



# St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services

*A full service retirement community*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services Welcomes Some of San Diego's Neediest Displaced Seniors**

**San Diego, CA October 25, 2007** – Fire evacuation from the comfort of your home to the floor of a high school gymnasium or the hallway of a stadium is difficult for anyone. But it's harder on seniors, especially those needing skilled nursing care or assistance with daily living.

Senior Beth Price was overcome with confusion when a Mt. Miguel Health Care Center she resided in was evacuated at 2:00am on Tuesday morning. "We didn't get much notice, I had time to grab my robe and that's it," said Price. "Then the attendants got us into wheelchairs and on the bus, I had no idea where we were going!" To add to her confusion, her husband, an independent resident, was not with her. Her step-daughter, Lucy Price, had originally heard that residents were relocated to Qualcomm Stadium, but Lucy could not find her step-mother there. Just before 9:00am, Lucy found her in a small room sectioned off for seniors with skilled nursing needs at San Diego High School. "I was so relieved to find my step-mother."

Lucy Price quickly realized the temporary accommodations at the high school were not equipped to care for her step-mother and other seniors. "The staff was trying to relocate my step-mother to sites around San Diego. Each time it was to a different place. I just couldn't leave her and go to work without knowing exactly what the next steps were. Soon we were told St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services had made additional beds available and you can't imagine how relieved I was."

Lucy talked with St. Paul's driver, Lupe Ferrell, who gave her directions and assured her that her step-mother would be well-cared for during the short trip to St. Paul's John A. McColl Family Health Center, a skilled nursing community located just a few short blocks from Balboa Park. Upon arrival Lucy says she was overwhelmed by the instant attention her step-mother and other seniors received.

"Each person was greeted by a staff member with warm, moist towels and drinks. They received fluids, food, were bathed and provided with clean clothes. Many were in bad shape. I saw nurses changing friends of my mother's who had been in a soiled state for some time. It's amazing to see how dedicated and caring the staff was. They were obviously prepared for an emergency."

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St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services' immediate response to the fires began on the morning of Monday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. All open beds at its skilled nursing community and open apartments at the Villa, its assisted living community, were held for any senior being displaced by the fires. At midnight on Monday, five of Mt. Miguel's most frail seniors were immediately transferred to the McColl Family Health Center and by dawn all available beds were full, which is quite a feat when considering the amount of paperwork and medical attention needed for admission to this type of facility.

Calls continued to flood St. Paul's Tuesday morning, so staff converted the dining room at its skilled nursing community into a make-shift overflow room and purchased additional medical beds, clothing, linens and supplies to accommodate the need. Thanks to the help of local companies like Eric's Medical Supply Inc. who provided 10 beds at ½ the normal cost, the room was up and running and St. Paul's accepted Beth Price and those who were still at the San Diego High School shelter.

“Our entire staff, from housekeeping to nursing, did a tremendous job of working together towards a common goal of helping displaced seniors find a warm, caring environment in the midst of a regional crisis,” said St. Paul's CEO Cheryl Wilson. “I'm very proud at how the team pulled everything together so quickly.”

A few hours later, buses carrying 22 additional seniors and their caregivers from the San Diego High School shelter arrived at St Paul's Villa, the organizations' assisted living community a few blocks away on Fourth Avenue. The seniors at the Villa had apartments, hot meals, warm beds, bathrooms, showers, and clothing provided. Additionally, they had all the amenities of St. Paul's Villa at their disposal: social activities, a big screen TV and DVD player, library, chapel, ballroom, etc. They also had a host of new friends and well-wishers in the permanent residents at the Villa. The St. Paul's Chaplain was also there to greet them.

With their family reunited again, Lucy Price and her father sat around the bed in the St. Paul's dining room chuckling about the confusion and joking with the St. Paul's staff about how they may never leave. Lucy Price was able to choose her bed and picked the one under a beautifully painted Mediterranean wall because it makes her smile, which is all one can ask for during a time of crisis.

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*St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services is a full service retirement provider, offering Independent, Assisted Living, and Skilled Nursing communities, as well as child and senior day care programs. Since opening its doors in 1960, St. Paul's remains an innovator in the San Diego community with a reputation for exceptional care.*