

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RANCHO SANTA FE FOUNDATION**

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The local support for the teens of San Pasqual Academy over the last three years has been very exciting to see, and through the community support group created by Joan Scott, Carole Markstein and so many others, Friends of San Pasqual Academy has provided everything from basketball cleats to personal computers, prom dresses to Valentine goodie bags, and most of all unconditional caring about these young people.

In September, 2004, the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation assisted with the opening of the Sulpizio Family Health and Wellness Center on the San Pasqual Academy campus. Since then the State of California has committed funding to run the programs for two years, pending the completion of the interior furnishings of the center. We have just learned that the State Inspectors will be here in about two weeks, and there is still much to do. Here is their story:

Creating a “culture of wellness” that meets the physical, mental and behavioral health needs of foster youth has been an integral part of the vision for San Pasqual Academy since its inception. This vision became a reality in the fall of 2004, with the completion of the Health and Wellness Center.

Former and current foster youth have expressed the desire to have an on-campus health center that would create better access to health and dental care, as well as provide health education, prevention, and intervention services. The goal is to create an on-grounds resource that meets the comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral needs of 250 foster youth, as well as assisting them in the development of lifelong positive health behaviors.

The need for a Health and Wellness Center at San Pasqual Academy stems from the fragmented histories of the youth placed in the program, as well as the size and location of the campus. The typical profile of a San Pasqual Academy youth is an adolescent who has averaged eight prior placements and who has little hope of family reunification. These multiple changes in placement include changes in healthcare providers and a loss of continuity in the development of healthy lifestyles.

Currently the medical needs of the youth of San Pasqual Academy are met through a combination of the North County Mobile Clinic and other health and dental care providers in Escondido and Ramona. Their mental health needs are met through New

Alternatives' EPSDT funded day treatment program, and their behavioral health needs are met through house parents, childcare staff, and the school.

An integrated, comprehensive behavioral health program based in the on-campus Health and Wellness Center will establish a "culture of wellness" through health education, health prevention strategies, and intervention services. Although basic physical and mental health services are provided through Medi-Cal, behavioral health is not. The youth at San Pasqual Academy have limited access to information that is normally provided at home, such as: sex education, drug, alcohol and tobacco use, diet and nutrition, family disease history, as well as other issues that contribute to a lifetime of health or illness.

A comprehensive and well-planned behavioral health program will increase each foster youth's self-care knowledge and reduce the likelihood of behavioral and health habits that have a serious and long-term impact on their health and welfare.

The Center is located on-site and easily accessible for Academy students, yet segregated from the main core of the campus. The site was selected to provide the students with *accessibility* and *privacy*. The 2700 square foot building includes reception, nurse's station, examination rooms, and classrooms for group education seminars.

To successfully complete the Health and Wellness Center, the Academy needs resources to provide the furniture and equipment required to outfit each of the offices and exam rooms.

The Rancho Santa Fe Foundation has committed up to \$15,000 of our unrestricted funds in support of a fund raising goal of \$66,000. We are looking to leverage Rancho Santa Fe Foundation support with others in the community and ask your help in raising the funds to complete this project. We are proud of the local support that has gone to assist these youth, who have made a choice to attend San Pasqual Academy, to improve their minds as well as their bodies. If we are successful in creating this "culture of wellness" at San Pasqual Academy, it will provide a basis for healthy futures and productive lifestyles.

Please join us, and so many others in our community, with your gift of \$1,000 or more, to complete this wonderful project. Your donations may be sent to the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation, P.O. Box 811, attention Christy Wilson.