





DCA Director Lois Carson puts a staple in the new roof at the Riverside National Guard Armory. She has been with the agency since its inception 15 years ago.

In this special anniversary issue, Lois Carson, DCA's executive director since the agency's inception in 1979, reflects on the past 15 years of Community Action and how the agency continues to serve as a voice for Riverside County's low income and homeless population.

### *How has the role of the Department of Community Action evolved over the past 15 years?*

"Locally, I'm happy to say that the one thing that has not changed or evolved is the decision to remain a small catalytic agency of experts who would develop, support and empower organizations, with a goal of building capacity in the community.

But we have evolved through the programs we offer that are specifically tied to needs that we have seen over time. Weatherization was the big new program in the late 70s when I first became involved with Community Action. It started as a joint venture between what was then the Federal Community Services Administration and the Department of Labor and was designed not only to enable families and seniors on fixed incomes to get utility assistance so they wouldn't have to make choices between heating and eating, but to also provide training in a marketable skill for unskilled workers. Today you've got big companies doing weatherization. Community Action started something that the rest of the world picked up.

By the early 80s we were beginning to see a brand new phenomenon emerge — a large number of poor families being headed by women. To enable these families to move out of poverty they would need some training in order to get jobs. DCA decided to do a supplemental needs assessment to determine if it was in fact true that poverty had been feminized. What we found was worse than we anticipated. Our (Commission) Chair at the time was Brigette Page, the former mayor of Banning. As a woman, she listened intently to the results of the survey and we decided to do something about it. If these women were to re-

ceive job training, they would need child care. That's how we got into child care. We've spawned a model of what I'd like to call Community Child Care where every sector in a given community supports the project. The model gave rise to the County Child Care Consortium.

In our 1986 annual report we revealed another new phenomenon: the working poor. I immediately started talking to the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Economic Opportunity because I wanted our agency to do something about it. Here were these valiant souls, working and knocking themselves out. And they couldn't get over that poverty threshold. What could we do to recognize their efforts as an incentive that would provide a program for them? That's when we came up with the idea of the Family Loan Fund.

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*"Ten years ago an extensive Needs Assessment revealed that reasonable and responsible childcare for working parents was of great importance. With the assistance of public entities, business firms and volunteers, the Community Action Agency was instrumental in opening the San Gorgonio Child Care Consortium in Banning. This child care center will celebrate its 10th anniversary in early 1995. Other communities have copied the successful plan, and more people are employed, either in the child care centers themselves or by being able to work because reliable daycare is available to their children."*

— Brigette Page, served on the committee that established a Community Action agency in Riverside County and was founding chair of the Community Action Commission.

The next manifestation in this evolution was the hardest nut we've had to crack: the homeless. And we were the first to respond. In 1987, we wrote a report to the Board of Supervisors and the City of Riverside on what we were seeing coming down the pike. We were in a stage of denial and I felt that I had to do my job by informing the leadership. DCA was (and still is) running the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and the State Emergency Shelter Program and could see clearly the extent of the problem.

I think the type of agency that we are allows us to forecast trends and look at changing realities. I decided a long time ago that I wanted us to be the repository on data relating to the poor. And being that makes our staff look at what's going on. Our needs assessments have always been

more than an empty exercise, more than just a compliance activity, but (instead) a real activity that helps us decide what we should be doing with our meager resources. All of that puts us in a position to forecast trends and look at emerging issues and problems. I tend to be a futurist so I'm always looking ahead of today.

So I guess that's the evolution — one of changing needs, and a change in strategies. We're always looking for a better way to work. Every program that we do we ask, 'Is this the only way to do this or is there a better way?' That's a hard test we put ourselves to so that we're constantly improving what we do. I do think that we've evolved into a better organization. But we don't know how good we need to be. It depends on the problem we're trying to address. We may find ourselves totally inadequate to meet the next problem. We may stop a moment and rest on our laurels and feel good about ourselves. But since we don't know what's coming up we get only a moment of "adulation." We've tried to remain faithful to our basic policy to be lean and mean, to collaborate with other organizations and to embrace change. We have been an innovator."

