

Westchester volunteers help make over home of family facing struggle Westchester Playa Village pitches in for residents; Courageous Citizens Awards

By Geoff Maleman

Behind every home there is a story, and the story of Karen Ricks and her family can be considered both uplifting and heart-breaking.

For many years, Karen and Tim Ricks and their three children were intimately involved in the Westchester community. Tim attended Loyola Marymount University, where he met his future bride, Karen. He worked in the computer lab (where he honed the computer skills with which he made his career), and sang in the university's renowned men's chorus.

After graduation, he initially worked for Phidippides shoe store, then Continental Airlines, and finally Information Builders, where he stayed nearly 30 years, making friends inside and outside the company, and around the world.

As a young man, he discovered the sport of triathlon, ran in 10K races and half marathons, and rode his bike in several "century" rides. More recently, he was a regular at the Westchester Family YMCA. From Boy Scouts and Knights of Columbus to Westchester Lariats and Visitation School, the Ricks family could be found helping others.

Then, tragedy struck.

On July 31, 2011, while attending a family reunion, Tim suffered a massive heart attack and died.

The money from a small insurance policy has run out, and Karen, a

homemaker for more than a decade, found herself with two daughters in college and a son ready to graduate from high school, but without a full-time job. Finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, Karen has not been able to complete the myriad of home improvement projects Tim would normally handle, and her family's home has been affected.

Although their bond as a family has not wavered during this time of uncertainty, their home on West 82nd Street has suffered, and from paint and flooring to landscaping and a variety of repairs, the Ricks' home is desperately in need of some real tender loving care.

The Ricks are being treated to a Mammoth Mountain vacation, while volunteers from the Rotary Club of Westchester and throughout the community roll up their sleeves and paint and landscape their home. Thanks to major contributions from the William H. Hannon Foundation, the Drollinger Family Charitable Foundation, the Westchester Woman's Club, the Westchester Rotary Foundation and many others, the Ricks will return to new paint, new flooring, new landscaping and plenty of additional surprises. Work on the home at 6638 W. 82nd St. in Westchester (just west of Emerson Avenue) begins at 9 a.m. each day and continues during daylight hours until the afternoon of Sunday, June 2, when the Ricks will return to their "new" home. Volunteers are encouraged to stop by to donate an hour or an entire day. Those interested in volunteering can contact Warren Bobrow at (310) 670-4175, or warren@allaboutperformance.biz.

"We are hopeful this project will inspire others like it in our community," said Westchester Rotary President Cindy Williams. "In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we often fail to realize how fortunate we all are, so it will be a privilege to help Karen and her family make their home warm, comfortable and livable again."

Those interested in making a tax-deductible contribution to the project can make checks payable to Westchester Rotary Foundation and mail them to P.O. Box 91543, Los Angeles, CA 90009.

WESTCHESTER PLAYA VILLAGE PITCHES IN TO HELP

The local community recently came together to help longtime Westchester residents, John and Irene McKeegan. The McKeegans have lived in Westchester since 1972, when they bought and moved into a house just several doors down from the home where Irene grew up. Irene's parents, Nita and Earl Eddy, were the original owners of their home on 88th Place which they bought in 1953. Irene and her brother, Michael, both attended Loyola Village Elementary School, Orville Wright Junior High, and graduated from Westchester High School. Earl Eddy passed away in 1979, and Irene was caring for both her mother and brother at this home, until their recent passing.

After selling her parents' house, Irene found herself faced with the massive task of cleaning out a home that had accumulated 60 years of possessions. Both John and Irene are retired, still active and able to drive, but they knew they needed help. There were many boxes, pieces of furniture, and other belongings that needed to be moved to storage, down the street to their own home, or donated. It would require a lot of coordination, heavy lifting and they did not have resources readily available for such a project.

Westchester Playa Village (WPV) supported this project by pulling together not only WPV volunteers, but by coordinating efforts among several community-based organizations and service clubs. They said this task provided benefits that extended beyond just WPV and the McKeegans: The Westchester Rotary Club picked up and received over 30 boxes of books for their Book Fair;

The American Cancer Society picked up and received a dozen pieces of furniture and other household items;

A community service fraternity at Loyola Marymount University, Alpha Delta Gamma, Lambda Chapter, provided much needed manpower;

The Rotary Club of Playa Venice Sunrise provided volunteer support; and Ten bags/boxes of clothing and other items were delivered to Goodwill

Industries.

Westchester Playa Village and the McKeegans would like to thank all the volunteers and service clubs who gave of their time by lifting, transporting and providing other support.

For more information about WPV and its services, (310) 695-7030.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY TO HONOR CITIZENS AT ROTARY

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey will join the Rotary Club of Westchester in presenting the 2013 Courageous Citizens Awards.

The awards are given annually to citizens throughout Los Angeles to commend those individuals who have acted with courage and at considerable personal risk to help a victim of crime, assist in the capture of a suspect or testify in the face of extraordinary pressures.

Lacey will make the presentations at the Rotary Club's June 5 meeting, which will begin at 12:10 p.m. at the Crown Plaza Los Angeles Airport hotel at 5985 W. Century Blvd. in Westchester.

The cost for the program and lunch is \$20 for non-members and includes free self-parking. To reserve a seat, Bob Smith at (310) 493-3835. §