

## Garden Pathways

2008 *"Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"*

## Karen Brown



**Karen Brown** has a heart of deep compassion that reaches out to the hurting, the vulnerable, and, those who face unexpected challenges. She is a friend to the stranger, an embracer of the marginalized, and an unseen angel whose presence leaves a palpable impact.

Karen has chosen to rise above personal adversity and to translate pain into kindness towards others. Throughout the year, Karen generously provides meals for persons who are in need. The homeless become guests at a restaurant table or at a lavish holiday feast. Families joyously discover that an anonymous diner has paid their check.

Recently when a waitress asked which items a homeless man could order, Karen's granddaughter instinctively responded, "He can have whatever he wants. We do this all the time."

Karen actively participates in the Adopt-a Family and Hope Families programs that assist families in need with children's clothing and gifts, groceries, toiletries, and funeral expenses. Karen triumphs over her personal health challenges with lupus as she serves and generously supports diverse health causes. Through Karen's help with Small Miracles, families with children who are undergoing cancer treatment receive housing. Her involvement with Cars for Care provides support for crippled children. She assists burn victims and their families and sends kids who have been burned to camp. Karen's generosity of time and resources also benefits the initiatives St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Lupus Foundation, Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, March of Dimes, Bakersfield Memorial Hospital, and Optimal Hospice. Karen's heart of generosity extends to her church family at Valley Bible Fellowship and to those who serve our country and community, including veterans and search and rescue volunteers of the Kern County Sheriff's Department. Spurred by her own limited opportunities for education, Karen now encourages young people to pursue their education. She has devoted countless of volunteer hours of service to schools.

From humble beginnings, Karen feels blessed to be a successful business owner of Brown's Backhoe Service, Inc. In 2000, the excavation business received full certification as a Women's Business Enterprise by the Women Minority Business Enterprise Clearinghouse.

Karen has been married thirty-three years to her high school sweetheart, Butch. She is the proud mother of Angel and Matthew. Karen feels that one of her greatest accomplishments is the example she has set for her ten-year old granddaughter, Brittney, who donated her entire savings to Homeless Quarters during a school coin drive for homeless children. Karen rejoices that Brittney has learned to think of others before herself. Karen eagerly awaits the birth of her first grandson.