

Home tour will help needy kids

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Posted: 04/02/2011 09:37:50 PM PDT

Claremont homeowners are opening their homes and hearts to the community to help abandoned and neglected children.

The youngsters are associated with The Children's Fund of San Bernardino, a public/private partnership whose mission is to prevent child abuse and to help at-risk youngsters who are impoverished receive the food they need to prosper. The nonprofit also provides clothing, shelter, medical care and educational opportunities to those in need.

"This home tour is our major and main fundraiser of the year. We have our teas in January and this in the spring. We need community support because the needs of the children we serve are ongoing. One in four children in San Bernardino County live below the poverty level. Children's Fund helps where it can and the wonderful thing is that it can help immediately to lessen the suffering of these children," said Charlene Betts, longtime community supporter and member of the Claremont/West End Auxiliary of Children's Fund.

That help comes in many forms from providing basic needs to giving parents bus passes so they can go to work to covering surgery at Loma Linda Medical Center.

The kind gesture of the opening of homes is part of a home tour set for 10a.m. to 4p.m. April 16-17.

The annual fundraiser is called "Entertaining in Style" and that's what Claremont/West End Auxiliary of Children's Fund supporters have

been doing for years. Tickets are \$30, in advance, or \$35 at the door. The

tickets can be purchased at various locations in Claremont, Upland and Ontario.

Along with the homeowners, five local florists will participate by adding their own colorful and festive touch to the fun. They are Archibald Flowers in Rancho Cucamonga; Carol's Secret Garden in Upland; Graber Olive House in Ontario; Suzanne's Flowers in Ontario; and Wisteria Grove in Claremont.

In the first years of this fundraiser, local designers/stylists were invited to come into homes and to show their magic. Elaborate table settings perfect for entertaining were at the center of the tour.

Today, florists contribute their expertise but the focus is more on the home, its architecture and gardens. But the tradition of hard work and helping young people in need continues. Co-chairwomen for this year are Linda Rice and Joanne Mineer.

Although the home tour's main benefactor is Children's Fund, the auxiliary also donates to the Claremont-based Shoes That Fit and the Claremont Afterschool Program (CLASP).



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One of the expansive homes will host a complimentary refreshment area along with a beer and wine garden. And yet another will feature a demonstration home and garden emphasizing sustainability and energy savings.

The house has been completely retrofitted. On-site advisers from Every Watt Matters will be available to discuss home energy audits. Every Watt Matters has agreed to make a donation to Children's Fund for every person who signs up for its energy-savings program.

There will be opportunity drawings for a Victoria Gardens gift certificate donated by Lee and Duane Jackman; a flat screen television; and a Bernina 600 computerized embroidery sewing machine.

For more information about The Children's Fund and the Claremont/West End Auxiliary Home Tour, call 909-624-5781 or 909-920-9438.

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