

# Community MATTERS



COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION



*Programs like the Spring Lake Village Classical Music Series inspire resident philanthropy, giving to enhance community life. Pictured above at a recent event: Foundation associate philanthropy officer Leslie O'Brien, Dana Shigley, daughter of resident Pat Snyder (right), residents Barbara Riley and John Steinmetz, Foundation philanthropy officer Kimberly Manning.*

## From vision to community: the spirit of care and connection at Spring Lake Village

“One person can effect change, and many people together can change the world.” Such was the belief of Reverend Darby Betts, the founding executive director of one of Front Porch’s predecessor organizations, Episcopal Senior Communities. In the early 1960s, Rev. Betts envisioned an organization of communities serving older adults, and with a gift of land near Monterey, ESC’s first community, Canterbury Woods, was established. In 1986, in keeping with Rev. Betts’ vision and leadership,

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### Snapshots



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Spring Lake Village opened in Santa Rosa. Rev. Betts planned to retire to Spring Lake Village and designed many of the community's features accordingly. He and his wife Elaine helped create a community with a culture of camaraderie, elegance and warmth, and their example of leadership showed that many people together have the ability to continue to improve their community.

Resident leadership at Spring Lake Village has always been at the forefront of positive change for their community, and leadership in philanthropy has played a role in many of the initiatives undertaken to improve the lives of residents both at Spring Lake Village and at communities across Front Porch. While resident assistance has always been a core focus of fundraising for all Front Porch communities, the idea of the Circle of Friends as a unifying force to support this effort was born at Spring Lake Village from a group of friends who came together to raise money to support the fund, which is now called the Circle of Friends fund at all Front Porch communities.

Beth Vergin is one of the founding members of the Circle of Friends committee at Spring Lake Village. When asked what inspired this idea, she shared

“Home is the place where, when you have to go there / they must take you in.” (Line from the 1915 Robert Frost Poem, *The Death of the Hired Man*).

“To my mind, the existence of continued care is what makes the difference between a place and a home,” Beth reflected. “Finding a home to age with dignity and continued personal growth is not just a search for a place, but also the search for a feeling of home. The concept and the resources of Circle of Friends send a reassuring message about Spring Lake Village as a true home, knowing that no matter what happens, one will be able to stay and be cared for.”

Spring Lake Village residents have long supported community improvements dear to their hearts with gifts through the Front Porch Communities Foundation. After a stay in the Health Care Center, one resident in 2015 made a significant gift to replace all the Center's bedside televisions with state-of-the-art digital models with ports to plug in headphones and media players. “The screen in my room was hard to see, and I had a hard time hearing my program. I wondered if others might feel the same way. I had the means to make a gift to improve my community,” she noted at the time. “I'm happy this will make a stay in the Center a bit easier for everyone.”

The SLV Classical Music Fund is another way residents have impacted their community through their giving. The Classical Music program at Spring Lake Village was started by resident Bob Hayden and is now managed by residents Barbara Riley and Sally Heath. In 2016, through donations to the SLV Classical Music Fund administered by the Foundation, music aficionados raised money for a new performance-quality grand piano, allowing the community to attract world-class musicians. “About 20 years ago, Bob invited a prominent musician to play, and they declined due to the condition of the piano,” Barbara remembered. “Working with the Foundation, Spring Lake Village residents raised enough money to purchase a new piano with enough left over to continue to enhance



*Elaine Betts, wife of ESC founder Reverend Darby Betts, lived at Spring Lake Village until her death in 2021. Pictured here with former Covia Chief Executive Officer Kevin Gerber, Elaine was a valued member of the community.*

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## Leadership Corner

# Reflections and new beginnings

The new year offers us time for reflection on the past and inspiration for the future. As 2025 begins, I look back on my 13 years of working with Front Porch residents, staff, and friends who care about one another, who care about their communities, and who spark joy every day through their gifts of time, talent and treasure. The lessons I have learned in my journey with Front Porch Communities Foundation and its predecessors come in many forms: Be kind, be generous, be there for one another. The joys that residents have shared with me have been as plentiful: inspiring views of the world, great books and films to explore, incredibly heartfelt personal reflections on life and hopes for the future.

As I prepare for 2025, I am profoundly grateful for the people and team members who have made this journey so fulfilling. I will be officially retiring on April 1, but the lesson I've learned from so many residents is that I'm really just starting the next chapter of life. We have built a great team at Front Porch Communities Foundation who will carry forward the passion and pride we have in our philanthropic work. While I will miss working with all of the Front Porch residents and team members, I will always carry the Front Porch spirit with me. Here's to a prosperous and joyous 2025!

