Partnerships

A profile of the Foundation’s ongoing effort to create a healthy northern California

Camp Dedication Brings Organizations Together for Thanks

The sun was shining down on Grizzly Creek Ranch Saturday morning, June 7, 2003, when Sierra Health Foundation hosted a breakfast on-site at its new children’s camp in Portola, California. Over 120 people from Plumas County attended the event which was dedicated in part to them, for the important role each played in the development of the Foundation’s new project, Grizzly Creek Ranch Camp for Kids.

“In its early stages this project was just a dream…,” said Wendy Everett Sc.D., Chair of Sierra Health Foundation’s Board of Directors. “That dream is a reality today — and I look around this room and know that it’s a reality because of a great deal of collaboration that took place between many of you here today, and staff of the Foundation. And, I need to tell you that when we saw this particular property in Portola, we knew this was the place to build our camp for kids with special needs,” said Dr. Everett.

The event took place in the Dining Lodge, a large, open building with walls of paneled windows that overlook what is called “Carmichael Meadow.” “We call it Carmichael Meadow because it is associated with Francis Carmichael, the gentleman who owns the property behind the Ranch — 1,000 acres of which we have a lease option to buy,” said Len McCandliss, President of the Foundation. The Dining Lodge is set up to hold approximately 240 people for meal service and events and has a state-of-the-art catering kitchen designed for campers to serve themselves. “Joanne Simmons is the Camp’s Head Cook and she is clearly in command of her kitchen,” said Ann Perez, the Grizzly Creek Ranch Project Director.

A hearty breakfast was served at 8:15 a.m. and the program began at 9:00 a.m. The hungry crowd enjoyed their meal with tapping toes as Heather Gage played her fiddle for the first hour. Len McCandliss, Master of Ceremonies, introduced the line-up of speakers who all presented welcoming comments about the project and the opportunities it presents for special needs campers and the local community. Speakers included long-time Plumas County Supervisor B.J. Pearson; Ann Perez; Patrick Eagle, Camp Manager; and Steve Hornsey, Program Coordinator for the City of Sacramento Access Leisure Program, a group that will be using the camp this summer.

Mr. Hornsey has been coordinating activities for organized groups of physically challenged kids for nearly 20 years. And, speaking from personal experience, he can’t say enough about what a camp
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Story of Grizzly Creek Ranch... And How the Camp Was Won

About four years ago, a discussion began among the Board of Directors about how its resources to further the healthy development of children in the region, above and beyond the 10 year commitment that had been made to the Community Partnerships for Healthy Children initiative. A short time later, conversations with organizations serving organized groups of children uncovered that a significant number of children in northern California had needs that could be better served by the development of programs designed for special needs accessibility.

There are a lot of camps around — some with very focused activities — sports camps, horse camps, science camps — even “entrepreneur” camps for kids. But there is a much shorter list of camps and facilities that can accommodate a wide range of children with special needs.

Grizzly Creek Ranch Camp for Kids is Sierra Health Foundation’s new project near the City of Portola in Plumas County. Grizzly Creek Ranch operates full time as a camp for kids with special needs during the summer, and is available for use as a conference and retreat center to other groups in the off season. The 2003 camping season began this year in July.

Sierra Health Foundation Salutes Retiring Board Member

Byron H. Demorest, M.D.

This past year, Sierra Health Foundation’s Board of Directors recognized the retirement of one of its founding members, Byron H. Demorest, M.D. Byron was an extremely dedicated Board Member who served the Foundation for nineteen years.

When Dr. Demorest wasn’t assisting the Foundation with its grantmaking he was busy serving the needs of Sacramento area children as a renowned pediatric ophthalmologist — a career from which he only recently retired. Byron’s care for children, both personally and professionally, translated to his work on the Foundation Board where he maintained an active role on the Program and Camp committees. His genuine interest in the success of the nonprofit community and foundation grantees was always clear.

A long-time volunteer with the Boy Scouts, Byron served as an advocate for organized group activities for youth both in and outside of the Board Room. His experience with these types of projects over the years was greatly admired by his peers.

Though Byron Demorest is a proud, native Nebraskan, graduating from the University of Nebraska School of Medicine in 1948, he established his private practice in Sacramento soon thereafter and received numerous awards and distinctions in northern California and Sacramento for his work in ophthalmology.

The Board and Staff of Sierra Health Foundation would like to thank Byron Demorest for his many years of commitment on the Board, and for his important role in the improvement of health for children and families in northern California.

“The certainly were reminded that collaboration is an essential part of a project’s ultimate success. So, thanks once again to everyone for their contribution.”

