



TC Holiday Fund's CSA keep feet warm

Written by Elliott Burr - Town Crier Staff Writer
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The Town Crier Holiday Fund annually collects and disburses financial donations to area non-profit organizations that benefit those in need. In the following article, we profile two of this year's 15 beneficiaries, Community Services Agency Helping Kids and East Palo Alto Kids Foundation.

Community Services Agency Helping Kids

The Community Services Agency of Mountain View Los Altos offers an array of support for families in the area, ranging from food services to assisting in finding dental care, but this year it's in need of something a little more footsy.



This year's Holiday Fund may allow Community Service Agency to restore their shoe voucher program and help needy kids put shoes on their feet.

"We're not getting shoe vouchers anymore," said Elba Landaverde, emergency assistance program director. "We used to get them from the Assistance League of Los Altos, but they're not generating as much revenue anymore (due to decreasing costume rentals)." Landaverde said they had to cut the program last March, although the need remains.

CSA used to be able to issue families a \$20 per person voucher valid at Payless Shoe Source on Grant Road in Mountain View.

"With five children, that's \$100" toward several pairs of shoes," Landaverde said. She would like to start up the program again and include the Payless store in San Antonio Center because of its more "central location."

To qualify for a shoe voucher, one must be a Mountain View, Los Altos or Los Altos Hills resident, live in the low-income demographic and young people must be K-12 students. Landaverde said a majority of CSA's clientele is Latino.

If the total shoe purchase exceeds the voucher, families are encouraged to pay the difference.

"One gentleman told me, 'But I only have \$1 to my name,'" Landaverde said. "We try to encourage fiscal responsibility so there's a sense of ownership. ... Like you can buy shoes that last all year long so you don't have to buy them as often or I always tell people to look for the sales.

"We used to get maybe five to eight people requesting shoe vouchers each week," Landaverde said. But now, she said, they don't have any vouchers for families.

She said she often gets to know families very well, and she knows how needy they are.

"It's really hard to turn people away," she said. "Something like shoes might not seem like a big deal to most people, but to them it is."

CSA receives its funds from individual donors, foundation grants and corporate sponsors.

For more information, visit www.CSAcares.org or call 968-0836.

To donate to the Holiday Fund, make checks payable to "Town Crier Holiday Fund" and send to 138 Main St., Los Altos 94022. For more information, visit www.latcholidayfund.org. Carol Crites is a Los Altos resident and long-time volunteer. Send suggestions for this column to volunteerprofiles@latc.com.