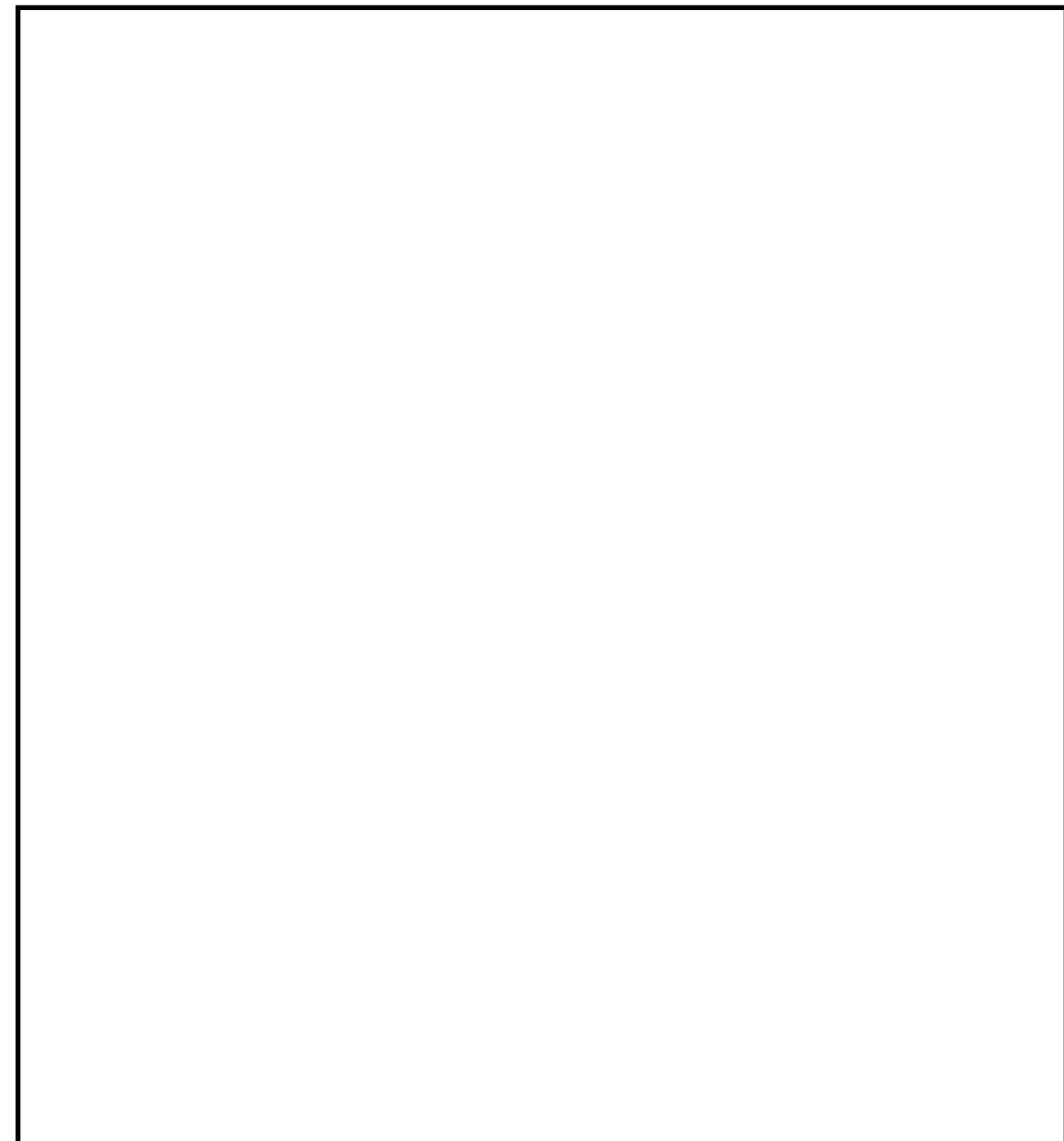


By JOYCE LOVELACE
The Outlook

One of the most rewarding associations of Dwight Tudor's life began with a bus ride.

While at a wedding a few years ago, Tudor, a retired food-industry executive and longtime La Cañada Flintridge resident, boarded a guest shuttle and took a seat next to Barbara Wilson, a family friend. The two chatted all the way from church to reception, mostly about her volunteer work with the Lake Avenue Community Foundation — a nonprofit, faith-based outreach organization directed by her son, John.



Dwight Tudor (right) shares a moment with a student in a Lake Avenue Community Foundation tutoring program.

"She was so eloquent about what she was doing," Tudor recalled. Her enthusiasm for the foundation was so infectious, he said, that it inspired him to get involved.

Ever since, Tudor has been a devoted and effective champion of LACF, which was founded in 2001 with a mission "to unleash the God-given potential of at-risk youth, providing the tools necessary to thrive academically, emotionally, economically, and spiritually."

He has given his time, regularly tutoring children in the after-school program at LACF headquarters in Pasadena. He has played a leadership role on its board of directors, and he has helped expand local support for LACF's good works, fostering connections between the foundation and the La Cañada Presbyterian Church, where he is a parishioner.

Though Tudor downplays his contribution, he's happy if his example shines a spotlight on the foundation. Those at LACF, meanwhile, praise his rare dedication.

"Dwight is a stand-up man, a great man of God who puts his words into action, both here at the foundation and at his own church," said Greg Helton, development director of LACF, whose board members recently held a get-together to honor Tudor as he stepped down after several terms of distin-

guished board service.

"He has made a great impact in the lives of children through his sincerity and the credibility he brings to them," Helton said. "He's been a blessing; a great leader on the board and an advocate for what the foundation has been doing to make a bigger impact in the community."

Tudor grew up in Glendale and graduated from USC. He and his wife, Sylvia, have lived in La Cañada Flintridge for 47 years, and their four children attended local schools.

"My conviction is, we need to spend money, time, effort and talent in our local community, and I consider northwest Pasadena part of our community," he said. "It's an opportunity to isolate a need and develop the programs to fit that need."

At its facility on East Villa Street, LACF serves nearly 100 neighborhood children from kindergarten to middle-school age, who find a haven there in the afternoon hours when their parents are at work.

A network of volunteers, from teens to senior citizens, offer help with homework as well as guidance and mentoring, with emphasis on Christian values as a foundation for success in life. This is no drop-in center for babysitting, Helton stressed, but rather "a genuine investment of energy and time in these kids."

Tudor's pupils, Helton noted, have come to regard him as a wise and kindly grandfather figure, a positive role model and consistent, caring presence in their lives.

For his part, Tudor has enjoyed seeing the kids grow and thrive along with LACF's tutoring and mentoring initiatives. "The program has evolved to where there are specific needs and objectives for each child, from general to more individualized tutoring," he observed.

While financial donations are welcome and essential to the success of any outreach effort, Tudor urges us all to also discover the joys of donating our time and talents in hands-on, personal ways.

There is, he reflected, "a great reward in doing that," a deep and wonderful sense of gratification that builds slowly but surely over time as tangible results emerge.

"It's very subtle," Tudor said. "I'm not sure it's overt. But it reinforces your Christian values, and shows you that you can make a difference."

To learn more about the Lake Avenue Community Foundation, visit www.lakeavenuefoundation.org.