### *How has community action evolved at the state and national levels?*

"At the state level, there are two entities: the Cal/Neva Community Action Association, which has evolved into a very fine, skilled professional organization. I can remember when it was just a shoebox organization and we didn't even know where we were going to get the money to pay the one staff person we had. It has really evolved into a great organization that serves its membership but also administers projects that we individual agencies would not do. Over on the other side is the state Department of Economic Opportunity. First of all, we've seen an evolution in the name: it used to be the Office of Economic Opportunity, under the Executive Branch. Now it is a state department. We've seen seven or eight new directors go through there like a revolving door. I believe it is the most stable it has ever been at this point in time. Community Action agencies have probably done more to contribute to the stability and effectiveness of the state



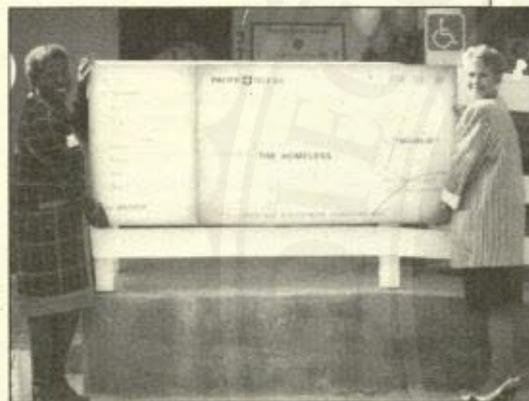
Two DCA supporters prepare for a women's conference sponsored by DCA.

office than vice-versa. Our agency has been a major contributor to the effectiveness of the state."

### **What about at the national level?**

"I've seen the National Association of Community Action Agencies (NACAA) also experience the same evolution as the state organization. When I came on board in 1980 as director, the national organization was on a swift decline. But it started to build its way back up and today, it is a very strong organization. It is the only presence of community action in the nation's capital since there is no longer a federal agency. And we have played our part in its growth.

At the national level the one contribution by this agency is my involvement with the development of the Certified Community Action Professional program, which will be our legacy to generations of Com-



Lois Carson and Ann Morschl of Pacific Bell Telephone hold up a "check" worth \$63,000 given to DCA to help aid the homeless.

munity Action executives for years to come. I had served on accreditation commissions for colleges, and in accreditation of child care centers here in Riverside. This led to my interest in trying to find some way to professionalize our ranks and to evaluate what we do in our own national association. What came out of that discussion was an idea to create the Certified Community Action Professionals program."

### **What are the most significant contributions Community Action has made in Riverside County during the past 15 years?**

"I think the multiplication of community-based organizations (CBOs) and grassroots organizations is significant. There weren't a whole lot of them in place when I came to DCA. There were the usual ones: the YWCA, YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Campfire Girls...I think there were only a few truly grassroots organizations here in Riverside. I suggested to the Board of Supervisors that we not build a big bureaucracy by hiring a lot of staff but instead strengthen community-based organizations

so they could deliver the programs at the neighborhood level where people could reach them. Some members of the board were a little unsure about community organizations because they saw them all as incapable of managing programs. They feared they would commit malfeasance with the funds. And I said, 'Well we either have to build capacity or we build a big bureaucracy' and they didn't want that. So I asked them to give it a chance and if it didn't work I would come back and make some other kind of recommendation. That is one of the reasons we're in the business of organizing community-based organizations today. And once people with ideas found out we would help them get organized, we didn't have to beat the bushes anymore.

They came to us and that's what they continue to do today. The biggest of them of course is the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition. All of the childcare projects are separate nonprofits with boards of directors. We organized all of them, and others such as: Hospice, The American Urban Indian Center, Riverside Recovery Resources, etc. If one is just sort of hanging by a slender thread or having difficulty operating, we will nurture them and strengthen them and provide some training for them. If there's none in place in a specific area and the needs assessment has shown we need to address a certain area or community, then we'll find an organization and help them go through the incorporation process and provide them with seed funding until they can stand alone.

We do what we can to work with these organizations because they make the difference in the community. Where there is no community-based organization, there is little service going into that community. We've proven that conclusively. Rubidoux was an area where there were no CBOs and when we looked at where people were coming from for assistance, they weren't coming from that area because they didn't know it was available to them, nor did they know how to get it. That's what a community-based organization does. It acts as an intermediary between services or information and the people. It is a real intervening structure that is very vital for strengthening the infrastructure of any given community."

