

# Community MATTERS



COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION

## Wesley Palms water bottle initiative made possible by Foundation support



*Wesley Palms residents received their water bottles and had an opportunity to say hello to Foundation philanthropy officers Jackie Smith and Keith Church. Pictured from left: Jackie Smith, Beth Coyle, and Keith Church.*

they were also going through a lot of disposable water bottles. He learned that the community was going through 40 cases of 48 water

**Water bottle initiative continues on page 2**

Wesley Palms is transforming its approach to water consumption with help from the Front Porch Communities Foundation. During COVID-19, Wesley Palms began distributing disposable water bottles. “It was culturally built in for a few years that you would pop by the front desk and ask for a water bottle,” Wesley Palms Executive Director Justin Weber shared. “Or ask for a couple of water bottles after you left the dining room.” One afternoon, a Wesley Palms resident asked Justin why this was the community’s practice. Prompted by this question, Justin began to notice that, though there were residents and staff using reusable water bottles and mugs,

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### Snapshots



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bottles a week, which worked out to 92,160 water bottles a year. “That just seemed outlandish,” Justin pointed out.

Working together with staff, Justin and his team began to brainstorm alternatives that could cut down on the disposable plastic being used by the community. “What if we got every resident a reusable water bottle, something that they could carry around and fill up,” the team asked. This idea fit well with an initiative that had already begun, replacing water fountains with bottle refilling stations.

“We had several water fountains on each of our floors, and we were replacing those with water bottle refillers,” Justin noted. Water fountains were starting to go out of practice after COVID so the team was already in process to upgrade to the water bottle refill stations. These additions worked perfectly with the reusable water bottle idea.



*Pictured above: Barbara Radcliffe*

The water bottle project was also an opportunity to partner with the Foundation. One of the Foundation funds is the Wesley Palms Community Discretionary Fund. These funds had been raised from residents and family members to support needs at the community. Justin was able to use a portion of these funds to provide every resident with a reusable water bottle. Featuring the Wesley Palms and Front Porch Communities Foundation logos, the water bottles provided a great opportunity to not only cut down on plastic at Wesley Palms, but also spread awareness about the Foundation.

“Witnessing the residents’ forward-thinking approach was inspiring and it was an honor to be part of the project,” noted Jackie Smith, Foundation associate philanthropy officer. “Their commitment to having a meaningful impact on the environment is a testament to their vision for a better future. Together, we are cultivating a legacy of responsibility and care for generations to come.”

The next important step was figuring out how to distinguish each resident’s water bottle so they wouldn’t get mixed up. “We did a little bit of research and we found a paint marker that is supposedly a permanent way you can mark the water bottles,” Justin noted. Wesley Palms held events where residents could pick up their water bottle, label it and get introduced to the community’s plan for how to use the bottles to cut down on plastic usage. “We know it’s going to be a little bit of a process,” Justin admitted, considering the plastic water bottles were “culturally built in for a few years” but he’s optimistic about the process. “I am proud of it,” Justin noted. “Our community is coming together, and people are putting their actions where their thoughts are and that takes effort.” Together, the Wesley Palms community and the Front Porch Communities Foundation are finding a way to positively transform the community’s culture around waste. ●



*Front Porch Chief Advancement Officer Mary McMullin (second from right) joined a table of donors and thought leaders at San Francisco Towers at this year's Circle of Friends dinner, raising awareness of the need to support neighbors who have outlived their resources.*

## Leadership Corner

# Shining Light on Leadership

As Front Porch continues our strategic journey, we prioritize leadership as fundamental to our success now and in the future. We define leadership as “Inspiring people working together to make a difference in the world.” While this is aspirational and broad, we are able to link our leadership approach and our core values in practices that are measurable and significant.

There are so many ways people throughout Front Porch and the Front Porch Communities Foundation are working together to make a difference. Recently, the Celtic Cup provided needed funds donated from golfers and our business partners for Community Services to lead work to alleviate loneliness and provide housing matches that benefit older people. Our Circle of Friends events this year included new locations and

raised even more awareness of the need to support neighbors who have outlived their assets. Philanthropy Week activities in three communities brought residents together to learn about opportunities where their leadership makes a difference.

