



from the executive director

The summer months marked the middle of 2007. This annual midpoint gave us an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate what we, as an agency, have accomplished throughout the first portion of the year; and focus our energy on future efforts.

I would like to begin by congratulating the School of Unlimited Learning's Class of 2007! Though these students have faced several obstacles and barriers in their very young lives, they have overcome each one and can now proudly call themselves high school graduates. The article entitled "A Dream Realized," follows one senior's path to success.

In this volume of **Change**, you can learn about two EOC summer programs that focused on children's well being. In June, Camp Sanctuary – a weeklong camp – gave 50 inner-city children a safe, educational, and active alternative to their summer vacation. Featuring various safety clinics and field trips, this unique camp perfectly blended education and entertainment making for an unforgettable summer camp experience.

EOC's Food Services once again made a difference in the lives of thousands of youth this summer via the Summer Food Services Program. This effort provided Fresno County children, who may have otherwise gone hungry this summer, a nutritious and well-balanced meal. I encourage you to read the article "Food That's In When School Is Out" to learn more about the Summer Food Services Program and how thousands of children benefited.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and commend EOC employees, community leaders and nonprofit organizations for their diligent and continuous work in assisting those affected by this year's ravaging freeze. In "Giving Hearts - Planting Seeds of Hope for Freeze Victims," discover how the Valley Freeze Relief Fund has helped Valley workers including assistance to 20 small-farmers whose crops were damaged or destroyed during the freeze.

We hope you enjoy this edition of **Change**. As always, we thank you for your commitment, service, and support!

Warm regards,  
Roger Palomino  
Executive Director

# Food That's In Out

When School is

Most students look forward to the perks summer vacation brings - staying up late, sleeping in, and let's not forget, no homework; but for over 120,000 Fresno County students who rely on free or reduced-price school meals, the end of the school year meant they would have to worry about where their next, and possibly only, nutritious meal of the day would come from.

**"By the end of the summer break our staff will have prepared approximately 100,000 lunches."**

EOC's Food Services took nutrition to the kids who needed it the most through the Summer Food Services Program (SFSP) – a federal nutrition program that provides meals to low-income children under the age of 19.

"By the end of the summer break," says EOC's Food Services Director Gary Joseph, "our staff will have prepared approximately 100,000 lunches." Joseph adds, "Parents can rest assured knowing that their child is receiving a well-balanced meal." Each meal meets strict USDA and CDE nutrition guidelines and includes two ounces of protein, two servings of fruits/vegetables, one serving of bread, and eight ounces of milk.



Fresno County EOC started the Summer Food Services Program in 1991 with two sites; sixteen years later, the program is servicing 61 sites including 44 urban and 17 rural locations such as parks, community recreational facilities, churches, housing projects, schools, and migrant camps. EOC-operated sites are considered "open sites" and welcome all children under the age of 19 to a free, healthy meal.

SFSP is funded by the USDA and administered by the California Department of Education (CDE).

## "We want to inspire, educate, and motivate our youth."

Camp Sanctuary: Summer Safe Haven For Low-Income Youth

Many children dream about attending summer camp but, for many low-income children, high costs, limited family resources, and lack of transportation make summer camp a farfetched reality.

This summer, the Sanctuary – the Agency's runaway and homeless youth shelter – made that dream a reality for 50 underprivileged children living in the city of Fresno. Camp Sanctuary, a weeklong day camp for low-income youth ages 8 – 12, focused on protecting children from unintentional and preventable accidents.

Campers' days were filled with activities including swimming, various safety clinics, and getting up-close and personal with some exotic animals from the Fresno Zoo Mobile. Youth were also able to connect with adults as they built relationships with mentors from EOC's AmeriCorps and volunteers from California State University, Fresno, and EOC's School of Unlimited Learning. "We want to inspire, educate, and motivate our youth," says Sanctuary Director Stacie Hines. "Camp Sanctuary,"



Youngsters and camp counselors overcome the heat at the Island Water Park.

she adds, "gave children, who would otherwise have a lot of free time during their summer vacation, the opportunity to learn, make friends, and thrive in an environment that promotes success and safety."

**Protecting children from unintentional and preventable accidents.**

The highly anticipated "Great Outdoors", a campout at Chukchansi Park, culminated the weeklong camp. This unforgettable event brought out campers, their families, mentors and volunteers alike for a night under the stars.



Camp Sanctuary could not have been possible without the help of our partners. THANK YOU!

American Ambulance  
BlackBeard's Family Entertainment Center  
Blue Cross of California  
Boys and Girls Clubs of Fresno County  
California State University, Fresno, volunteers  
Children's Hospital of Central California  
EOC Food Services Lunch Program  
EOC Sanctuary Street Outreach and  
EOC School of Unlimited Learning  
Fresno City Parks and Recreation Dept.  
Fresno County Sheriff's Department

Fresno Grizzlies  
Kaiser Permanente  
London Properties  
Lowell Elementary School Neighborhood Center  
North American Traffic Seminars  
PG&E  
Ronald McDonald Charities  
San Joaquin River Parkway Trust  
Starbucks Coffee Company  
U.S. Forest Service  
Wells Fargo Bank

Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission  
1920 Maripos Mall, Suite 300  
Fresno, CA 93721



Feature Story  
**SOUL Inspiring**

Fabian Ramirez, SOUL Graduate



EOC is an integral catalyst of positive change in our community. We are helping people and changing lives through various events and services.

