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Nonprofit Strategies



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Philanthropy celebrated nationwide

By Barry VanderKelen

The 25th annual National Philanthropy Day was recognized Nov. 15 in the United States and Canada. But we can celebrate it every day, giving thanks for the many people who have made a difference in our lives and in our communities.

It began as the vision of one person. In 1981, it began to bother Doug Freeman, then an estate, tax and charitable planning attorney in Los Angeles, that philanthropy received little acknowledgment from the general public.

“Our lives have been enriched so thoroughly by the efforts of so many,” Freeman

told me when we met in 1995. “We all need to learn to say thank you because most people give and don’t ask for anything in return.”

Freeman began building support for his idea to establish a day to celebrate philanthropy. He personally wrote more than 4,000 letters to members of Congress. He also enlisted the help of a small group of people consisting of nonprofit leaders, philanthropists, and corporate executives.

Five years later, in 1986, his efforts paid off. Dan Lungren, then U.S. representative from Long Beach, sponsored the legislation in the House and Pete Wilson, then senator from California,

sponsored the legislation in the Senate. The legislation was approved and signed by President Ronald Reagan.

In 1986, Americans donated the equivalent of \$157 billion. Last year, they gave over \$300 billion, and 8.1 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$169 billion. National Philanthropy Day recognizes the extraordinary accomplishments that philanthropy as well as those involved in the philanthropic process have made in our communities.

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Resource Use

- Support nonprofit leadership
- Board development/training
- Strategic planning

Nonprofit Business Column of *The Tribune*

Barry VanderKelen, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation writes a bi-weekly column to help strengthen nonprofit organizations in the community.

The Tribune publishes the column every other week in the Business section.

Each column is reprinted as a one-page handout for use by local organizations. Barry can be reached at 543-2323 or by e-mail at barry@slocf.org.