

# Capitola budget keeps funding levels intact

By **DONNA KIMURA**

Sentinel staff writer

**CAPITOLA** — Caroline Bliss-Isberg has been before every city council in the county in the past two weeks, seeking a rare commodity: money for local non-profit agencies.

"For every \$1, you get \$99 of service," she told the Capitola City Council on Thursday.

It was another stop on this year's long Human Care Alliance tour.

Bliss-Isberg is chairwoman of the alliance, a group of 77 agencies that provide services to seniors, children, the poor and the disabled in Santa Cruz County.

As it considered its 1993-94 budget Thursday, the Capitola council promised to give 26 agencies \$199,944 next year.

Next year's budget plan is a no-frills package.

It provides for the same services as this year, according to City Manager Steve Burrell.

The city, he said, is anticipating a loss of about \$60,000 in state funding next year.

The groups that were funded this year will receive the same amount in 1993-94, voted the council in approving a \$8.3 million budget.

In addition, three new groups will get a hand from Capitola.

The Doran Resource Center for the Blind and the Seniors Council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties will each receive \$1,500, and the Family Service Association of Santa Cruz will receive \$1,000 for suicide prevention.

Funding for the Legal Aid Soci-

ety of Santa Cruz County, however, is still in question. Legal Aid, which provides free legal services to the poor, received \$3,000 this year from the city.

Mayor Ron Graves said he wanted to fund the three new groups with the money proposed for Legal Aid, which has been hit with recent criticism that have ranged from taking unreasonable positions in landlord-tenant cases to violating a contract with the county for advising on small claims matters.

Inquiries by two separate county grand juries, complaints to the state Bar Association and Municipal Court and the federal Legal Services Corp. have turned up no legal violations.

The council deadlocked 2-2 on funding Legal Aid. Graves and Bob Bucher voted to turn the agency's allotted amount over to the new groups.

"Where there's smoke, there's usually fire," Graves alleged.

Margaret Fabrizio and Jerry Clarke voted to support all of the agencies. Vice Mayor Mick Routh was absent.

The council agreed to discuss funding Legal Aid at another meeting.

More than 600 children and families will receive services from the agencies that were supported, said alliance leaders.

The largest contribution of \$88,944 went to Food & Nutrition Services, which is responsible for a wide variety of programs in the county, including Meals on Wheels and the city's senior dining program at Jade Street Park.