



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen Celebrates 25 Years of Serving the Working Poor, Families and Homeless in San Jose**

(SAN JOSE, Calif.) Feb. 15, 2005 – Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen in San Jose is celebrating its 25th anniversary committed to providing nutritious meals and support services in a dignified, safe and caring environment to all needy individuals, with a special concern for families and senior citizens.

#### **In the Beginning**

Loaves & Fishes was founded by Peggy Coleman, (then assistant pastor Father) Barry Del Buono and pastor Father Larry Largente at St. Patrick's Church. This dynamic trio saw the need for a place where families without the means could go, no questions asked, to get a free, hot meal, served with dignity in a secure environment. 1980, the Year of the Family, seemed an appropriate year to begin.

“On a rainy night, February 15, 1980, 11 adults and 15 children came together to share a meal of bread and fish,” said Barry Del Buono, now president and CEO of Emergency Housing Consortium LifeBuilders. “At the time, there weren’t any places families could go for a decent hot meal,” said Peggy Coleman Del Buono. “Loaves & Fishes made that possible.”

#### **Continuing the Mission Today**

Today, in addition to hot meals, Loaves & Fishes provides outreach services including emergency assistance, food bags, social service referrals and soon a children’s program. The organization gets tremendous support from the Second Harvest Food Bank, and it works closely with InnVision (Loaves & Fishes sends hot meals to the Cecil White Center at InnVision each week), The Salvation Army, Valley Medical Center, and senior centers among many other groups. In addition, the group has more than 500 dedicated volunteers.

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“Loaves & Fishes has a reputation for serving nutritious meals,” said Hugh Barnett, executive director. “The organization provides meal service five days a week, 51 weeks a year, at St. Patrick’s in downtown San Jose and St. Maria Goretti Kitchen in East San Jose combined. Food service demand has been growing about 5% annually at St. Patrick’s, where we now serve 1,000 hot meals weekly—more than 50,000 each year. Some guests face a choice, pay the rent or buy food. We are helping to keep them from joining the ranks of the homeless.”

### **About Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen**

Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen is celebrating 25 years of providing for the less fortunate in the downtown and east side San Jose communities. The organization is committed to providing free, nutritious meals and support services in a dignified, safe, and caring environment. Loaves & Fishes provides these services to all needy individuals, with special concern for families and senior citizens.

### **To Help**

Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen depends mainly upon cash donations and grants from individuals and businesses to keep the hot meals coming. Donations may be sent to Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen, 389 E. Santa Clara St., San Jose CA 95113, or made securely on their web site at [www.loavesfishes.org](http://www.loavesfishes.org)

For additional information, please contact Hugh Barnett at 408-293-4505.

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