The Foundation influences leadership development in a crucial way through our scholarship programs that inspire and enrich our staff. This significant educational support is one key to building and retaining a vibrant staff that can continue to lead Front Porch into the future.

Memory Bridge is a gift provided to the Foundation that engages staff and residents through education on dementia. As Front Porch adds more Summer House memory care neighborhoods to our communities, we are ever more

aware of the need to lead staff, residents and families through the twists and turns of living with dementia. Memory Bridge provides important insight for this journey.

Team members from the Foundation regularly meet with residents, donors and representatives from organizations who provide grants to share needs and prospects for providing meaningful support, whether for older people or emerging leaders throughout Front Porch. It is this constant and consistent consciousness raising that will make a difference in the world, and we invite more involvement and creative approaches to help achieve our audacious goals.

Mary McMullin  
Chief Advancement Officer  
Front Porch ●

# Celtic Cup 2024: partnering to support older adults in need

Community friends and business partners joined Front Porch Communities Foundation again this year for the 13th Annual Celtic Cup Golf Tournament to raise funds to further the impact of Front Porch's Community Services division, which primarily serves isolated and low-income older adults living in the community at large. Community Services focuses on four areas of impact: food security, stable housing, creative engagement, and social connection.

This year's golfers enjoyed the challenging course and the expansive views of the San Francisco Bay from the Berkeley Country Club. Following

the tournament, golfers joined with Front Porch team members, board members, vendors, industry professionals, and community members for a lively reception and Community Services presentation. Speakers included Community Services participants whose lives have been directly impacted by these Front Porch programs.

Gary Calhoun and Debbie Zike met through Home Match, a Front Porch program that connects those seeking housing with older adults who have extra space in their homes. Gary shared, "Before Home Match, I was living on the streets, fighting a war in my daily life. When I heard about this program, I thought it was a joke

at first, it felt too good to be true. Moving into Debbie's house has saved my life."

Anabella Denisoff, a participant in many of Front Porch's connection and creative aging programs, shared, "Well Connected Español was a lifeline for me during the pandemic, as a blind person who can't leave the house much on my own. It has continued to enrich my life, and I encourage you all to support this cause that means so much to so many."

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported this year's Celtic Cup to advance Front Porch's Community Services programs, and a special thanks





*Opposite: A team of golfers celebrates a great shot on the course at Berkeley Country Club. Above, clockwise from left: Charlie Davis, San Francisco Towers dining director, joined the foursome for Morrison Community Living. Golfers Sean and Bill Hung head out for a fun day on the course. Home Match participants Debbie Zike and Gary Calhoun share how the program changed their lives with Celtic Cup attendees.*

to this year’s sponsors for their generosity. Fifteen sponsors were acknowledged as “founding sponsors,” having been supporters of the event since its inception in 2012. A new sponsor joined in this year, Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, an insurance provider for Front Porch.

Rafael Haciski, Vice President for commercial insurance at JKJ, shared this reflection after the event: “At Johnson, Kendall &

Johnson, we are fortunate to work with many not-for-profit senior living and human service organizations across the country, and as such, we’re fully aware of how vital philanthropic support from business partners is to continually sustain and improve the mission. The Celtic Cup was the perfect opportunity to bring all of Front Porch’s supporters together, not only to network and share in the collective vision and success stories, but to hear

directly from those who are benefiting from Front Porch’s services. That said, my favorite part of the event was when we all got to hear from Gary and learn how Home Match changed his life and put him on a path to success, while simultaneously having a positive impact on his ‘new’ housemate, Debbie. It is moments like these where we look at one another and proclaim, ‘this is why we do what we do!’” ●

The Celtic Cup has been a beloved tradition for business partners, staff and friends of Front Porch in Northern California for over a decade. Front Porch Communities Foundation is pleased to announce that the 14th Celtic Cup will be coming to Southern California in 2026! We look forward to having ongoing and new supporters join us for a day of fun, food, and golf that makes a difference at La Cañada Flintridge Country Club in April 2026. Stay tuned for more details, including info on a 2025 golf outing for early registrants!