### **What contributions has DCA made to the county within the past five years?**

"I think we've seen our CBOs reach a high level of expertise. They've come for



The DCA coordinates both the Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo recognitions by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors each year. The events honor both Riverside County employees and citizens from each district.

our grantsmanship training. They've come for case management training. They've asked for help with bookkeeping. They know how to go get information and use it to their advantage. We've seen a lot of empowerment in the community. I think we've developed a real caring community. Wayne Chism, the roofing company owner who put the roof on the armory is an example of what I'm talking about (see back page). I think Riverside County has really become a caring community, in spite of the NIMBYS (Not in My BackYard), those who have had opposition to some of our efforts. That was one of DCA's goals: to build a caring community and to build capacity in the community. I'm not at all excited about giving people a bag of groceries, but instead building a childcare center. That is building empowerment. And incidental to that longterm, major project, we do give folks a bag of groceries.

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*"I recall the early days when the local administration of President Johnson's anti-poverty program was transferred to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. The transition was relatively smooth under the capable leadership of Lois Carson. The program continues to be an excellent example of the efficient use of Federal funds at the local level. Lois and her staff are able custodians of these funds which are designated to stir families out of poverty. The self-help aspect of some of the Department of Community Action's activities is particularly appealing to me because it fosters dignity as well as ultimate financial independence."*

—Bob Fitch, former Chief Administrative Officer, Riverside County

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Weatherization and energy programs play an important part in moving Riverside County residents out of poverty. Weatherization programs include insulating homes as shown in this photo, installing water-saving devices and educating consumers about saving energy as shown in the photos below.

I also think we've seen less competition and more cooperation develop in our community. We really felt early on that we had to promote collaboration because when I talked to our partners, we had the least to put on the table. The major resource we took was us — our staff — and our willingness to do the work. We have constantly said we didn't want to compete with our network of CBOs but complement them and support them. I think that's something we have really done well."

### *How has Community Action continued to fight the "War on Poverty" in Riverside County?*

"Well, we're constantly having to hurdle barriers and in that sense I suppose it's still likened to a war. When we started talking about coordinated childcare with a lot of volunteers involved and a volunteer board, etc., our representative in County Counsel at the time said 'You can't put the Board in this kind of liability with a bunch of volunteers out there doing things like that' I suggested he tell that to the Board of Supervisors because when they applied to be a Community Action agency they agreed to a principle of maximum feasible participation. Well, I won him over.

When we were ready to build the childcare center, we were met with more opposition, which proves there's always some uphill battle that you have to deal with. I think that the idea in former Presi-

dent Lyndon Baines Johnson's goal was to fight poverty so that people would no longer be poor. He likened it to a war. And it is always a struggle. However, I think a new metaphor is in the offering, one that speaks of a kinder, gentler nation that really cares about people and takes its cue from the Nation's Constitution: 'to promote the general welfare.'

I don't think the war analogy is a good one anymore. In those days the Vietnam War was going on and people were protesting it in the streets. It worked then but it doesn't work now. Many agencies got into the habit of just fighting for the heck of it. They were so used to struggle that they expected a struggle everywhere and even where there was none, they'd make one. We got to the point where we'd be battling with each other. That's why I think its time to break down that whole metaphor and replace it with another that is more appropriate to the future.

I think for the future we also need a whole new frame of reference for what we are trying to do. Something like: 'Building communities', 'developing families', 'caring communities', or 'save the children.' All of these have an inherent struggle built into them."

### *What priorities would you set for Community Action to continue in this new direction?*

"Well I think we're still about eradicating poverty from the lives of people. That's so broad that it seems impossible. But stated another way, we're still about moving families out of poverty: they have to want to and we have to be able to help them do so. Building stronger families was pioneered in Community Action, just like weatherization was way back when in the 70s. Community Action's "Family Development" is about not just giving people services, but finding out what else is going on with them to see if we can help them rebuild their lives and their families. We're losing our children. Communities aren't safe anymore. Through the Family Development approach I think we can make streets safe again. We have to focus on the economics of the community much more. In its early

life, Community Action was much more economically based. But we turned into a service organization under the Nixon Administration. He changed the national office from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Community Services Administration, a very telling title. Frankly I'm delighted to see a "new" Congressional terminology to describe social programs — Economic Opportunity. Education continues to be one of the surest pathways out of poverty. It is personally enriching and empowering and it is a wealth, every bit as marketable and useable as money. It is a continuing priority from our past and it will be needed in the future. Not everything we did in the past should be discarded, but we should let go of some things, particularly programs that have grown old and outdated."

