

A magical first decade

Foundation targets fight against cancer

BY ROB MESZAROS
Contributing writer

The 10th day of the 10th month of the 10th year: It's a phenomenon that comes along only once a century. But for one local nonprofit, Oct. 10, 2010 signifies much more than just an anomaly on the calendar.

Today marks the culmination of the 10th anniversary year of the [Mendiburu Magic Foundation](#), an occasion that has prompted the city of Bakersfield to proclaim it [Nancy Ann Mendiburu Cancer Fighter Day](#), in honor of the organization's namesake.

"We wanted to create something that would allow us to help other people in my mom's memory," said Brian Mendiburu, who lost his mother to ovarian cancer in June of 2000. "I just knew that the long days of crying and being sad should be redirected, and the energy used differently."

He dried the tears, rolled up his sleeves and formed the foundation with help from longtime mentor Larry Reider, then Kern County superintendent of schools.

Today, [MMF](#) helps the community in three primary ways: raising funds for ongoing cancer research; aiding families affected by catastrophic or life-threatening illness through its patient assistance fund; and fostering youth development through scholarships.

The foundation has grown up so much over the past decade, a feat that is attributed to the generosity of the community and community leaders taking an active interest.

Among those currently leading major functions within the organization are Reider, who oversees the community advisory council; Bill Rector, retired police chief, who leads youth development and mini-grants; Kern County Superintendent of Schools Christine Frazier, who chairs the scholarships fund; Lyle Martin, assistant police chief, who oversees the patient assistance funds; and Adoree Roberson, owner of Premier Realty and Jenny Maitia, owner of Wool Growers, who co-chair the resource development and fundraising committee.

"I have stayed on the board because the foundation does so much good for our community and because those of us that can should give back to our community," said Reider. "[MMF](#) gives me as much as I give."

At the foundation's only annual fundraising event — the Pyrenees Fiesta, which

Get involved

To volunteer with [Mendiburu Magic Foundation](#) or to make a donation, visit [mendiburumagic.org](#) or call 319-0355.

was held in mid-September — \$24,000 was generated and will go directly to help the community.

"Small nonprofits like [MMF](#) oftentimes can address needs that may be overlooked by larger organizations," said board member Janelle Capra, who works as director of the Memorial Hospital Foundation's Children's Miracle Network. "I truly believe that [MMF](#) is doing that through its patient assistance funds."

Bill Rector agrees: "The foundation fills a void and

helps families in our community with things to get them through their ordeals," he said. "It can be as simple as giving a family a gas card so they can travel to a treatment center for care. It is one less things someone has to deal with when they are trying to focus on their loved ones."

The mission of [MMF](#) is simple — and hasn't changed from day one, Mendiburu says.

"We might stumble at times. But the only way someone does not stumble is if they choose to stand still. We have done the opposite of that and will continue to work hard and always move forward to advance great projects."

Rob Meszaros serves on the [Mendiburu Magic Foundation](#) board