

Ripple Kids and The Lost Bean Organic Coffee House Send Valentine Smiles to Orangewood and CHOC Kids

On February 9th, *The Lost Bean* hosted children from a local non-profit organization, Tustin's *Ripple Kids*, who volunteered their talent and creativity to design unique Valentine's Day cards to delight CHOC and Orangewood kids.

Tustin, CA, February 10, 2008. For its monthly Community Day, *The Lost Bean Organic Coffee & Tea House*, once again turned to children to celebrate upcoming Valentine's Day in the spirit of community. *Ripples Kids* embraced the invitation and the idea of writing love notes to delight local children experiencing hard times. Created by Bridget Belden, a Tustin Mom, *Ripple Kids* is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring and empowering children to take action in their communities. The idea is that, if one kid does something positive in her community, another kid will be inspired to do the same which will in turn motivate another, and so it will continue. A ripple effect is initiated by one kid – a "*Ripple Kid*"—taking action.

The initiative was a true example of community teamwork: *Ripple Kids* volunteered the time, talent and youthful spirit of youngsters. Local businesses, including *Sugar-Press Paperie* and *The Red Bee* donated craft material. *The Lost Bean* provided the space and donated essential "kids' fuel" –Organic hot cocoa and heart-shaped cookies. Lastly, *The Joyful Foundation*, an organization whose volunteers make and donate blankets to local chemotherapy centers, kindly contributed extra helpers. Regular customers watched, mystified by the amazing dexterity of many little fingers. One could feel the vibrant energy emanating from the tireless junior leaders. The 1st through 6th graders cheered and giggled, happily coloring away. Rainbow crayons, sparkling paper, polka dot ribbons and ruby-red buttons were flying from hand to hand. The café's sophisticated wooden-carved décor, more accustomed to the tranquil WIFI coffee-goers, could not believe its own walls. Meanwhile, supportive Moms supervised their independent offspring and assembled their own Valentine's Day collage, dusting off memories of scrapbooking days, when the kids were just little beans. Moms' initial anxious expressions—"Can we still do this?"—quickly gave way to self-contented smiles as patrons pointed to parents and kids' art and politely commended all for their creativity. Caught in this salutary fever, inspired "regulars" jumped on the bandwagon, earnestly contributing to the group effort; that's the ripple effect. Others inquired about buying the art only to hear that the masterpieces were specially commissioned for very special people.

Contrary to what many may think, this project involved more than merely a self-indulgent attempt to quell participants' guilt or desire to respond to their own needs. Instead, this Valentine's Day mob included participants, some as young as 6, who either personally experienced or had a close encounter with the very same ailments that the Valentine's Day recipients are currently confronting. The group reflected the powerful life-force and joy that accompany all kid-driven activities.

"We are so glad to be involved in such an endeavor. Many kids are eager to lead or to contribute to original projects. Children are smart and often have a keen understanding of life's challenges." says Terri Benedict, a participating Mom. "Such initiatives give kids control over their own trials. It's an opportunity for them to connect, share with others, and have loads of fun doing it too!" Bridget Belden, President of *Ripple Kids* adds: "This is the first time we have worked with *The Lost Bean* and we look forward to many more such occasions. It's a perfect match: *Ripple Kids*' mission is to empower youth and help facilitate their community projects. *The Lost Bean* owners enjoy supporting neighborhood charities and sharing their fabulous venue. It works for everyone!" "We are happy to provide support to initiatives such as *Ripple Kids*" says Zeke Covarrubias, one of the co-owners at *The Lost Bean* "Our goal is to help make a positive change within the community."

At the end of the event, Sandy Berg-Whiley—founder of *The Joyful Foundation*—humbly distributed fleece blankets as a gift for the kids' hard work. "This was just great!" said Sandy. "A card can provide warmth just as well as a blanket. Both carry a message of hope and love."

If you missed the event, stop by to view *Ripple Kids*' whimsical cards prominently displayed on *The Lost Bean*'s windows. Not only can you grab a great cup of coffee or tea but you may also experience first-hand a captivating exhibition of vibrant, hopeful art. *Ripple Kids* will deliver the cards to The Children's Hospital of Orange County on Valentine's Day and *The Lost Bean* owners will deliver the cards to Orangewood Children's Home.

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It is the mission of *The Lost Bean* to always act with an environmental conscience and a sense of charity and community. To that end, Tustin community members are invited to suggest other such events which *The Lost Bean* might host in the future. Contact the Media Relations Director at 714.858.5800 for more information. Also, save the date for the next *Lost Bean* Community Day on March 15, 2008 with *Green Day* as the theme, in honor of the environment and *St. Patrick's Day's* green.

To contact *Ripple Kids*: All parents are welcome to visit RippleKids.com where useful information and invaluable resources have been gathered to help empower children in their mission to support their community. 714.602.2295 | info@RippleKids.com | www.RippleKids.com

To contact ***The Joyful Foundation***: The Joyful Foundation is run 100% through volunteer efforts. There are many ways to get involved. Visit the foundation's website and learn more about ways you can contribute. 714.997.9532 | sBerg1216@AOL.com | www.JoyfulFoundation.org

About *The Lost Bean*: the only Organic coffee shop in Tustin, *The Lost Bean* offers Organic coffee and tea drinks, catering services and a collection of unique coffee and tea gift baskets. 30% of all profits are earmarked for donation to charities supporting health, the environment, and education. *The Lost Bean* is located in Tustin's Plaza Lafayette shopping center at 13011 Newport Ave (near the Brewing Co. at Newport and Irvine Blvd.) (714) 544.2584 | info@TheLostBean.com | www.TheLostBean.com.

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Media Contact: If you'd like more information about this topic or schedule an interview with Zeke Covarrubias and Bodie Berg, contact Sakina Zerrel at 714.858.5800 or SZ@SakinaZerrel.com.