## Claremont Manor: built on generosity

For 75 years, Claremont Manor has been building on a community established by generosity. The Claremont Manor dedication ceremonies took place April 30, 1949 on 10 acres of land donated by prominent Claremont citrus rancher Lee Pitzer. He and his wife Blanche were among Claremont Manor’s earliest residents — “49ers”, as they called themselves.

For most of its first 50 years, Claremont Manor was part of the non-profit Pacific Homes, but in 1998, just before its 50th anniversary, the organization merged with California Lutheran Homes and FACT Retirement Services, both also non-profits, to become part of what is now Front Porch Communities and Services.

For its 75th anniversary celebrations this year, Claremont Manor opened a time capsule that was created in 1999 for the 50th anniversary. The capsule, which has been displayed in the library for the past 25 years, included a letter from Marty McGaughy, the community’s executive director in 1999. Along with sharing contemporary news and technology, McGaughy reflected on the community’s ongoing culture of philanthropy. The Manor’s current Executive Director Robert Barton read the letter aloud to the community at the time capsule opening event, held on April 30, 2024 — the same date as the dedication ceremonies 75 years previously.

“We have recalled to memory the lives of numerous individuals who have invested their funds and energies to fulfill the vision of creating this wonderful community,” the letter reads. “A consistent theme has been that of the Manor residents as very special people committed to being good neighbors to one another. My firm belief is that when this time capsule is opened many years hence, that same theme will still ring true.”

The community’s commitment to generosity lives on in Claremont Manor’s annual Philanthropy Week. Held each summer, Philanthropy Week includes an array of events and activities ranging from golf putting competitions to dog fashion shows and, this year, ended with a gala dinner in support of the Foundation’s Circle of Friends resident assistance fund. Claremont resident David Kane donated a brand-new mobility scooter to be raffled off in support of the cause.

Keith Church, the Foundation’s philanthropy officer serving Claremont, has a long history with the community, making his work there even more special. When he first started working with Front Porch’s Southern California communities, Keith’s family stayed at Claremont Manor while searching for housing. “We fell in love with the community. My oldest son has described it as ‘having 100 grandparents.’ We felt like we were welcomed into a large and very special family that took a very

genuine interest in our lives. While I now live a short drive from Claremont Manor — we fell in love with the foothills too and decided to stay — I still see the residents and staff as one big family every time I visit the campus.”

From its very first days, Claremont Manor residents, family, staff and friends have thought about the future needs of the community and the people who might live there, and that consideration drives its generous spirit. From the founder who donated the land upon which the community stands to the residents today who contribute to support the community and its current and future residents, the theme of neighbors being good to one another continues to ring true. ●

*“I saw a chance to help my neighbors and I’m honored to do that through my donation. I want to help the people who run out of funds unexpectedly when they’ve been here for a long time,” said Claremont Manor resident Ellen Tam (pictured right).*



## Across continents and communities: Maylene Wong’s path of compassion and generosity



*After traveling around the world earlier in her life, Maylene Wong now enjoys life in her community at San Francisco Towers. She is pictured here with her friend Chloe, who belongs to Megan Sullivan, SF Towers life enrichment director.*

Maylene Wong’s story began with her father who emigrated on his own from China at age 10 to Fresno, California, and her mother who emigrated from Canada. Neither had a high school education, but together they created a multicultural environment for Maylene and her brother in which to grow and learn. “That extended to a laissez-faire philosophy about how we wanted to live our lives, except for Saturday morning piano lessons,” Maylene remembers.

“From kindergarten on, I liked sitting in class, regardless of the subject, and hearing that medical school was a long course was reason enough for me to sign up,” Maylene said. After finishing her medical training, she got a job in the Veterans Administration (VA) and at UCLA. She taught, researched and managed a cardiac laboratory. “My patients served in Spanish-American, WWI and II and Vietnam Wars,” Maylene said. “They taught me about who they were, who I was, and together we communicated to arrive at appropriate treatment.”

**Maylene Wong** continues on page 8

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### Maylene Wong continued from page 7

Her work and her curiosity for the world allowed Maylene to travel frequently, offering her the opportunity to be immersed in other cultures both culturally and scientifically.

