



# The Golden Gram

Dear Friends & Supporters,



As my good friend Robin Williams always said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's Party!'" Celebration is another word for party, and we have much to celebrate this Spring.

This past February 17<sup>th</sup> marked the one-year anniversary of our groundbreaking ceremony for **Harry's House**. As you know, Harry's House is the Rona Barrett Foundation and our valued partners' final piece of our vision for the Golden Inn & Village. Harry's House will provide an additional affordable 60 apartments allowing vulnerable seniors and veterans over the age of 62 to continue to age in place.

We are well on the way to opening our doors this summer. Please stop by our website to see photos of our progress on Harry's House. You won't believe your eyes.

More cause for celebration is the reopening of our Hair Salon & Barber Shop services on January 23, after its long hiatus due to the pandemic. There is nothing better than having our "crowning glory" washed, especially for those who find this routine difficult. Residents are now walking around the GIV more glowingly confident than we have seen in a long, long time.

In our 2022 Fall issue, you met four of our eighteen original residents feted at our Class of 2016 Celebration last summer. We are delighted to introduce you to the final four of the eight who shared their thoughts about living at the GIV for the first five years.

As we continue to reach our milestones, we celebrate all of our friends and supporters who help us in our efforts to offer those seniors in need, "More than a roof over their heads."

With love and gratitude,

*Rona*



**IT'S OFFICIAL:** After the hiatus of the pandemic, the Golden Inn & Village Hair Salon reopened on January 23!



Resident David B. Johnson awaits his turn.

Carol Bratcher enjoys her new style by Nicole Decierdo.

All of our Residents—women and men—appreciate the accessibility of the Salon, especially those who do not drive or cannot find or afford transportation. And for residents who struggle with washing and styling their hair, having it done professionally has been a real boost in their mental health and their social life.

Walking down the hall and through the stairs, the salon-quality shampoo and conditioner wafts through the air, leading Residents right to the door of the Salon where Nicole Decierdo, our cosmetologist, has a ready smile welcoming them. Our Salon includes a hair washing bowl, a hair drying station, and styling mirror. It even has magazines in the waiting area!

Cuts and styling are by appointment twice a month at no cost to the Residents, courtesy of the Rona Barrett Foundation.

"It's such a treat watching the residents undergo this simple, yet effective makeover. Each and every person has come out of the Salon with the biggest smile on their faces," enthuses Vanessa Kernes, Director of Wellness Programs and Services. And Residents exclaim, "Nicole did a great job!" "She cut my hair exactly like I asked!"

We can definitely see how effective the reopening of the Salon has been because all who have availed themselves of its services are smiling more confidently than we have seen in a long, long time.

## Meet The Board of The Rona Barrett Foundation: KELLY HUNZIKER

When Rona asked Kelly Hunziker to join the Rona Barrett Foundation Board, Kelly did not hesitate to say yes.



Kelly Hunziker & Dave Boyea

**"I decided to join the Board because I've lived in the Valley since third grade. This community is my home and the folks who live here are family. I want to be able to give back and help in whatever way I can as much as I'm able."**

Ten years ago, Rona and Kelly parked next to each other when their offices were in the same building. They would joke with each other who would hit the other's car first.

She and Anna Widling, former Director of Wellness Programs and Services at the Golden Inn & Village, hit it off also. Anna shared with her "all of the wonderful work happening at the Foundation and the GIV," she fondly recalls. Kelly began attending fundraisers to learn more. She was touched by the staff and the volunteers. "So, I knew it was going to be a very successful project," says Kelly.

That's why for the last ten years, Kelly has been an invaluable advocate, donor, and supporter of the Foundation's dedication to seniors and veterans over 62 in need. "In working with Edward Jones and investors for the last twenty-six years, the goal has always been to help people plan for retirement years, to be able to live the lifestyle they want to live. But unfortunately, that's not always possible or the case. So knowing that there is the GIV and Harry's House as options here for our lower income seniors, it struck me as something really necessary and really special for our area. I've never seen anything like it," Kelly explained.

Kelly thrives on giving back to the community she loves. She is the newly elected president of the Santa Ynez Rotary Club, she sponsors the Santa Ynez Valley Union High School's Student of the Month program, and she volunteers with the YMCA's annual Campaign for Youth since 2005.

