

Youths distribute handmade angels

Correctional facility students make, distribute angel ornaments for patients in local hospitals.

By **EUGENE W. FIELDS**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

ORANGE • It took 18-year-old Adrian Aguilar three hours to make the stained glass, 24-karat-gold-plated angel ornament. But it took him less than two minutes to give it away Monday.

Aguilar and five other students from Rio Contiguo School delivered 35 handmade ornaments to patients at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange.

This is the fourth year that students from the youth correctional facility, in Santa Ana, have joined with Angels of Love Ministry to make and to distribute the ornaments at St. Joseph and other local hospitals.

Rick Cryder, the founder of Angels of Love, said the project helps the patients by encouraging them, and it helps the students by showing them a life outside of substance abuse.

"We want to be able to change the mindsets of the kids, so they see others in a different light," Cryder said.

The students went to rooms, knocked on the doors and gave a short speech before delivering the ornaments.

"It took us three hours to make this," Aguilar said. "This is a random act of



Trudy Chatham, 85, of Orange admires a stained-glass angel ornament given to her by Adrian Aguilar.

kindness."

Aguilar has been at Rio Contiguo for the past seven months and is scheduled to be released in two weeks. He said he volunteered to build and distribute the ornaments, because he wanted to pay back society for his former drug usage.

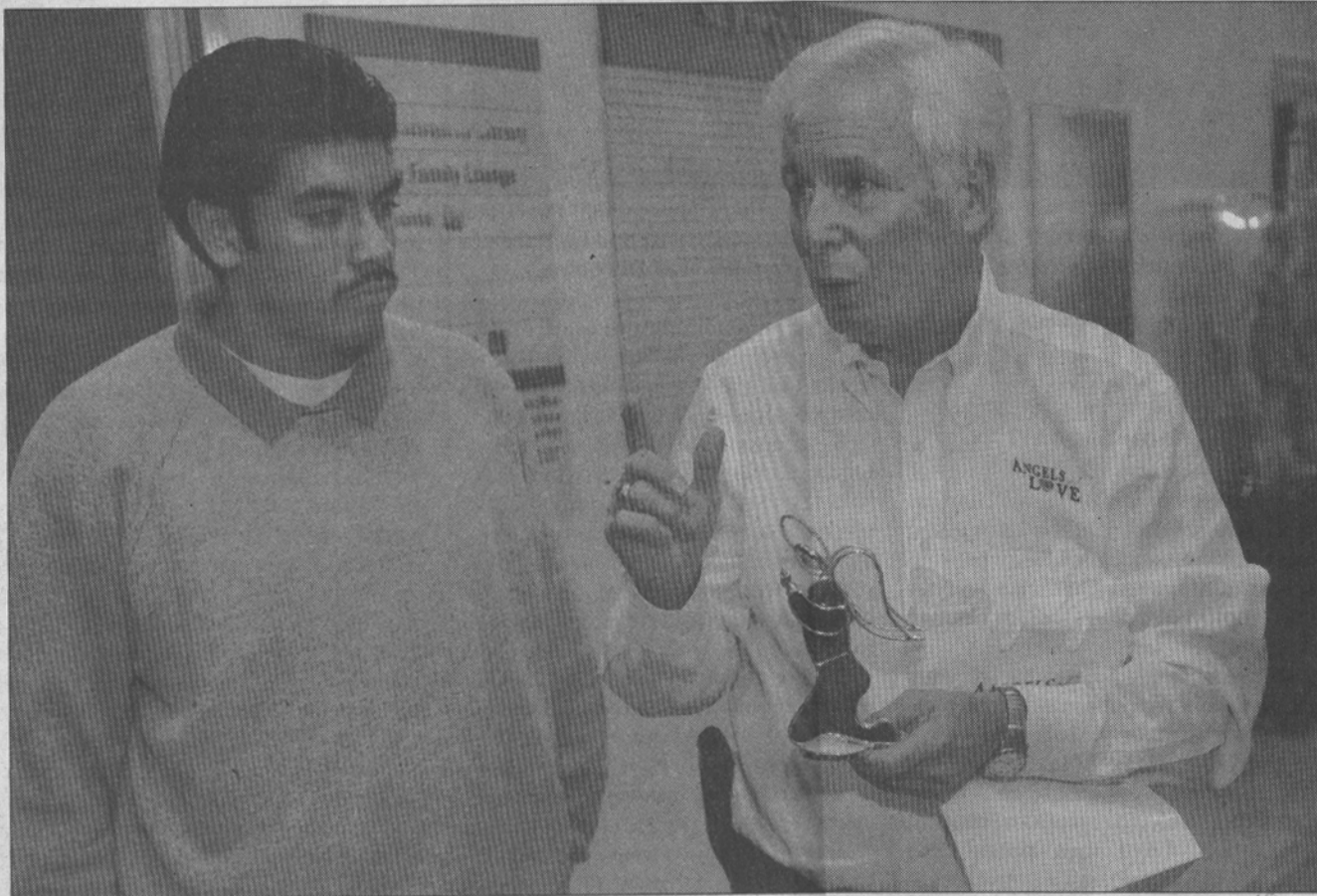
"It's helping to change my ways," Aguilar said. "I want to make a difference."

Trudy Chatman was one of the patients whom Aguilar visited. Chatman, who was celebrating her 85th birthday with her family and friends, said she was overwhelmed by the gift.

"This is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen," Chatman said about the ornament. "They were darling kids."

Cryder said the group plans to come back to St. Joseph today with members of the Sheriff's Department and deliver 100 more ornaments.

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PHOTOS: ANA VENEGAS, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Rick Cryder of Orange, right, creator of Angels of Love, advises Adrian Aguilar and other students of Rio Contiguo School, a correctional facility, on how to deliver their 35 hand-made ornaments to patients at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Adrian Aguilar, 18, pushes a cart with angels ornaments thorough the halls of St. Josephs in Orange.



Family and friends of Trudy Chatham, an oncology patient, watch Rio Contiguo School students give her an ornament. She turned 85 Monday.