Katharine Miller  
Executive Director  
Front Porch Communities Foundation ●

*Throughout her tenure at the Foundation, Katharine Miller's work has been driven by deep connections with the residents and donors that she met, a legacy that will endure after her retirement in April.*

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the quality of the performances going forward. It is a beloved part of the community, and residents continue to support the fund generously.”

Other projects like the dog park, the labyrinth and the bocce courts that were all made possible or improved by resident gifts through the Foundation reflect the spirit and the personality of the community. Resident gifts improve the community now and for future residents.

Spring Lake Village was born from the dream of one person, but over the years, the energy and generosity of many people have made this community what it is today. Each generation of residents has brought new ideas and a commitment to improving life for one another, helping to preserve the spirit of warmth and support that Reverend Betts envisioned. The collective efforts of all residents have transformed Spring Lake Village into a place that truly feels like home, where each person’s contributions leave a lasting impact for all who will follow. ●



*The residents of Spring Lake Village have worked hard to carry on the legacy of founder Darby Betts, embodying his belief that people working together have the power to change the world. Pictured clockwise from left: Charlie Chapman, Heinz and Beth Vergin, Delia Schmedding, Raleigh and Patricia Wilson, and Bob Hayden.*

# Fresh food, fresh connections: Market Day brings healthy produce to local communities



Market Day, a program of Front Porch Community Services, promotes healthy eating by bringing weekly produce markets into neighborhood settings, including senior centers and affordable housing communities. More than a market, each site provides opportunities for connection, volunteerism, and access to important resources.

Market Day has locations throughout Northern California and in Los Angeles. To promote accessibility for vulnerable populations, Market Day accepts EBT, electronic benefits for food assistance, at each site, and as part of its “mission within a mission,” donates all unsold produce to nonprofit partners serving vulnerable seniors.

The Market Day at Stoneman Village, a nonprofit retirement community in Pittsburg, celebrated

12 years in September. Along with fresh produce, shoppers received sweet treats and re-useable Market Day tote bags.

Market Day locations were recently re-opened for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic at Oak Center Towers in Oakland and Presidio Gate Apartments in San Francisco.

This year, Market Day partnered with Front Porch’s Operation Snowflake program to bring fresh produce baskets to some of Front Porch’s CARING Housing Ministries affordable housing communities. The baskets were designed with the dietary and cultural preferences of the residents in mind. Front Porch Support Services team members in both Northern and Southern California assembled the baskets and delivered them to residents. ●



Here’s a fresh idea — volunteer with Market Day! With locations throughout Northern California and Los Angeles, markets are staffed entirely by volunteers. If you’re close by, sign up to help out. You’ll see how gratifying it can be to deliver vitamin C — carrots, cantaloupe and companionship.

To learn more, please visit [frontporch.net/connect/market-day/](https://frontporch.net/connect/market-day/)

## Inspired by generosity: the Canterbury Woods schoolchildren fund

This past fall, 40 schoolchildren received a wonderful surprise as they prepared to head back to class. Canterbury Woods distributed \$100 gift cards for school supplies to employees for the children and grandchildren who live with them, ensuring they were able to start the school year on the right foot.

The story of this new initiative begins with Canterbury Woods resident Joe Tada, whose passion for education and gratitude for the staff inspired him to give back in a meaningful way. “I wanted to do something for the staff, who have been so kind to me,” he explained. The result? The Foundation’s Canterbury Woods Schoolchildren Fund, established to support the educational dreams of employees’ K–12 children.

The fund serves as a testament to how inspiration can travel between communities. When Mr. Tada heard about a similar program at Casa de Mañana, the Front Porch community in La Jolla, he knew Canterbury Woods could create something equally meaningful.

At Casa de Mañana, the LaVerne & Walter King Schoolchild Support Endowment Fund (“King Fund”) was established through the Foundation in memory of Walter King’s wife, LaVerne. Walter King’s childhood struggles, including the embarrassment of not having adequate school supplies, motivated him to create a program that ensures frontline employees’ children have access to essential educational resources. His generosity set the stage for others to follow suit.



## Building community for the future: Mary Ellen Heising’s lasting gift



Spring Lake Village resident Mary Ellen Heising’s life has been filled with service, resilience and a deep appreciation for community. Now, with her decision to make an estate gift to Spring Lake Village through Front Porch Communities Foundation, she’s planning a legacy that will support her cherished community for generations to come.

