

CN COVER STORY

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"You may not make a world of difference, but you can make a difference in the world," reason Ivan and Elisabeth Misner.

Their continuing commitment to serving children and adults in need earned the Misners distinction as 2004-05 Humanitarians of the Year for LeRoy Haynes Center for Children and Family Services.

Service to humanity has never been a vague, unattainable notion for either Ivan or Elisabeth. Helping others has been an integral ingredient in their lives since childhood and, just as their parents passed the giving gauntlet to them, so have the Misners taught their children it's good to give.

Ashley, Kassie and Trey Misner each received a grant from the BNI-Misner Charitable Foundation, the nonprofit foundation their parents created to augment educational and children's services.

The couple gave grants to their own children to encourage them to get involved in charitable causes. Trey loves animals, so he picked the Pomona Valley Humane Society as his project. Kassie, following in her mother's performance arts' footsteps, is looking for an arts' project mentoring children. Ashley, worried about the alarming rise in crimes against women and children, will focus on victims of domestic violence.

"From the time I was barely able to read and write, the concept of it's more blessed to give than receive was stressed," Elisabeth said. "We had lean and tough times sometimes, but if someone else needed something there was no question. You gave it to them."

Some of her earliest memories revolve around family service projects. These included picking up huge sacks of trash on the side of the road to keep the environment clean, distributing food to needy neighbors and community residents, entertaining seniors at local nursing homes and participating in service projects with church and youth groups.

Ivan and Jerry Misner and John Calvin and Mary Prevo had no clue their children would later find common ground in their idealism and marry each other. Besides both being the oldest of three children, the younger Ivan and Elisabeth realized soon after meeting they were

equally committed to using their talents and time to make the world a better place.

"I grew up in a lower middle-class neighborhood. We didn't have a lot of money," Ivan said, "but my parents contributed time and service because it was important."

Jerry Misner and her girlfriends - her son and daughter-in-law call them "the good ladies" - formed The Doodlers Club in Azusa when Ivan was a child.

"The good ladies met every month and made care packages for Vietnam soldiers," he recalled. "Our job as kids was to collect stuff - pens, pencils, magazines, for example. We turned a whole bedroom into a storage area with tons of stuff in it. Acts of service were our way of helping the community. I also remember putting out clothes for LeRoy's as a boy. I didn't know I'd become even more involved with LeRoy's when I grew up."

Ivan was born in 1956 in Pittsburgh. The family moved to south central Los Angeles when he was 5 and six years later moved to Azusa. He attended Azusa High School and graduated from Gladstone High School. He earned a bachelor degree in political science at Cal Poly Pomona, then completed master's and doctoral degrees in organizational behavior at USC.

Elisabeth, born in Fort Worth 40 years ago, spent her childhood years in several states - Texas, Missouri, Florida and Tennessee - because of her father's work as a NASA engineer. She came to California in 1982 after winning a scholarship to attend Ambassador College. She earned a bachelor degree in theology and Spanish, then went to work with Dr. JoAnn Dorothy, a chiropractor and a representative from her profession to Business Network International, known as BNI.

Ivan, who later became an internationally known and New York Times' best-selling author, motivational speaker and businessman, started BNI in 1985. He was the facilitator for the BNI leadership workshop Dr. Dorothy asked Elisabeth to attend in 1986. "It was the best referral I ever got," Ivan said, smiling as he looked at his wife of nearly 16 years.

BNI is a referral agency working on Misner's premise that business executives and professionals can help one another through a referral network that begins small and steadily expands. It's a twist on the same philosophy he relies upon as a community volunteer: "If you get business, you have to be willing to give business," he said.

Their relationship revolved around business for three years before their romance began and they married. She became president of a BNI chapter's leadership team. As his wife, she edited his seven successful business books and co-wrote with him and Buzz

MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

LeRoy Haynes Center honors La Verne couple



Ivan and Beth Misner will be honored as Humanitarians of the Year at the LeRoy Haynes Center's annual gala fund-raiser.

Aldrin the best-selling book "Masters of Success."

