

PRESS RELEASE

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BETHEL CHURCH OF SAN JOSE ADDS THE ELEMENT OF GIVING TO THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATE AMERICA 2008

SAN JOSE, CA- Bethel Church of San Jose (Bethel) is known for its Broadway like performances, but at this year's *Celebrate America 2008*, they've added an element of giving to the program. Bethel has partnered with the Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital, The American Hero Tribute and Beautiful Day organizations. In the past, Bethel has honored veterans from a particular war or era. This year Bethel has teamed up with these organizations to make a contribution into the lives of the service men and women in our community.

VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HOSPITAL

The VA Hospital, located in Palo Alto, houses one of four Polytrauma Units in the country. After some research, it was made known to Bethel that the Spinal Cord Injury Unit and the Polytrauma Unit were in need of wireless internet access, and the OEF/OIF fund was running low.

"Most of the patients in the Polytrauma Unit are in their early twenties. They use the internet for everything from banking to communicating with family," Patricia Matthews, VA Hospital Public Affairs Officer said. "The OEF/OIF fund allows us to assist the families of the service members we are treating. It provides for everything from airlines tickets to diapers," she added.

During Celebrate America 2008 Bethel will be making an announcement and a contribution to both needs. In addition, proceeds from the concession stands will go toward the OEF/OIF Fund and providing wireless Internet for the Spinal Cord Injury and Polytrauma Units.

THE AMERICAN HERO TRIBUTE

The American Heroes Tribute strives to honor U.S. Military personnel who have given their lives in the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their goal is to accomplish this through a national banner campaign that will journey from city to city throughout the nation. In doing so, they directly acknowledge the family and preserve the memory of the fallen. Bethel has commissioned a new banner in honor of Lieutenant Kenneth Ballard.

Ballard was killed in action on May 30, 2004 in Najaf, Iraq. Ballard was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division from Friedberg, Germany. Born in Rome, New York, Ballard and his mother, Karen Meredith, relocated

to Santa Clara, California in 1978. Later, in 1981 they moved to Mountain View. After graduating from Mountain View High School in 1995, Ballard enlisted into the Army. He traveled to Bosnia and Macedonia. Then after three years of service he won an ROTC scholarship to study at Middle Tennessee State University. During that time he earned a bachelor's degree in international relations and a commission as a second lieutenant in 2002.

The new banner will be unveiled at Celebrate America. Ballard's mother, Karen Meredith, will be present for the unveiling.

BEAUTIFUL DAY

Beautiful Day is a national network of churches working in collaboration with businesses, organizations, schools, media, entertainment, government and health care to unleash compassion into the local community in such a creative and innovative way it is felt by everyone and leaves a lasting impact.

Recently, at the request of Mayor Chuck Reed, Beautiful Day helped oversee the complete home remodel of local hero Sergeant Michael Wade.

Wade began his military career when he enlisted in the Army in 1964. Shortly after enlisting, he was deployed to Vietnam where he served two tours of duty. Wade left active duty in 1970, relocated to California, and enlisted in the Army National Guard. When our country needed him, he was always ready to serve. Wade served courageously at the fires of Big Sur (1976), the Ben Lomond mudslides (1982 & 1983), the Alviso floods (1984), Urgent Fury (1983), Just Cause (1989), Desert Shield, Desert Storm (1991), and Operation Restore Hope (1992 –1993). Before his retirement in 1997, Wade had received more than 43 awards and decorations. He is also the older brother of Major General William H. Wade II, 44th Adjutant General of the California National Guard.

Also being recognized is Colonel Ernest A. Glave. This highly decorated service man served valiantly in World War II. Discharged from the Navy in 1946, he then continued his military service by joining the Army National Guard. Glave is a well respected resident of the South Bay, and a relentless community servant. He has served as president of the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara for 37 years, along with other countless community positions in the areas of political advocate, and civil supporter.

For more information, log onto www.bethel.org/CelebrateAmerica2008.htm or call (408) 246-6790 x114.

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