Mary Ellen’s journey to Spring Lake Village began after the passing of her husband in 2016. At the time, she was living in San Jose while her two daughters had settled in Santa Rosa. The idea of moving closer to her family and simplifying her life by selling her home felt right. “I thought, ‘Maybe I should look at retirement communities near my daughters,’” she recalled. When they found Spring Lake Village, she knew it was something special. “The people were so friendly, and it offered all the things I wanted,” she shared. She loved the down-to-earth feel of the community, the chance to walk outside her door and be surrounded by nature and the cottage that was perfectly situated for her needs.



Joe Tada credits a conversation with Kimberly Manning, Foundation philanthropy officer, as the catalyst for the fund at his community. “When I learned about Casa’s program, I realized we could replicate it here at Canterbury Woods,” he said. “It’s nice to be in a position to be able to help others.” He also said that Elvyra Abare, former Canterbury Woods executive director who now works at Webster House, helped shape his broader interest in supporting education and helping Canterbury Woods retain its valued employees.

The Foundation Schoolchildren Funds exemplify the power of shared ideas and generosity, extending support from one community to another. What started as a vision in one person’s heart has blossomed into a program that touches the lives of employees and their children, affirming the value of education and the spirit of giving. ●

*Pictured left: LaVerne and Walter King. Pictured above: Team members at Canterbury Woods received the gift cards in time to use them for their children's school supplies.*

This move marked a new chapter in Mary Ellen’s life. She embraced the opportunity to reinvent herself as a widow, saying, “I was ready for change. It won’t get any easier, so let’s make the change now.” Moving to Spring Lake Village, she discovered, was a “no-brainer,” a choice that has brought her both peace and joy.

Growing up in a small town in North Dakota, Mary Ellen learned early on the value of community and hard work. She attended college in Iowa, where she met her husband, and together they lived in various regions of the country, eventually settling in California. When her children were grown, she pursued a master’s degree and became the first executive director of the Food Bank of Santa Clara County, helping to start what would become a national network of food banks. “We had no idea then just how significant this work would be,” she reflected. This experience shaped her as a visionary leader and gave her lifelong friends who shared her passion for helping others.

At Spring Lake Village, Mary Ellen has continued her commitment to community. She’s served on the Front Porch Board of Directors for the last three years, led the SLV Resident Council, and served on various SLV committees, including those for conservation and emergency evacuation. “It’s important to keep your mind alive and be involved,” she says, and she appreciates how residents at Spring Lake Village contribute so much to the community. “Everyone here is a potential friend. There’s a wonderful sense of community, and I’ve made friends that feel like family.”

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When it came time to update her estate plan, Mary Ellen felt strongly about including a gift to the Foundation for Spring Lake Village's Circle of Friends resident assistance fund. "Retirement needs have changed so much with inflation and the rising cost of living," she noted. She has a deep respect for the Circle of Friends fund, which offers financial support to residents who outlive their resources. "I can't imagine anything worse than having to leave your home late in life due to financial challenges outside of your control. This fund is a safety net, ensuring that people can stay in the community they love. That's something I want to support for others."

Mary Ellen hopes her decision will inspire others to consider leaving their own legacy. "We are a community, and as part of that community, we help and look after each other. What better way to enhance our sense of connection than to leave something behind for those who come after us?" she said.

Mary Ellen's estate gift is a testament to the values she has lived by — compassion, generosity and a commitment to strengthening the communities she loves. Through her legacy, she's helping to ensure that Spring Lake Village remains a vibrant, welcoming home for generations of residents to come. ●

## Your legacy of generosity: a gift into the future

Call them what you want: bequests, trusts, wills, estates, or planned gifts. All are tools to continue or establish your legacy of caring. Once you provide for the remainder of your life and arrange for gifts for family and special people, you may find joy in planning a future charitable gift to benefit your favorite cause.

Front Porch Communities Foundation's roots are in the charitable bequests from pioneer residents of Front Porch communities. A gift in your estate plans allows you to have an impact on your community far beyond your lifetime.

Margaret "Maggie" King made a lasting impact on her community that is echoed in other Front Porch communities. Maggie was born in Los Angeles, but

relocated with her family to Hollister and became a teacher at the same one-room school she attended as a child. After obtaining her Master's degree in education with a minor in physical therapy from Stanford, she opened her own practice and eventually headed the O'Connor Hospital physical therapy department. Even though she insisted on "really retiring" once she moved to Los Gatos Meadows in 1986, Maggie was an active, engaged resident of her community. As a health professional, she was aware of the increasing incidence of cognitive decline faced by those living longer lives. When she passed away in 1993, she left a significant gift in her estate to the Foundation to build out a memory care neighborhood at the Meadows — the first such

center in the Northern California Front Porch communities. In her honor, the community named the memory care center "Maggie's Place." Maggie's legacy lives on, as the memory care centers at St. Paul's Towers, Spring Lake Village and San Francisco Towers all carry the name "Maggie's Place."

