about/staff.shtml>.

VCCF Annual Report goes digital

Now there is a place on the Internet where you can find out just about anything that happened at the Ventura County Community Foundation in 2010.

VCCF's 2010 Annual Report is posted on vccf.org. All 57 pages of it.

For the first time in VCCF's history, the annual report was not printed. Instead, it was compiled, written and laid out to be posted on the Web only.

This saved VCCF thousands of dollars that might have been spent on printing. It also spared trees, and is a cleaner and greener approach to giving out information of interest to VCCF stakeholders.



VCCF's 2010 Annual Report is available to view or download at vccf.org.

And because we were not constrained to a certain number of pages, we were able to provide more information in a readable form. The report lists all VCCF funds, gifts and grants.

The report offers the convenience of hyperlinks to related material on vccf.org. Tabs on each page can be used to navigate between the sections. The index is set up so users can click on a page and instantly go there.

TO SEE THE REPORT

Click on <http://www.vccf.org/media/pdfs/VCCFAR2010.pdf>



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VCCF is certified in compliance with national standards for U.S. community foundations.

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Highlights is VCCF's newsletter. Writers: Colleen Cason, Hannah Davey; Design and production: Talon Klipp; Photos: Hannah Davey, Ed Haas, Fred Bauermeister. To access Highlights online, visit: <http://vccf.org/media/publications>. *This publication is printed on recycled materials.*

Ask our scholarship experts

Students seeking college scholarships from any of the 94 funds at Ventura County Community Foundation can get expert advice during one of the new application workshops scheduled for Dec. 21, 22 and 28.

Virginia Weber, VCCF program officer for scholarships, and LaToya Ford, program associate and grants manager, will guide high school students through the application process. They will be on hand to answer any questions about how to successfully register on vccf.org and complete a scholarship application.

The nine sessions will be in VCCF's Technology Center so students will have use of a computer.

Sessions will be from 10 to 11 a.m., 1 to 2 p.m. and 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on all three days.

For more information, contact Ford at lford@vccf.org or phone her at (805) 988-0196, Ext. 126.

VCCF offices are at 1317 Del Norte Road, Suite



150, Camarillo.

Space is limited so registration is required.

The deadline to apply for a scholarship for the 2012-2013 school year is Jan. 6, 2012. Applicants must pre-register on the VCCF website by 5 p.m. on Jan. 4, 2012. For online scholarship registration and more information, go to vccf.org.