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**Chance Encounter**  
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The two recipients, Tom Amato and Leslie Medine, were welcomed by 150 guests as they became the focus of resolutions from Congressman Mike Thompson, Assembly member Noreen Evans and Senator Pat Wiggins. A number of adults and youth spoke in glowing terms about the effect of each of their work on the youth and adults of our community.

Tom Amato is not only the Executive Director of the Angwin Teen center, he has lead efforts to help parents, adults, and teens understand and support growth in one another through education and wisdom sharing.

Leslie Medine is the founder of a number of youth lead organizations currently focusing her efforts on VOICES/On the Move, a program founded and operated to transition foster youth to independent living. She has the unique ability to listen to and lead people in a way that allows their ideas and visions to emerge.



**A Car of Her Own**

Stephanie Holderman was struggling to meet all her obligations which includes completing her Master's program at Mills College, an internship in an innovative preschool program at Stanford University and planning her marriage to her longtime friend and partner, Benjie. Then her car broke down. This strong, determined young woman had overcome other obstacles in her life which earned her an If Given a Chance scholarship in 2001 and she wasn't going to let this trial throw her off track.

Stephanie had received support of If Given a Chance through her time at Napa Valley College and while completing her Bachelors degree at Mills. She knew that If Given a Chance was there all along but didn't know, until recently exactly how far these people would go to help.

She mentioned her transportation woes to If Given a Chance Student Liaison, Isadora Asch who passed the message on to the Executive Director, Jim King. Jim contacted an If Given a Chance board member, Kent Gardella, owner of Napa Valley Jewelers, who worked his magic on his good friend and fellow Rotarian, Kevin Massie, owner of Napa Ford.

Kent and Kevin worked to find a car that was in good condition and reliable for this young lady. On Sunday August 10th, Kevin handed over the keys to a 1995 Lincoln Town Car to a overwhelmed and exuberant Stephanie. She confined much of her response to "wow" over and over as she bounced around the car with sheer delight and disbelief.

Stephanie was touched beyond measure that If Given a Chance reached into the greater Napa community to fulfill one more need in her life. With the combination of service, friendship,

Rotary relationships and dedication to young people, a very special moment occurred. Kevin was quick to point out the time and work his staff put in to make the car truly reliable. He also noted his good friend at

Advanced Auto Body, Mike McDaniel touched up small imperfections and made sure the paint job shone with luster.

Stephanie was overcome with emotion as she realized the way the Napa community came together to assist her on her road to success.

*... the Napa community came together to assist [Stephanie] on her road to success.*



**CAN Program Kicks Off**

In a classroom at Napa Valley College, the CAN Program began. Our 2008 scholarship recipients were all required to take this 8-day course in study skills, independent living skills, and team building. This program is in response to listening to our students and understanding the challenges they faced as they began their college journey.



We created a partnership with Napa Valley College, Bank of Napa, Mustards Grill, and the Napa County Office of Education to make sure these students had the tools to succeed. Thanks to a generous donation from Dey Labs, we were able to provide a refurbished laptop for each student completing the program.

Many students were struck by the amount of information made available to them, and what they needed to know in order to navigate college campuses and services. They were also impressed by the generosity of the Bank of Napa and Mustards Grill for helping them learn about finance and budgeting, cooking techniques, and other skills. The students grew closer as a cohort by experiencing the ropes course courtesy of the Napa Valley Office of Education.

Communicate your needs, Advocate for services, and learn to Navigate college campuses and independent living. The students loved learning about the campus and the parallels with other schools. Being introduced to college life without being thrown in created a feeling of safety, as if they had a map to follow.

**The Economy and If Given a Chance: a Challenge**

Without a doubt everyone has been affected by the economic challenges facing our nation. Each individual and each company alike must make harder and wiser decisions in order to survive and thrive. This holds true for If Given a Chance as well. We are struggling to fulfill our mission of supporting the dreams of these courageous young people. As the state considers cutting financial aid and cost of tuition rises, the last

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**Student Survey and Study Completed**

In 2004, If Given a Chance began to gather data to better understand who we serve and the effect our programs have had. It wasn't until 2008 that we were able to obtain an analysis of the data gathered. Although we had added programs and grown since the data was gathered, we still believed we would gain valuable insights to assist us in the work we do.

We teamed up with Cora Neal, a professor at Sonoma State University and her students to make sense of the data we had collected on our students since our founding in 1995. We also added student surveys were completed in 2005.



