

Rotarian honored for helping homeless mother get back on her feet



Susan Mosk holds the Belmont Rotarian of The Year Award, which was presented by Rotary District Governor Kamlesh Chandan, left, with Belmont Rotary President Whitney Norton. PROVIDED BY TED HALL

Ted Hall

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Two days before Christmas in 2021, Susan Mosk met for the first time a homeless mother and her five children who desperately needed a friend.

Mosk, who is a member of the Belmont Rotary Club, became that friend and has been the family's advocate, advisor, confidant and supporter for the past 15 months. In recognition of her real-life example of Rotary's motto to put "Service Above Self," Belmont Rotary Club has named her Rotarian of the Year for 2022-23.

The award was announced and presented by Rotary District Governor Kamlesh Chandan at a recent Belmont Rotary Club meeting.

"I was truly inspired listening to Susan's story," Chandan said. "Thank you for making a difference and creating hope in the world. We are proud to have you in Rotary."

Mosk's involvement in the crisis began when Hope United Survivor Net-

work arranged for the family to live temporarily at the Home2 Suites by Hilton, an extended stay hotel in Belmont, where a few months earlier Mosk had been hired as director of sales.

The family had endured years of seclusion enforced by a father who had died from COVID. Not knowing how to cope, the mother and children continued to live in isolation in a house without electricity or running water until foreclosure forced them out and social services workers arranged for their move to the hotel.

Mosk, herself a mother of three grown children, could not bear the family spending Christmas in a hotel room with no gifts. So, she reached out to her large network of friends. In her previous employment, she worked 15 years in leadership positions for the Gaston County Family YMCA, where she became district executive director responsible for all YMCA facilities and programs in Gaston County.

She turned first to a fellow Rotarian in

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the Belmont club and asked if he would be a secret Santa for the family. He immediately agreed and brought her gift cards totaling hundreds of dollars, with which Mosk purchased gifts of clothing and toys for every member of the family.

On Christmas Eve, Mosk and the hotel manager wrapped the presents and hid them in a housekeeping closet until delivering them to the family on Christmas morning.

The Christmas miracle was joyful, but Mosk knew the clock was ticking, because the hotel costs were covered for only a month. She turned again to her network, enlisting a dozen or more in the search for an apartment and a way to pay the rent.

Just before time ran out at the hotel, a suitable apartment was found, and a Belmont church Mosk had contacted used its crisis fund to pay the security deposit and first month's rent.

Another church welcomed the family into their congregation and began providing educational programs to help them with managing their finances and other living skills.

The Gaston County Soccer Association, of which Mosk was president, arranged a scholarship that allowed one of the children to play.

Belmont Rotary Club members organized a campaign to solicit, collect and deliver furniture, household products and supplies and everything else the family needed to furnish and occupy their apartment. Those unable to con-

tribute items gave gift cards and other financial contributions.

Mosk's husband, Doug Mosk, drove his truck and trailer to collect donated items and with the help of several Rotarians delivered and placed in the apartment beds, mattresses, tables, chairs and much more.

Soon after the mother of the family attended a Belmont Rotary Club meeting to express her appreciation, the club learned she was in danger of losing her new job because her car had broken down, and she had no money to have it repaired. Members reached for their wallets and in minutes put more than \$900 on a table to cover the repair costs.

Now, more than a year after their first meeting, Mosk remains in daily contact with the family. She's been instrumental in helping the mother find employment, assisting her with obtaining her late husband's benefits to which the family is entitled, and solving many other problems that arise in a family still learning how to cope on their own.

"Many people see a need and take action by writing a check or making a phone call," said Belmont Rotary Club President Whitney Norton. "But what Susan Mosk has done for this family is extraordinary because she follows through and goes, not just the extra mile, but all the way to get done whatever she sees that needs doing. Her dedication to this family is the embodiment of the Service Above Self motto to which all Rotarians adhere. And that is why Belmont Rotary Club chose her to receive the Rotarian of The Year Award."