**Rotary Club Awards Three Top Prizes in its 3rd Annual Chili Cook-off**

By Pat Kramer

The Sunland/Tujunga/Shadow Hills Rotary Club held its third annual Chili Cookoff event on Sunday, April 10th at the Elks Club, 10137 Commerce Avenue in Tujunga, with three winners selected for their unique chili recipes. Karen von Gunten of Tujunga won 1st place for her chili with beans, Deane Bowers of Sunland took the prize for John and Ilene Bowers for the chili con carne category, and Shadow Hills’ resident Roger Klemm won top honors for his three bean vegetarian chili. Judging the competition were The Back Door Bakery & Café owners Deborah Rosen Goodale and Reno Goodale. Regardless of who officially won, the real winners were those who came to taste the seven varieties of chili to help support the Rotary’s yearlong community events.

While the Rotary Club is best known for putting on its annual 4th of July Parade in Sunland-Tujunga, now in its 30th year, Rotary produces many other memorable events throughout the year such as Bolton Hall’s Winterfest, where snow is brought in for kids to play in, and October’s annual Halloween Haunted House. It was Rotary Club member Roger Klemm who, along with many community volunteers, created The Welcome Garden & Wildflower Annex in Sunland with its dramatic colorful spring flowers now in bloom. In June, Rotary will hold its popular Father’s Day Pancake Breakfast where dads get to eat free when they attend with their kids. The Pancake Breakfast takes place on Saturday, June 18, 2016 at McGroarty Arts Center, 7540 McGroarty Terrace in Tujunga.

All year round, the Rotary Club is busy working on fundraisers in conjunction with other community groups. Rotary Club President Sabrina Godinez notes that in years past, Rotary held a Poker Ride fundraiser to raise money for Wounded Warriors. Additionally, they’ve helped fund leadership seminars for local high school students and supported various efforts by the Interact Club at Verdugo Hills High School as well as the students’ Drug-Free Awareness Walk to Sunland Park. In the past, Rotary has also joined forces with the Lions’ Club and the S-T Chamber to put on the Spring Festival and the former Watermelon Festival at Sunland Park.

Beyond the local borders of Sunland-Tujunga, Sunland/Tujunga/Shadow Hills Rotary is now helping to sponsor a humanitarian effort led by Rotary Club member Michelle Ramage to deliver much-needed school supplies to children in Africa. Ramage and her party leave for South Africa on Thursday, April 14, 2016 and will spend the next six weeks visiting students in villages there as well as in Namibia and Botswana. This project was initiated by Ramage with the help of Foothill Dental Care in Tujunga and residents of the Foothill communities who contributed donations to purchase erasers, chalk boards, coloring books, crayons, pens and pencils for children who currently do not have access to any of these items.