

Adventures in Caring Foundation

25 Years of Caring

By **ERIN J. SMITH** / CASA

BEST KNOWN FOR DRESSING AS RAGGEDY ANN AND ANDY TO VISIT HOSPITALS, Adventures in Caring is celebrating 25 years of lifting the spirits of sick and lonely patients.

"It's only through compassion that healthy, vital relationships are formed between the care-giver and care-receiver," said Simon Fox, Executive Director and husband of Founding Director Karen Fox. "Our volunteers bring compassion to the bedside to support healing."

Adventures in Caring was started in 1984 by Karen Fox, who, with the help of her husband, has transformed the lives of patients and volunteers since first putting on the Raggedy Ann costume herself.

At a recent luncheon at the Four Seasons Biltmore in Montecito, just under 200 people gathered to share their stories and celebrate the quarter century milestone.

Some were patients or families of patients, but many were the volunteers themselves. Over the past 25 years, more than a thousand Raggedy volunteers have made one million visits to the bedsides of people who are seriously ill or injured.

Volunteers are specially trained in advanced listening skills, and most are pre-med and pre-



Simon Fox (Executive Director) and **Karen Fox** (Founding Director) with Mayor **Marty Blum**.

health profession students from local colleges who go on to make an impact on patients as professionals. "My volunteering as a Raggedy has been the single most important factor in my ability to interact well with patients as a medical student," described John Hann, a second year medical student at UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine.

Along with a successful volunteer program, Adventures in Caring has developed into a service-learning program. DVDs and books on teaching and cultivating compassion are used by hospices, nursing schools, and church care giving ministries. Proceeds from the sales of DVDs, books, and seminars cover all administration costs. Every donation made to Adventures in Caring goes directly toward funding programs.

For more information call 962-4500 or visit www.adventuresincaring.org.

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Contact her at priscilla@santabarbaraseen.com • (805) 969-3301