

HELP of Ojai is reaching the end of escrow on the Ojai Cafe Emporium building at 108 S. Montgomery Street. The current HELP of Ojai Little House programs of Transportation, Senior Activities and Administration will transition to Montgomery Street and be joined by the Fox Street-based Community Assistance Program. Eventually, the Senior Nutrition program may expand to Montgomery Street. “We are very excited to continue the legacy of service this location has provided to the Ojai Valley since the early 1900’s. Whether it was the lumber yard offerings of decades past or the more recent favorite scones for breakfast or salads for lunch, the Café Emporium and that location holds a warm place in all of our hearts.”

HELP of Ojai has been at the 111 West Santa Ana Street location for three decades. HELP has owned the Fox Street location of CAP for approximately 20 years. Both locations have emerged as not viable, long-term options for our programs. Fox Street is too small for the current programming and the property is not expandable and is currently in escrow. The Little House location is no longer viable as the City of Ojai attempted to reduce the lease term to five years, attach City-determined termination provisions to a new lease, expand their parking uses to the Little House parking lot and more. None of those provisions are commensurate with HELP of Ojai’s long-term ability to serve the city and valley residents. These lease changes led HELP to have to find an alternative location on their terms and with appropriate timing.

Through the recent generosity of many donors, HELP is able to purchase a property for the first time that will meet current and future needs. Specifically, these donors remembered HELP in their bequests – Pauline and Frank Duffy, Nancy and Bill Hammond, Carolyn Huntsinger, Irene Koch, and Miriam Schwab. While others also contributed, these bequests allowed HELP to make this purchase, thereby, cementing these donors’ important contribution to HELP’s present and future service to the community they all loved.

From Café Emporium owner, Trisha Proud, “Since 1985 the Ojai Café Emporium has served the Ojai Valley. Many generations have celebrated life’s events with us. We have felt honored to continue this Ojai tradition for the past 13 years. Although we are sad that no buyer had stepped forward to buy the Ojai Café Emporium, it is thrilling to know that HELP of Ojai is taking over the care of this historic property, and that it will continue serving the community in another capacity. The Ojai Café Emporium will serve the Ojai Valley at this location for the last time on Sunday August 15. On behalf of the staff, we hope to see you before then!”

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this new phase for HELP of Ojai, please contact Terri Wolfe, Executive Director, at (805)646-5122 or terriw@helpofojai.org.