

805

LIVING

**GIVE
THANKS,
GIVE
BACK**



Elemental Good Deeds

Giving thanks to those whose work goes back to the basics.

Helping others is part of being human, as basic, perhaps, as the four elements that the ancients thought made up the world.

Earth, Air, Fire, and **Water** are all part of life in the 805 area in different ways. This year, as part of our yearly focus on giving back, we're grateful for four groups whose work is, in a way, elemental.

BY **JOAN TAPPER** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **GARY MOSS**

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Taking to the Air

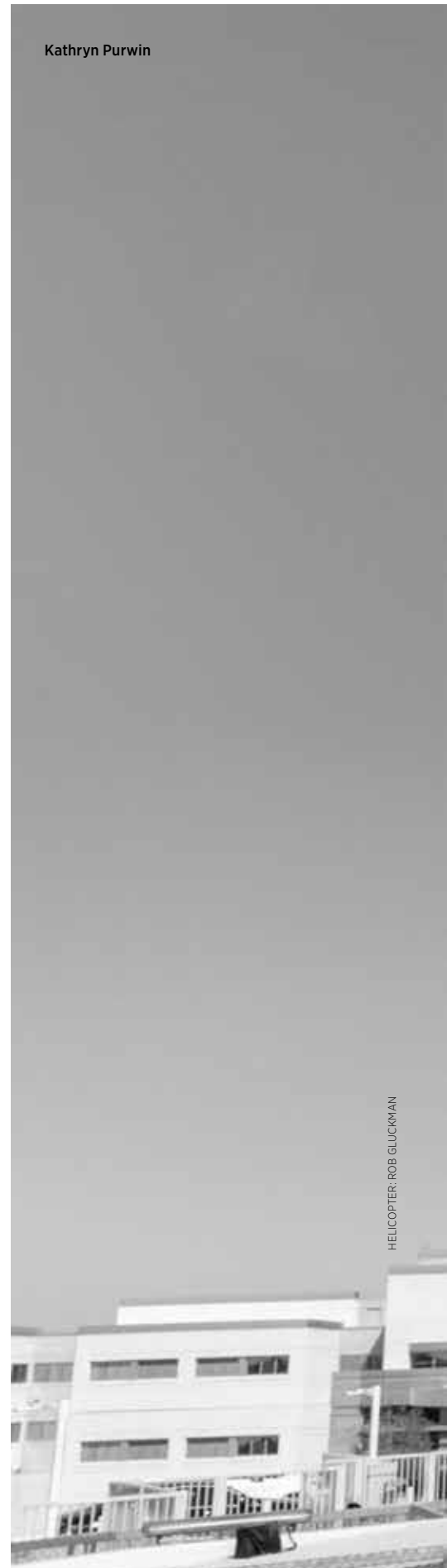
The year was 1999, and the nurse in charge of the emergency transport program at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), which treats roughly 4,000 kids from the Conejo Valley annually, saw a need for change. Judy Sherif wasn’t satisfied with the hospital’s contracted helicopter service, which wouldn’t pick up uninsured patients, among other issues. Sherif, a recreational pilot herself, approached Alan Purwin, then CEO of Helinet Aviation (helinet.com) at the Van Nuys Airport, and explained the problem. She found a sympathetic ear.

Kathryn Purwin, Alan’s widow, who succeeded him as CEO in 2016, remembers, “Alan and I made the decision to donate a Sikorsky S76 helicopter to the hospital. Later we added a second helicopter.” Both transports came with a long-term commitment to be responsible for pilots, maintenance, insurance, and fuel.

“Helinet is a diverse company,” adds Purwin, whose business includes movie and television production, contracts for medical services for other hospitals in Los Angeles, electronic news gathering for networks, and luxurious executive charters. “We thought, yes, this is our opportunity to give back to the community. We have four pilots [out of 25] that are Children’s pilots, and those are the jobs everyone wants. They work seven days on, seven off, in 12-hour shifts. They are our most experienced pilots.”

Helinet averages 450 transports to CHLA a year, picking up patients from Bakersfield to San Diego. “There are quite a few from Los Robles [hospital in Thousand Oaks],” she adds. “The Sikorsky helicopters are big and powerful with room for medical equipment. When we get a call, we go to CHLA, pick up a two- or three-person medical team, then go get the kid, and return to CHLA.”

The program, recently renamed the Alan Purwin Emergency Transport Program, “is part of Alan’s legacy, and what he really loved,” she says. “I’m determined to make sure it continues.”



HELICOPTER: ROB GLUCKMAN

