

Project Hope Day Comes to Orange County, California

Editorial Staff

DC: Dr. Porteous, what exactly is Project Hope?

Dr. Porteous: Food for the hungry! Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat) was doctors of chiropractic and their patients collecting food and other items for the homeless and needy. It was really a day when people were helping people in their own neighborhoods. The project was really very simple. On February 14, Valentine's Day, patients, their families and relatives donated non-perishable food items. In return, the participating doctor offered exam and/or treatment at no cost.

Our purpose was to collect non-perishable foods and items that could be utilized by the literally hundreds of thousands of homeless people in California. Here in Orange County, over 27 chiropractic practices participated. The Food Distribution Center of Orange County estimated four to five thousand pounds of food was collected and distributed to the homeless of Orange County -- a direct result of dedicated doctors, staff and hundreds of patients. I would particularly like to express my very special appreciation for Pat Ball from the Orange County Food Distribution Organization. She really made the project a success. If it wasn't for her we wouldn't have had barrels in all the offices and all the food picked up and distributed. She really played a vital role in the success of our project.

DC: How did the idea for this project Hope Day in California come about?

Dr. Porteous: Project Hope started by the Santa Monica Chiropractic Society last year and has spread throughout California. The project is supported by the California Chiropractic Association through its county societies. The concept is not a new idea; many doctors have collected food for the less fortunate over the years. Dr. Slusher's Chiropractic Centers have collected food and toys twice a year for as long as I can recall.

"DC:" In getting feed-back from the other 27 chiropractic offices, what do you think about the overall impact chiropractic had on the general community in Orange County, California?

Dr. Porteous: This was the first year and because of this, we can call it a very successful outcome. Everyone benefits from this type of project. Several offices reported serving as many as thirty new patients. The Orange County Chiropractic Society had sent out press releases to inform the community about the effort and the turnout was wonderful. People who didn't take advantage of chiropractic services found their way to chiropractic offices to donate food.

I believe that the community was made aware of the chiropractors' concern and commitment to this social challenge. Interestingly enough, due to some postal shortcomings, we were unable to notify all 800 plus chiropractors in Orange County of Project Hope. We are confident that next year we could have in excess of 100 to 200 offices involved. We did get a marked response by chiropractors saying, "Oh, we would have loved to have participated in Project Hope, but we just didn't get the information in time." We are very encouraged at hearing from so many doctors after the fact. They're saying, "Gee, next year we definitely want to become involved." We have decided

to make this an annual program.

DC: And, what are your plans for next year? Do you have any specific dates in mind for another Project Hope Day?

Dr. Porteous: We are definitely going to repeat the February 14 Valentine's Day. But because of the serious need for food and non-perishable items by the Orange County Food Distribution Center, (this organization distributes it to all the major charities) we are working on a strategy to have three dates a year. We will have a Hope Day three times a year. We are just finalizing the plans right now. And we hope that those dates would be projected out far enough that it would be convenient for more doctors to participate.

DC: What should a doctor do who is interested in participating next year?

Dr. Porteous: We are hoping that we will have workshops that will instruct the doctors on how to properly participate in the program, as well making audiocassette or videocassette tapes so that doctors can get the information and participate. With this kind of turnout, we just feel that we obviously have hit a responsive cord in the chiropractic profession, and so we are going to take advantage of it. The need is year round, so we are going to look for a consistent effort on behalf of the profession (at least here in Orange County) to feed the hungry. I would like to invite any doctor of chiropractic anywhere in the United States to write and I would be glad to give them information on how they can participate or how they can have their own special Hope Day, wherever they are. You don't need anything other than a Big Heart and committing the day to it! We are hoping that we will be able to synthesize all the information down into a brief audio cassette that we would be able to give to any doctor anywhere. A doctor does not have to practice here in Orange County to participate. I invite them to write us so that we can get them involved.

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