

April 17, 2006

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Dick Johanson

The past few weeks have been a time of reflection. In addition to a spiritual focus, let's set a special time aside to focus on our first, second and third grade school kids. For many of these community treasures the challenge of learning to read at grade level is a tall mountain to climb. Currently in Fresno, almost two-thirds of our kids score below grade level. Over ninety percent of this group will not attend college. We can help. ReadFresno is one of our venues. Through participating ourselves and permitting our employees to become reader/mentors for one hour per week, through the donation of books, and through assisting in funding for program staffing and supplies, we can make a lifelong difference in a child's life. Here's the best part--we can make a difference in our own lives too!! During this special time of the year take a peek at www.readfresno.org for more information. Reflect on it.

We're "Flyin' Free" for You—Annual McLane Art Show & Gala

As one of its many projects at McLane High School, McCormick Barstow hosts each year a wonderful celebration of student visual and performing arts. This year, photography students from Fresno High are joining the festivities as special exhibitors. The richness of the work, the talent and the beauty makes this event a community treasure. This year the event will be held on Thursday, May 11 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the offices of McCormick Barstow. We will be holding our board meeting at McCormick Barstow in May so that board members have a ready opportunity to enjoy the show.

Best Companies to Work for in Central California

In the knowledge and innovation economy, talent is at a premium. Just as communities have stepped up to insure a higher quality of life to attract and keep employers, entrepreneurs and young professionals, individual companies are doing the same. There is a new opportunity to assess the strengths of your workplace from a variety of perspectives—Best Companies to Work for in Central California. This new initiative is sponsored by the Business Journal, Chamber, Denham Resources and the Human Resource Association of Central California. The registration deadline to participate is April 21. For more information, go to the website at <http://www.bestcompaniescentralcal.com>

Live Well & Thrive—Kaiser's Campaign is Contagious

At the recent membership meeting of the Business Council, Dr. Varoujan Altebarmakian cast a vision for the future of health care, demonstrated how cultural change happens and discussed the Thrive campaign. It was a powerful, inspiring session. The keys to solving the current health care crisis are technology and self-care. Current brain search, better understanding of the connections between body/mind/spirit and technological breakthroughs in medicine, communications and information processing provide opportunities to prevent and efficiently address health challenges that historically became chronic and severe.

On Wednesday, May 10 from 11:30 to 1 p.m., Kaiser Permanente has organized a "Live Well & Thrive" luncheon for women. The event will be held at TorNino's. Sponsors include ABC-30 and KMJ. Local chefs will prepare the meal and Chicken Soup author Marci Shimoff will be the keynote speaker. Sadly, we all know our Valley has epidemic levels of obesity, depression and diabetes. Transformational change is necessary institutionally and personally if we are to overcome them. Tickets are \$15 and available at Borders and Gottschalks. For more information, call 448-3322.

Commitment to Outcomes—The True Test of Intention

At our board meeting last week, Ken Newby provided an update on the Regional Jobs Initiative, the primary initiatives moving forward in Fresno, the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, and a partial list of significant projects moving forward in 2006. Most of the extraordinary and comprehensive projects moving forward have their genesis in the launch of the Collaborative Regional Initiative (CRI) in 2000, a joint venture between Fresno State and the Business Council, largely funded by the Irvine Foundation. The glue, inspiration and talent magnet of the CRI were the Community Values. Given the grinder level of daily activity necessary, one value--***Commitment to Outcomes***--is what is transforming our community. "We are willing to take responsibility for tasks and achieving specified outcomes. We are committed to staying involved until the tasks are completed."