### *What do you see as the future direction of Community Action in Riverside County in the next five, ten and 15 years?*

"I'd like to see every community organize an approach to address its own problems, if you will, a Community Action Foundation in every community. I'd like to see the leadership come from the elected officials, the schools, the business community and those leaders that well up from the people, sharing equally in the decision-making for the community. It is only when everyone can see themselves in that picture —



having a role to play in this total scheme of things, that we are able to say somebody will listen to me. I'm not invisible in this. You won't find people wanting to burn things down, but they will pay more attention to their children, and their children will emulate the behavior of the adults. The elected officials will pass laws and do things that facilitate and accommodate rather than put up arbitrary barriers to peoples' realization of their own dreams and aspirations. We need to keep working toward that ideal. We may never get there (as Dr. King once said about the promised land), but we have to keep working as though we're going to get there. It is that vision that keeps us inspired and moving forward and working hard. It makes what we do a real joy because we keep our eyes on the prize. Today may be a setback but tomorrow may catapult us well beyond where we thought we would be; so we should look ahead and only look back to help us in the present or look into the future."





Participants in DCA's FAST Program (Families Achieving Self-sufficiency Together) pose during a graduating ceremony held in their honor. These women have successfully completed the program and several have already found jobs and were able to go off public assistance. Back Row, Left-Right: Robin Johnson, Cheryl Steele, Sylvia Flores and Kerrie Dalman. Front Row, Left-Right: Barbara Telezinski, Cynthia Kiernan, Lois Carson, Director and Linda Boaz and Yolanda Santos, DCA Staff.

### What leaders in the community have played a role in Community Action's history?

"Their name is legion and they are from all sectors.

The schools have shown a great deal of leadership and receptivity to ideas that we've brought to them, like the Minority Male Charette. City governments have responded well to us. Organizations, leaders, volunteers...have really been marvelous.

I pay the greatest tribute to the small community-based organizations who have taken on responsibilities well beyond their capacity. I remember once saying to the Board, 'These people are out here making bricks without straw and if they weren't there, people in need would be storming the bastille. They would be here at your doorstep.' These community organizations are intervening to take care of the needs of the poor and we should do all we can to support them. I pay them greatest tribute because they are volunteers acting out of love and concern for their community. No amount of money could buy what they do. It takes the collective minds and wills of a group to achieve an objective. There has to be a leader, and in every one of these efforts I've talked about, someone has sprung forth to be that one person that makes it all happen. It's really kind of exciting to watch a community empower it-



Youth intervention and diversion programs are sponsored annually by the Department of Community Action. This includes a tutorial program for minority children formerly held at Emerson Elementary School in Riverside.

self; or a group, or an organization, or an individual."

### How is being a public agency helped strengthen Community Action's work in the community?

"Because this is a public agency, we could not act like a private, nonprofit community-based organization. People will see us as part of government and if we don't share the wealth, share the resources and share the knowledge with groups in the community, then we will make an enemy of them. Government ought to facilitate and not compete. In that

sense it has been a perfect match. We bring a wealth of resources to help them do what they have to do. They bring a special focus on one need — one thing they're trying to do — plus a cadre of volunteers who want to do it. Being a part of government is good when a CBO needs something and we could use government resources to help them. The County of Riverside is a nice calling card in the right places. There are a number of benefits to being a public agency.

Some of the disadvantages, however, are that we can't get private funding and we can't move things quickly. You have to go through a lot more bureaucracy. But if you plan for it and factor time into your process then that's not a problem."

### What barriers has the agency faced that have been a constant over the past 15 years?

"Well I know there are some. But I guess I never really focus too much attention on the barriers other than I know I'm going to remove them. I always focus on our strengths, what we can do and how can we get around any barriers. If you accept that this is going to be a real challenge then you deal with the barriers and many of them have been formidable. Trying to develop those childcare centers was one. We thought we'd never get it off the ground. The first one took four years. We were in the process of barrier removal every step of the way, but we did it."

