

EARTHQUAKE 1989 - SAN LORENZO VALLEY / SUMMIT

Activist keeps pantry open to quake victims

By Terri Morgan
Special to the Mercury News

Annette Marcum is a doer. After the Oct. 17th earthquake, the director of Valley Churches United in the San Lorenzo Valley began distributing checks to provide quake victims with emergency aid almost before the ground stopped shaking.

Now, when low-income families and the elderly need food and household supplies, Marcum and other volunteers at the churches' food pantry provide them with the goods free, along with any help they need to get their lives together.

So it should come as no surprise that two days after the Valley Churches United was handed a 30-day eviction notice, Marcum had another location lined up and had promises from county officials to cut through red tape that could have forced the pantry to close for six months.

SJM 8-3-90 B1

The new site is two blocks away from the old pantry, and Marcum does not anticipate any break.

"Stopping our operation would hurt the people who depend on us," Marcum said. "We serve 680 households each month, in addition to 40 seniors who come in each Friday for groceries."

The nationally recognized food pantry, which served as a model for other pantries in Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties, opened in 1982 after torrential storms wreaked havoc throughout the San Lorenzo Valley and other parts of the county. The pantry was moved to its present Highway 9 location next to the Ben Lomond Super Market in April 1987.

The organization was given its eviction notice Tuesday, because Ron Clements — who owns both the supermarket and the food pantry building — is preparing to ex-

See ACTIVIST, Page 2B

derwater canyon on Moss Land- gingerly placed it in a holding isn't known to threaten people. to open in January 1991.

Activist's effort keeps pantry open for quake victims

ACTIVIST, from Page 1B

pand his grocery store. He plans to tear down the food pantry building and use the site for a parking lot.

Marcum, who had been shopping for a location since Clements announced his plans several months ago, began searching in earnest. By Thursday morning, she had most of the pieces in place, and took Valley Churches United board

of directors on a tour of the new site, also owned by Clements. Located at the corner of Fillmore and Highway 9, the new site is a vacant lot that now houses a recycling center.

Marcum has arranged to move a 24-by-10-foot modular trailer and a storage shed on the property to house the food pantry. She has also elicited promises from Santa Cruz

County Supervisor Fred Keeley, whose district includes the San Lorenzo Valley, to process a use permit — which is necessary for operation — by the end of the month. Keeley will also ask the county to waive its permit fees.

Normally such a permit takes six months or more to acquire, and without a permit, the food pantry would have been forced to shut down.

"The new location is right on the bus line," said Marcum, "and there will be no break in services."

Despite the pending move, Marcum had nothing but praise for her old landlord.

"He's been a jewel," she said. "How many other grocery store owners would allow a giveaway grocery store to operate in their building?"