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## Wanted: Men who give a damn

### Grass-roots movement has one goal: doing good

By Kyle Jorrey

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**GRATEFUL**—Matt Coulter, executive director of The Young and The Brave Foundation, a charity that helps cancer patients pay medical bills, accepts a \$10,000 check June 1 from 100 Men Who Give a Damn at the group's first meeting at Sherwood Lake Club in Thousand Oaks. The group will meet quarterly to donate money to a charity selected by members. Photos by KYLE JORREY/Acorn Newspapers

Women Who Care.

"The whole point is that it's a non-organization," said Sherwood resident Tadd Ekstrand, who brought the concept to the Conejo. "If we started a 501(c) 3 we'd have to have a board, we'd have to hold meetings, and a lot of people you see here tonight are busy running their own businesses . . . so it's just 100 guys getting together for one hour to do some good, and having some fun doing it."

As the mostly male group gathered on the patio of the Sherwood Lake Club overlooking the pool, Nathan Stockmeir shot straight from the hip.

"You know the saying 'It's not our first rodeo?'" he said through a microphone. "Well, it is."

Stockmeir, vice president of operations for Sherwood Development Company, is one of the founders of the Conejo Valley chapter of 100 Men Who Give a Damn, which met for the first time June 1. And despite Stockmeir's cautionary words, the event went off without a hitch.

A loosely organized philanthropic movement sweeping the country, the 100 Men concept is simple: no board of directors, no politics, just giving. It's an offshoot of 100



**KICK OFF**—Tadd Ekstrand, one of the founders of 100 Men Who Give a Damn Conejo Valley, speaks during the group's inaugural meeting last Thursday. Ekstrand is a 2007 graduate of



**MAKING HIS CASE—David Hincapie makes his five-minute pitch for The Jonas Project, a nonprofit based out of Long Beach that helps military veterans seeing to start their own business. Hincapie was born and raised in Los Angeles and served in the Army from 2009 to 2012. He is now a sergeant in the Army Reserve. KYLE JORREY/Acorn Newspapers**

Following the 100 Men blueprint, members will meet quarterly to donate to a single charity selected after three nonprofits make five-minute pitches to the group (no PowerPoints allowed). With the 100 members pledging \$100 each, the goal is to give the winning charity \$10,000.

**Oaks Christian and the CEO of an Agoura Hills-based financial management firm.**

At last week's kickoff meeting behind the gates at Sherwood, the most votes went to Ventura-based The Young and The Brave Foundation, which helps young adults, children and families diagnosed with all forms of cancer.

"It's a big deal," Matt Coulter, the foundation's co-founder and executive director, said of the \$10,000 donation. "We really work to make sure that every penny that comes in really counts, and this is a lot of pennies."

Coulter's nonprofit came out on top over two challengers: the Southeast Ventura County YMCA and The Jonas Project, an organization dedicated to helping military veterans launch and expand their own businesses. Both organizations will be invited to return to a future 100 Men event, Ekstrand said.

Ronnie Stone, Southeast YMCA CEO, said the sting of not receiving the big check was lightened by the quality time he and Megan Glynn, the Y's recently hired senior director of advancement, spent with a roomful of potential donors.

"See all these people? There's more than enough people here to help support all of these causes," he said. "This is an opportunity to tell people what we do."

Glynn, who made a pitch for the Y's new water safety initiative, said she didn't mind being one of the only women in the room.

"I love it," she said. "I can hang with the guys."

Before voting, members spoke individually with representatives of the nonprofits while they dined on appetizers and sipped from glasses of wine, beer and scotch, all donated.

Ekstrand, a 2007 graduate of Oaks Christian High School, is no stranger to philanthropy. His fiancée, Morgan Evans, is a close associate of Dole CEO David Murdock. The pair has helped the local billionaire put on fundraisers for organizations like the YMCA, Bethany Christian School and Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Ekstrand said.

After hearing about the 100 Men concept from an employee, Ekstrand, CEO of Invictus Asset Management in Agoura Hills, turned to social media—and to his contacts at Sherwood—to organize a local chapter. Last week's inaugural gathering included about 75 members, most of whom knew Ekstrand personally.

“If we can get over 200 members, then we can do a first, second and third prize,” he said.

Which organizations get a chance to talk to the men depends on the members themselves and a little bit of luck.

“When a member signs up, they’re allowed to nominate three charities, then we just put them all in a hat and pick three,” Ekstrand said.

Though the goal is to support charities that serve the Conejo Valley, the group isn’t being overly restrictive. The Jonas Project, for example, is based in Long Beach but supports troops nationwide.

The next meeting of 100 Men Who Give A Damn is scheduled to take place in September at a still-to-be determined location. Ekstrand is looking for a venue willing to donate space, with the goal being to keep costs to a bare minimum so every dollar raised can go to charity.

To become a member, go to [www.100menconejovalley.com](http://www.100menconejovalley.com). The only requirement to join is a commitment of \$400 for the year, which will go directly to the charities.

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