### Are there any barriers you look back on and wish you were able to get over?

"I wish we could have enabled — or been a catalyst to — more housing (for low-income people). Housing has been the number one need

for all but one of the last 15 years. And, unfortunately, we are not much closer to a solution now. But there are agencies like the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, Habitat for Humanity and the Riverside Housing Development Coalition in existence today."

### What legacy has Community Action left over the past 15 years?

"A belief that we can solve the problems that confront us. Nothing is impossible."

*"FAST (Families Achieving Self-sufficiency Together) is one of my favorite examples of the successful programs Riverside County DCA has operated over the years to help people move out of poverty. FAST has a pioneer project for the Family Self-sufficiency approach in California, and is typical of DCA's spot on the cutting edge. The program's success stories give hope and inspiration to struggling single mothers far beyond Riverside County's borders, as well as encouragement to all of us in the world of Community Action.*

*I believe Family Self-Sufficiency is the way we will go in terms of a truly effective method of moving people out of poverty. Riverside County has been an incubator, and we are grateful for the results. We count on DCA for leadership and innovation..."*

— Michael J. Micciche, Director,  
Department of Economic Opportunity,  
Sacramento, California

### What is one thing you would want the public to say about Community Action?

"That Community Action changed my perception of the poor. I would want people to say, 'I used to think that the poor were poor because they were lazy and they just weren't motivated to do for themselves but I no longer feel that way.' The poor really represent the adage: 'There but for the grace of God go I.' They want the same things we want. They want to be able to do for themselves and they really do just want a helping hand, not a handout."



# 15 YEARS OF COMMUNITY ACTION

## 1979

- January* Designation of Riverside County as a Community Action Agency.
- July* Federal Community Services Administration gives Riverside County a \$125,000 planning grant.
- October* First election held for low-income commission representative.

## 1980

- September* Lois J. Carson appointed Executive Director of the Community Action Program.

## 1981

- June* Contract Ceremony with Community Services Administration, Region IX officials for first local initiative grant worth \$728,000.
- Fall* Idea for San Geronio Child Care Center implemented with land leased at \$1 per year and a Community Development Block Grant.
- October* CAA funds C.E.T., a grant to conduct a feasibility study on the transfer of ownership of the Farmers Home Administration/Housing Authority-owned Fred C. Young Labor Camp to resident farmworkers.

## 1982

- January* First two community forums introducing the Community Services Block Grant program were held.
- September* First Community Action Agency Open House and Volunteer Recognition honored 40 individuals.
- November* CAA initiates Pre-Apprenticeship program to provide training in school to youth in a small business.
- CAA obtains land for Jurupa Child Care Center at \$1 per year.
- December* CAA receives discretionary grant worth \$25,000 from the California State Office of Economic Opportunity for the development of employee-related child care in Jurupa, Perris and Coachella Valley.

## 1983

- February* First annual citizen recognition in honor of Black History Month.
- May* First annual citizen recognition in honor of Cinco de Mayo.
- June* CAA develops Weatherization for Women and Youth Training Project in conjunction with Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc.
- Summer* Organized and funded Coachella Valley Housing Coalition to develop farmworker housing.
- Fall* CAA assumes staffing of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Local Board.
- September* CAA recognizes volunteers at its 2nd Annual "Celebration of Volunteers."
- October* Ten developmentally disabled students from Peppermint Ridge earned weatherization training certificates on completion of CAA Energy Conservation program.

- November* Community Action receives \$20,000 grant to conduct a study regarding the establishment of an Urban American Indian Center, now known as the Riverside American Indian Center.

## 1984

- March* Community Action Agency is designated a county department by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.
- October* Department of Community Action (DCA) and San Geronio Child Care Consortium dedicate the new Child Care Center in Banning.
- November* Community Child Care Consultants Inc., a group organized by DCA, holds its official opening ceremony.
- December* DCA initiates Solar Energy project for Coachella Valley residents in conjunction with the City of Coachella.

## 1985

- May* DCA sponsors "Personal Power and Economic Equity," a women's conference at University of California, Riverside.
- July* DCA funds Peppermint Ridge's Ranch and Grow project which trains disabled people to successfully operate a plant nursery.
- Fall* DCA releases "Status of Poverty in Riverside County, 1995."
- October* DCA funds Desert Hospital's Home Health Care Services to provide services to low-income residents of the city of Blythe and surrounding area.
- December* Perris Child Care Center project receives \$250,000 and land leased at \$1 per year.