— Len McCandliss

The construction of Grizzly Creek Ranch was led by J.R. Roberts, Corp., a Sacramento-based construction firm with a big heart. J.R. Roberts’ crew and a long list of subcontractors built out approximately 20 acres in just over a year. With the exception of a few minor holidays, it was pretty much flying elbows and dust clouds at the Ranch.

On June 7, the Board of Directors and staff hosted a breakfast and dedication ceremony in Portola for over 120 of the folks who participated in the development of the project. Attendees included those who were involved in the early planning stage, architecture, site and program development, local dignitaries, the construction crew, and the local internet provider. You can read more about these events on pages 1 and 7.

The staffs of Camp Ronald McDonald, and of nonprofit organizations in the region, played a critical role helping us to understand how an organized camping experience can shape young lives. The Board and staff of Sierra Health Foundation are very grateful to these people for lending their expertise to the project. We certainly were reminded that collaboration is an essential part of a project’s ultimate success. So, thanks once again to everyone for their contribution.

Stay tuned for more information and announcements about the camp and what’s happening at Grizzly Creek Ranch!

—Len McCandliss

Byron H. Demorest, M.D.
The economy has thrown down the gauntlet and issued a challenge to nonprofit organizations to fight for survival or die trying. At the risk of personifying the current economic struggles of our nation through chivalrous metaphors, the need to take up arms against strained economic forces is as old as King Arthur.

If ever there was a time for the knights (leaders) of the nonprofit sector to ride a white horse, it is now. The urgent challenges so many organizations are facing to sustain their current capacity or scout new terrain, square in the face of economic downturn, is formidable. Lances and swords won’t save the day; creative leadership, however, just might. I hope this column will encourage leaders in the nonprofit sector to pick up the gauntlet and meet the challenge to survive.

Sierra Health Foundation’s commitment to encouraging strong leadership in the nonprofit sector remains focused. We recognize an organization’s efficiency and effectiveness are directly affected by the competence and vision of its leadership. Last May members of the second class of our Health Leadership Program graduated but not before I had the chance to pick their brains about what they were doing to address the pressing issues and concerns coming from this economic plight. Here are the “building blocks for recovery” they shared.

**Building Block 1 — Don’t Lose the Forest for the Trees**

Almost to a person, a reduction in funding opportunities was seen as an invitation to examine, reexamine, and retool old ways of functioning and to develop new formulas for future success. However, in the process of retooling, keep an eye to the organization’s “core competency.” Core competency includes values and purpose for existing, and those talents and programs that distinguish your organization from others. If a plan to retool in times of economic strain causes you to shift your focus from what is fundamental to your existence, you run the risk of creating a breach of trust with your staff and stakeholders and you could weaken your very foundation. Let your organization’s core competency be the driver in future decision making — it sustained you in good times and it should again during the tough ones.

**Building Block 2 — From the Mud Grows the Lotus Blossom!**

The keeping and growing of money is a “constant” in life and that goes for the “life” of nonprofits too. Even a muddied economic dip has the potential to produce something good.

Financial stability can be helped along by looking inward and husbanding resources already available. For example, take this time to tap into the unused skills many staff possess but can’t use in their current positions. You may be surprised to see what staff will volunteer to do when given the chance to contribute in new ways.

Looking at new sources of funding is essential. Consider fee-for-service opportunities or ways to attract potential donors outside of your current giving circle; do your own public relations through word-of-mouth, handshakes, e-mails and cocktail parties.

**Building Block 3 — Won’t You Be Mine?**

Let’s never forget how powerful relationships (both inside and outside your organization) and your reputation are in the business of securing funds. And don’t think just because you’re a nonprofit, you’re not a business. You are! You might not be trading merchandise, but you are in the business of service and people.

During your funding scramble, keep in mind the following steps to relationship-building as you bolster staff morale and network with current or potential funders:

1. Determine mutually satisfying goals.
2. Shake off any bad feelings, emotions or fears and explore what you think the relationship is and how it can be either amended or enhanced.
3. Step outside your relationship, and like a detached observer, see what other people are doing and see yourself responding to them.
4. Ask how you could reinforce or trigger a different behavior and how you might respond.
5. Try to produce positive feelings in others.

When you become relationship focused, you can align yourself with the other party’s perspective and achieve results beneficial to your purpose: shared support, higher morale, proactive staffs, potential networks, possible mergers, advocacy opportunities, increased communication opportunities, and the list goes on and on.

