



Editorial



Giving where we live / Community charitable foundations emerge in region

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The science teachers who could start innovative projects – if they had a little money for supplies. The elderly who were going hungry on weekends because no one was delivering meals to their senior center. The sobering alcoholics whose lives could be tipped in the right direction with a little more counseling.

Never are the unmet needs in a community as exposed as in a recession. And few ties are as strong as those people have to their community. A coupling of the two in San Diego County has created community foundations. The new movement has made a difference in this recession and could be a major force before the next one.

Escondido, Carlsbad, Oceanside, Ramona, 4S Ranch, Rancho Bernardo, Chula Vista or La Jolla – the foundations have a common model but grants tailored to their localities. Each local foundation recruits 100 founding members who contribute \$1,000 annually for five years. Half the money raised goes into an endowment to grow, and half into one-time grants for their community.

The founders choose a theme for the year (environment, education, science and technology, and so on), solicit applications, then conduct on-site visits and interviews. There's an emphasis on parlaying grants into additional money. Follow-up visits a year later hold the causes accountable.

San Diego Foundation provides endowment management at economy-of-scale rates and shares each community foundation's best practices information.

Jack Raymond was founding chair of the Escondido group, the first. It has 128 members, a \$262,000 endowment, and grants for library computers and after-school programs to its credit. Raymond is amazed by the response, hearing over and over, "I made my money in Escondido, I will leave it in Escondido." In one case, the future legacy money is close to eight figures.

Carlsbad soon followed and has 125 members and a \$125,000 endowment. Board chair Yvonne Murchison Finocchiaro is proud that a family trust matches many grants. Applications are being taken for a civil society theme – bringing the community together.

Paul Souval, retired Navy officer and defense industry executive, ran into a buzz saw trying to build Endow Chula Vista during the current recession. He recruited 25 members before putting the effort into

a quiet period from which it is now emerging.

Then there's La Jolla, the baby. "People look to us for leadership, to make the community brighter," said Bob Kelly, head of the San Diego Foundation and inventor of the concept. "There was no way I was going to give up on La Jolla because of a recession."

San Francisco, a corporate headquarters city, has \$13 in endowment money for every \$1 San Diego has. And Ramona or Chula Vista? With community foundations, it doesn't have to be that way.

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