

IN OUR COMMUNITY



COURTESY OF RIPPLE KIDS

Kids sort fleece for dog beds and dog toys at the Ripple Kids in Action Summer Challenge. The event showcased a variety of causes, each with a related project for kids.

# Nonprofit creates ripple effect in volunteering

BY NICOLE LYONS  
STAFF WRITER

Ripple Kids in Action Summer Challenge 2014 took place Sunday at Hicks Canyon Elementary in Irvine. The event showcased a variety of causes, each with a related project for kids to get involved in, everything from making dog beds for shelters to refurbishing skateboards for underprivileged youths.

The challenge was to show kids what they're passionate about and empower them to, in some way, do something this summer to help their community.

This is the second year that the event has taken place. More than 500 people attended. The Orange County-based nonprofit Ripple Kids seeks to inspire kids, showing them how to be a wave of change in society. To create a ripple effect, it only takes one kid to start a food drive, or another

to be moved to start one at his school.

The organization's founder, Bridget Belden, explained the idea of Ripple Kids:

Usually, she notes, it is a parent who initiates a service opportunity and will say something like this to their child: "We are going to do a beach cleanup tomorrow morning."

Usually the common response is, "Do I have to?" Instead, what Ripple Kids hopes to create is this mentality among youth:

"I went to the beach the other day and there was all this trash around. I want to do something about it, and I can."

Ripple Kids started with Belden, a mom of two, who one day did some soul-searching. She was thinking about her legacy. Belden looked for causes to support, but each time she would run into the mental block of, "How can I make a

difference on this huge issue?" Then over a conversation with her daughter, she had an epiphany: It only takes one person to help educate and inspire someone else, and then the domino effect occurs.

Currently, four area schools participate in Ripple Kids: Hicks Canyon Elementary, Arroyo Elementary, Red Hill Elementary and, just recently, Loma Vista Elementary.

"It's incredible to see kids become aware of what is happening around them, identify where they can contribute and influence their peers to get involved," said Belden. "Then their value in society changes."

Ripple Kids plans to host another challenge event in the fall.

In the meantime, go to the nonprofit's website, [ripplekids.com](http://ripplekids.com), for project inspiration, and learn how to get your kids' ideas off the ground.

LITTLE MOMENTS



LINDSEY GARRETT

## AVA, TUSTIN

Before this day, you would have never guessed that my daughter was deathly afraid of water. She preferred the comfort of a warm towel and a beach chair; pool parties were her worst nightmare. It took six months of weekly lessons, most of which ended in tears, before she would stick her head underwater. One year later, she was jumping in on her own and swimming to me. This shot represents that achievement while encapsulating her body's fragility, as life-giving breath is momentarily suspended while she navigates the world below the surface.

- Lindsey Garrett

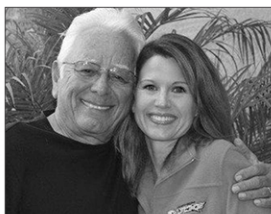
## BROUGHTON: Father's Day

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parents.

If you have stellar grandparents, you know what a blessing they are, and my mom and Glenn are a blessing. To our kids, there is no "step" granddad; he's just "Gramps." And for that, I will be forever grateful for my stepdad.

To all of you stepdads out there, keep fighting the good fight: blowing noses, showing up at baseball games and talking to the mechanic for your stepkids. Maybe the rewards aren't coming to you today or tomorrow or even when your kids are young, but I'm a prime example of the good and important influence you can have: my life made better, richer, fuller because of the love of my stepdad.



COURTESY OF SUZANNE BROUGHTON

Suzanne Broughton with her stepdad - simply "Gramps" to her kids - Glenn.

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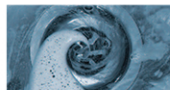
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