

Tahoe Magic provides essentials to community members

To the community,

A single parent, struggling to keep her family safe and warm writes, "Thanks to the angel that helped me and my children. I do not know who you are, but if I ever meet you, I will give you the biggest hug of thanks."

That hug goes out to each of you who has supported Tahoe Magic. Thank you so much.

We would like to share some startling statistics on just how much financial assistance was provided by Tahoe Magic to families through agency requests on behalf of their clients:

Uninsured children received emergency dental services \$13,530.

Families received rental assistance \$7,162.

Utilities paid for families with young children/gas, elect. phone *1,365.82.

Car repair/car insurance \$855.25.

Employee fingerprints, passport, clothing \$260.18.

Education assistance \$5,911.34.

Food and gas \$350.

Annual holiday support to our nonprofits helping children \$6,750.

Total giving this last year (our 18th year) *\$ 36,184.59

*Tahoe Magic supported families this year to the greatest

extent ever. What is hard to imagine is that for many families, a bill of less than \$50 is more than they can pay when in crisis. One parent had a daughter who was burned when a stove exploded. This single parent needed to take two weeks off from the two minimum wage, part-time jobs she had so she could care for her daughter. She could not have done this without Tahoe Magic paying for a month of rent for her.

Tahoe Magic continues to be the nonprofit that agencies can count on for their families in crisis. We can fund emergency needs within hours when asked. Bridge funding means the difference of a home for a family, the ability to work and support a family, dental care for those without any other means, and the warmth of gas and electricity during the winter. This magic helps to make our home, our community, a true community of caring for each other.

Please support Tahoe Magic this year as part of your holiday giving – 100 percent of your donation goes to directly to families in need.

Please send your tax-deductible donation to Tahoe Magic, P.O. Box 13070, S. Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude to a community of “angels”.

Thank you.

Tahoe Magic board members

Opinion: New reality of aging

By Barry Rand, AARP Bulletin

Recently I participated in a roundtable discussion at Stanford University on the new realities of an older America. Hosted by Tom Brokaw, our discussion focused on “Generation Ageless: Longevity and the Boomers.”

What became clear to me is that five key changes are shaping the aging of America. First, older people are growing in number and living longer. During the 20th century, life expectancy grew by nearly three decades, and longevity gains are continuing. We’re approaching a time when older adults will outnumber children for the first time in history. And while people are living longer, they also are doing so with lower rates of disability and poverty than previous generations. This is creating a new longevity that has tremendous implications for people 50-plus and for society – young, old and everyone in between.

Second, this new reality is also shaped by increased racial and ethnic diversity. By 2030, racial and ethnic minorities will make up 42 percent of the U.S. population, and one in five Americans age 65-plus will be Hispanic.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Education reform could have big impact

Publisher’s note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 13, 2010, Sacramento Bee.*

The more strong voices there are prodding education bureaucracies to improve results for kids, the better.

That's what makes former D.C. schools chancellor Michelle Rhee's new StudentsFirst venture intriguing. Within one year, she aims to create a 1 million-strong membership organization. Within five years she aims to raise \$1 billion, some of which would be used to influence local school board and state legislative elections, starting in 2012. Ultimately, she's aiming for 10 million members, with people joining for as little as \$5 a month.

Modeled on membership organizations such as AARP, the Sierra Club and the National Rifle Association, Rhee says the StudentsFirst organization launched in Sacramento last week comes out of a couple of things – her experience as D.C. chancellor, with courageous teachers and others telling her that they felt alone in battling the bureaucracy; and from the film, “Waiting for ‘Superman,’ ” which has inspired people to ask her what they can do.

Rhee realized there was no call to action. StudentsFirst seeks to remedy that.

Her four goals are the right ones to draw a broad audience: great teachers, giving parents choices, sending money to programs that work and getting parents more involved.

Read the whole story

Family Resource Center says thanks for holiday giving

To the community,

Big thanks to all our generous community members who adopted

children in the South Lake Tahoe Family Resource Center's Adopt-A-Family program this Christmas.

Because of your spirit of giving and giving back, many needy families will have a Christmas this year.

Happy Holidays to you and your family.

Julie Lowe

Opinion: Time to discuss state employee benefits

By Joe Nation

Stanford's Institute for Economic Policy Research has issued two recent reports on the condition of public employee pension funds in California. The first identified a \$425 billion funding shortfall for three state pension systems: the California Public Employees' Retirement System, California State Teachers' Retirement System, and the University of California Retirement System. The second report found a nearly \$200 billion shortfall for local government pension systems.

Both reports focused on the overall financial health of pension systems in California but did not touch on retiree benefit levels. It's time to begin that conversation.

Discussing public employee retirement benefits is dangerous politically. So let's start with the legal status of benefits owed to public employees.

