

Orthodontist raises money for smiles

HE IS HELPING CHANGE THE WORLD one smile at a time.

San Ramon orthodontist **Sandy Bigman** once again was able to make a donation to the Smile Train, which is dedicated to helping millions of children across the world who have cleft lip and palate.

Bigman recently held a roller skating party at Golden Skate in San Ramon as a fundraiser for the Smile Train. More than 600 of his patients and their families and friends came to have fun at the '70s disco-theme party and donated



MONICA LANDER
Around San Ramon

\$1,045 to this worthy cause. Bigman matched the amount raised that night and donated a total of \$2,090 to the Smile

Train — enough to provide surgery for eight children.

This is the third year Bigman's office has contributed to the Smile Train, donating a total of almost \$5,000 to the organization. Begun in 1999, the Smile Train empowers local doctors and hospitals in developing countries to help the children in their communities. The Smile Train can provide cleft palate surgery for about \$250 and in about 45 minutes.

More than 35,000 children in 50 countries receive free cleft surgery annually thanks to the generous support and do-

nations of individuals and organizations. In addition to disco music and lots of skating, Bigman's party featured jewelry beading, colored hair spray and food.

"We love working on this program because we feel that we are really making a difference in someone's life," Bigman said. "When you look at these before and after pictures you can see how awful it must be to live with a cleft. This program really made all of us realize how lucky we are and it made us want to pitch in and help. Even if we are only able

to help one child, it is worth it."

All the money raised by Bigman, his team and his patients will go directly to treatment programs at the Smile Train and zero percent to administration or overhead. Smile Train board members pay for all non-program expenses.

Support for the Smile Train is just one of the many ways Bigman gets involved in his community where he has lived and worked for the past 18 years. He annually raises money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation through his Halloween Candy Buy-Back; collects money and canned food for the Contra Costa Food Bank at his annually hosted Talent Show; and each spring his Bollinger Canyon Road office is filled with bouquets of daffodils as a representative for the American Cancer Society's "Daffodil Days" campaign. He and his employees also take part in fund-raising walk-a-thons and sponsoring several local schools and sports teams.

For more information about the Smile Train, visit www.smiletrain.org.

VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL NEEDED for the annual Hats Off America Red T-Shirt 10K Run/5K Walk, to be held Saturday, Sept. 9 at the Sycamore Valley Park at 2101 Holbrook Drive in Danville.

The event, held rain or

shine, raises awareness and money for the Hats Off America, a nonprofit organization that raises money for families of soldiers who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Run/Walk is one way Hats Off America lets the families know that their loved ones will not be forgotten.

Volunteers are needed as spotters and to pass out water during the event. All runners and volunteers will receive a red T-shirt and a barbecue lunch following the event. The entry fee for runners is \$35.

Created by **Sparky George**, owner of San Ramon's Classic Car Auto Restoration and Repair, several Hats Off America fund-raising events will be held during the coming new year.

George, a Vietnam veteran and the "Bear Flag Runner" of Danville, has been running six miles a night, five days a week, with a five-pound weight since Sept. 15, 2002, in honor of the service personnel being deployed in Iraq.

For information, contact Sparky at 925-855-1950 or thebearflagrunner@yahoo.com. For information about Hats Off America, visit www.hatsoffamerica.us.

Reach Monica Lander at 925-743-2205, or c/o the Times, P.O. Box 68, Danville, CA 94526, or mmmlander@netzero.net