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RANCHO SANTA FE FOUNDATION

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Stories, and their telling and re-telling over time, have been civilizations way of recording history. And granted, the stories probably change in the re-telling, but at the very least they are being passed along from generation to generation. And even in modern times, stories remain as a means of communication that remains powerful, poignant and inspiring.

Let me tell you a story ... I was talking to a man whose name is Alan Sakal yesterday. He is a member of the Board and a volunteer for an organization called *Bread of Life* (www.bolrescue.org) in Oceanside. *Bread of Life* relies on a large and diverse group of volunteers who assist with the procurement and delivery of food, the preparation of food, organizing and distributing of clothing and hygiene items and they operate a winter shelter for approximately 125 men, women and children seven nights a week. Until about two weeks ago, these people were lucky if they could find space at *Bread of Life* for the night to sleep on a blanket, on the floor. This is where the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation and the Rancho Santa Fe Rotary club enter the picture.

I received a call in November from Bill Herrick who is a member of the Foundation board and a devoted Rotarian. Bil, who has been involved with the hotel business during most of his professional career, had been able to procure more than 5000 new blankets that were imperfect but still very usable. His idea was to deliver several thousand to orphanages in Mexico, a thousand or so to New Alternatives which operates homes for foster children in Southern California (New Alternatives operates the residential program at San Pasqual Academy), and he then asked the Foundation and the Rotary Club to distribute approximately 1500 to organizations within San Diego County. Both organizations were happy to help, particularly as this has been one of the coldest winters in history in our area!

The only problem was that Bill Herrick's offices could not warehouse all 1500 of these blankets. So, we made a call to the Rancho Santa Fe Association, and they generously offered to let us use the living room at the Dacus House as the warehouse. Our thanks to the Association and, particularly Dick Brockett, whose office is in the Dacus House.

The blankets arrived and one of the Foundation/Rotary families unloaded the 375 boxes containing the blankets. But then the problem was to distribute the blankets. Many of the organizations that we contacted had a desperate need for the blankets but did not have a

truck large enough (or at all) to pick them up. So, we rented a truck and enlisted the support of David and Michael Anderson, whose mother Debbie works for the Foundation, to drive the truck and deliver nearly 500 of the blankets!

So how does Alan Sakal and the Bread of Life fit into the picture? Well, some months ago, Alan decided to run in the upcoming Carlsbad Marathon and decided to use the opportunity to raise money for the Bread of Life. When he saw the 100 new blankets that had arrived for the winter shelter, he knew that the money he raised from running in the marathon would be used to purchase 75 new, high quality cots for the guests at the Bread of Life winter shelter. For the last two weeks, these people have enjoyed the warmth of a hot meal, and the warmth of a bed with a blanket.

I wanted to share this story, because it demonstrates the strength of a community that works together – individuals like Bill Herrick and his family, the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation, the Rancho Santa Fe Rotary Club - who have been able to help those who might have been cold had it not been for the blankets that we have been able to distribute.

This was a story that I wanted to share to mark the beginning of the New Year ...