

## **Five Local Heroes Saluted For Outstanding Community Service**

### **Safeco Corporation Honors Each with \$15,000**

SEATTLE, Wash. (Feb. 12, 2008) — Safeco Insurance, a leading national property and casualty insurance company, today announced local recipients of its first annual **Community Hero Awards** at an event held at the Santa Ana Saint Joseph Ballet. Thirty individuals have been selected from across the country for this award and today, Safeco honored and recognized the five Southern California recipients for their extraordinary dedication to helping others and inspiring change within their communities.

Nominated by Safeco agents for their tireless commitment to strengthening and enriching their communities, each hero was presented with a \$15,000 check benefiting his or her non-profit organization.

“Safeco knows every neighborhood has heroes and saw this opportunity to partner with our agents to identify individuals special to them and their home towns,” says Virginia Anderson, President of the Safeco Insurance Foundation. “Safeco’s Community Hero Awards are intended to recognize and celebrate those individuals who make a positive difference in their community and inspire others to do the same.”

The Southern California Community Hero Award recipients are:

- **Steven Baker**, for his work with Lancaster-based Grace Resources, nominated by Henry Marvin of the ISU-Stephen B. Marvin Insurance Agency.
- **Dora Jacildo**, for her work with Children Today in Long Beach, nominated by Nancy Yoshida of DeWitt Stern of California.
- **Harold and Kay Kutler**, for their work with the Brother Benno Foundation in Oceanside, nominated by Ginger Hodges-Rodigo of Michael Ehrenfeld Insurance.
- **Kevin McCarthy**, for his work with the Boys and Girls Club of Fullerton, nominated by Michelle Scott of Fullerton Insurance.
- **Jake Muth**, for his work with the Chino-based Let It Be Foundation, nominated by Anthony Amorelli of Amorelli, Rosemann and Associates.

**Steven Baker** has dedicated his life to bettering the lives of homeless individuals and families in Antelope Valley and Southern Cali. Initially a Youth Pastor at Bear Valley Community Church and then Pastor at First Alliance Church of San Diego, Baker began working with homeless individuals living in downtown San Diego in 1985, through Episcopal Community Services. Soon, Baker was developing a sheltered workshop program for homeless men and women to develop job skills and find meaningful work. In 1991, he was asked by the Antelope Valley Ministerial Association to develop a food bank to help the less fortunate of the region. Baker became the founding Executive Director of Grace Resource Center, first located in an old building in Lancaster. Sixteen teenage volunteers helped Baker reach out to 1,500 people each month with emergency groceries and hot "Souper" meals. In 1999, the organization acquired the old Sierra Toyota property and raised nearly \$800,000 to renovate their facility. Today, because of Steve's vision and hard work, Grace Resources provides 8,000 people each month with emergency groceries, meals, job and life skills training through ongoing P.O.W.E.R. classes, and computer training classes. Baker's community involvement goes well beyond Grace Resources and includes appointments to the advisory council of the California State Prison-Antelope Valley, Volunteer clergy for the Lancaster Station of the Los Angeles County Sheriff, and even as Honorary Firehouse dog for Los Angeles County Fire Station 33.

**Dora Jacildo** began her career in early childhood education as a preschool teacher in Long Beach. After leaving the classroom, Jacildo worked tirelessly to improve the quality of early childhood programs in the South Bay, mentoring more than 300 childcare providers and assisting with the start-up of hundreds of family childcare businesses. Today, she is the Executive Director of Children Today, a nonprofit agency in Long Beach dedicated to improving the care and development of young children experiencing homelessness. Widely recognized as a model program, Children Today has received countless visits from city and county government officials and plans to open a second facility next spring. In addition to fulfilling her many responsibilities at Children Today, Jacildo serves on many committees and commissions in her community and advocates for children nationwide through speaking engagements and the provision of consulting services to other non-profit and educational agencies.

**Harold and Kav Kutler** founded the Brother Benno Foundation in

1983, inspired by the work of a Benedictine monk, Brother Benno Garrity, from the Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, California. Brother Benno died in 1992; his life spent feeding the poor and homeless. The Brother Benno Foundation began as a small soup kitchen and has grown to provide services such as case management, legal assistance, emergency shelter, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Harold Kutler's book, "Soup, Soap, Hugs and Hope," describes the dedication and philosophy that has driven the Foundation, a philosophy nominating agent Ginger Hodges-Rodigo summarizes as "offer[ing] each and everyone respect, love, and unconditional acceptance." Hodges-Rodigo continues, "Have you ever met someone who exudes such kindness, goodness and purity that they seem somewhat 'holy' themselves? Harold and Kay Kutler are both just that type of person." Since the administration and labor that keeps Brother Benno's going is donated, the Kutlers' award will be used to provide goods and services for those who need them most in San Diego County. Brother Benno's also shares its donations of food, clothing, blankets, and furniture with other non-profit organizations in the area.

**Kevin McCarthy** worked with the Boys and Girls Club of Fullerton to create a playground for underprivileged kids in his community, designing, fundraising, serving as a project manager, and doing manual labor at the construction site – all while maintaining his full-time role with Fullerton Insurance Service. He also established Operation Claire at St. Jude Hospital in memory of his niece; ensuring children whose families cannot afford medical care are serviced at home in the event of a medical emergency. McCarthy's entire staff nominated him for a Community Hero Award adding comments such as, "Through the 13 years I've known Kevin, his incredible commitment to everything he puts his energy to is inspirational." Kiwanis, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Fullerton and Stanton, and many other community organizations have given him their highest honors and count him among the ranks of their members. Another staff member writes, "Kevin has a huge soft spot in his heart for the underdog, disadvantaged and struggling people in his life and community. Most of his actions to help people are anonymous. He believes that he is born to make a difference."

**Jake Muth**, a 15 year-old freshman from Ayala High School in Chino Hills, already has four years of active community service under his belt. An honor student, Muth was selected as one of ten "Leaders of the Pack" from his class of 600 students. He volunteers

as a big buddy for AYSO's VIP Soccer Program and Little League's Challenger Division and was selected to the Chino Hills "Volunteer" Program through which he provided Pee Wee sports assistance. Over the last two summers, Jake has volunteered more than 160 hours of his time to youth programs in his community. In 2006, he became a member of the Junior Advisory Board of the Let it Be Foundation, an organization that cares for the families of children with life-threatening medical conditions. Members of the Board work together to raise money for the Foundation and encourage other youth to get involved in community service. One of Muth's projects, a citywide lemonade stand, raised more than \$10,000 for the Foundation's retrofitting and redecorating of bedrooms belonging to Foundation kids with special needs.

"Safeco agents around the country work with so many outstanding citizens. We are proud to be honoring this year's Community Hero Award recipients and hope our small contribution to their causes enables them to continue making a difference in the communities they serve," adds Danielle Clark, Safeco community relations director.

### **About the Safeco Community Hero Awards**

A total of \$500,000 will be awarded nationwide through Safeco's Community Hero Awards, an initiative of the Safeco Agent Giving Program supporting the civic engagement of Safeco agents. Safeco's Community Hero Awards, in addition to other Safeco Corporation and Safeco Foundation gifts, contributed a total of \$7.1 million to towns and cities across the country in 2007.

### **About Safeco Corporation**

Safeco, in business since 1923, is a Fortune 500 property and casualty insurance company based in Seattle. The company sells insurance to drivers, home owners, and owners of small- and mid-sized businesses principally through a national network of independent agents and brokers. Safeco is also one of the nation's leaders in the sale and service of surety bonds.

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