

COMMUNITY

Cupertino Rotary kicks off its season of giving

Lots of holiday events to come

By Matt Wilson

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The Rotary Club of Cupertino kicked off its slew of holiday charitable initiatives on Thanksgiving by delivering 101 meals to residents in need.

Rotarians dropped by Safeway on Homestead Road to pick up the dinners that morning. Each meal feeds roughly six to eight people, according to the club.

The program is held annually in the morning in partnership with the grocery store to purchase discounted precooked meals, which include the customary bird and holiday staples.

Recipients are selected by local community-based organizations. Meals delivered to empty homes were taken to Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church and West Valley Community Services.

Operation Snowflake

The deliveries were just the start for the service club. Saturday is the first round of Operation Snowflake, an annual event that sees Rotarians turn the Via West Campus in the foothills into a snowy wonderland. More than 100 special needs children are expected to attend and enjoy 13 tons of trucked-in snow and holiday crafts and goodies, the club says.

The event will repeat Dec. 9, albeit for 100 adults with special needs. Live music from the Grate-



FILE PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF VIA SERVICES

Nicky (last name withheld) enjoys a sled ride during Operation Snowflake at the Via West Campus in 2012. Operation Snowflake returns Saturday and is but one of a handful of holiday events put on by Cupertino Rotary. The service club kicked off its round of campaigns with turkey dinner deliveries on Thanksgiving.

ful Dads will accompany the festivities.

Each year snow and shaved ice is laid out in play areas for snowball and snowman creation, with plenty of help from volunteers. A sled run is set up for oh-so-careful trips down small hills.

The Santa Clara-based Via Services offers year-

round programs for children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities. The camp is located 13851 Stevens Canyon Road in unincorporated Cupertino.

Holiday luncheon

On Dec. 13 the club plans to host 40 seniors at its annual Holiday

Luncheon and Musical Program. Guests will be treated to lunch, music from the Monta Vista High School choir, and possibly a visit from Santa. The Quinlan Center is decked out in a Christmas motif with poinsettias galore, according to Rotarians Marguerite Padovani and Henry Buffalow.

Guests are invited from local retirement communities, senior centers, and assistance agencies. Padovani and Buffalow said most attendees are in their 80s.

Kid's shopping spree

The following day the club, along with members of Quota Club and Inner Wheel, will take underprivileged children on holiday shopping sprees at Target. The effort is in its 17th year, and sees volunteers sponsor and chaperone an elementary school-age child who picks out \$175 worth of new clothes. Students are selected from Cupertino schools.

Children are also treated to a pizza lunch and time with a surprise visitor at the YMCA before heading back to school, according to the club.

Wreaths Across America

On Dec. 16 the club is joining up with the American Legion Stevens Creek Post 642 to lay a wreath on every veteran's grave at a West Valley cemetery. It's part of Wreaths Across America, an organization that puts on 1,100 wreath-laying ceremonies across the country. A one-hour event is set for 10 a.m. at the cemetery, 22555 Cristo Rey Drive in Los Altos.

Each wreath costs \$15, and the Legion is working to raise the remaining funds to cover approximately 1,400 graves.

Mail donations to: American Legion Post 642 c/o Dennis Whittaker, P.O. Box 302, Cupertino, CA, 95015.