



Harvey, Danny are proof people care
BY DENNIS MCCARTHY, Columnist
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Odds and ends from around the Valley:

It took a couple of days, but Harvey Rose got his independence back Friday, thanks to Jeff La Ferriere.

On Thursday, I wrote about how a thief stole the scooter that the 82-year-old World War II veteran used to get around now that his legs aren't working the way they should anymore.

TV news picked up on the story and Thursday night, La Ferriere, a building engineer at an assisted-living facility in Burbank, saw it and gave Rose a call.

He had a slightly used scooter that one of the residents at his facility couldn't use anymore. Did Harvey want it for free? La Ferriere asked.

"I was angry that someone would steal something like that," La Ferriere said. "This poor guy could have been a double amputee for all that thief knew.

"Harvey was so grateful. When he and his wife came by to pick up the scooter, she said the first thing they were going to do was go fishing together. Her husband had his independence back."

Harvey wanted me to pass along his thanks to all the people who called and offered to help him buy a new scooter.

"I learned a lot from that thief stealing my scooter," Harvey said Friday. "People care. They want to do the right thing. All they need is the chance."

Absolutely, Harvey.

Happy birthday to one of the San Fernando Valley's classiest veteran haircutters - Carmin Casciano, who turns 100 today.

Carmin ran the barbershop at the Woodland Hills Tennis Club apartments for more than 30 years. If you didn't live at - or visit - the massive complex, you probably never realized it had its own barbershop for men and beauty shop for women on the premises.

"After Dad finally retired at 92, he still had some of his old cronies coming out to his house to have their hair cut," said Carmin's daughter, Barbara Osborne.

Brave guys. Carmin finally hung up his strop and razor for good at age 95.

When Barbara asked him recently what the secret was to living so long, her still-feisty dad gave her a sheepish smile.

"When you get to be my age, honey, you'll know the secret," he told her.

You're a lucky man, Carmin. You're turning a century old today surrounded by family and a lot of love. Happy birthday, pal.

And finally, a big thank-you to the Woodland Hills and Lancaster West rotary clubs for stepping up recently to help Danny Gonzales.

Together, the clubs donated \$5,000 to underwrite Danny's trip to Africa this summer to help open a health-outreach education center for 20,000 refugees living in squalor.

I first wrote about Danny and his proud, hardworking parents - Lupe and Alberto Gonzales, living in Pacoima - back in 1999 when Danny was a shy, 13-year-old eighth-grader at Byrd Middle School in Sun Valley.

His essay on how kids growing up on some pretty mean streets face the daily pressures of gangs, teen pregnancies and violence in school had been judged the best out of several hundred entries throughout the Valley.

It basically boiled down to the love and support of your family, Danny wrote. If you had it - and he did - you could beat the gangs and violence.

Today, Danny's a 21-year-old junior at Stanford University majoring in human biology - and traveling this summer with seven other students to some pretty mean areas of Africa to help kids facing their own pressures trying to stay alive.

"When we read about this incredible young man and what he was going to do, we knew we had to help him," said Donna Berti, president of the Woodland Hills Rotary Club.

Berti called Sandy Smith, president of the Lancaster West Rotary Club, and together the organizations raised the money to underwrite Danny's trip to the Mwange Refugee Camp in Zambia.

"He was shocked when I called to tell him," Berti said, Saturday. "We were on the phone 20 minutes. He was crying and I was crying. He couldn't wait to call his mom and tell her."

Danny called the Rotarians "his angels," and promised to make them proud with his work in Africa.

"For people you don't know to step forward and do something like this for you, it's just incredible," he said.

Yeah, it is. But like Harvey Rose said, people care. You just have to be the kind of person who makes them care.

Dennis McCarthy's column appears Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

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