

# Compassion in Action celebrates four years of helping clients

By **AMIRA SEYOUM**  
STAFF WRITER

Growing up with 11 siblings and having to figure out how to do things on her own prepared Barbara Case for a greater cause she was unaware she would begin.

In 2002, Case founded Compassion in Action - USA, a non-profit organization that provides free representation to clients who are ill or injured and need assistance acquiring medical care, Social Security disability, food and other essentials.

Saturday, the organization celebrated its four-year anniversary with a fundraising luncheon at the San Dimas Senior Center.

With more than 80 guests in attendance, Case was thrilled with the positive response and \$9,000 raised from the event. "I am so thrilled with the turnout because we are a small organization and I was only expecting about 50 people and with the silent auctions, raffles and donations we raised a lot of money," Case said.

Seven of Case's clients were able to attend and share their story with the audience. Case said that many were amazed by what they heard. Jeri Holmes, a Case client, hoped that the luncheon would produce better exposure to the problem. Holmes has been denied nine times for Social Security and is awaiting another hearing.

"Barbara has been very helpful in my case, she has taken me to my doctor appointments and has really been my voice representing me. She is a very compassionate

person and I don't know where I would be now without her help," Holmes said.

Dana Navarro, a member of the board of directors who was also in attendance, expressed how grateful everyone was for the donations and hopes that now people are aware of the issue.

"I am so grateful for the support, but I do have a mixed feeling because I know it is not enough," Navarro said. She continued to explain the severity of the problem and the lack of information people have. "I just don't know how to people make aware of what is going on."

Navarro personally had an experience that connected her to Case from the beginning. In 1996 Navarro's mother, Cathy Maxwell, was struggling to receive Social Security while fighting breast cancer.

"She kept hitting all these walls trying to get medical," Case said. "In a month, I had medical and Social Security for her, so the last month she got to spend with her family instead of dealing with that."

That was one of Case's first clients and was the start of something that is now her life. However before Navarro, Case received an assignment while in a leadership program. "I had to create a community project with the community being more than just my street," Case said. "Honestly, I don't know how it happened, it just did. It was something that needed to be done and it just ma-



COURTESY PHOTO

Compassion in Action staff, clients and their families prepare for guests to arrive at their fundraising luncheon. Front row, from left, Phil Case, Lilla Reyes, Toni Baker, Leonett Waight, Barbara Case, Jasmine Navarro, Elena Richardson and Terrence Richardson. Back row, Kimberle Kelly, Dana Navarro, Tyrone Waight and Linda Reyes.

terialized."

Case said she always had an intuitive nature. When she heard the word "no," she knew it meant she had to keep on looking.

"There is a horrible problem going on where people who are disabled and cannot work are being denied their Social Security disability or aren't getting Medicaid," Case said. Case said that many of the clients she represents are sent to doctors who don't do an accurate evaluations. "When clients tell me they are being written evaluations after being looked at for less than five minutes, there is a problem - which is one of the

reasons why sometimes we go with our clients to their doctor appointments," Case said. Compassion In Action now gets referrals from across the United States.

"Now we have a lot of experience and understanding of this problem and it is helping us continue to grow, but I still don't think people know the extremity of the problem," Case said.

Financially, the company has also grown with support from the community and businesses such as Wells Fargo, who have given grants. But Case said the organization still needs support. "I am still working from my home of-

ice and would like to have an office where our clients would be able to come to us, or to be able to hold a workshop in an office, but we still don't have that luxury yet," Case said.

Case has touched many hearts and hopes to continue to do so for many years.

"Barbara has made some people who feel so hopeless, hopeful again," Holmes said. "I really do feel hopeful this time with her help, I hope that with this the word will spread and people will know what is going on and she can get help, that is my hope for a nice woman like her."