EOC continues to explore new ways to inspire change and make our community a better place. In just the past few months EOC has been responsible for instituting real change.

## in this issue

### A Dream Realized

EOC's School of Unlimited Learning (SOUL) changes lives and brightens futures for at-risk students.

### Giving Hearts

EOC and partners raised over \$170,000 for the Valley Freeze Relief Fund.

### Food That's In When School is Out

EOC's Food Services took nutrition to the kids who needed it the most through the Summer Food Services Program (SFSP).

### Camp Sanctuary

Camp Sanctuary gave 50 underprivileged children the opportunity to learn, make friends, and thrive this summer.

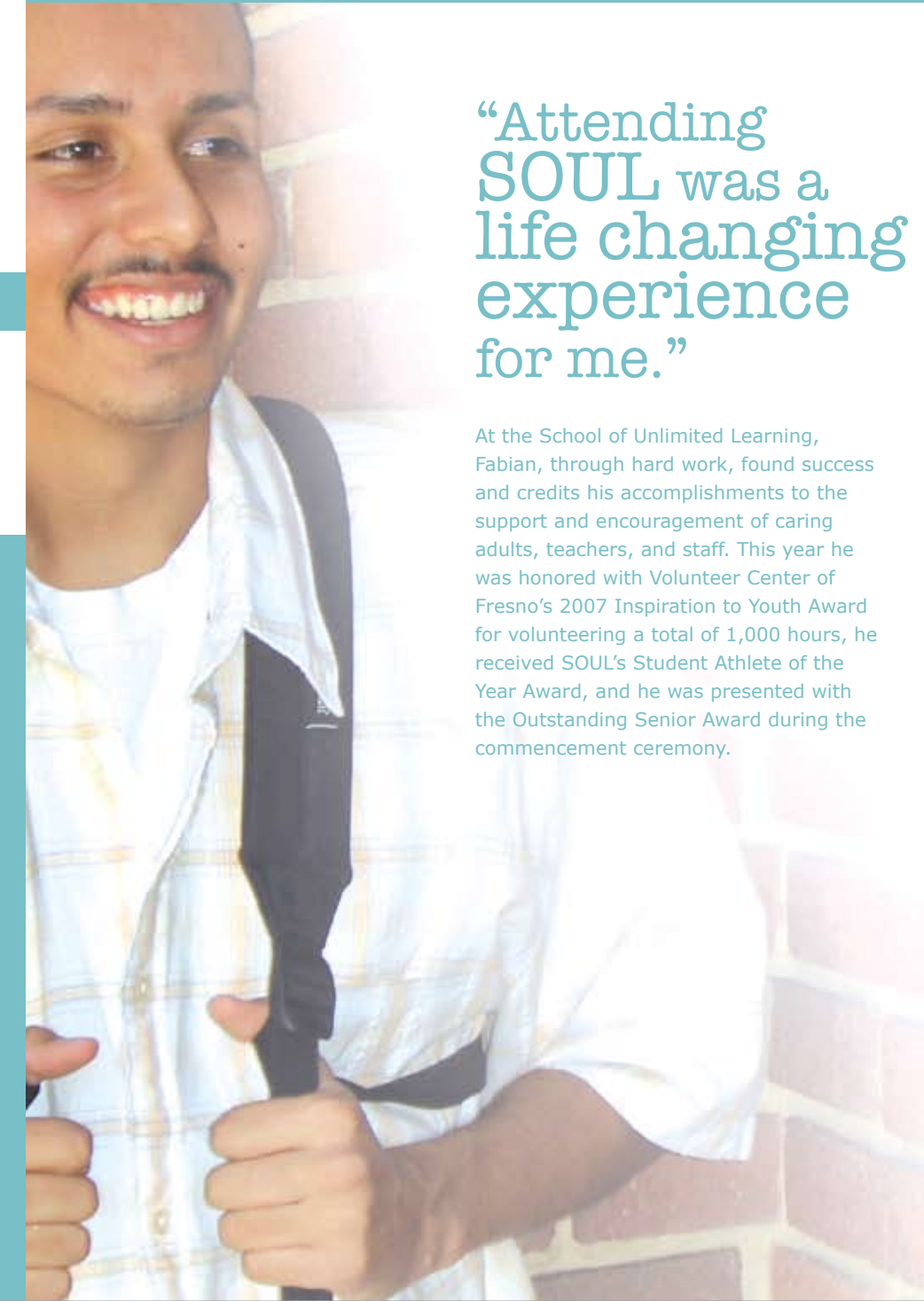


# A Dream Realized

Our Hats Off to You, Graduate

Nearly 40 graduates from EOC's School of Unlimited Learning (SOUL) proudly donned their white and black caps and gowns as they marched to Edward Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1. Glowing parents, pleased teachers and staff, and stories of inspiration and triumph filled the ceremony held at Cornerstone Church in downtown Fresno.

