

Community CHAMPION

Local teen's vision will help families with ill children

Jan-Willem Knapen is an architect of sorts, with designs on helping families of ill children. The 16-year-old Belgian-born Bellarmine College Preparatory student knows a lot about the subject, as he and his family have been on a journey since being diagnosed with leukemia at the age of four, then afflicted with a brain tumor in November 2002 and a relapse this year. JW, as he is known, decided to raise funds to build a home for families of young cancer patients at Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Medical Center, modeled somewhat after the Ronald McDonald House at Stanford. To help with his mission, he created the JW House Fund at Community Foundation Silicon Valley to raise funds to build this home.

"In my over 20 years of nonprofit work, Jan-Willem Knapen has taught me that you are never too young to dream and to make that dream a reality," said Patricia Gardner, a family friend and executive director of Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits. "His sense of purpose to help others dream and to believe you can make it happen is a true inspiration. JW gives me strength to continue to trust that there is good in the world, and that is right here in this community. So I, too, believe that the JW House will soon be built and will be a tribute to this young man for generations to come."

On November 6, some of JW's original artwork will be displayed and auctioned at the Triton Museum in Santa Clara, with proceeds benefiting the JW House Fund. "JW's courage and compassion for other children and their families struck my heart and mind to energize me for another fund-raiser," said Helen Owen, chair of the JW House Committee and of the Triton event. "I will not be satisfied until \$250,000.00 or more is raised to put the wall up for the JW House and JW is grinning from ear to ear."

"It's been amazing to me that he, despite being sick, has found ways to be a man for others," said Gerald Wade, S.J., chancellor and interim president of Bellarmine College Preparatory. "He's not a complainer. He's positive about himself and about others, as well."

While JW's illness has been difficult for his family, it has also provided them an opportunity to see the very best in people. "We are overwhelmed by the numbers of people responding to JW's struggles and dreams," said Anne Marie Knapen-Asnong, JW's mother. "The generosity and kindness of people who don't even know our son has been unbelievable. People have put him into their hearts without reservation. Sometimes when I look at the news and read about bad or hurtful things that are going on in the world, I think that we must be seeing the exact opposite side of human nature. Everywhere we go we see love, compassion and kindness. JW has received thousands and thousands of cards from around the world — so many that we had to give up counting! We are overwhelmed by the response." Ask JW what life has taught him, and he will answer simply, "Never ever give up!"

In The Prophet, Kahlil Gibran writes: "You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." We salute JW Knapen — a true giver in our community.

By Brian Adams. To nominate an individual as a Community Champion, visit www.valleyscene.org. Click on the Community Champion button, complete the form, and submit online.



JAN-WILLEM KNAPEN

The J.W. House Fund
www.jwhouse.org

Doodles and Giggles
Art Show

November 6,
5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Triton Museum of Art
Santa Clara

RSVP: Vicky@jwhouse.org

October
2004

Inside this Issue:
Wealth & Estate Planning
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IRELAND SAN FILIPPO, LLP
and information about
San Jose Museum of Art's 35th Anniversary

Valley SCENE

The 9th Cattle Baron's Ball was held September 18 at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton. The annual event is the single largest fund-raising event in California for the American Cancer Society. Pictured are 2004 event chairs (from left) Dawn Niederman, Pamela Abaci and Teri Judelson. (Additional photos on pages 14 & 15).



SCENE and Heard

United Way launches annual campaign

United Way Silicon Valley (UWSV) kicked-off its 2004-2005 Community Giving Campaign September 9. Chairman Rick Fezell, managing partner for Ernst & Young's San Jose office, announced, "Our 2004-2005 United Way Community Fund goal is \$9 million. In addition, we project that we will raise an additional \$5.2 million in donor-directed and other funds. This brings our

total goal for the 2004-2005 United Way Campaign to \$14.2 million." Fezell said this year's campaign goal is approximately \$2.6 million less than last year's. "It is important to note that a lower overall campaign goal does not impact the amount of money we will allocate to our member agencies or any of the programs and services we provide directly," he said. "In fact, this year's goal includes a 2% increase over last year's total for the Community Fund." One reason for the shift in goal totals is that several United Way corporate partners have changed the way they handle their workplace campaigns. United Way is still part of these campaigns, but those contributions do not meet UWSV's strict guidelines for revenue recognition so they will not be included in the overall United Way Campaign goal. "Our decision to put more emphasis on the United Way Community Fund is consistent with our organizational transition to a community impact model which focuses on producing measurable results in the local community," said Mark Walker, UWSV president & CEO. "In the coming months we will officially release a Community Needs Assessment, which will help us prioritize community needs in the area of health and human services." Giving to the United Way Community Fund ensures that

those in need will have access to food, clothing, emergency housing, physical and mental health services, daycare for preschool children and care for seniors and much more. For more information on United Way Silicon Valley, visit www.uwsv.org

Breast Cancer awareness

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and there are many ways for folks to become involved in raising funds for the fight against breast cancer. On October 13, the Courtside Club in Los Gatos challenges its members to Get Physical Against Breast Cancer. For more information see Scene & Heard on p11

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The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce 22nd annual Barbeque for COMPAC (the Chamber's political action committee) was held August 26 at History Park. Pictured are (from left) Ron Gonzales, mayor, City of San Jose; Mike Fox Jr., event chair; Rabbon Johnson, COMPAC chair; Jim Cunniff, Chamber president & CEO; and Jack O'Connell, California superintendent of public instruction.

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