

MissionViejoPatch

Heartwarmer: Original Mission Viejo Resident Helps Needy, Wins Award

For Orange County's hungry, Jan Brick has been a comfort. And now she's an award-winner, too.

By **Peter Schelden** | [Email the author](#) | 6:00am

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Jan Brick spent 42 years in Mission Viejo and sent all nine of her kids to Mission Viejo High School. When they flew the coop, Brick started volunteering, and now at age 78 she's won an award.

Brick was one of the original homeowners when Mission Viejo houses were first being sold.

"We kind of stayed put," she said. "We had a big family, and we're in a great location, close to three schools. It worked out real good."

Her children grew up, and Brick lent a hand with grandbabies. She has 22 of them now, plus eight great-grandkids.

When her grandchildren started to go to school, Brick picked up an ad that had been nagging at her. It was asking for volunteers for South County Outreach, a group that now feeds more than 600 needy families a month in Orange County.

"I saw a little ad—and I mean little—in the paper one day," she said. "The first time I saw it, I put it by the cupboard by the phone. The second time I thought, 'I'm going to do it.' And I just did."

She started with one four-hour shift a week. Now Brick gives three full workdays a week to SCO, working in the pantry sorting food.

"I won't deny it—it is a lot of work," she said. "There's always something to do."

She helps stock the shelves where those in need browse for food, sometimes. But mostly she sorts through shipments of food, preparing carts according to the size of a family.

Mostly she never sees the people she's helping. But there are a few regulars, she said. They get a hug if Brick is at the front of the store.

But more often than not, she says, she's in the back talking to fellow volunteers and sorting food.

So it came as quite a surprise when [O'Connor Mortuary](#) recently named Brick its monthly Heart and Soul Award winner.

"I was excited but kind of humbled," she said. "I can think of a whole lot of other people who could have an award, too. We all work hard, and we all work together. It's work, but we have a good time, too."

