Now Is The Time To GIVE BIG KERN!

In this and other upcoming issues of the Bakersfield News Observer, readers will have an opportunity to learn about hardworking Kern County nonprofits that are fundraising through the website GiveBigKern.org, a crowdfunding opportunity hosted by Kern Community Foundation. Give Big Kern is celebrated as Kern’s own official Day of Giving on May 5, but the website is already open for donations and will remain open till May 6.

As you read these agencies’ brief profiles and learn about their needs, please consider donating to them especially now, during the COVID-19 crisis, which has negatively impacted charities in a big way. Just go to GiveBigKern.org, search for an agency by name or cause, find your passion and give. You can also fundraise for a nonprofit you love, and invite your friends, peers and loved ones to donate, too. If you don’t have money to give but would like to pledge volunteer hours—because nonprofits are going to need a lot of help when the statewide shelter-in-place order is lifted—find the Volunteering page on the drop-down menu of GiveBigKern.org. Use the button at the bottom of the page to submit your volunteer pledge. Thank you and we hope you will enjoy reading about local charities and how you can support them through Give Big Kern!

This is what you would find on a typical spring Sunday afternoon with the League of Dreams, an adaptive sports league providing sports training, team competition and supportive sporting opportunities to very special athletes. Just this past Saturday, the Bakersfield area chapter of the League of Dreams hosted their annual Give Big Kern fundraising event, bringing together over 600 athletes with physical and developmental disabilities in Kern County. The League currently has 6 sports; baseball, basketball, bowling, dance, gymnastics and fencing, and partners with several other local organizations to provide these programs.

For many of the athletes, these sports programs are their only experience to participate in organized sports and for some, it’s their only form of physical activity. According to a report due to the COVID-19 virus, the League of Dreams had to cancel a big fundraiser and our 2020 baseball season, as well as postponing or canceling gymnastics season.

This year Give Big Kern efforts will help League of Dreams continue to offer these athletic opportunities for athletes with disabilities, and as well as valuable opportunity for community members (primarily high school students). The League of Dreams focuses on athlete abilities instead of their disabilities, and believes that “Every child should have a chance to play!”

Please donate to us through givebigkern.org.

League of Dreams
By Jessica Mathews
Executive Director

Arriving at the ballpark, you would expect to just see all the typical coaching, the look of the field, smell of the popcorn, peanuts, dirt and see kids running, hitting and talking—except you go to the field and feel something special.

The athletes are all in uniforms and they are playing, just like any other sport, except you see others who you’d say (Volunteers), and some of the athletes are in wheelchairs or walkers, while others have their hands being held.

League of Dreams focuses on athletes’ needs. It is organization is in need of funding and/or donated services. The athletes are all in uniforms and they are playing, just like any other sport, except you see others who you’d say (Volunteers), and some of the athletes are in wheelchairs or walkers, while others have their hands being held.

League of Dreams - Two child athletes, one of them in a wheelchair, interacting on the basketball court. (Photo courtesy of League of Dreams)

Behind our Mission is…To strengthen the nonprofit Organizations of Kern County through training, networking and advocacy.

Kern Alliance of Nonprofits serves over 500 nonprofit organizations through Kern County. We are leading Kern County nonpro

t leaders in the fields of communications, development, strategic planning, education and more. Nonprofit organizations and government are free to receive our communications at no cost. We showcase the work of nonprofits in Kern County and on a typical spring Sunday you can walk through experience will surround visitors with 9/11 artifacts, each customized with the name, rank, and state of missing-in-action soldiers with whom Kern County residents served.

By William Potter
Editor

Missing In Action Remembered (MIA Remembered) is a local nonprofit founded by small business owners and Vietnam veteran Bill Potter and his wife, Denise. This organization is in need of funding and donations to construct and maintain a Military Dog Tag Memorial, housed in the Portrait of a Warrior Gallery, to remember military pets who lost their lives defending freedom and construction is $95,000. We hope you will consider donating to us through Give Big Kern.

We pledge to support our wounded warriors and provide them with rigorous, healing, and individualized programs to make them stronger in their walk through life.

As of March 25, 2020 there are 81,935 Souls still Missing In Action.

Please visit us at: www.MIARemembered.org and Please visit us at: www.MIARemembered.org and God Bless our Military and the USA.

League of Dreams - Two child athletes, one of them in a wheelchair, interacting on the basketball court. (Photo courtesy of League of Dreams)

Kern Alliance of Nonprofits holds a training on Nonprofit Marketing. (Photo courtesy of Louis Medina)

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Casa Esperanza Transitions for Home for Women

By Kathy Lopez

Casa Esperanza Transitions for Home for Women is a nonprofit organization with a goal of providing safe and supportive transitional housing in Bakersfield, California, for single women and their children. The program has been inspired and modeled after the Alexandra House in Los Angeles, California. Their success is the motivation behind what Casa Esperanza is planning to build.

Our intention is to have residents that will live in a family-like environment that produces a sense of community and a sense of valued family life.

Casa Esperanza’s mission is to break the cycle of homelessness.

A transitional home for women and their children is something that would greatly benefit the community.

As Casa Esperanza plans to open its home in December of 2020, we are seeking funds for house, furnishings, professional licensing, legal fees, education, and the lot for go on.

Homes are not meant to get big, because of the COVID-19 crisis. “Heart of Hope,” an important fundraising effort for Casa Esperanza, was postponed as originally planned. However, April 27, launching Hearts of Hope is, the event, with proceeds from this effort being used to ensure all residents are surviving the crisis.