For many of these at-risk students, like student standout Fabian Ramirez, high school graduation was merely a dream that four years ago seemed impossible to accomplish. Like many of his classmates, Fabian attended a "traditional" high school but found it far too challenging and dropped out his freshman year. "It just wasn't for me," says this determined 18-year old. "I knew I needed to get back on my feet so I enrolled at SOUL."



## "Attending SOUL was a life changing experience for me."

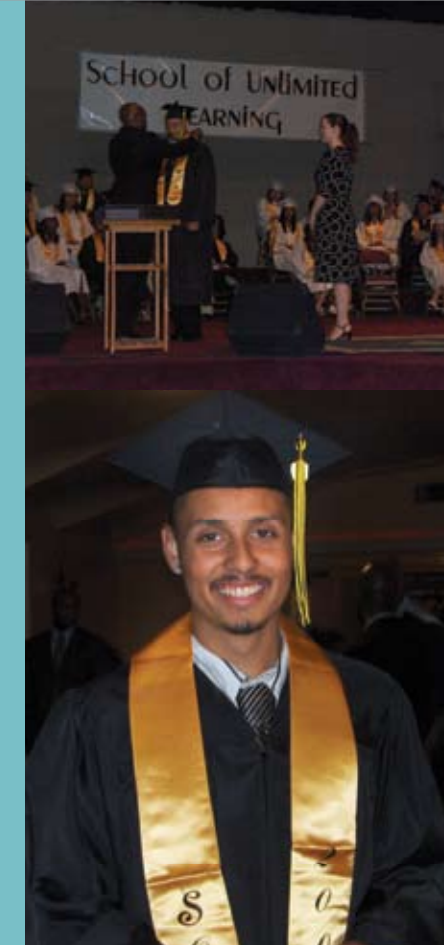
At the School of Unlimited Learning, Fabian, through hard work, found success and credits his accomplishments to the support and encouragement of caring adults, teachers, and staff. This year he was honored with Volunteer Center of Fresno's 2007 Inspiration to Youth Award for volunteering a total of 1,000 hours, he received SOUL's Student Athlete of the Year Award, and he was presented with the Outstanding Senior Award during the commencement ceremony.

"It's not rare to find success stories like Fabian's at SOUL," says principal Dr. Mark Wilson. "Like many of our students, Fabian faced an adversity-filled childhood but he pressed forward and succeeded."

"Attending SOUL was a life changing experience for me," adds Fabian. "I wouldn't be here today and I definitely wouldn't have an optimistic future to look forward to, if not for the confidence that my teachers, counselor, and Dr. Wilson instilled in me."



EOC's School of Unlimited Learning was chartered in 1998 by Fresno Unified School District; it pioneered the charter school movement in the Valley, becoming the first charter school in FUSD. SOUL's goal is to provide high-risk, 9 - 12th grade students an alternative-learning environment where they can receive an education tailored to their specific needs. Students are offered individualized services including case management; one-on-one career, academic and personal counseling; tutoring; and childcare services.



# Giving Hearts

Planting Seeds of Hope for Freeze Victims

We asked for help and you overwhelmingly responded! Thanks to your generous contributions, the Valley Freeze Relief Fund has raised over \$170,000.

This spring, the fund received its largest donations yet – a \$40,000 contribution from a charitable organization and a \$33,268 gift from United Way of Fresno County and Fresno Regional Foundation.

over \$170K raised

"The magnitude of these donations and of all monies raised is astounding," says Executive Director Roger Palomino. "Individuals, organizations, and businesses throughout California saw the dire situation faced by hundreds of Valley residents and took action."

In June, twenty Fresno County small-farmers were awarded a \$1,663.40 mini-grant made possible with funds donated by United Way and Fresno Regional Foundation. "These farmers applied but did not qualify for a no-interest loan offered by the City of Fresno," adds Palomino. "We hope these resources will ease the financial strain felt by families since the freeze."

### The Valley Freeze Relief Fund

The partnership formed by EOC, ABC-30/KFSN-TV, and Gottschalks – began as a 14-hour fund drive designed to assist those affected by the freeze. Months later, thousands of dollars generated by the effort have been distributed to various local organizations and relief efforts including:

**Visalia Emergency Council**, provided Tulare County residents with mortgage/rent and food assistance; **Cornerstone Church's Operation Hope**, a food drive which fed 8,000 families; and **Merced Community Action Agency**, provided replanting capacity to Asian farmers.

Left Photo: One of 20 small-farmers awarded a \$1,663.40 grant.

Right Photo: (from left to right) EOC's Executive Director Roger Palomino, Fresno Regional Foundation's CEO Dan DeSantis, and United Way of Fresno County's President Richard Kriegbaum