**Building Block 4 — This is Costing Me WHAT?**

Times of economic instability are always challenging, but they can be creative too. Try being a little entrepreneurial in your approach to cost management. For example, you might have to consider altering or implementing some of the following: hours of work, use of credit, integration of programs or services, temporary leaves, salary freezes, increasing volunteers, and analyzing a program’s effectiveness to determine if it should stay or go. Another powerful and rarely used approach is to merge with another organization. (See the sidebar for an expose of a recent merger of two family service agencies).

**Building Block 5 — Hey, What About Me?**

If you’re feeling like a beast of burden bearing the stress and worry for your staff, organization and clients, I recommend you work on lessening your load. Try putting a little emotional distance between you and those pressing concerns. Don’t become a victim of misdirected self recrimination. I assure you it will only make matters worse if you go to bed at night asking yourself, “What is it that I’m doing wrong? Why is it that we did things right for so long and can no longer do them?”

Like any enterprise, nonprofits operate within a cycle, which, by its nature, begins, peaks, and declines, with a variety of substages in between. Nonprofits also operate within the cycles of other enterprises: funders, for-profits, government and the economy, with the extra burden of dependency. Presumably, the state of the economy (fragile but getting stronger), is out of your control. One of the best things you can do then is take steps to keep morale high for you and your staff.

From the mythical King Arthur to the director of a nonprofit, vision, tenacity and perseverance will carry the day. Picking up the gauntlet and charging ahead is what we must do.

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**Two Nonprofits Merge to Better Serve Clients and Gain Operating Efficiencies**

While nonprofit organizations (NPO) often collaborate, NPOs merging their operations and boards is much rarer. Two Sacramento/Yolo organizations, Lekotek Family Resource Center and Yolo Connections, Inc., did just that. Realizing they provided some common and complimentary services to at-risk families, and with a history of positive collaboration, the two organizations saw the value of joining forces. The newly created NPO, appropriately named Hands Together, Inc., will serve families with children from zero to adulthood. Lekotek previously targeted families with special needs children from zero to eight, while Yolo Connections also served families with adolescents and teens.

The corporate merger also resulted in a merger of leadership. Jim Lockwood, formerly the executive director of Lekotek, is now responsible for operations and administration; Mary Jo Bryan, the former executive of Yolo Connections is now responsible for programs and program development. To learn more about how these two NPOs planned and carried out this merger, call Jim or Mary Jo at (530) 669-3285.

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Dorothy Meehan

“...an organization’s efficiency and effectiveness are directly affected by the competence and vision of its leadership.”

— Dorothy Meehan
Program Graduates “Switch the Tassel”

Those who shop in May and June know that stores burst with items to honor graduates cards and gifts and other things to say “best wishes for the future.” Things were no different here at Sierra Health Foundation as both the second class of the Health Leadership Program and the inaugural class of the Youth Development Institute celebrated their new-found knowledge, skills and friendships.

Sierra Health Foundation Health Leadership Program

On May 2, 2003 twenty-seven nonprofit and government leaders celebrated completion of this formal, seven-month leadership development program with peers, friends and family at the Foundation’s Conference Center. This program, designed to turn good managers into great leaders, is presented by faculty and consultants affiliated with the University of Southern California, Sacramento Center, and the Marshall School of Business in Los Angeles.

For 12 full days, and many hours in between sessions, class participants learned from instructors and each other about diversity, values, negotiation, team building, communications, decision making and other important aspects of leadership. They worked hard, laughed often, and developed a new network of other passionate, caring executives dedicated to promoting health and well-being in northern California.

The Youth Development Institute Graduates 37

The first Youth Development Institute (YDI) class graduated May 3, 2003 in Sacramento. Thirty-seven youth workers and program managers from Sacramento and surrounding counties completed 50 hours of training over a 10-day period spanning March 20 through May 30.

Based on the model developed by San Francisco’s Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD), participants engaged in an active learning process designed to model as well as teach youth development principles and practices. In the final evaluation, participants reported feeling re-energized in their work with and for youth and more connected to additional community resources. One participant noted, “I have learned so much that I am overflowing with ideas to enhance our work with youth. Each week we (the staff) have implemented new activities and have made plans to make program changes.”

The Youth Development Institute targets youth service organizations in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, and San Joaquin counties. The first Institute graduates were line staff, program managers, and executive directors from City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation, CORAL, Elk Grove Unified School District, EMQ, Family Connections (Placerville), Oak Park Multi-Services Center, OMNI Program, People Reaching Out, Region 3 Technical Assistance Office, Sacramento Area Emergency Housing Center, Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, Sacramento Mutual Housing, Sacramento START, and Yolo Connections.