When you are ready to plan a legacy gift, it's important to choose a way of giving that works best for you. Consult with your legal or financial advisors to determine the asset and form of giving that makes sense for you. The Front Porch Communities Foundation team can work with you to tailor your future gift to have the greatest impact.

Finally, let the Foundation properly thank you. Join your friends and neighbors as a



member of the Front Porch Communities Foundation Legacy Society. This allows you to be recognized in your lifetime for your future gift. Members of the Legacy Society are generous people like you who plan future charitable gifts to the Foundation by using one of the following charitable vehicles:

- Will
- Charitable trust
- Charitable gift annuity
- Life insurance policy
- Individual retirement account or other retirement plan

Legacy Society membership comes with privileges, such as invitations to special events, special recognition (or anonymity, if you prefer), and the opportunity to get to know other forward-thinking, generous people at your community. It also comes with the gratitude of friends and neighbors now and in the future. ●

Contact a Foundation  
Philanthropy Officer  
with any questions:

Kimberly Manning  
*Philanthropy Officer*  
Office: 925.956.7448  
Cell: 925.286.3502  
kmanning@frontporch.net

Keith Church  
*Philanthropy Officer*  
Office: 818.254.4222  
Cell: 818.262.8692  
kchurch@frontporch.net

## Crafting a legacy

You don't have to be wealthy to make a difference. You just have to plant a gift in your estate plans. Your wishes will grow from there, enriching the community of caring and services for seniors.

### What types of gifts can I leave to Front Porch Communities Foundation in my will?

You may leave items such as cash, property, land, securities or real estate. Every gift, no matter how small or large, can make a difference in the lives of seniors.

### Can my gift support a specific program in my community?

Yes, you may support a specific community or program. You may also designate your gift be used where the need is greatest. These unrestricted gifts are especially valuable, as they provide flexibility to respond to changing needs and priorities.

### Is a gift through my will tax deductible?

Front Porch Communities Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Charitable gifts are deductible to the full extent of the law. However, we suggest you seek advice from your tax advisor. Administrative charges are not deducted from gifts.

### I already have a will – can I still leave a gift to Front Porch Communities Foundation?

Yes. Simply specify Front Porch Communities Foundation as a beneficiary of a particular account (such as a savings account or a retirement account). You can also amend your will with simple language (referred to as a codicil) to include a gift to Front Porch Communities Foundation.

### How do I get started?

Please contact your philanthropy officer to discuss your priorities and options. Front Porch Communities Foundation receives and administers all charitable gifts made to support Front Porch Communities, CARING Housing Ministries, and Front Porch Community Services. *Please notify us of your intentions to provide a bequest gift so that we may include your name as a member of the Legacy Society.* ●

# A life of vision, dedication, and community: José Katz's journey of giving back

José Katz's life journey is deeply rooted in his commitment to thoughtful decision-making and meaningful connections. After years of service and a lifetime of impactful experiences, José was inspired to join the St. Paul's Towers community in Oakland by a trusted friend and former colleague at the Berkeley Tennis Club, Bev Goggio. Bev's sage advice — "You should move now while you are still physically able" — resonated with José as he contemplated his future. Having seen friends and family thrive in similar communities, José ultimately chose St. Paul's for its

outstanding health services and supportive environment.

José's story begins in Brooklyn, New York, where he grew up in a close-knit family within the vibrant Fort Greene neighborhood. The son of immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island in 1903, José embraced the opportunities his family's sacrifices afforded him. After excelling at Stuyvesant High School and the City College of New York, he faced a pivotal career decision: join the prestigious research staff at MIT or Bell Labs, or embrace the cutting-edge innovations of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratories in California.

José chose California, marking the start of a distinguished career that spanned nearly four decades. As a Senior Staff Scientist/Engineer at Lawrence Berkeley and Livermore Labs, José contributed to projects that shaped history. His work ranged from developing instrumentation for underground nuclear tests with Edward Teller to contributing to the groundbreaking Human Genome Project alongside Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Though professionally accomplished, José considers his greatest joys to come from his family. He shared 45 wonderful years with his wife, Moira Watson, a special education teacher, who died in 2008. Together, they raised their children, Alexandra

and Andrew, and delighted in the arrival of their three grandchildren: Isabella, daughter of Alexandra and Angelo Baroni, and Owen and Benjamin, sons of Andrew and Joanna Katz. Coincidentally, Joanna is the daughter and granddaughter of two of José's colleagues at the Lawrence Berkeley Lab, Nancy Talcott and Ken Mirk.

