BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT BORDERS  The partnership between residents of the towns of Pescadero, San Gregorio, La Honda and Loma Mar, the region’s farmers and ranchers, and agricultural and floricultural workers from Mexico has been strengthened for more than a decade by the work of Puente de la Costa Sur. Puente works to promote fair and humane immigration policies while at the same time we strive to meet the basic needs for food, shelter, and safety for nearly 150 workers and their families each year.

BUILDING COMMUNITY  At the hub of Puente life is La Sala (“the living room”), offered twice each week to program participants as a place to build community and find support. Staff and volunteers provide a comfortable setting to visit with others and offer referrals to medical, dental, and social services, as well as help with translating legal and other documents.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY  Over 25 tons of food were distributed to men and children through Puente’s monthly partnership with the Second Harvest Food Bank. In addition, Puente staff distribute rice and beans, canned goods, and fresh produce to workers living at the area’s farms and ranches.

PROVIDING FOR BASIC NEEDS  Many men come to Puente for the first time with only the clothes on their back. Puente provides sleeping gear and clothing, welcome bags with phone cards and food coupons, and, where needed, bicycles for transportation and assistance with the rising cost of utilities. Puente staff assists program participants with finding work and scheduling medical, dental, and legal appointments. Staff and volunteers also enroll program participants in the county medical program in an effort to provide affordable medical care. In 2006, Puente volunteers contributed 135 bikes, 36 blankets, 7 sleeping bags, 16 sweatshirts, and 17 jackets for distribution to Puente participants.

SERVING OTHERS  Volunteer service is at the heart of Puente programs and services. In 2006, 133 volunteers gave 1,544 hours of service by fixing bicycles, distributing food, organizing holiday celebrations and special outings, teaching basic literacy, visiting with program participants at La Sala, and leading tours and presentations.

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO FARMERS AND RANCHERS  Puente provides support to program participants as well as farmers and ranchers to resolve minor work-related problems. Puente often works with ranchers and farmers to find workers. Through its tours and presentations, Puente provides much needed visibility to innovative farming and ranching practices on the south coast.

SHARING PUENTE’S VISION AND MISSION  During 15 presentations around the Bay Area in 2006, 1,468 people learned of Puente’s work and how they could help serve our constituents. Touring farms and ranches on the south coast, 210 people witnessed Puente’s work first hand.

PLANNING FOR CHANGE AT PUENTE  After a decade of service to more than 500 workers, founder and executive director Wendy Taylor announced her plans for retirement. The Puente board of directors sprang into action to insure that the organization would continue to be strong and vibrant. In December, they appointed longtime activist and south coast resident Kerry Lobel to serve as interim executive director. (Continued on Page Two)
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PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY SUCCESS
Three of Pescadero’s service organizations—Puente de la Costa Sur, North Street Community Resource Center, and South Coast Children’s Services—met between May and December to address community communication, shared values, networking, and collaboration. From those meetings, Puente and North Street decided to pursue further conversations with the goal of better integrating services.