A new, whatever it may be, this Casa Esperanza is still very much alive and continues to turn around those who are in need and struggling. Please keep the dream in mind while we go through tough times. Casa Esperanza is, as a practical way to receive donations within—what nonlocal donors can contribute.

To learn more about and donate to our organization, visit givebigkern.org and search for “esperanza.” You can also see our website at www.esperanzabakersfield.org.

Gaining Respect, Access, Connections, and Experience (G.R.A.C.E.) is a faith-based enrichment program for adults with disabilities located in the heart of downtown Bakersfield. GRACE is a mission of our community to support its efforts to reach those most vulnerable, who often are unable to reach its potential while they gain confidence in their abilities.

GRACE is known for providing a safe environment that promotes self-worth, increased self-sufficiency and greater overall health.

Flood was born out of a Saturday night alternative worship service at First Black, called “Charleston.” In 2008 Flood, a separate 501(c) (3) corporation, was created to provide quality outreach to people experiencing homelessness, and supportive services to enable those homeless individuals to achieve self-sufficiency.

Flood fulfills an important role within the Bakersfield Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative by specializing in reaching those more vulnerable, those who often rely on the assistance we provide. Despite any setbacks.

The participants at GRACE enjoy being active and learn what valuable skills can be taught to those in their talents and knowledge. We encourage volunteers to download an application from our website (www.itsgrace.org) and spend time with these amazing individuals.

GRACE relies on the generosity of our community to promote self-worth, increased self-sufficiency and greater overall health.

Despite the current epidemic, Flood remains vigilant in other ways. The-breathing space at Jesus Shack called “Celebration.”

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**Give Big Kern**

**5.5.20**

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**Junior League of Bakersfield**
**Women Dedicated to Volunteerism and Community Change**

By Katie McDaris

Junior League Volunteers, donating more than 200 books to the Jamison Center Library in February 2020.

**Junior League of Bakersfield: Women Dedicated to Volunteerism and Community Change**

Since 1944, the Junior League of Kern and our many amazing volunteers have planted over 20,000 trees in Kern County.

Executive Director Melissa Iger. (Photo courtesy of Junior League of Bakersfield)

In the future, the City of Bakersfield plans to use 4,000 trees around Shinohara Park, Botanical Center, in the fall, in Tree Foundation of Kern Executive Director Melissa Iger. (Photo courtesy of Tree Foundation of Kern)

We are proud to say we have planted trees at Golden Valley High School, Mike Morse High School, South High School, Leland Park, Trinity Lutheran, Kepple Park, Central Park, Crutcher Park, John H. Stirling Park, and many others. We will be working with the employees of one of our great community partners, Baja. It is going to be a powerful and beautiful place for all the people to enjoy. Keep your fingers crossed on our behalf that we can do this without any further COVID-19 hiccups.

Unfortunately, we had to close our doors temporarily due to current public health crisis, and plan to reopen again in the fall, perhaps in the setting of a new Junior League sign outside the Lori Brock Children’s Center! The project will include more housing plants, new benches and tables. We will be working with the employees of our great community partners, Baja. It is going to be a powerful and beautiful place for all the people to enjoy. Keep your fingers crossed on our behalf that we can do this without any further COVID-19 hiccups.

To learn more about our services or to donate to us during Give Big Kern, what we do is unique and we appreciate your support. Please consider donating to us through Give Big Kern. Just visit givebigkern.org, and search for “Junior League.”

By Ashley Vorhees

Catholic Charities is a Community Based Organization serving the needs of families and individuals in crisis regardless of race, age or zygodice beliefs. We are served with love and respect, family is a privilege.

If you're looking for food, clothing, or other essentials, Catholic Charities is here for you. We have a number of programs and services Catholic Charities serve approximately 3,000 individuals a month with food resources.

We have food pantry also allows clients with their CalFresh and Peach Card application, DCFYsubsidies and no for to volunteers, and a rental and utility assistance program for those who are eligible. Catholic Charities has remained open since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and has seen a dramatic increase in the need for services. With many families being out of work or experiencing a decrease in the funds available to them in the current public health crisis.

We are proud to say we have planted trees at Golden Valley High School, Mike Morse High School, South High School, Leland Park, Trinity Lutheran, Kepple Park, Central Park, Crutcher Park, John H. Stirling Park, and many others. We will be working with the employees of one of our great community partners, Baja. It is going to be a powerful and beautiful place for all the people to enjoy. Keep your fingers crossed on our behalf that we can do this without any further COVID-19 hiccups.

Although we are closed, we still have many expenses. To make the biggest impact, become a volunteer with Catholic Charities. We have an exciting project coming up then to do a garden makeover for the Bakers supporting our local Bakers.

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Catholic Charities helps some of the most vulnerable members of our community. For example, Catholic Charities of Bakersfield has remained open since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and has seen a dramatic increase in the need for services. With many families being out of work or experiencing a decrease in the funds available to them in the current public health crisis. We are proud to say we have planted trees at Golden Valley High School, Mike Morse High School, South High School, Leland Park, Trinity Lutheran, Kepple Park, Central Park, Crutcher Park, John H. Stirling Park, and many others. We will be working with the employees of one of our great community partners, Baja. It is going to be a powerful and beautiful place for all the people to enjoy. Keep your fingers crossed on our behalf that we can do this without any further COVID-19 hiccups.

Catholic Charities of Bakersfield

Executive Director Cindy Uetz, Elaina Rusk and Asha Chandy, Junior League of Bakersfield, standing in front of the Jamison Center Library in February 2020. (Photo courtesy of Junior League of Bakersfield)