The pandemic brought moments of introspection for José, including the loss of his beloved dog. It also deepened his faith and underscored the value of community — a cornerstone of life at St. Paul's Towers.

José's philanthropy reflects his belief in paying it forward. "As I got older, I got more savvy about my finances," he explained. Setting up Charitable Gift Annuities (CGAs) with Front Porch Communities Foundation allows him to support the Circle of Friends resident assistance fund at St. Paul's — a cause he views as both meaningful and practical. For José, giving is a way to invest in the future while ensuring that St. Paul's remains a place where others can thrive as he has.

Today, José continues to build connections and contribute to the vibrant life of St. Paul's Towers. His story is a testament to the power of thoughtful choices, the enduring strength of family and the importance of giving back. ●



*José was named Joseph Katz at birth, but was given the name José by a colleague early in his career, and it stuck with him.*

# A dedication to generosity: Joy Winer's impact at Vista del Monte

At Vista del Monte, Joy Winer found a community spirit and dedication to giving back that she deeply values. Originally from Dayton, Ohio, Joy lived for 35 years in Boston before moving to Santa Barbara to enjoy retirement. After her husband passed away, she moved to Vista del Monte, drawn by the strong reputation of the community. "I was relatively young when I moved in," she recalls, "but Vista felt right from the start. I was still active, and everyone spoke so highly of it."

Joy quickly became a valued advocate at Vista for Front Porch Communities Foundation. She feels strongly about the Circle of Friends resident assistance fund, which supports residents in financial need, helping them maintain stability within the community. "It's a terrific resource for our community," she said. Through Vista events and gatherings, Joy found that contributing to the fund brought benefits to residents and the community at large. "I really value Vista's approach to building a supportive environment, and the resident assistance fund is a big part of that," Joy added.

Joy's involvement also extends to the Resident Association's Employee Appreciation Fund, a cause she's passionate about. She praises Vista's staff for their outstanding service and is enthusiastic about showing appreciation in a meaningful way through this holiday drive.

Reflecting on Vista's recent 60th anniversary, Joy mentioned the plaque mounted in the community that commemorates the cooperation between residents and staff, which speaks to her values of unity and care.

"I love that Vista is small and incredibly friendly. You get to know so many people here," she shared. Her story is one of active participation and the joy of being part of a caring, connected community — a sentiment that Joy embodies through her contributions every day. "After leaving the workforce, giving just feels right. If you're fortunate, it's an easy decision to share and support others." ●

*Vista Del Monte recently celebrated its 60th anniversary. At the event, Front Porch Communities Foundation honored a donor who made a significant impact on her community.*

Alma and Cliff Pearson moved to Vista del Monte in 1998, but they made their first donation to the Foundation four years before becoming residents, while they were on the wait list. That gift of \$100 was earmarked for the Vista del Monte Resident Assistance Fund. Alma continued to support Vista after Cliff's passing until her own death in 2008 at the age of 96. When asked to what she attributed her longevity, she would reply, "God's keeping me here to work and grow this money — so I can give it all away." Alma gave her entire estate to her favorite charities. The majority of the \$2.5 million she gave to the Foundation between 1994 and 2008 for Vista del Monte was designated for its Resident Assistance Endowment, including two large gift annuities and a seven-figure estate gift. Alma's gifts to Vista's Capital Fund supported further development of the community, including the construction of Fernbrook, which was named for her sister.



Alma had a transformational impact on life at her community — on its very walls and on the Foundation's ability to provide financial assistance to those who outlive their resources there. Her legacy of caring continues in the hearts of those who live and work at Vista del Monte.



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**The unprecedented Southern California fires have affected residents, staff members and friends throughout the Los Angeles area. Several Front Porch team members have suffered the total loss of their homes.**

One of the resources available to employees affected by the fires is the HEART Fund. An acronym for Helping Employees At Risk Today, the HEART Fund is a special emergency fund managed by Front Porch Communities Foundation designed to assist Front Porch employees who experience an unanticipated financial hardship in circumstances like these.



**You can make a donation to the HEART Fund to support our team members who are in need right now.**



*Scan the QR code or visit [frontporch.net/give](https://frontporch.net/give) to make a donation.*

Donations are tax-deductible and will be used for emergency cash grants for affected team members to use for immediate needs and rebuilding for the future.

Thank you so much for being part of our mission to build and inspire community, caring about one another and being there when someone needs assistance. We are stronger together.

**Make a difference today with a gift  
at [frontporch.net/philanthropy](https://frontporch.net/philanthropy)**

818.254.4096  
[fpcf@frontporch.net](mailto:fpcf@frontporch.net)