See: "A Car of Her Own," page four . . .

The surveys supplied extremely valuable feedback from a range of students.

We found that we have awarded 71% of our scholarships to females. Ethnically, our students mirror the population of Napa County with 29% Latino recipients, 65% Caucasian, 3% African-American and 2% Asian.

The number one category of obstacles overcome by our recipients was some form of abuse whether it was sexual, physical, emotional or simple neglect. Many more of our recipients either faced their own drug/alcohol addiction or

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*If Given a Chance exists to recognize youth who have demonstrated exceptional courage in overcoming extraordinary personal challenges, and to provide guidance and financial assistance so they may achieve their educational potential.*

**Who are our recipients?**

- 44.1% have had substance abuse issues
- 57.14% have suffered abuse, 39.8% of those experienced physical abuse, of those, 22% dealt with sexual abuse
- 39.8% have suffered neglect
- 29.9% have witnessed domestic violence in their home
- 27.2% come from foster care
- 29.5% were involved with the juvenile justice system
- 17.7% have been homeless
- 49.2% were affected by their parent's substance abuse issues

**Wish to support If Given A Chance?**

**Send your donation to:**

If Given a Chance  
P.O. Box 2607  
Napa, CA 94558

**For estate planning or to donate stock**  
please contact the Executive Director,  
Jim King at:

Phone: 707-260-5656  
E-mail: chance@napanet.net

**How you nominate someone:**

Applications are distributed, and posted on our website at in October. The applications are due in February. All students must be nominated by an adult.

**Wish to Volunteer?**

Phone: 707-226-8890  
E-mail: sking@can-v.org

**Want to learn more about If Given A Chance?**

If Given a Chance  
P.O. Box 2607  
Napa, CA 94558

www.ifgivenachance.org

E-mail: chance@napanet.net  
Phone: 707-260-5656

**The Economy and If Given a Chance** (cont'd from page 1)

thing our recipients need is to cuts in the funds we provide.

Our national leaders have spoken of the most important steps one can take to ensure a future of success. When that discussion focuses on our children, they all agree that the world before us demands that our children obtain a college education.

In this global economy, a lack of a college degree, more often than not, equates to lost opportunity. The young people If Given a Chance serves are the least likely to receive financial assistance from other sources. They have worked hard to reach this point. We want to make sure they finish the journey.

If they are able to finish what they have started they will become vibrant contributing members of our communities. They will join with other young people to lead us out of our economic trials and back to success. Place your hopes with us in these young people and provide the support necessary for them to join in recreating opportunity for all.

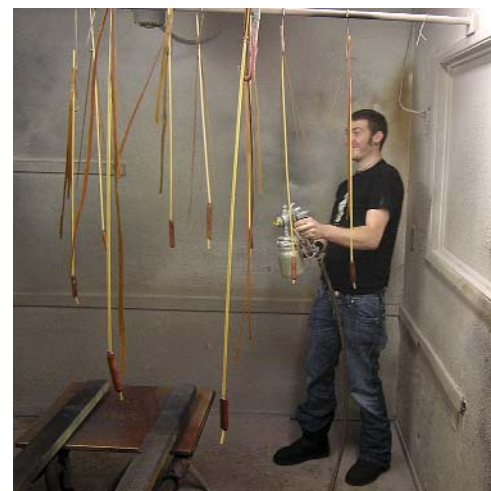
A generous donor family has stepped up to assist us in filling the gap of funding we face. A portion of their gift is in the form of a challenge grant. They are asking you, our supporters, to meet their commitment of \$25,000. This match would go a long way to meet the needs of the young people we serve.

Of course gifts of any size add up and we are truly grateful of any support you may consider.

**Spotlight On . . . Zach Geyer, Santa Rosa Junior College**

Zach has found a passion in his life, art. He recently was chosen, out of over 1100 submissions, as one of 100 artists to exhibit his work in a recent show at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Zach plans on continuing to major in art with



hopes of one day teaching. He is now a member of the Napa Valley Arts Council and plans to hold an open studio in September.

Zach is inspired to give back in his free time. He volunteers in the ICU at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital. He visits and encourages the patients and their families. He is uniquely qualified to volunteer in this manner as he had his first debilitating stroke at the age of 12. He has had multiple surgeries, many complications, with both advances and setbacks. He has managed an amazingly hopeful and inspiring attitude every step along the way.