CNYD Curriculum Developer, Stacey Daraitis, co-facilitated and transferred the Youth Development Curriculum to this year’s Sacramento YDI Training Team composed of community trainers Rebecca Livingston (EMQ), Marilyn McGinnis (Oak Park Multi-Services Center), Kim Mohler (City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation), Mary Bruns (YDI Trainer), and Bina Lefkovitz (YSPP Program Manager).

Youth development is based on the belief that all youth need the same five supports and opportunities: Emotional and physical safety, relationship building, youth participation, community involvement, and skill building. The YDI trains agencies in how to put these concepts into practice.

Class II Health Program Graduates:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robin Asghar</td>
<td>Community Partnerships for Families of San Joaquin</td>
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<td>Nicole Bateman</td>
<td>Community Living Centers</td>
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<td>Don Bennett</td>
<td>Emergency Food Bank</td>
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<td>Lisa Bertaccini</td>
<td>Sacramento County Division of Mental Health</td>
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<td>Lisa Boch</td>
<td>Healing Touch, Tri-County Consulting &amp; Education Exchange</td>
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<td>Darla Clark</td>
<td>Chapa-De Indian Health Program, Inc.</td>
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<td>Warren Daniels</td>
<td>Community Recovery Resources</td>
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<td>Bob David</td>
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<td>Patricia Davis</td>
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<td>Shirley DiKard</td>
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<td>Melinda Dugger</td>
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<td>Sharon Elliott</td>
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<td>Audrey Flower</td>
<td>Madrone Hospice</td>
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<td>Ruth Hall</td>
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<td>Teresa Jacques</td>
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<td>Guy Klopp</td>
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<td>Joan Loustel</td>
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<td>Lao Ly</td>
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<td>Lucinda Lyon</td>
<td>University of the Pacific School of Dentistry</td>
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<td>Carl McManey</td>
<td>State of California Office of Statewide Health and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Roberts</td>
<td>Valley Oak Children’s Services</td>
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<td>Cora Salazar</td>
<td>Families in Self Help, Inc.</td>
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<td>Lisa Salinas</td>
<td>Community Resource Project, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Sells</td>
<td>Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency</td>
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<td>Hermine Taylor</td>
<td>Community Action Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Thompson</td>
<td>Center for Human Services</td>
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The Inaugural class of the Youth Development Institute.

The next Youth Development Institute class will be held in fall 2003. For more information on YDI and to apply for the fall class, contact Mary Bruns at (916) 876-7093.
Organizational Assessments Become Springboards for Action

Second Round of Grantees Selected

At Sierra Health Foundation we realize we cannot achieve our goal of improving the health of northern Californians if the organizations we rely on aren't operating at their potential. Through our Capacity Building Program, we support the strengthening of the “back office” of these critical organizations. This support comes through grants and technical assistance to organizations positioned to expand their services to meet ever-increasing needs.

As we spring into summer, Sierra Health Foundation Organizational Capacity Building grantees are doing everything but “taking the summer off.” Round One grantees that received funding for Organizational Assessments and Capacity Building Work Plans just completed their grants and are now armed with action plans to guide them in building their capacity going forward. Round Two grantees are just beginning a process of examination and discovery.

The six grantees in Round One (Amador-Tuolumne Community Resources, Asian Community Center, Asian Pacific Community Counseling, Inc., Children’s Receiving Home of Sacramento, El Hogar Mental Health and Community Service Center, and the Sacramento Hearing Services Center) started 2003 with a hard look at their organizations — both strengths and challenges. Each grantee developed an internal assessment team representing a cross-section of Board members and staff and then, with assistance and facilitation by an experienced independent consultant, examined its organization on nine dimensions. The teams worked, on average, four months taking a close look at Mission and Planning; Program; Governance; Financial Management; Human Resources; Fund Development; Facilities and Equipment; Marketing, Outreach and Alliances; and Culture, Communication and Leadership.

With a methodology and tools developed by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, each of the six Round One grantee teams completed their assessments and developed action plans for building their own organizational capacity. As one could predict, common areas of priority developmental needs emerged, as depicted below.

“Starting from a point where we were struggling with the need to change and grow, through the foundation’s help and the consultant’s work we have come to a clear vision of what steps need to be taken to move us forward,” stated David Ballard, Executive Director of Children’s Receiving Home of Sacramento. David and the other Round One grantees will now begin implementing their capacity building work plans.

As the first grantees are “graduating,” the Round Two grantees are just getting started. They are:

- Center for AIDS Research, Education and Services, Sacramento County
- Child Haven, Inc., Solano County
- Community Action Agency of Butte County, Inc.
- Council for the Spanish Speaking of the Diocese of Stockton
- Sierra Recovery Center, Sierra County.

