

# Hurricane Disaster Relief for Sister City

Provided by Jill Brunkhardt

Hurricane Jimena, a Category 3 storm, made landfall September 2 on the Pacific coast of Baja California Sur. It skirted northward and crossed the peninsula toward Manhattan Beach's sister city of Santa Rosalia, where it hovered for days, causing hours of 90 knots wind gusts and days of continual torrential rains. The results were ruinous in several nearby municipalities and villages.

Santa Rosalia's downtown area was devastated by flash flooding with water, mud, rocks and debris scoured from the central canyon funneling through the heart of the city, washing cars and drowned livestock out to sea. Homes, shops and public vehicles were damaged or partially washed away and the public infrastructure crippled. The Marina Santa Rosalia was destroyed except for two slips. The harbor is littered with floating and sunken debris including cars, refrigerators and other household items. Nearby villages report over a dozen missing citizens.

### Needs

Power to the town has been only partially restored. Water is scarce since pumping stations bringing water to the town were damaged and will need to be rebuilt. A relief effort is in process to gather and airlift items for shelters and homeless residents. Some essential items are being prioritized by the Red Cross and the Mexican government but other needed items are being collected to be transported to the area. Needed items include: Basic first aid & OTC medical supplies, Canned goods, Camp tents, plastic tarps, &

ropes, Cooking pans & utensils, Flashlights & lanterns with batteries, Light bedding and sleeping bags, New and clean gently used clothing and shoes, Tools (power and manual) including saws and wheelbarrows, Generators and power converters from 12v DC to 110v AC.

### Relief Effort

The local collection effort is being organized by the Manhattan Beach Sister City Committee and Manhattan Beach Rotary Club. The corresponding Mira Costa student organizations, the Baja Club and Interact Club will be coordinating a donation center for goods on Mira Costa's campus. To arrange for drop off, please email maledesma@verizon.net or call 310.372.0069.

We will also be accepting financial donations to augment the collection effort. Checks can be made out to MBSCC and mailed to P.O. Box 278, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. Both the Manhattan Beach Rotary Club and MBSCC are registered California non-profit 501-C3 corporations and information will be provided upon receipt of donations.

Santa Rosalia has been Manhattan Beach's sister city since 1989. The Manhattan Beach Sister City Committee was originally created in 1963. The Manhattan Rotary Club was chartered in 1950 and the Rotary Club International is the largest community service organization in the world. The students of Mira Costa and Santa Rosalia have funded and arranged for student exchanges in recent years enriching the lives of residents in both cities. •

# Stagers give Richstone Transitional House New Face

By Karen King Russo

You have heard about companies that work with realtors to "stage" houses that are for sale. That is to spiff them up to make them look their best, and bring in the best price. The International Association of Home Staging Professionals (IAHSP) is comprised of 80 local regional chapters with 1,500 accredited staging professionals in the US and Canada. They work as independent contractors, after being trained and accredited by Stage Home.com. The IAHSP Foundation is a non-profit wing founded by Barb Schwarz, founder of Stage Home.com, for the purpose of volunteering services for specified causes. September 12-19 was their ninth annual World Wide Staging Service Week in which each of the different local chapters chose a different project to volunteer their talents, and coordinate with providers in staging, on a charity basis. "It is with great enthusiasm and joy that we give back to the communities in which we live and work," said Schwarz.

This year, the Los Angeles chapter of IAHSP Foundation selected the transitional homes of the Richstone Family Center as their project. These transitional homes are Richstone's response to the need of girls who, at 18, have just been released from foster care with no place to go. Many have been shuttled from one foster home to another, isolated from family support systems, are undereducated, and are susceptible to drug and alcohol abuse and early pregnancy. Yet they are expected to be independent, self sufficient, contributing members of society by 18. How many of our own daughters, brought up in the most favorable of circumstances, would we want to see out there on their own at 18?

To address this need, in 1997 The Richstone Family Center purchased three houses on a residential street in Hawthorne with Federal HUD dollars in conjunction with the City of Hawthorne, and established the Transitional

Living Program. With funds from the Eisner Foundation, Richstone renovated and joined two of the three structures, making it the main house to accommodate six young women plus a Richstone staff member who stays overnight on the premises. The third house, the "advanced" house next door, accommodates three young women who have demonstrated responsibility and most approximate independent living.

These girls, ages 18- 24, are referred from LA County and funded in large part by the county for a stay of up to 24 months. Richstone raises money to cover additional expenses. Each girl is given a private bedroom and shared bathroom, laundry, kitchen, study with computers, and living area. Each girl is expected to perform household chores, abide by house rules, and participate in counseling and life skills instruction such as budgeting, shopping and cooking. They are required to attend school or job training programs, and to work. Each girl contributes 50 percent of her income from work to an interest-bearing bank account that goes with her when she leaves.

Some of the girls just won't comply with the rules and will bail out, or may be asked to leave. But as Richstone has become more experienced in managing this project, the rate of success with the girls has improved to the point that some have even gone on to four-year colleges.

This IAHSP project for Richstone was in the works for several months, with the culmination on Saturday, September 12. The house was "staged" with new pastel paint on the walls, carpet, furniture, curtains, and paintings. Fresh and calming, the transformation was due to the contributions of Brooks Furniture, Fashion Furniture, Sherwin Williams Paint, Lowe's Hardware, Ready Clean, Eyedead Interiors, Albert Hernandez Painting,



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