



Bertha Herrera, the mother of two Pomona Hope Kids students, worked with Pomona Hope and other organizations to pass a bond measure to aid Pomona schools.

Breaking Barriers, Serving Schools by Meg Connors

In 2005 if a parent like Bertha Herrera wanted to volunteer in her child's classroom, she would not have been able. The district had made it difficult for people to volunteer. Bertha has recently taken part in making a significant turn-around in the school district. Not by herself, of course. In 2007, Dr. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana came into the superintendent's position. She has been a Godsend to the district. Parents quickly organized and got access to participate in daily school life. In the fall of 2008, Dr. Melendez was asked what the major needs of the district were that budget cuts wouldn't cover. She got a list from school principals. One school had serious breaks in the old plumbing. Another school had sweltering classroom temperatures without air conditioning. An affiliate organization of ours, along with the Teachers' Union and others came up with a bond issue that would allow taxpayers to pay \$11 a month for repairs on school buildings. Research was done to determine what parts of the district had had little voter turnout in the past. Those areas were targeted, and teams visited every

home and encouraged people to vote.

Bertha Herrera was on one such team. Bertha has two children in Pomona Hope's After School Program. She has been concerned about the condition of Pomona Schools. She was eager to talk to Spanish-speaking residents about the changes they could make possible. For many of the parents like her, it was their first time initiating change in the schools and local laws. She covered many blocks.

"When I got tired walking," said Bertha, "I would tell myself, 'If this bond passes, it's going to make the schools better for my children. And I really, really want that for them.' When everyone voted and we won, it was so beautiful!"

On voting day the bond was passed by a landslide. The areas that normally had little voter participation had almost full turnout this time. Dr. Melendez had an assembly to thank participating groups. Pomona Hope was among them. It was a major step forward in our partnership with the school district, and parents like Bertha Herrera.

Pomona Hope Kids

Wish List:

- Double and triple A batteries
- Purified water, water filter or water bottle for each student (40)
- Flash drives
- 3 child's admissions to Boomers (summer reading grand prize)
- Prizes for PHK store (.50-15 dollars) for kids ages 5-14
- Rulers, erasers, crayons, colored pencils, markers, and manila pencils
- Collapsible soccer net
- Soccer and volley balls
- Child's pool table cues and chalk
- Adult size pool or ping pong table

Summer school is not going to be offered in the Pomona Unified School District this summer. The Pomona Hope Kids Summer Enrichment Program is more necessary than ever. Read more on the opposite side of this letter.

To donate or contact Us:

Pomona Hope
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Pomona CA 91767

(909) 623-0400

www.pomonahope.org
info@pomonahope.org
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Students from Pomona College gave up an entire Saturday afternoon to do work for Pomona Hope.

Growing Partnerships

This year Pomona Hope has been the recipient of a great deal of support and partnership from the surrounding community.

- Two partner churches, Northminster Presbyterian Church and La Verne Heights Presbyterian Church, gave to Pomona Hope through Alternative Christmas Fairs. These fairs provided much needed items and supplies for the second semester of the After School Program.
- Experts in the areas of Human Resources and Grant Writing have stepped forward to offer their skills and expertise to our organization. An entire writing class from Scripps College is in the process of writing grant proposals for our organization.
- Our After School Program has more volunteers than ever.
- This past spring, two groups of students from the Claremont Colleges spent Saturdays giving their time to clean, paint, move furniture, organize, garden, and generally improve the facility we meet in.
- Finally, despite extremely challenging economic times, we have continued to receive generous gifts from individuals, churches and foundations. One particular highlight was a very generous gift from the Stater Bros. Charities. The purpose of Stater Bros. Charities is to help improve and transform the communities Stater Bros. Markets is privileged to serve by providing much needed philanthropic support. We are grateful for their partnership in our community.

Summer Enrichment Program Plans

As many of you may know the Pomona Unified School District has been devastated by budget cuts. One of the results of these cuts is the elimination of summer school for students. Many of our students depend on summer school, not only for continued educational investment, but for structure and supervision for a good portion of each summer day. This year the Pomona Hope Kids Summer Enrichment Program is more essential than ever.

Pomona Hope Kid's Summer Program is instrumental in providing consistent relational and academic attention to our students, and provides a safe and constructive place for our students to be during the long summer months. Last year more than 90% of the children in our program improved their skill level in reading.

Our program will begin on June 22 and run for six weeks. Last summer we ran the program for 3 days a week. This year we are stepping out in faith due to the elimination of summer school, and seeking to improve upon the program while running it 5 days a week from 2:30 – 6:00. The program will once again be focused on literacy, but this year we will also have math, computer and music lessons in the students daily routine.

Pomona Hope Kids has an important opportunity to provide a very real need for our students. Any academic attention our students can receive during the summer positions them to be much more successful during the academic year.

Will you consider partnering with us to provide the Summer Program to our students? If you are able we ask you to consider making a \$50 - \$100 gift to the Pomona Hope. In addition to monetary donations we are including a wish list on the front of this newsletter of items for the program. Please take a moment to see if you might be able to provide for some of the supplies or money towards these needs. Donations can be sent to Pomona Hope, 401 N. Gibbs St., Pomona, CA 91767. If you have any questions regarding the program and our needs please contact Tanya Eveleth at 909-292-3976 or email Tanya at teveleth@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for your support!