



Saratoga councilwoman's dedication to children's health leads to post as foundation exec

By Chris Vongsarath
Saratoga News
Monday, April 21, 2008

Kathleen King continues her crusade for children's health as the recently appointed executive director of the Santa Clara Family Health Foundation.

The appointment, officially announced on April 7, adds to the executive duties King already occupies as chairwoman of the Silicon Valley Children's Hospital Foundation and member of the Saratoga City Council.

But after retiring from a 25-year career with Applied Materials, a high-tech company based in Santa Clara, King said she has found her passion in public service.

"If I could wake up and have to pick a job, I would say this one," King said.

King joins the Santa Clara Family Health Foundation, located at 210 E. Hacienda Ave. in Campbell, at a time when its efforts are aimed at children's health. Currently, the foundation is focused on raising funds for Healthy Kids, an insurance program that pays for the medical, dental and vision care of children in Santa Clara County who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families.

"We are very excited to have Kathleen join the foundation as executive director," said Ron Cohn, chairman of the foundation, in a press release. "Her long commitment to health of children and her vast experience in the community are huge assets for the foundation."

The timing of the foundation's focus and King's commitment to children seemed like a natural fit, said Elisabeth Handler, public information officer for Santa Clara Family Health Plan, the foundation's parent organization.

"She's got great visibility, on the political side and on the community side," Handler said. "You've got to have someone whose calls are going to get answered and she is really well known."

One of the foundation's biggest challenges has been raising enough money to support all the children served by the program, especially with state budget cuts and other counties requesting funding for their Healthy Kids programs, Handler said.

"We've got a waiting list of 1,500 kids for the Healthy Kids program and that's terrible. We can't serve them," she said.

King said it takes Santa Clara Family Health Plan about \$1,000 a year to provide a child with adequate medical, dental and vision care services, something she is confident she can accomplish.

Earlier this year, King was instrumental in securing a donation from Cadence Design Systems Inc. that is expected to put more than \$1 million toward a new diagnosis and treatment center for children with autism in the Silicon Valley.

As the mother of a child with alpha mannosidosis, a rare genetic disorder that affects all areas of the body, King has a personal stake in this mission as well.

"Children are 25 percent of our population but 100 percent of our future," King said. "If we can keep them out of the emergency room and into our schools, it benefits all of us."

For more information on the Santa Clara Family Health Foundation, visit www.healthykidsfund.org