During the early years, BNI struggled to exist and expand. Today, it is the world's largest and most successful business networking organization with 3,500 chapters in the United States, Canada, Barbados, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Spain, France, Israel, Germany, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Last year, 2.8 million BNI referrals worldwide generated \$1.2 billion in business for BNI members.

Parents' principles had formed the foundation of convictions for the two. They had wholeheartedly embraced service as children and their beliefs intensified when they became successful adults committed to acts of kindness and service.

"It feels good," Elisabeth said. "Sharing with those who have nothing brings you a lot

of satisfaction. These experiences shape an innate feeling that will always be with me."

According to Ivan, service "absolutely influenced me. It was something that was incorporated into family life. Initially, it was a matter of giving time. The financial contributions came later."

The groups and programs they've embraced over the years have included the Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles, The Firehouse used clothing outlet for low-income and homeless families, Grace Miller Elementary School and Bonita Unified School District's Reflections fine arts programs, Spanish Trails Girl Scout Council's Daisy and Brownie troops, Covina Housing and Community Development Commission, El Roble Intermediate School PFA, Pomona's American Red Cross Sept. 11 relief efforts, Claremont High School home tour benefit and La Verne Rotary Club service projects.

They've both devoted more energy and years to the Haynes center than to any other cause. And they have no intention of ending their 15-year relationship with the center.

She wrapped Christmas gifts, organized holiday "giving" trees for gifts, helped at car shows and volunteered on projects as a member and president of the LeRoy's Ladies Auxiliary. He has raised money and volunteered for programs as an executive officer and member of both the LeRoy's board of trustees and board of directors and chairman of its strategic planning committee. Both are LeRoy's Legacy Club members. For her 40th birthday this year, she asked loved ones to forgo gifts for her and donate to music education scholarships for LeRoy's boys. Her request netted \$750 for the boys.

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COURTESY PHOTO
The Misner family - clockwise from bottom left, Kassie, Ivan, Trey, Elisabeth and Ashley - continue their legacy of charitable service through the BNI-Misner Charitable Foundation.

LeRoy Haynes Center plans gala fund-raiser

STAFF REPORT

LeRoy Haynes Center for Children and Family Services Center board officials, administrators, students and supporters will recognize Dr. Ivan and Elisabeth Misner of Claremont as 2004-05 Humanitarians of the Year honorees on Nov. 13.

The La Verne residential/educational/counseling facility for troubled, abused, abandoned and neglected boys will hold its annual fund-raising dinner at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 13 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Ontario.

Tickets are \$175 per person. Reservations must be made by Nov. 6.

Various levels of sponsorships and congratulatory advertisements in the souvenir program book are also available for individuals and businesses. All proceeds will benefit the LeRoy's boys and the center's programs. Donations are tax-deductible.

Ticket reservations and information on sponsorships, advertisements and the Haynes center may be obtained by calling senior development director Georgia Rudolph, (909) 593-2581 Ext. 581 or 583.

A Citrus College jazz quintet will entertain guests during the no-host social hour and during dinner. The program will showcase the educational, counseling and specialized treatment services available to boys who are sent to LeRoy's by the courts

and county children's services agencies. Guests will also have the opportunity to meet several boys and hear their personal stories.

The Southland Band will play a repertoire of classic rock, top 40 tunes, rhythm-and-blues, country rock, blues and original songs for dancing following the dinner.

Southland was founded in Yorba Linda in 1991 by Britt Nelson, lead guitarist and vocalist; Ron Shepard, rhythm guitarist and vocalist; Jerry Mackey, bassist and vocalist; and keyboardist Neil Caplin. The band personnel additionally includes percussionist Dion Collins, saxophonist Allen Mitts, trumpeter Dave Blaney and trombonist Greg Haake.

The band is among the most popular in Southern California and has played throughout the region for civic, community, college, school and corporate events. It opened for blues legend Bo Diddley and blues/rock guitarist Jeff Healey at the House of Blues in Anaheim and for Blood, Sweat and Tears at the Starlight Bowl in Burbank.

Southland has headlined Fourth of July celebrations, the House of Blues at Downtown Disney, municipal Concerts in the Park series and concerts at the Coach House, Galaxy Theater, country clubs and charitable benefits.