

HOPE Resource Centers busy helping CVUSD families

A family of eight sleeping on the floor, a single mother who had no money to bury her teenage son, and a mother struggling with cancer and homelessness are just some of the clients being assisted at the HOPE Resource Centers opened last fall by Chino Valley Unified School District.

In a recent report to the district, statistics and stories were revealed, showing a growing need for the centers that provide local families with referrals for food, clothing, parent education, tutoring, housing information, and counseling.

The HOPE Resource Centers are the result of efforts by CVUSD Superintendent Wayne M. Joseph to help families in need in the school district after realizing that many academic problems stem from issues children have at home. In February 2014, he established a HOPE Committee of local community leaders to address those issues, and in November 2014, the school district opened five resource centers at school sites with \$250,000 the district had set aside for the project.

Each center is manned by a bilingual case manager, provided through a contract between the City of Chino and the school district.

Between November 2014 and June 30 of this year, the HOPE Resource Centers served 608 people with 2,017 units of service, including calls, office visits, and follow-up meetings. Sixty percent of the clients were from Chino, 24% from Chino Hills, 10% from South Ontario, and 6% from other areas, reported CVUSD employee Liz Lara, who oversees the program.

Since July 1, the centers have served 395 clients with 796 units of service. Of those clients, 73% are from Chino, 14% for Chino Hills, 7% from South Ontario, and 6% from other areas.

The district is comprised of Chino, Chino Hills, and a small section of South Ontario.

Lara said the most requested service from first time clients from November 2014 to June 30, 2015 was health care (24%), followed by counseling (19%), food (17%), housing (14%), tutoring (7%), emergency supplies (7%), clothing (6%), and other services such as immigration help, legal aid, and utility assistance (6%).

Among the challenges being addressed in the first seven months of the program are a long waiting list for counseling by Spanish speakers, homework help and tutoring on the new Common Core standards, language barriers that prevent many parents from assisting their children with homework, and life skills training and workshops for parents who want to find better employment.

Recent issues include a lack of shelters for homeless families in the surrounding area, providing tutoring, and seeking funds to assist families with school uniforms and physical education clothes. Lara also said the HOPE program is now picking up the cost of the case managers because it did not receive a \$75,000 grant for homeless persons.

HOPE Program staff members are currently working on remodeling the CARE Clothes Closet on the Adult School Campus in Chino, and establishing a HOPE donation account through the City of Chino so donations will be tax deductible.

Since July, the HOPE resource center program has benefitted from several community donations, including 450 backpacks filled with school supplies for homeless students and those in financial need from St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Chino Hills, hygiene and school supplies and \$1,000 in Walmart gift cards for homeless families from the Chino Valley Fire Foundation, new clothing and hygiene supplies from local Boy Scouts, school supplies from the MOM's Club of Chino, hygiene supplies and diapers from the Vacation Bible Study students at CrossPoint Church in Chino, and new and used clothing, blankets, and emergency supplies from a number of individuals, non-profit groups and faith-based organizations.

The California Institution for Men is expected to make a large monetary donation in October to the resource centers to provide new clothing for the CARE Clothes Closet.

The HOPE Resource Centers are located at the Chino Valley Adult School campus, 12970 Third St., Chino; Alternative Education Center, 15650 Pipeline Ave., Chino Hills; Dickson Elementary School, 3930 Pamela Drive, Chino, room 16; Walnut Avenue Elementary School, 5550 Walnut Ave., Chino, room 20; and Dickey Elementary School, 2840 Parco Ave., Ontario, room 103.

CVUSD families may visit any of the resource centers, regardless of the location of their child's school.

Center hours are 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. Afternoon appointments are available by calling the Family Resource Center's main number at (909) 628-1201, ext. 8960.