“The VA conducted some of the first international trials in the treatment of heart failure and, as a participant, I consulted with colleagues in Milan, annually for 10 years. On days off, I roamed throughout Italy and visited iconic museums, opera houses and wineries. A year in London was an insightful experience with their National Health Service, enhanced by the city’s great music at Covent Garden and the many dirges for Churchill’s funeral. On sabbatical in Japan, while learning a new technology, I absorbed centuries-old temples and gardens, and eventually climbed Mount Fuji. Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* compelled me to visit the Galapagos Islands and to explore evolutionary hypotheses supported by surface archaeology in Uganda, observing ant hills in South Africa, tracking rhinoceros in Zimbabwe and range lions and warthogs in Kenya, Tanzania, Lake Victoria and Ngorongoro Crater, and eventually to Indonesia to follow orangutans whose ancestors had long migrated out of Africa.”

Maylene moved to San Francisco Towers nearly 20 years ago. She wanted to find her “end-home” as she put it, and not be a burden on anyone as she aged. “Being in an urban environment was essential, with easy access to the arts and culture of San Francisco,” she said. “Retiring into a senior community certainly risked restricting a life style, but every day continues unexpectedly to be on the living edge.” She has served on various committees and the Resident Council at the Towers and came to appreciate how this organization values the residents’ input on business and budgetary issues.

Maylene’s commitment to her community has moved her to contribute philanthropically through Front Porch Communities Foundation during her time as a resident, donating annually to the Circle of Friends resident assistance fund and the San Francisco Towers community discretionary fund. In addition, Maylene named San Francisco Towers as a beneficiary of her trust. “This is a giving community, and each of us cares for each other.” ●



# Front Porch art galleries serve as bridge to greater community

Front Porch communities are often seen as their own societies, living and breathing entities that are self sufficient and independent from the world around them. However, these communities are intimately connected with the larger community around them, all in their own unique ways. St. Paul's Towers residents in Oakland are heavily involved in community activism and local clean up efforts in their neighborhood. Vista del Monte residents in Santa Barbara welcome local community members into their fitness and aquatic center. There are examples of this across Front Porch.

Two spaces that provide unique and creative opportunities for engagement between Front Porch residents and the greater community are Ruth's Table in San Francisco and Front Porch Gallery in Carlsbad.

Ruth's Table, in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District, is a part of Bethany Center, a CARING Housing Ministries community. CARING Housing Ministries is Front Porch's affordable housing division. In 2009, renowned artist Ruth Asawa donated her dining table, constructed by her husband, architect Albert Lanier, to Bethany Center. The table, symbolic of social gathering, community and creativity, formed the start of an arts initiative called Ruth's Table. Along with her gift came Ruth's wish: for the table to serve as a gathering place for creativity. Ruth's Table continues to strive to foster positive change through creative programming and build an environment where participatory arts are integral to life in our community.

Evan Johnson, program director at Ruth's Table, works closely with artists and residents at Bethany Center to curate programming. Ruth's Table's exhibition this past spring, Radical Resilience, featured artists living with disabilities. It was planned carefully with Bill Bruckner, a resident of Bethany Center, who was elected to join Ruth's Table as a member of the inaugural Artist Committee. Bill and his wife Vicky are regular attendees at Ruth's Table events. Vicky reads poetry at the monthly writers potluck, and Bill has been hired to teach multiple workshops to the



*Bethany Center residents Bill and Vicki Bruckner regularly attend events at Ruth's Table, such as this visit from a performance troupe called Clowns without Borders.*

community. "As a working artist with a disability who has a studio in the Mission District, I am delighted and proud to be a part of Ruth's Table because of its active commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and creativity! Ruth's Table's shows featuring artists who have both visible and hidden disabilities have had a wonderful positive impact throughout our community," Bill shared.

On the other end of the state, Front Porch Gallery came into existence in 2002 with the mission to increase access to creative opportunities for residents, as well as older adults and adults with disabilities in the community, fostering creative expression and meaningful connections. Originally operating out of the Casa de Mañana property in La Jolla, and rotating through all ten communities, Steven Nossan, the director at the time, curated unique, creative art exhibits. In April of 2005, Front Porch Gallery became an official gallery, taking up residence at Carlsbad By The Sea. Just a block from the ocean, Front Porch Gallery is a diverse and creative hub contributing to the vibrant energy of Carlsbad Village.