Zach has recently added something very personal to his activities. He has been speaking to groups and community organizations about the challenges he has faced and continues to face. His talk is entitled; "In Our Own Voice: Living with Mental Illness". He works with the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Zach is a reflection of the hope and success that is If Given a Chance.

**Katy Buckner, 2004, Has Class!**



I hope that you and everyone else at IGAC are doing well! I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your continued support.

Since graduating from Loyola Marymount University in May, I took one month off and visited Israel, and then returned to LMU for graduate school during the summer. Since then I have been working toward my Multiple Subject Teaching Credential and my Masters in Education through LMU's PLACE (Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education) Corps program. Through the program, students practice "simple living" in communities while simultaneously working toward our degrees and teaching in under-resourced Catholic Schools in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. I am fortunate enough to teach an AMAZING third grade class in a severely under-resourced school in East Los Angeles. It has been tremendously challenging to be a first-year teacher without any formal training whatsoever, but the rewards have been exponential. I will be in the program through May 2010 when I will graduate from LMU once again. However, I have found that teaching is my calling, and plan to be in that field for the long-run.

**Student Survey and Study Completed** (cont'd from page 1)

had to deal with those issues concerning their parents. 27% of our students were in foster care. 17% had been involved with gangs. 29% had some dealings with the justice system.

Most of our students had 4 or more challenging circumstances to overcome. The number and type of challenge they faced directly affected their success (finished at least 2 years of college or training) rate. For example of the students who did not face abuse as an issue in their lives, 58% of males and 70% of females experienced success. For those who had faced abuse, the numbers drop to 38% of males and 46% of females experiencing success.

The survey's recommendations included creating a ongoing support system for the students and a process for resource and referral to appropriate services. These have been added, starting the year following the most recent data the students worked with. In 2005 If Given contracted with Isadora Asch as our Student Liaison. Isadora holds a Masters in Psychology and has extensive knowledge of services and resources. She is in contact with each student every 2 weeks to check in and offer support.

Another recommendation was to assist the students in becoming better prepared for not only surviving the first year on a college campus and succeeding at living independently. Last year we implemented the CAN Program (Communicate Advocate Navigate). This is a program designed to impart life lessons concerning study habits, educate the students on school services, banking, cooking, and self-reliance skills. CAN, or the equivalent, is required of all student recipients.

We are continuing to gather data and will require all continuing students to complete the survey to allow us to gain greater insights into our work and the success we foster.

**2008 Chance Encounter**

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, October 19th, 2008, If Given a Chance hosted the Chance Encounter event. Chance Encounter honors individuals who have had a significant impact on the youth of Napa County.

2008 proved to be a challenging year for identifying that special person who deserved be called "Our Children's Hero". The challenge proved too much for the selection committee made up of Barbara Nemko, Napa County Superintendent of Education, Carol Glaser, Napa Valley College, and Harris Nussbaum, last year's recipient. They chose not one but two recipients who they felt were equally worthy of the honor.

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**Who's Graduating?**

**Lindsey Pogue, 2002**, should be completing her MA in History and Culture in 2009. She has attended Sonoma State University and currently attends Union Institute and University.

**Stephanie Holdermann, 2001**, is completing her graduate studies at Mills College in Child Development. She is looking forward to leading emerging child development programs and enriching the opportunities for young children

**Nick Offord, 2003**, is finishing his studies at Ex'pression College of Digital Arts in Sound Arts.

**Nickole Iadarola, 2004**, a 2009 graduation date looms for Nickole as she completes her studies in Psychology at Sonoma State University. She will be entering graduate school to obtain her Masters in Counseling in the near future.

**Patricia Holdermann, 2002**, will complete her studies in Dental Hygiene at Chabot College this Spring.

**Roseanne Gammello, 2005**, is receiving her Bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology in 2009 from University of California Berkeley. She is planning the next steps to enter Medical School.

**David Diaz, 2005**, is completing his undergraduate work at Stanford University with a double major in Communication and Political Science.

**Upcoming Events**

- Fashion Show—Silent Auction to benefit our scholarship program: April 25th, 2008 at the Spring Hill Suites Marriott, Napa, CA, 2-5 p.m. Many local leaders and dignitaries will model the latest fashions. For more information contact Lisa Lindsey, 707.980.1054
- 15th Annual Scholarship Awards Dinner, May 22, 2009, Napa Valley Marriott.

