

**First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto
Offers Challenge Grant of \$10,000
To Spur Donations for Local Homeless Families
During Current Economic Downturn**

March 10, 2009 -- First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto is announcing a challenge grant designed to benefit homeless families dependent on the Opportunity Center, the midpeninsula housing and service agency that is located just off El Camino in downtown Palo Alto.

Specifically, First Presbyterian Church is committing \$10,000 in funds for the Opportunity Center, with the intent of encouraging the community to step up to the challenge and raise an additional \$10,000 for the Center's current staffing and program needs.

The Opportunity Center, which opened its doors in 2006, is operated by InnVision, a San Jose-based organization dedicated to empowering homeless families and individuals by providing food, housing, medical care, counseling, shelter and emergency services. It provides 88 permanent housing units for people in need, including 18 multi-room units for families. First Presbyterian Church was one of several local churches that led fundraising and volunteer support for building the Opportunity Center through a multi-denominational group called Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA).

Like many non-profit organizations, InnVision is struggling in these difficult economic times due to cuts in state funding and reduced levels of community donations. In addition to offering the Opportunity Center's housing and services, InnVision oversees the Hotel de Zink program, through which 12 local churches host emergency shelter space and provide meals for 15-18 homeless people on a monthly rotation. First Presbyterian Church hosted homeless guests last July, and will do so again this July. The church also serves hot dinners to those in need every Wednesday night and gathers food weekly for the InnVision-Urban Ministry of Palo Alto downtown Food Closet.

In addition to food, the church collects personal hygiene products, blankets, towels, diapers, clothing and gift certificates to stores and restaurants, all of which are distributed directly to the Opportunity Center's clients.

Donations in response to this challenge grant should be made out to First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto and sent to: First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301, Attn: Clerk of Session. Every donation received by April 30th will be matched 100% up to the total challenge grant of \$10,000. One hundred percent of the funds donated will go directly to the Opportunity Center. All donations are tax-deductible.

First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto is a progressive and inclusive faith community. We believe that we are called to take action on issues of peace, justice and equity, locally and in the

greater world. Sunday worship services are offered at 8:45am (both a child-friendly service and a Taize-style contemplative service) and at 11:00am.

Contact information for the Opportunity Center:

Philip Dah, Program Director, (650) 853-8672, x210, pdah@innvision.org

Trina Lovercheck, Volunteer Coordinator, (650) 853-7076, x205, tlovercheck@innvision.org

Contact information for First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto:

Rev. W. Robert Martin, III, Head Pastor, (650) 325-5659, x102, rmartin@fprespa.org

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