

Volunteers Honored for Creating Safe Places for Foster Care Kids

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Press release from: [Hillsides](#)



(PASADENA, CA)— With support from volunteers, organizations, and corporations, Hillsides, a foster care children’s charity, provides all the basic necessities and extra attention each child and family deserves, especially during turbulent financial and emotional times such as today. Five local individuals and organizations were recipients of Hillsides Special Recognition Awards during its annual Angel Awards Ceremony.

Having read about Hillsides Youth Moving On in the newspaper, Cindy Roberts decided she wanted to participate in the beginning phase of the mentor program for former foster youth living in the transitional housing program. After raising her five children, Cindy has realized how important adult role models are in influencing youth’s lives.

“I wanted to be a source of support and friendship and make a positive difference for young adults,” Roberts said. While volunteering at YMO she has baked cakes, decorated apartment doors for the youth’s birthdays, participated in mentor/youth activities such as game nights, bowling, cooking, hiking, bike rides, plays, pool parties, golfing, dinners, holiday celebrations, and many more.

Passionate about the program, Roberts finds an endearing quality in each of the youth. “It is amazing to see their growth, help them learn life skills, and see their self-confidence soar,” she said. “I feel fortunate to be a force in the YMO family and appreciate the dedicated and loving staff.”

As a Sears employee Conrad Schlick visited the foster care children’s charity for several decades on service calls. However, his knowledge and familiarity grew greatly after his wife began working for the charity in 1995. Through his wife, Schlick met Chet Buker, who often spoke about his positive experiences as a Hillsides volunteer.

“It was largely due to him that I knew I would dedicate my skills to Hillsides when I retired,” said Schlick, who is self-described as blissfully retired. “It is a great opportunity to continue my craft, while helping others.”

Just like Buker, Schlick is now recruiting another volunteer, his friend, Jim Prince, who joins him on most repair jobs at Hillsides.

With the support from members of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Monrovia, Hillsides children benefit every season with the caring gestures of people who care for them. Parishioners collect donations for Easter, Valentine’s Day, Christmas and fall school year.

Taking the lead in encouraging parishioners to participate in their community outreach is Sarah Thomas. Thomas’ desire is to demonstrate to children that Christians are caring individuals who can bring smiles to them. “I want them to know that someone out there thinks of them,” she said.

“During the various holidays, foster care children may become more depressed as they recognize they’re not with their families,” said Laura Kelso, the charity’s director of community resources. “Giving our children these significant items cheers them up. St. Luke’s is definitely brightening the days of our kids.”

Researching online for a children’s charity to benefit from their pre-opening gala, Chris Kadohiro, managing partner of

Roy's Restaurant, found Hillsides. After learning about the wide range of programs and services Hillsides has to offer the children of our community, Roy's was confident that they had found their match.

Roy's worked with Hillsides staff in coordinating the evening's benefit and inviting guests. Donating 100% of the evening's proceeds to Hillsides, Roy's raised \$22,650 and opened its doors to over 300 guests.

When asked what keeps Roy's participating with Hillsides, Kadohiro said, "The reputation and the continuing support of the children in the community." He added, "Of the many pre-opening parties for our restaurants that I have attended, the energy and warmth of Hillsides was one that truly stood out."

Since 1999, Pasadena Foothill Association of Realtors Charitable Foundation has been donating to the foster care children's charity. The charitable foundation recognizes Hillsides for its mission of creating safe places for children. However, their relationship strengthened when Jackie Broxton, director of major gifts and planned giving, gave a presentation at the Professional Realtors Association.

Brandie Belangeri, vice chair of PFAR, approached Broxton to learn more about Hillsides. Since then Brandie has become a loyal friend to Hillsides and remains a true spirited individual eager to advocate for the children we serve. She has inspired others at PFAR to generously consider Hillsides as a leader in its community outreach efforts, said Broxton.

"We at PFAR keep giving to Hillsides because of the wide range of care they give to children and the dedication and support Hillsides shows toward the family unit," said Belangeri.

To learn more about the foster care children's charity or how you can volunteer, visit www.Hillsides.org.

About Hillsides: As a Pasadena foster care charity founded in 1913, Hillsides creates safe places for children at risk and their families by providing residential care, mental health services to break the cycle of domestic violence, special education, and advocacy. To learn more about Hillsides, visit www.Hillsides.org.

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