

The Reporter, Vacaville, CA: December 15, 2005

Mission Solano's success commended by Schwarzenegger

By Jason Massad/Staff Writer

It's not every day you get a letter from the governor.

And for Ron Marlette and others at Mission Solano, the holiday season is bringing a bevy of gifts.

The Fairfield faith-based group broke ground earlier this month on its long-hoped-for \$9 million homeless shelter near Beck Avenue and Cordelia Road.

Now, the state's top official, the "Governator" himself, is recognizing the success of an organization that ferried the homeless to and from churches in a beat-up bus eight short years ago.

"I commend your efforts to identify the root causes of homelessness and uplift the less fortunate in the community," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger wrote. "By uniting partners from business, local government and volunteer organizations, you help plant the seeds of hope for the future for Californians in need."

Marlette, head of Mission Solano, as is typical for him, deflected praise.

"I see this as an accomplishment by the community," he said. "The community has brought us to the point that we are right now."

That point is the groundbreaking of the first phase of the mission's shelter, dubbed the "Bridge to Life Center," which will help 100 women and children now suffering on the streets.

The shelter has harnessed the strength of the local business, faith-based and political communities to fund completely the first-phase of the project.

The groundbreaking of the shelter earlier this month was dampened, literally, by the inclement weather that is typical of the holiday season.

Officials ceremoniously turned the earth at the shelter site while rain came down - not an ideal situation.

But Kevin Miller, spokesman for the mission, said he even saw a holiday gift in the rainy weather.

"The pouring down rain just sort of emphasized how the poor need a place to go, especially this time of year," he said.

Jason Massad can be reached at county@thereporter.com.