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# Casa de Mañana resident Leslie Miller shares her lo



When Leslie Miller helped her father move into Casa de Mañana in La Jolla more than 20 years ago, she wasn't thinking it might be a place where she could live one day. "I was in my 50s," she recalled, "and I didn't think of myself as being ready to live in a senior living community." However, soon after, major home maintenance issues made her living situation untenable, initiating an urgent search for a new home. While spending more time with her father at Casa, helping him get acclimated, she was perusing the real estate listings for a new condo and began to think, "What if I lived here?" After some conversations and the requisite due diligence, this idea became a reality in just a few months. Leslie became a Casa de Mañana resident just a few months after her father, moving into Villa One where she continues to live today.

Leslie quickly fell in love with her new community. "I felt like I was on a big gorgeous cruise ship, on a never-ending vacation," Leslie remembered. The coastal San Diego area wasn't new to Leslie; she has lived there most of her life. "There is something different about Casa, though," Leslie said. "I call it the Casa magic. It's something about the location, right next to the ocean, and the different mix of people that are drawn here from all over. Often, folks will move in, feeling a bit uncertain about the change in lifestyle,

## Foundation Philanthropy Weeks bri



# ve of community

but once they are here for a little while, the questions stop. They see very quickly what a special place this is.”

It is this “magic” that motivates Leslie to support Casa de Mañana through the Front Porch Communities Foundation. “When residents are going through a rough time with their finances, the Circle of Friends resident assistance fund is there to help them,” Leslie explained. “I love my neighbors, and I wouldn’t want any of them to have to leave for something completely out of their control. If I can help them, then it’s a win-win for everyone.” ●



*In addition to being a supportive donor at Casa de Mañana, Leslie Miller is an accomplished pianist who plays frequently at Casa and in the surrounding community. She's pictured here playing at the opening reception of this year's philanthropy week.*

# ng the joy of giving to communities



Over the summer, the Foundation team and Local Philanthropy Committees produced Philanthropy Weeks at Casa de Mañana, Walnut Village and Claremont Manor. These events exemplify the spirit of giving between residents and staff and galvanizes those connections. “We come together to celebrate philanthropy, but also put it into action through gifts in the moment,” said Keith Church, Foundation philanthropy officer. Activities during Philanthropy Week are entirely community-driven and offer something for everyone, from musical performances and staff-resident trivia to special events like Game Day and Dessert Under the Stars. At Casa, a highlight was the dog fashion show, and Walnut Village beat the heat with a watermelon eating contest, which was won by a resident. While Philanthropy Week is fun, it inspires significant giving, which is at the heart of its importance to residents. Funds raised from the week support the Circle of Friends resident assistance fund, Employee Scholarship Funds, and the HEART Fund (emergency financial assistance for staff), according to donor preference and community need. ●





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In 2022, the mission of the Front Porch Gallery was updated to respond creatively to changing needs and used inspiration from Ruth’s Table when developing exhibits and creative programming. In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the gallery, the focus was on the gallery’s core purpose to use creativity as a catalyst to enhance longevity and enjoyment of life for older adults by providing free programming to promote creative viewing, discussing, art making and collecting.

Programming at Front Porch Gallery is designed to encourage intergenerational crossover and opportunities for casual connection. The most popular program, Paper Craft Café, promotes creative engagement activities for residents, as well as the Carlsbad community. Participants enjoy meaningful

connections while creating unique and engaging paper craft artworks. The pieces will be displayed in the gallery during a Gallery Take Over event in early 2025.

Cathy Carey, Front Porch Gallery Director, supports creative activities throughout the San Diego area in addition to her work onsite at the Gallery. She met Mary Lenox, a resident at Wesley Palms, while participating in an art panel at her community. Mary is an artist and poet who has since participated in multiple shows at the Gallery. “Front Porch Gallery created an environment where we can behold beautiful artistic expressions by talented artists and poets,” Mary said. “Front Porch Gallery’s leadership in the art community enriches us all as you expand knowledge about and access to the world of creativity — up close and personal.” ●

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