Kerry’s Kids was established to carry on the dream of Dr. Kerry Spooner Dean, a pediatrician at the Children’s Hospital and Research Center, Oakland (CHRCO) whose life ended tragically in May of 1998. It was Kerry’s dream to organize a mobile health care unit in order to provide health care, health screening, immunizations and health education to homeless and low-income children and their families in the Bay Area.

**Issue #1:**
**The Inaccessibility of Healthcare**

Kerry understood that homeless children are at risk of developing unique health problems due to their living situations. In fact, children living in homeless shelters are at greater risk of many infections and health problems that can have far-reaching effects on their lives. The health-related problems faced by these children are worsened by homeless families’ limited access to health care. Barriers to accessing care among the homeless include the economic costs of health care, institutional factors that may prohibit homeless families from utilizing existing health care services, language, education, lack of insurance and environmental factors including lack of transportation to health care facilities. In addition, parents of homeless children often prioritize other needs, such as food and shelter, above accessing health care. By using a mobile van that provides free health care at homeless shelters where families live, Kerry’s Kids has been able to overcome many of these barriers.

Homeless families make up over one-third of the estimated 360,000 homeless persons in California. The majority of these families are made up of young, single mothers and their children who are often the victims of domestic abuse or other acute crisis. Estimates suggest that there are between 80,000 and 95,000 homeless children in California today and that the number of homeless mothers and children is on the rise. Over the past five years Kerry’s Kids has sought to fulfill the unmet basic health needs in the community by providing minor acute health care, well-child care and immunizations to children living in homeless shelters in Oakland and Berkeley. For the past three years we have worked with the Henry Robinson Center, The Salvation Army Shelter and the Harrison House. This year we have added a new site, The Oakland Elizabeth House (see Kerry’s Kids Expands Rotation to 4th Site, p. 3).

**Issue #2:**
**The Health Risks of Being Homeless**

Because of their unique environment and limited access to health care, children living in homeless shelters have exceptional health problems. As a result of living in crowded shelters with shared facilities, these children are at a higher risk of infectious diseases including upper respiratory tract infections and gastrointestinal infec-
My parent’s stories of their childhood experiences in El Salvador, where poor children like them barely had enough to eat and did not have adequate health care, initially inspired me to become a doctor.

Upon my arrival at UC Berkeley, I learned about a group called Doctors for Global Health. This was a student group on campus that sought to provide doctors for places like El Salvador. Although I went to conferences and learned more about how I could help those children, I felt as though there was something that needed to be done here in my community too.

I grew up in an under-served community in the United States. My experiences have inspired me to shift my focus to helping children who are in communities similar to mine. Poor children, like the ones I grew up with, also need as much help as those in other countries. And although this is considered to be the “land of opportunity,” there are times when these children are forgotten.

My community is very culturally diverse, but I remember feeling uncomfortable when I came into contact with health care providers because of the language and cultural barriers that existed. If there were more doctors with diverse cultures and deeper understandings of those cultures, the barrier between doctor and patient could be breached.

Kerry’s Kids has provided me with an opportunity to work with children from a community similar to mine. By working with Kerry’s Kids, I was able to shadow and assist a doctor and work with children who reminded me of the kids I knew while growing up. One of the best experiences I had was translating for a Spanish speaking family. The parents and the child were so thankful and happy that I was there to help them communicate with the doctor. I felt so close to them because they reminded me of my own family. I loved the feeling, but I still feel that there is so much more I can to do to help children in communities like this. My dream is to become a pediatrician and serve these under-served children. One day I would like to open a clinic where I could help poor children receive adequate health care.
What's New with Kerry's Kids

Kerry's Kids Expands Rotation to 4th Site

The most recent addition to the list of sites visited by Kerry’s Kids is the Oakland Elizabeth House. Elizabeth House is a one-year residence for single women and women with children who have experienced the poverty of homelessness, violence or addiction. Their mission is to support women and children in their transition to independence.

Elizabeth House opened in 1991 as one woman’s response to the needs of the homeless women and children she met on the streets of Berkeley and Oakland. Their founder, Pat Lindstadt, sought to offer support in a variety of ways that would enable the guests to regain both a sense of control over their lives, and ultimately, independent living. The founding values of hospitality, hope, empowerment, personalism, community, compassion and nonviolence all remain integral components of Elizabeth House.

This year, Kerry’s Kids joined the team of community-based organizations that helps Elizabeth House provide these services for their families each year. (For more information about Elizabeth House, please visit www.oakehouse.org)

Innovative High School student Erika Chaconas, daughter of Ted Chaconas, Director of Medical Education at CHRCO, took it upon herself to raise money for Kerry’s Kids. This seventh grader showed true compassion and energy by organizing a garage sale with family, friends, and neighbors - all in an effort to support Kerry’s Kids. Her initiative raised $350 for our program. Thank you to Erika and all of those who helped her effort.

Pictured above is Nooshin Razani, the 2004 recipient of the Dr. Kerry Spooner Dean Award, who was selected based upon her commitment to providing care for under-served children. Also pictured are Jim Wright, M.D., Associate Director of Medical Education at CHRCO (left) and Ted Chaconas, M.D., Director of Medical Education at CHRCO (right).

