

SEASON OF CARING

Couple back where it all began

Laughter and a helping hand helped the Rosados get through Hurricane Katrina.

By **COURTNEY BACALSO**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Philip Rosado paid a dollar to a man sitting outside a Northern California grocery store to get the name of the beautiful 18-year-old woman he noticed.

Then he called out to her as if he knew her, and they chatted.

"It was a small town so I figured he could've known me," she says now, laughing. "He never told me the truth about our meeting until after we were married."

That was more than 40 years ago.

Since then, the Rosados have been through "hell and back."

Twelve days before Hurricane Katrina slammed into Gulfport, Miss., the couple packed their clothes into their 1990 Honda Accord.

They only had the clothes and hope for a better life in California – the place they met.

Philip and Carolyn Rosado received comfort, food and shelter – all they needed for a new start – with the help of the

Orange Rescue Mission.

The mission is one of 23 organizations in Orange County that are part of The Orange County Register's Season of Caring campaign, which will match contributions from readers until Jan. 7.

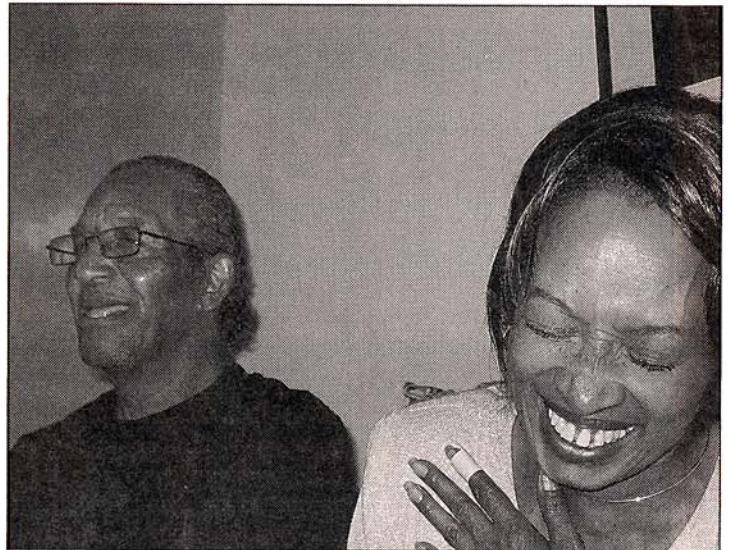
"The moment we arrived, they made things so easy for us," Carolyn Rosado, 59, says. "They were so organized and ready to help."

She found out about the Rescue Mission through the Red Cross.

When they arrived at the Operation Drop-In Center, stations had been set up. They were given brand-new clothing and gift cards for gas, phone, groceries and food.

The Rosados found temporary shelter at an Extended Stay America funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency just in time for the holidays.

"The Rescue Mission gave us boxes with food for our Thanksgiving meal," Carolyn Rosado says of the mission. The Rosados were able to find a permanent residence in Anaheim by January.



COURTNEY BACALSO, THE REGISTER

THANKFUL: Days before Hurricane Katrina hit, Philip and Carolyn Rosado fled Gulfport, Miss., and headed to California, the place they met, in hopes of a better life.

Carolyn Rosado began working.

The mission's Kingston Graduated Rental Assistance Program has helped the couple maintain a stable living situation.

But in June, Philip Rosado, 65, was diagnosed with prostate cancer and began a 28-day radiation regimen.

"It's been tough. The rescue mission helped us out when they found out through neighbors that we were struggling.

They help pay for things without us knowing until afterwards," Carolyn Rosado says.

Despite their experiences, the Rosados still have one another.

Philip Rosado drives his wife to and from work. He even brings her home-cooked lunch just to spend more time with her.

They also keep their spirits up through laughter, often retelling the story of their first encounter.