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## Pizarro: Valley community digs deep for hit-run victims' families

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Tragedy often brings communities together, and that has been the case this month for the community near Stevens Creek Boulevard and Cypress Avenue.

**Oralia Puga Ramirez** and **Enedina Oliva** were killed in a hit-and-run on Aug. 9 near the intersection, which is close to **Kirk Vartan**'s A Slice of New York pizzeria. When he read that their families were having financial problems, he taped up a 12-pack soda box to gather donations from nearby businesses.

The owner of the Quiznos sandwich shop opened his register and some customers stuffed in some bills, too. Workers at Arby's - whose manager translated Vartan's plea into Spanish - also donated. The Audi dealership let Vartan talk to customers and workers.

"People who probably could not afford to give anything gave what they could," Vartan said. "We even got a \$100 gift from a local store."

As of Thursday, he'd collected \$1,700 and says he'll keep collecting even after he presents the families with the donations this weekend.

**REMEMBERING KATRINA** : To mark the third anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, San Jose State University students Thursday planted 1,800 white flags on the wide lawn near the statue of **Tommie**

**Smith** and **John Carlos** in remembrance of the disaster's victims.

Students from the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project will also be hosting a community forum at 3 p.m. Sunday with Katrina survivors and Assemblywoman **Sally Lieber** .

The event - co-sponsored by the San Jose/Silicon Valley NAACP, the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley and Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County - will take place on the second floor of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library.

**BAGGING SOME RESIDENTS** : Axis, one of San Jose's high-rise condo developments, has a clever marketing idea to bring in some potential residents and show off one of the features of the downtown neighborhood.

On Fridays through Dec. 19, people who take tours of the units will get an Axis-emblazoned tote bag that's perfect for shopping at the San Pedro Square Farmers Market (which also runs through Dec. 19).

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