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Packs recognized for efforts

Couple honored with Spirit Award

By Simon Read, STAFF WRITER

LIVERMORE – The parents of the two Danville children killed in a hit-and-run accident last year accepted recognition from the state Legislature on Friday for their efforts in making local streets safer.

Assemblyman Guy Houston, R-Livermore, presented Bob and Carmen Pack with a resolution acknowledging the activism they have undertaken in the wake of their tragedy to prevent a similar reoccurrence.

The Packs' only children, Troy, 10, and Alana, 7, were killed on Camino Tassajara in Danville on Oct. 26, 2003, on their way to get ice cream. The driver, Jimena Barreto, 45, currently is awaiting trial on felony counts of vehicular manslaughter.

The professional nanny and Walnut Creek resident has two prior driving-under-the-influence convictions and was driving on a suspended license, court records said.

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Houston had sent the Packs two U.S. flags that recently flew above the



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state Capitol in honor of their children. The Packs said they are having two specially crafted boxes built to store them in. Each box will be placed in Troy and Alana's bedroom.

The couple met the assemblyman at his Livermore office and expressed their gratitude for Houston's political support and discussed their legislative hopes.

"Nothing will ever be able to compensate you for what happened," Houston told them, "but we all support what it is you are doing."

With the backing of state Senators Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, and Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough, the Packs introduced five bills last month targeting high-risk DUI offenders.

Next week, the Packs will meet with Torlakson's staff to discuss promoting the bills and planning ways to gather support, Bob Pack said. In mid-April, the couple will be in Sacramento to address senators who will decide if the bills go forward.

"Hopefully, the bills will go to the Senate and, later this year, make their way to the governor," Pack said.

The proposed legislation has multiple objectives. It seeks better tracking of those who drive drunk, and calls for more severe penalties and stringent rehabilitation programs for those who do.

One bill in particular, SB 1694, would eliminate the state's seven-year statute of limitations on previous DUI offenses. Current law dictates a person arrested for driving drunk more than seven years ago can escape the penalties re- quired for multiple offenders on their next offense.

"When an offender goes before a judge, we want the judge to see the whole person," Pack said. "If a judge sees this is a person's third, sixth or 10th offense, something can be done about it. The question has to be asked: When is enough?"

The Packs' activism has resulted in their being honored with a 2004 Exemplary Spirit Award by the East Bay Leadership Foundation.

Because of their efforts, a paved pathway is being built 100 yards off Camino Tassajara. It will connect Diablo Vista Middle School with local shopping and housing developments, providing children a safe place to walk.

In his discussion with Houston, Pack acknowledged opposition the bills may face.

"We are all for the liberties people are meant to have, and those liberties include access to alcohol and medication," he said. "But we have lost our only two children ..."

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