The Leo's Legacy project was started last year at Lazear and La Escuelita elementary schools by Roxanna Martinez, M.D. This project then included monthly health information lectures for parents and school staff while Kerry's Kids provided screenings and immunizations for the children. Due to the generosity of Kerry's Kids, this program was expanded this year with the addition of Erik Fernandez, M.D., M.P.H. who is able to provide similar services to Garfield and International Community Elementary schools. By combining efforts, we were able to provide much needed immunizations and influenza vaccinations to the students of four Oakland elementary schools and their surrounding communities.

You are never given a wish, without also being given the power to make it come true. -Richard Bachman
tions. The conditions in which shelter children live also make them more vulnerable to infection in the event of disease outbreaks in the community. Homeless children are more likely to go without food and are also more likely to eat at inexpensive fast-food restaurants than housed children. As a result, health consequences due to malnutrition, including obesity and anemia, are more common among homeless children than among housed children. Other chronic illnesses suffered by homeless children that can be at least partially attributed to their living environment include asthma and lead poisoning.

The Power of Kerry’s Kids

For over five years now, the spirit of Kerry Spooner-Dean and her strong commitment to the service has continued to inspire dedicated volunteers to carry on her dream of providing health care for these children. Each week the Kerry’s Kids mobile van, our Site Coordinator Katherine Castillo, and a team of volunteer health care providers visits one of the fours sites on a rotating basis. Our volunteer teams are led by a strong network of volunteer community pediatricians who are dedicated to providing care for underserved children and their families. Pediatric Residents in training and medical students at CHRCO also volunteer on the van each week as part of their training. In addition to our physician volunteers, Kerry’s Kids also collaborates with the Oakland Head Start Program and volunteers from the University of California, Berkeley to provide medical care and resources to the children in the four homeless shelters we serve.

Kerry’s spirit continues to be a driving force in guiding Kerry’s Kids to provide essential services to the high-risk, under-served, uninsured children we serve. Kerry’s Kids is firmly committed to providing free health care and education to under-served children. Thus far, through the dedication of our volunteer staff, the donations of private donors (including many of you reading our newsletter) and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, we have been able to provide free acute care, immunizations and physical examinations for the children we serve. In 2004 Kerry’s Kids gave a total of 228 vaccinations, provided health care treatment, school physicals, and WIC screening to 145 uninsured children in transitional housing facilities. In addition to this, Leo’s Legacy, under the direction of Roxanna Martinez, MD, conducted educational seminars to 100 parents & teachers on childhood asthma prevention, dental hygiene care, lead poisoning and nutrition. The Leo’s Legacy Program also provided 159 vaccinations and distributed educational materials related to health concerns as well as donated hygiene materials. In addition to providing services at our regular sites, over 200 children were seen by Kerry’s Kids Volunteers & Physicians at local Health Fairs where health education materials, diabetes screening, vaccine screening and hygiene items were distributed.

Currently Kerry’s Kids is the only facility in the East Bay that provides this population of children with access to pediatricians who can address the unique health concerns of children within this homeless population. As such, Kerry’s Kids fills a significant void of healthcare for homeless children.

Room to Grow: Reaching Beyond Physical Health

In addition to the health services we are currently providing, we are working to address the developmental issues that often affect children living in shelters. We recognize that, in addition to the health consequences suffered by homeless children, learning disabilities, behavior disorders and emotional problems are also frequently observed in these children. The psychological effects due to homelessness, including unstable living conditions and the domestic conflicts that may have precipitated homelessness, may significantly affect the development of homeless children. In addition, poor nutrition, environmental toxins, drug exposure and chronic stress can harm (Continued on page 5)
Kerry's Kids would like to thank all our faithful donors and the following people for all of their hard work and dedication.

Sandra Lee-Takei
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Thanks to our Pro Bono Support Team
Greta and Sabrina from Ghirado, CPA
David Caldwell
Deb Dean

Caring for Kids and Filling a Void (con’t)

(Continued from page 4)
a child’s developing brain. Homeless children suffer developmental delays in language skills, cognitive ability and motor skills almost three times as often as housed children. We are currently working in collaboration with our long-time partner Oakland Head Start as well as developing new relationships with the Center for the Vulnerable Child and community-based Pediatric offices to increase our families’ access to these and other resources and services in the community.

In the coming year we hope to see our volunteer staff continue to grow so that we may serve more children in need. We also hope to continue to expand the services we are currently providing to our families. Kerry’s Kids will continue to break down barriers to health care and to help our families feel less alienated by medical professionals and the health care system. As Kerry’s Kids continues to bring high quality free health care and education to under-served children we hope to become even more instrumental in building connections between the families we serve, community resources and community pediatricians.

Your support of Kerrys Kids is changing children’s lives for the better
Your Support Makes a Difference in the Lives of Children

All contributions are tax deductible and may be sent to:

Kerry’s Kids
936B Seventh St. PMB 420
Novato, CA 94945

EIN 02-0569175
Please make checks payable to Kerry’s Kids

Kerry’s Kids’ Mission
To provide primary pediatric health care and education directly on-site to uninsured children in under-served communities and to populations where access to health care is restricted due to a variety of socioeconomic conditions.