## 1986

- January* Rubidoux Child Care facility dedicated on land leased at \$1 per year.
- February* DCA receives \$25,000 funding to provide outreach for the Medically Indigent Adult program.
- March* Fifty Orchard Avenue Apartments are dedicated. Coachella Valley Housing Coalition sponsored the farmworker housing complex with \$3 million in grants from the DCA, Farmer Home Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Aetna Foundation.
- July* DCA establishes the low-income Family Loan Fund for working poor families.

## 1987

- March* DCA sponsors workshop titled, "Entrepreneurial and Training Opportunities in the Agua Mansa Enterprise Zone."
- April* DCA receives Best Media Coverage Award by the CALIFORNIA/NEVADA Community Action Association.
- July* DCA's Family Loan Fund program receives NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES Human Services Award.

## 1988

- January* DCA initiates Child Care Entrepreneurs Revolving Loan Fund targeting Family Day Care projects.

- March* DCA receives funds from the City of Riverside Community Development program to establish the Homeless Loan Fund program.
- Spring* Coachella Valley Housing Coalition builds 50 rental units and launches a self-help housing program for 60 farmworker families.
- November* DCA writes its first annual Comprehensive Homeless Plan and is funded to hire a Homeless Services Manager.

### 1989

- January* DCA is designated the management agency for homeless services.
- June* City of Riverside funds DCA to administer utility Deposit Loan Fund and Utility Assistance Program supported by ratepayer donations.

## THE LAST FIVE YEARS...

### 1989

- September* DCA Executive Director Lois J. Carson is elected president of the California/Nevada Community Action Association, Region IX.
- Carson elected as Treasurer of Cal/Neva Region IX. She coordinated the first regional training in Case Management for community action agencies in Las Vegas, Nevada.

### 1990

- June* DCA kicked off Project STEP (Shelter Targeted Education Program), an educational program which targets homeless adults who have reading and writing skills below the 7th grade level.
- April* DCA Director Lois Carson was re-elected president of the California/Nevada Community Action Association.

### 1991

- January* DCA implements the Families Achieving Self-Sufficiency Together (FAST) Program, a federally-funded family development program for single mothers who receive government assistance to help them earn an education and eventually move toward self-sufficiency.
- September* Annual joint meeting of Community Action Commission and Board of Supervisors
- Spring* DCA holds "The Endangered Black Male Youth" Conference for young minority males.

### 1992

- February* Lois Carson selected to chair the CAL/NEVA Telecommunications Committee which provided oversight to the Telephone Information Program (TIP).
- Carson was appointed to the National Certification Committee to develop an executive certification program. The committee evolved into the Commission Certification.
- May* Riverside DCA received NACAA funds to implement its first Minority Male Charette for young adults to interact with role models. Riverside was one of four U.S. cities chosen to participate in the program.
- Fall* DCA RECEIVES a \$18,600 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for two minority male youth conferences.

- Fall* Project FRESH (Fostering, Rewarding, Educating and Supporting Humanity) a tutorial program for minority males, began at Emerson Elementary School in Riverside. The project was an outgrowth of DCA's "Endangered Black Male Youth" Conference in 1991.

- November* Warren Maple, representative of the low-income sector, District III, elected chair of the Community Action Commission.

### 1993

- Spring* DCA helped coordinate the conference, "Race, Poverty and the Environment: Exploitation or Opportunity?" to explore the relationship between race, poverty and the environment.
- Summer* DCA Director Lois J. Carson was appointed to the Private Industry Council (PIC), which provides funding to train contractors throughout Riverside County for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

- December* Carson chaired the National Task Force on National Service, a group that wrote the policy paper on community service.

Carson appointed to the state Department of Economic Opportunity Policy/Advisory Committee.

- January* Joy Schlendorf, public sector representative, elected president of the Commission. She served on the Palm Springs City Council and now manages the district office of newly-elected Congressman Sonny Bono.

- June* An historic joint retreat was held by the Riverside and San Bernardino Community Action boards hosted by the Community Services Department.

### 1994

- July* The Community Action Commission and DCA Director Lois Carson were instrumental in getting about \$6 million to the earthquake victims of the Jan. 17 Northridge Earthquake. Carson helped arrange a meeting with Don Sykes, Director of the Office of Community Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and arranged a tour of the area. The funding was given to four community action agencies in areas most affected by the earthquake.

