



## Information of Interest

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Heroes Among Us: The Piña Family

*Heroes Among Us is a series of articles published by the National Auto Body Council (NABC) providing updates on the humanitarian efforts of past PRIDE Award winners. The initial chapter focuses on the Piña family, proprietors of Brea Auto Body in Brea, California, who received an award in 2005 for their work with the Mount Tabor Orphanage in Tecate, Mexico.*

Princeton Junction, NJ, May 5, 2009 — It's not an exaggeration to say that the Piña family—dad David, mom Virginia, daughters Doreen and Denise, and Denise's husband, Fred Gruner—have been transformed by their relationship with the Mount Tabor Orphanage in Tecate, Mexico, six miles south of the U.S. border, 30 miles east of San Diego, California.

Run by Mother Lillie Diaz and the Trinitarians of Mary, an order of Roman Catholic sisters, the place called the School of Hope is a safe haven for poor, even destitute girls ranging in age from four to 18, many of whom have been abused physically or psychologically. At Mount Tabor they receive a quality education, physical and spiritual nourishment and enough personal empowerment to carry over into life long after graduation.



"It's the kind of place that, when you experience it, absolutely tugs at your heartstrings," Denise states. "The atmosphere radiates love and hope. Those fortunate enough to see it are always the better for it."

Humbly operating out of a single RV when it opened, Mt. Tabor today

is a ten-building compound that accommodates close to 40 students, sisters, and volunteers, growth made all the more impressive because the facility relies completely on donations. The Trinitarians even get involved with many outreach programs and manage to give back to the surrounding communities. For example, at the Tecate site they feed the poor on the first Saturday of every month.

Last year at Christmas, Virginia, along with a team of volunteers, assisted the Trinitarians in handing out food and toys to almost 4,000 of the region's neediest neighbors. In anticipation of this annual event,

families and children line up overnight and sleep on the dirt road leading up to the school, hoping to receive food, shoes, and a toy.

The Piña family's involvement with the School of Hope began 14 years ago when Virginia first met Mother Lillie. "Mom could sense she was a special, gifted woman and was immediately drawn to her mission to help those with less than nothing," explains Denise. "I went along on our first trip to Tecate without expectations and came away with my life changed forever."

Since then the Piñas have consistently shown their support of the orphanage in a variety of ways. Virginia sits on the board of directors of the non-profit organization. Brea Auto Body has donated numerous cars over the years. Funds for infrastructure improvements were raised partly out of Denise and Fred's wedding donations, which they requested in lieu of gifts.

Family members work with local businesses and individuals to secure necessities like eyeglasses and computers. In June, Denise and Fred will set up ten new computer systems. Last year, in association with the St. Denis Catholic Community in Diamond Bar, California, Virginia spearheaded the organization of a dinner and silent auction that raised over \$32,000 for the cause, an undertaking the family plans to repeat this year.

"Once people see or hear about the Trinitarians, they tend to be generous because they understand the world is a better place because of their work," says Denise. "My family and I have been blessed to come into contact with their unconditional love and fearless spirits to create change. We want to share those blessings with the rest of the world."

Receiving the PRIDE Award was a gratifying, yet humbling experience for the Piñas. "The kind people that make up NABC shone a light on our family," adds Denise. "Standing on stage with my dad, mother, sister and husband—looking out at the many wonderful industry leaders gathered before us—was a privilege and honor. We were overwhelmed with gratitude. The evening and the award has become a cherished memory. Personally, it was a tribute to my parents, honoring their humble beginnings and lifetime of charitable service. Giving back is a part of who they are and what we were raised to embrace from my first memories growing up. The NABC Pride Award was an intangible gift we hold close to our hearts and we are grateful for the honor. Thank you NABC!"



This year's fund-raising dinner and silent auction for the Mount Tabor Orphanage will take place on Saturday, November 14, at St.

Denis Catholic Community in Diamond Bar, California. For information on this event, how you can help support the Mount Tabor School of Hope, or any of their other charitable projects, please contact Denise at the number listed at the top of this release.

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*The PRIDE Awards* are sponsored by NABC and recognize those in the collision industry that perform exceptional humanitarian and benevolent acts. The award program is in its fourteenth year.

*If you know of someone in the collision industry that has made an effort to benefit humanity without expectation of a return*, we encourage you to recognize them by nominating them for a PRIDE Award. Nominations may be made online at the NABC Web site ([www.autobodycouncil.org](http://www.autobodycouncil.org)), where a list of past

winners and their deeds is also available. In addition, the Web site contains a downloadable version of the nomination form that can be printed and faxed into the NABC office.

*About NABC:* NABC is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the image of the collision industry. Our ongoing and continued success is a direct result of the efforts and support of our sponsoring companies and membership. Please contact NABC directly for membership information. Call 1-888-667-7433 (888-66PRIDE) or go to [www.autobodycouncil.org](http://www.autobodycouncil.org).

*NABC ~ Changing the image of our industry, one consumer at a time.*

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