

## News

### Luncheon Honors Work of Homeless Count and Survey Volunteers

President Mouw and Mayor Bill Bogaard express gratitude to 60 student volunteers :: 04/19/10



Left to right: Joe Colletti, director, Office for Urban Initiatives; Sofia Herrera, associate director, Office for Urban Initiatives; President Richard J. Mouw; Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard; student Joshua Hammer; alumnus Andrew Wright, Office for Urban Initiatives.

A tamale luncheon on Friday, April 16, honored the 60 Fuller students who participated in this year's annual volunteer effort to count members of Pasadena's homeless population. Students also helped with a follow-up survey of homeless individuals.

"What is important is not the counting, but what we are able to do with that information," remarked Anne Lansing, the City of Pasadena's coordinator for the homeless count and survey. "This information is used to develop innovative, creative programs that are helping move homeless persons off the street."

Fuller's Office for Urban Initiatives and its co-directors, Joe Colletti (MA '84) and Sofia Herrera (PhD '99), led the counting effort for the fourth year in a row, with this year showing the highest participation of Fuller student volunteers. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as part of its requirements for providing continuum-of-care funding for homeless persons, asks local jurisdictions to conduct a "one night point-in-time" homeless count every other year in January. The City of Pasadena, however—in partnership with Fuller's Office for Urban Initiatives—conducts a one night point-in-time count every year.

"I am so grateful for the work of folks like Joe Colletti and our students, who have reached out to 'seek the shalom of the city,'" said Fuller President Richard J. Mouw, referring to the scripture passage Jeremiah 29:7, "sometimes in quiet ways that are not very visible to the rest of us."

"You are engaged in very important work here in Pasadena," Mayor Bill Bogaard told the student volunteers. "You have helped allow the city to provide support and compassion to a special group

of its citizens, a group that is always changing." Mayor Bogaard presented a certificate of recognition to the Office for Urban Initiatives for its work in coordinating the count and survey.

Several of those who spoke at the luncheon commended the methodology, developed by Colletti, which is used for the Pasadena count. Lansing pointed out that Colletti's counting instrument has been recognized by HUD as an example of "best practices" in the field.

Adding spice to the luncheon were an assortment of tamales provided by Mama's Hot Tamales, a job training restaurant and kitchen incubator founded by Colletti in the MacArthur Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. Sandi Romero, the operational manager and "Mama" of the restaurant, offered her own words of affirmation for the work with Pasadena's homeless.

Others who spoke at the luncheon included City of Pasadena Housing Director Bill Huang; Pasadena Police Officer Victor Cass; Ruben Gallegos and Kitty Galt, a Pacific Clinics mental health outreach team working with the homeless; and several others. "The involvement of Fuller in this work has been a tremendous asset," Galt emphasized.

"Doing this gave me insights about those who are homeless," one of the student volunteers shared. "We're the same kind of people; we're just in different places." Said another: "It was eye-opening to interact and really see the human being in front of you."

BECKY STILL, Senior Writer/Editor