- July* DCA and the Housing Authority of the County of Riverside were awarded a planning grant worth \$100,000 by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or YouthBuild, a program that puts "at-risk" youth to work building houses for low-income residents while learning the construction trade.

- September* DCA Director Lois Carson was elected 1st vice-president of the National Association of Community Action Agencies Board of Directors at the annual convention in New Orleans.

- October* DCA received a grant worth \$321,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to implement the Riverside Neighborhood Youth Corps 2000, a tutor/mentor program for at-risk youth.

Carson appointed to the National Low Income Home-owners' Energy Assistance Program panel on performance and outcome measures.

## Riverside Roofers Aid Homeless

Whoever says miracles can't happen has never met Riverside roofer Wayne Chism.

When the opening of the Riverside Emergency Cold Weather Shelter was being threatened because of a severe leaky roof at the U.S. National Guard Armory, with no funds available to repair it, Chism, co-owner of Southwestern Roofing Co. in Riverside, said he would not only do the work, but would also get the materials donated.

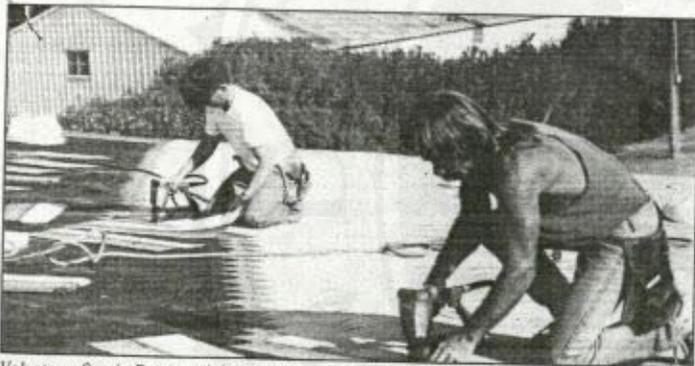
DCA Homeless Services Coordinator Jerry Doyle said an estimated \$80,000 would be needed to repair the roof. And with county budgets already being stretched, he didn't see any other way to fix it. The roof at the armory has leaked for years, but the damage has become more severe over time.

That was until Chism came forward after reading an article in the newspaper about the armory not being opened. After climbing up on the roof to inspect it, Chism called Doyle and said he would fix it — free of charge.

Chism and his partner, James Richardson, also arranged to have some of the \$5,000 worth of materials needed to fix the roof donated by A.L.L. Roofing Materials in Norco.

Chism and four other volunteers gave up their Thanksgiving holiday weekend to repair the roof. One of the volunteers was a former customer of Southwestern Roofing Company who read the story in the paper and decided to come out and help.

Chism said more businesses need to step forward to help the homeless.



Volunteers Sergio Ramirez (left) Geoff Coates (right) help put a new roof on the U.S. National Guard Armory in Riverside. The armory's opening was threatened because the roof was badly in need of repair. Riverside Roofer Wayne Chism donated the time and materials to replace the roof.

## Commissioner to Serve U.S. Congressman

Community Action Commissioner and former chairwoman Joy Schlendorf was recently selected to serve as District Director for U.S. Congressman Sonny Bono who was recently elected to serve the 44th District.

Schlendorf, who has served on the commission for about six years, has been involved with groups working to help the poor for most of her life. She formerly served on the Palm Springs City Council, where she spearheaded the creation of the city's Human Rights Commission.

She has also been active with the Soroptimists Club in developing two shelters for women alcoholics and helped initiate the Rotary Club of Palm Springs Youth Leadership Program. She was also a charter member of Women's Network in the Coachella Valley, a group created through the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women.

Schlendorf said she was "drafted" into former President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" back in the 1960s, when she landed a part time job teaching non-English people American History and English at a new neighborhood center. She later helped establish other programs at the center, including its first HeadStart program and Center for Employment Training (CET) program.



*"Joy's history in Community Action, which dates back to earlier days in Montana, has been a major asset to the Riverside Community Action Commission and Department of Community Action. Her service as a volunteer leader, an elected representative and as a talent in finance has been invaluable to this agency. She seems to possess the same commitment today as she had in those early days. I am certain she will prove to be a major asset to Congressman Bono."*

— Lois Carson, DCA Executive Director

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