Benefits to public employee retirees are legally protected. Period. Case and contract law guarantee retirement pay, even

in the obscene cases where public employees double dip (i.e., collect a large pension from one or more employers and work at full salary for another). If the public is angry about benefits levels or double dippers, we shouldn't blame public employees, but the political leaders who approved benefits that are both excessive and unsustainable.

I may have a unique perspective on this issue because every member of my immediate family has worked in public service. (My mother is a retired school librarian; my younger brother works as a firefighter/paramedic; an older brother was a high school science teacher; and my father retired from a public university.) They and all public employees are owed what we have promised them.

Joe Nation, a former Democratic state lawmaker, is a professor of the practice of public policy at Stanford University.

Read the whole story

Looking for help with food and gift baskets

To the community,

Help is very much needed for the St. Theresa Church annual Free Christmas Food & Gift Basket give away for those that are in need throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin. St. Theresa has offered free food baskets annually for more than 30 years.

Sue Davis, the director of Religious Education at St. Theresa Church normally organizes this event but is not able to this year and I have stepped into her place to ensure the service continues to be offered to our community members.

I need members of our compassionate community to step-up and help me make certain that those in need receive these simple necessities so that they too can celebrate this joyous occasion.

Volunteers are needed during the following times:

Basket preparations and distribution will be at the Grace Hall (aka the gym at the corner of Lyons Avenue and Highway 50)

Dec. 16 9am-4pm organizing/categorizing food and gifts.

Dec. 17 9am-4pm preparing food baskets, choosing gifts and wrapping, etc.

Dec. 18 9am-4pm 10am-3pm food baskets will be handed out.

Even a short amount of your time can make a huge difference. If you are not able to donate your time, but would like to donate nonperishable food items, gifts for infants, children and adults alike or to make a financial donation, they are greatly appreciated and needed as well. You may do so by bringing your donation to the St. Theresa Parish Rectory or by calling (530) 544.3533; you can also donate during any of the times that the event is under way.

If you know anyone who is in need of a food and gift basket during this difficult economic time, encourage them to call St. Theresa Parish Rectory at (530) 544.3533. We will be accepting applications until the distribution date.

On behalf of those that are in need this holiday season, I share in their gratitude for your time, generosity and consideration.

Tiffany Kostelnik

Opinion: Tahoe Senate seat Jan. election could have cost less

By Foon Rhee, Sacramento Bee

It's worth noting the painful irony today for California taxpayers.

The new Legislature began a special session called by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to fill the \$6 billion hole in the current state budget.

At the same time, mail balloting started for the special election Jan. 4 in the 1st Senate District.

Lawmakers flubbed a chance to save cash-strapped counties some real money by not allowing mail-only balloting for the race, which is not likely to be competitive because it is a Republican stronghold.

Instead, election registrars will have to open polling places just like they did Nov. 2, even though a tiny fraction of the electorate will turn out.

Read the whole story

Bijou school thankful for Heavenly's support

To the community,

Bijou Community School has received tremendous support from



Heavenly Mountain Resort through the ECHO grant. We would sincerely like to thank Heavenly for its wonderful contribution to the Two Way Immersion Program and the Field of Dreams Project.

We are very excited to continue to improve our school with community support from businesses like Heavenly. Thank you so much Heavenly. The lives of many children are being enriched through your generous donations.

Kathy Haven, Bijou parent

SLT Women's Center thankful for help

To the community,

South Lake Tahoe Women's Center would like to thank local service clubs Kiwanis Sunrisers and Tahoe Douglas Rotary for bringing holiday cheer to the lives of women and children who have experienced violence. Kiwanis Sunrisers hosted a full course Thanksgiving meal for more than 20 people on Nov. 18. Mothers were thrilled and thankful to sit down to a delicious

meal with their children.

On Dec. 8 Rotary hosted their annual holiday party held at Embassy Suites complete with dinner, gifts and Santa Claus.

Children had a great time telling Santa their holiday wishes and parents and children received a special gift.

Thank you, Kiwanis Sunrisers and Tahoe Douglas Rotary, for providing these wonderful events to brighten the holidays for our clients.

Sarah Sanchez, development coordinator South Lake Tahoe Women's Center

Gratitude for help with community tree lighting

To the community,

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority would like to thank all of the locals and visitors who attended the Community Tree & Menorah Lighting Dec. 3 at the California Visitor Center. This annual event was made possible through the generous support of the following local businesses:

Sierra Pacific Power, Lake DJ/ Derek & Vicki Tarpey, Temple Bat Yam, Paul Kushner and the Tahoe Schools Choir, Borges Sleigh Rides, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Zephyr Cove Resort, Riva Grill, Grocery Outlet, Safeway Round Hill, Raley's at the Y, CVS at the Y, Sierra Wood Products and the South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department.

A very special thanks to Santa Claus and his helpers. We look

forward to seeing you on the first Friday of December next year for this annual community event.

Anne Sutterfield, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority operations manager