In early summer, these grantees selected their consultants and began developing their internal assessment teams. During the rest of summer and into fall these grantees, too, will be taking a hard look at their strengths and challenges and at what they must do to position themselves for the future.

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Speaking Out on Health Access: CPHC Collaboratives Hold Third Annual Legislative Day

Getting the attention of a legislator in a state of over 35 million, when you come from a community of a few thousand, can be a daunting task. In order to make their voices heard, 62 participants of 13 of the Community Partnerships for Healthy Children (CPHC) collaboratives came together on May 7, 2003 to learn, to share and to tell their stories to California legislators. From Stanislaus to Modoc to Shasta counties, professionals and community members came to learn about the budget process, how legislation is developed and approved and about the role they can play in making systemic changes to improve conditions for children.

The CPHC Council, which is a policy-focused body of representatives from each of the 18 Community Partnerships for Healthy Children community collaboratives, once again selected health insurance access as its legislative issue. Armed with the latest statistics, new skills, and a passion to see all California children have access to affordable health care, participants organized community members to visit every legislative office at the State Capitol and make personal appointments with legislators from their home districts. Rafaela Frausto, Chair of the CPHC Council Steering Committee, expressed a sentiment common to those who attended: “How can we not support those who have unmet health care needs, when we know how important it is for our family members to have their health care needs met? This is a problem that requires a commitment from everyone, especially our policy makers.”

HEALTH INSURANCE ACCESS A CHALLENGE FOR MANY

• Over six million Californians are uninsured.
• Over 80% of the uninsured are in working families.
• A vast majority of the uninsured are either not offered or not eligible for health insurance through their employer.
• The uninsured are more likely to die prematurely than insured patients with similar problems.

Source: Health Access Fact Sheet, April 15, 2003

An Upcoming Opportunity…

Do You Know a Community Health Leader?

Nominations are now being accepted for the Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program Award ($120,000).

Deadline: September 22, 2003

The Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program (CHLP) honors 10 people each year for creating or enhancing health programs serving underserved communities.

If you know someone who finds creative ways, despite complex odds, to bring health services to his/her community, he/she may be eligible for this award. Candidates…

• must be working full time at the grassroots level.
• may not have received national recognition.
• must be in “mid-career,” with at least five but no more than 15 years of community health experience.

Nominations are open and can be made by consumers, community health leaders, health professionals and government officials who have been personally inspired by the nominees.

The CHLP Letter of Intent (LOI) must be received by September 22, 2003. For more information or to download the LOI, visit the CHLP Website at www.communityhealthleaders.org or call the program office at (617) 426-9772.

Mailing Address:
Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program
30 Winter Street
Suite 920
Boston, MA 02108
like Grizzly Creek Ranch can offer a child who has not just one, but many challenges to overcome. “The camp experience is magic — I have heard this from so many kids. As soon as they leave the camp, they’re ready to go back. They spend an entire year anticipating their next trip. When I became physically handicapped at the age of 16 due to a motorcycle accident, it took me awhile to find something I could do to make me feel good about myself again. When an activity is designed to assist a person who is physically or developmentally challenged to feel a sense of achievement, that is a tremendous thing.” And achievement is something that Hornsey knows something about. He is a world class water skier and has recently put together a sled hockey program in the City of Sacramento.

In proper ceremonial form, the dedication program came to an end when a special bronze plaque was uncovered on its easel at the front of the room. As the plaque was unveiled, tears came to the eyes of some of the Board Members. “I think this is just a new day of hope for kids in northern California,” said George Deubel, a founding member of the Board. “I hope that thousands of kids come through this program for many years to come — happier, healthier, and with higher self esteem. That’s what camp should be about — that’s what being a kid should be about.” The plaque bears the names of those most closely associated with the camp’s development: camp architect, Ward-Young; site planners, Schmidt Copeland Parker Stevens; and the construction firm of J.R. Roberts Corp.; as well as the name of each Sierra Health Foundation Board Member and the dedication date of June 7, 2003.

In the afternoon, the local residents were all invited to a public open house for a walking tour of the camp — to talk with the staff, and to have a Grizzly Float and Ranch Dog. Chico’s own “Cowboy Poet” Jim King and his friend Johnny Walker, a local harmonica player from Quincy, entertained a crowd of about 100 at the noon hour while classical guitarist Andrew Ohren and a wonderful young fiddle player by the name of Holly Sternberg kept the others happy well into the day.

Patrick Eagle, Camp Manager, was very pleased with the public turnout. “I had several people come up and ask me if we were in need of volunteers. It was great to meet a lot of our neighbors on Grizzly Road and many of the townspeople who came over for a visit. I think we’re going to have a very successful program up here,” he said.
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