

A Mission Field on the Edge of Phoenix

by Shirley Chipman

For weeks the Maricopa Village Christian School staff and students had prayed for help with their outreach to the Native American community surrounding their school in Laveen. Many of the local families lacked adequate food and clothing, and the mission school staff were working from early morning until late at night. “We realized how challenging it could be to get volunteers to commit to mission work,” said Arnie Suntag. “The sacrifices and challenges of participating in a completely selfless effort are not always appealing.”

Then a heaven-sent miracle happened that made those in Maricopa Village realize that ultimately God was in charge of their ministry.

Sabbath morning, December 10th, had started out like any other Sabbath with students lined up for singing, reading scriptures, and leading out in the worship service with inadequate time for rehearsal or preparation.

The program went surprisingly well, many commented, as the students did a better-than-average job of reading and singing. And the potluck was welcomed with enthusiasm.

The miracle happened during the potluck. “There must be 40 people driving up,” someone exclaimed,



This large group from the Litchfield Park church helped distribute food and clothing to families in the community.

“with truckloads of food, clothing and household goods!”

The Litchfield Park Seventh-day Adventist Church had mentioned that they planned to help distribute goods to the Native American families around the school. That Sabbath they delivered – and there was rejoicing in Laveen for the bountiful help that came unannounced.

“When our army of missionaries arrived in the community,” Suntag remembers, “there was a level of exhilaration rarely seen before. Members of the youth group marched from door-to-door distributing tracts and telling people about the mobile thrift store that had arrived in their

neighborhood. Within minutes, there was an enormous crowd in front of the home where the trucks were unloading their goods as word spread quickly throughout the community.”

People’s hearts were touched by the generous gesture. One resident, with tears in her eyes, tugged at the sleeve of one of the workers, looked intently into her eyes, and said simply, “Thank you so much for doing this!”

Community residents were able to find many things they needed, and soon all of the supplies were exhausted. Litchfield Park church and Maricopa Village had shared a pre-Christmas blessing by helping needy families with food, clothing and truth-filled literature.

“We are excited to see how the Lord will lead during this next semester,” said Susan Suntag, teacher at the Maricopa Village Christian School. “It is our sincere hope that more people will get involved in this exciting mission to a community where, despite serious trials and hardships, Native American people are reaching out for help — and many want to know more about Jesus.”



Members of the Litchfield Park church unload needed supplies for residents of the Pima-Maricopa community.



Arnie and Susan Suntag and Maricopa students (left to right) Mercedes, Xavier, Slade, Saul and Ethyn, shared with the Beacon Light church some of the blessings of their school.