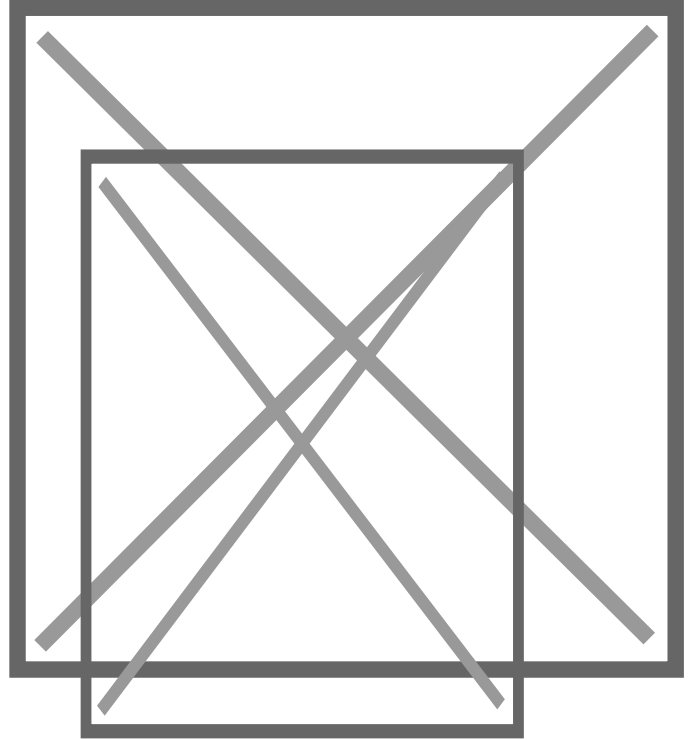


Army honors Mrs. Joan Kroc

by Kathy Lovin –



Joan Kroc hugs a child at the announcement of the original gift that was used for the Kroc Center in 1998.

On the day of the official announcement of Mrs. Joan Kroc's \$1.5 billion estate gift to The Salvation Army, the Ray and Joan Kroc Center in San Diego was the scene of wonderful celebration of Mrs. Kroc's life.

After the official announcement by the national commander, Commissioner W. Todd Bassett, at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., Sierra del Mar Divisional Commander Lt. Colonel Doug O'Brien kicked off the festivities in San Diego.

In front of a crowd that included Mrs. Kroc's family, her attorney, friends, former San Diego Mayor Maureen O'Connor, Kroc Center Advisory Council members, officers and staff, Territorial Commander Commissioner Linda Bond shared her fond remembrances of Mrs. Kroc and thanked everyone in attendance for nurturing Mrs. Kroc's vision and seeing it through to completion at the first—now flagship—Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center.

During a time of testimony about Mrs. Kroc, many shared their memories and impressions of her. Remembrances ranged from stories about her sparkling wit to serious reflections about what the San

Diego center has come to mean to those who use it. One woman tearfully talked about how much the swim team that she coaches has grown and improved since gaining access to the aquatic center. Members of her team have begun to beat records and some are even expected to qualify for the Olympic trials. Others talked of the Kroc Center as a safe haven and a second home for their kids.

A woman who serves on a committee at the Kroc Center told a story about a conversation she had with Mrs. Kroc about programs for seniors at the center. When Mrs. Kroc learned that some of the senior programs would be cut because of funding, she asked how much money was still needed. Then, Mrs. Kroc took out her checkbook and wrote out a check for the amount right there on the spot.

Another mother recounted that she brought her young son to the center for a visit. He asked where the chess club meets, but was disappointed to learn that the center didn't have one. Instead of turning him away empty-handed, the staff encouraged him to start a club of his own. Now there's a regular meeting of the chess club at the Kroc Center because of the dreams of one young boy and the staff's willingness to embrace the idea and empower him to do it.

Mrs. Kroc's daughter Linda talked to local media about her mother's generous spirit and her vision of "eliminating pain and creating peace" in the world. She said that the San Diego Kroc Center was her mother's "pride and joy" and the "perfect vehicle to express her vision." When asked why her mother chose to work with The Salvation Army, she said that there had been talk around the dinner table when her mother was young about how much the Army helped people in need during the Great Depression and that she'd always carried that impression.