

Water tank program helps Shafter family

A Shafter woman and her family are breathing a little easier now that they have clean water for their residences. Juanita Garcia, who lives in one house with her parents and her two children, said that they

have been without a viable water source since July. Her grandparents live in the house in the back on the same property.

Garcia said that at the time, she was told that they would have to dig her well deeper to hit water or she needed to replace the well with a new one. According to reports, to have your well dug, if it can be, is around \$15,000 and new well is above \$30,000.

Juanita said that they also can hook up to the city's water system. She said that they had the funds to pay the fees for the water, but could not come close to affording the plumbing that would be needed to actually hook up to the system.

Faced with this dilemma, Juanita went online looking for some help or information. She hit the jackpot when she hit upon the site for Self-Help Enterprises.

The drought has left many families and communities in the Valley feeling the effects with less work and higher prices.

Garcia said, "We took it for granted. You never think that something like this could happen to you." The well went dry in July and since then they have depended on a small portable water tank that was given to them by a friend. Her grandfather would go around every night before he went to bed and fill up five gallon buckets so they would have enough to take showers with in the morning.

Garcia and her family are being helped by Temporary Water Assistance Program, which installs temporary water tanks that restore a limited supply of water to homes. Through a partnership with Kern County Public Health Services, Self-Help Enterprises, Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK), and local water companies, people in the county may qualify for their program of drought assistance.

On Tuesday, March 29, the two houses were both given a 2,600 gallon water tank. David Mendez of Self-Help Enterprises said that they are currently helping 11 people here in Kern County. Mendez said that the families will have the temporary tanks for approximately 12 months while the homeowners are searching for a permanent solution.

Louis Medina of Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) said, "We are proud to be a part of this wonderful



Juanita Garcia now has water after going without a water supply since July.



Louis Medina of CAPK speaks to those gathered for the event.

project and working with such organizations."

Through the team work and cooperation from these agencies, families who might not have thought they had an alternative, are seeing some assistance, that weight lifted off of their shoulders while they can get their ship righted and find a permanent solution.

Amy Rutlege of the Kern

County Public Health Services said that the effort is one which will keep families filled with hope and much needed water.

The program is a no-cost or low-cost program. If you think that you might qualify for this program, you can obtain more information from the Environmental Health Division of Kern County Public Health Services at (661) 862-8776.

Golden Living Center donates \$1,000

Golden Living Center of Shafter will donate \$1,000 to Keep It Real Ministries during

a check presentation on April 9, which will be held at 140 E. Tulare Ave. in Shafter.

Keep It Real Ministries will use the donation to work with seventh and eighth graders of the Richland School District that are having behavior problems in school and instead of getting expelled from school KIRM provides mentorship to these youths and teaches them responsibility and accountability through community service activities while encouraging them to continue with their education. KIRM also holds a yearly "stuff the bus" back pack drive to assist low income families with school supplies.

"Golden Living is proud to present this grant to Keep It Real Ministries," said Fanny Melnikovsky, Executive Director of Golden Living Center - Shafter. "We are pleased to be able to support worthwhile organizations like the Keep It Real Ministries, which are pillars of the Shafter community."

The donation will be made as part of Golden Living's Community Support Initiative grant program, which is funded through Golden Living Center-Shafter parent company, Golden Living.

The Community Support Initiative grants are charitable contributions given in support of worthy non-profit community or regional organizations. Since the program's inception in 2005, over 1,996 grants have been awarded; contributing \$1,964,500 into local communities the company serves. Golden Living's community outreach and service supports the company's mission to improve quality of life through innovative healthcare, one person, one family, and one community at a time.



The two tanks will be hooked up to a pump that will get the water into the houses.



David Mendez of Self Help Enterprises explains options residents have when they are faced with a dry well.