

News Release

Media Contact: Barbara McMurray
McMurray Marketing Communications
(949) 494-5388
mcmurray@mac.com

**Friendship Shelter's
"Dinners Across Laguna and Beyond"
A Huge Success**

**Vital Dollars Raised will Help Motivated Homeless Adults
Rebuild their Lives, Return to Productivity**

LAGUNA BEACH, Calif., Feb. 13, 2007 – The Friendship Shelter's 15th annual *Dinners Across Laguna and Beyond* fundraising event was a runaway success, thanks to the generous hosts and guests of the 23 dinners held over several weekends throughout Orange County. The funds will help the Laguna-based shelter, which serves all of Orange County, continue the work of its ongoing rehabilitation self-sufficiency program for homeless adults.

Co-chairs Barbara McMurray and Gayle Verst created a flexible format whereby dinner hosts could select from a variety of dates to hold their dinners, and the style of their event was left to the hosts' creativity.

"The dinner hosts are the stars of this event, opening their hearts and homes and wallets to make this such a smashing success," McMurray observed. "We had a Chinese New Year celebration, a rock 'n' roll birthday blowout, a quiet dinner in a tony Newport restaurant, a high-energy social event with 90 guests, an intimate gourmet meal for four in San Clemente, a Pie 'n' Burger party for 60, and everything in between. One host even matched the donations his wife generated from her invited guests as a Valentine's Day tribute because it touched him to see how much it meant to her to help the shelter. It is our hope that every guest came away with the idea that the people they're helping are much like themselves, except for some hard knocks, a few bad decisions and a twist or two of fate that rendered them homeless."

Friendship Shelter Executive Director Carol Rhoads added, "Dinners Across Laguna guests had the chance to not only hear about but to meet former Friendship Shelter residents who have persevered, overcome their tough situations and gone on to live successful lives. The shelter is much more than a roof over someone's head. Initially, it's a stringent 60-day program that involves a safe place for developing life skills, resumé-writing, job-hunting, wage-saving, and counseling from a skilled team of staffers and volunteers whose goal is for residents to succeed at rebuilding their lives. In addition to the 29-bed facility here in Laguna Beach, Friendship Shelter runs Henderson House, an

affordable 8-unit apartment complex in San Clemente, where qualified residents can live for up to one year after they graduate from the Laguna Beach facility.“

Donating food and services to Dinners Across Laguna and Beyond were: A La Carte, Aegean Café, Alessio Ristorante, BBG Wines, Break of Dawn Restaurant, California Taste Fine Wines, Cedar Creek Inn, Dizz's As Is, The English Garden, From The Vine Wine Boutique, Fusano's Nursery, Hush, artist Philip Kiluk , K'ya at La Casa del Camino, Mangia Bene, Mozambique Restaurant & Coastal Lounge, Oiseaux Flowers, Orange County Printing & Graphics, Picayo, Regal Wine Company, Rick's Partners Bistro, Sage Restaurant, Sage on the Coast, Salt Creek Grille, Savoie's Fare Pastry & Café, Stalker's Fine Foods, Such a Great Party, Sun Dried Tomato, Super Dave's Printing, Tabu Grill, Trader Joe's, Vons, Wild Oats, The Wine Gallery, Zinc Café and Market.

Hosts for the 23 dinners, many of whom joined forces to create their events, included: Judy and Doug Anderson, Binnie Beaumont and George Western of Newport Beach, Paola Porrini-Bisson and Richard Bisson (co-hosts: Joy Dittberner and Tom Peters, Santina and Ron Davies, Sue Freeman and John Hancock), Lynette Braunstein and Colin Godwin of Laguna Niguel (co-hosts: Laurie and Tom Curran), Stuart Byer and Jeffrey Rehm, Stephanie and Kevin Donovan, Ilene Glassman (co-hosts: Jo and John Caldwell, Shari and John Williamson), Betsy and Michael Gosselin, Colin Henderson, Elizabeth and Marshall Innins, (co-hosts: Marlene Baker, Ketta and Jeb Brown, Jennifer DeGroote, Sheri Fetrow, Mary and Dan Shapero), Elaine and Adrian Kuyper, Linda Larson-Marshutz of Laguna Niguel, Barbara and Greg MacGillivray (co-hosts: Bruce Dwyer, Stephanie and Bob Mister, George and Jany Gade), Kerri and Edson McClellan of San Clemente, Mary and Bruce McDonald, John O'Neill and Ed Smith, Lauren and Richard Packard, Dave Sanford and Steve Dotoratos, Mary Kate and Kirk Saunders (co-host: Lisa Pitz), Maeve and Jeff Shapiro of Santa Ana (co-hosts: Mary and Mike Pashley), Ann and Jim Shea (co-hosts: Barbara and Ken McMurray, Trina Rosen), Donna and Dan Vigil of San Clemente, and Louise and Wayne Wright.

Since its inception, *Dinners Across Laguna* has raised about \$485,000, excluding the 2007 event. The money raised this year will not be tallied until the last dinner is held in late March but is expected to represent a substantial increase, thanks to the event's hosts and guests. Almost 60% of the revenues needed to run Friendship Shelter come from individual donations and fundraising events. Friendship Shelter serves approximately 300 homeless unaccompanied adults annually.

The Shelter holds informational open house events each year, and individual tours can be arranged. Volunteer opportunities abound: Guest Chef stints, in which volunteers provide dinners for the 29 residents, various work projects by scout troops, individuals, neighbors, corporate, school or church groups and much more. Contact volunteer Coordinator Terrell Anansi. To learn more about sponsorship and donation opportunities, contact Director of Development Mark Miller. Both can be reached at (949) 494-6928.

Founded in 1988, Friendship Shelter provides housing, a variety of support services, and a comprehensive rehabilitation program to highly motivated, homeless adults. It is the only year-round emergency shelter in south Orange County for homeless unaccompanied adults. Visit www.friendshipshelter.org for details.

###