

## Newsman's Legacy Helps Sick Kids



Not many people can claim a legacy that, for 24 years, has mobilized thousands of people and raised millions of dollars for a worthy cause.

But that's exactly what Harvey Zimmerman, a two-year resident of The Terraces at San Joaquin Gardens, saw in action March 8 with the annual arrival of the Fresno Bee Kids Day newspaper sale.

Zimmerman, 77, the former community relations director at the newspaper, was integral in starting Kids Day, which benefits Children's Hospital Central California through sales of a special edition of The Bee.

The idea for the sale came in 1986 from the Rev. John Backus, an Episcopal priest who at the time was president of Valley Children's Hospital, now known as Children's Hospital Central California. Zimmerman remembers that initial meeting with Backus well.

"He approached me and the newspaper's general manager about modeling a newspaper sale after what was being done by a newspaper in Buffalo, New York," says Zimmerman.

The Buffalo News had begun its Kids Day in 1983 to benefit sick and needy children throughout western New York. Special editions of the newspaper featured a wraparound section highlighting the work of children's organizations, and papers were sold by volunteers for twice the daily price. Half of the money raised then went to support children's charities.

"The general manager looked at me and I looked at him and I said it sounds like a great idea and would certainly sell papers," Zimmerman recalls. "After getting together the information on what Buffalo was doing, we put together a committee from this community. We made sure to pick people who were high profile or who could help us in some way."

In addition, the committee pursued corporate and private sponsors whose company names and logos would be featured on distinctive aprons worn by Kids Day volunteers.

Fresno's first Kids Day was in March 1987. Early that morning, 1,500 volunteers hit the streets to sell 72,800 copies of the inaugural edition. It's gotten better and better every year, Zimmerman says, both in terms of volunteers and money raised.

This year's Kids Day brought out more than 3,000 volunteers and raised \$440,000. In fact, The Bee has raised nearly \$5 million for Children's Hospital Central California to date. The hospital, which is in the midst of a \$73 million expansion, is known for its leading-edge treatment of pediatric heart disease and cancer.

Though he retired from the newspaper in 1998, Zimmerman still participates in Kids Day as a volunteer – one whose legacy now serves to inspire others.

"I didn't do [Kids Day] all on my own, but for 10 years I was responsible for it," he says. "I'm very proud to be a part of it."