Both Kelly's grandfather and father were victims of Alzheimer's. Dementia and Alzheimer's are areas that are important to her. She's part of the ALZ walk every year, of which Edward Jones is the major sponsor.

Kelly believes the biggest challenge facing the Rona Barrett Foundation is capacity. "With Harry's House, there are sixty additional apartments. But the need here in the Valley is so great. Rona shared with me that she would like to see this as the blueprint, as the model throughout the country. And I would love for her to see it come to fruition. I look forward to the challenge of developing complex, comprehensive strategies in collaboration with other professionals to help The Rona Barrett Foundation reach all of their current and future goals."

In her spare time, Kelly cherishes spending time with her husband, Dave, traveling, cooking, and enjoying the outdoors.



## Special Edition MEET THE RESIDENTS PART TWO!



Last year, on June 16, eight of the eighteen Class of 2016 residents were feted on our June 17<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. They gathered in the GIV Great Room – "the heart, hearth and hub," of the GIV, to share their thoughts about what living at the Golden Inn & Village has meant to them since GIV's opening in December 2016. We profiled four of the eight in our Fall edition of The Golden Gram.

Please meet the final four residents of our special edition:



Profiled in a previous Golden Gram but joining the conversation, **MAURICE STOLIAR**, age 90 was asked about his new story. He responded, "My new story? I don't have a new story. My life is going on and that's it. Day by day. Nothing changes. I'm going to have cataract surgery. I have a shot every month." Maurice is a pragmatic person: "When you're young you can go everywhere, buy a car, take a vacation. Now, I have a vacation with YouTube. With YouTube you can see much better than when you travel." All of Maurice's friends heartily laughed and agreed. Maurice summed up his life at GIV by declaring, "I used to have a big house and now I'm here and I'm very happy...thank God I'm alive."



**EMMA CASTANEDA** had worked for twelve years for the nonprofit organization Santa Barbara Family Service Agency as a receptionist when she retired in 2004. Emma had been living in Santa Barbara in what she described as a lower-income facility without the GIV amenities. Her daughter lived in Buellton and found out about the GIV and put Emma's name on the list. Now she's closer to her daughter and Emma says living at the GIV has been very rewarding and it has changed her life, "I've made lots of wonderful friends. I find that whatever I /we need, GIV is always there to HELP in any way they can..." When Maurice declared he didn't enjoy the BINGO games because he didn't win, Emma lovingly responded, "It's the game that counts, Mauricio. And being family."



**ERIN WHEATLEY** is a self-described jack-of-all-trades and a California native. She began her career as a reporter/photographer, then switched to a top-secret aerospace position, then switched again to become a design consultant for Three Day Blinds. But she didn't retire. She had been given a flu shot in 2012 and it triggered a condition called CIDP, which is Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy. She heard about the GIV from cousins. She's happy to be at the GIV because, says Erin, "I like that I have my privacy but I'm right next to Maurice. And he's a sweetie and so is Cliff. And Vanessa and Cindy—you just ask and they're going to find an answer for you either way. And Lorena in the kitchen. She's just so sweet."



Like Erin, ever-chipper **CLIFF LEWIS** didn't retire either after a stroke in 2012 at age 58. Cliff had owned a medical company, which he attributes to his stroke. He came out of a coma after two weeks on his daughter's birthday. When he heard about the GIV from his daughter he was elated, because in 1977, he and Rona had met on the set of the *Newlywed Game*, which he won! And when Cliff moved into the GIV, he reminded Rona of their original meeting and they hugged in fond remembrance. When asked of his favorite thing about the GIV, Cliff said, "The people. This one," referring to Erin. "I have to kiss her if I don't walk." Emma Castaneda chimes in, "And I cheer him on when he does walk."

For these residents as well as all our residents, the refrain continues to be, "Home friends, and family. Three of life's golden treasures."

Our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have helped, continue to help, and who will help us, improve the lives of our vulnerable seniors in their time of need.



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## GOLDEN NUGGET ...of the healthy kind

We know that one of the most powerful ways we can improve our physical, mental, and emotional health is walking.

Unfortunately, some of us leave out the most vital step we need to take before we take a step.

Harvard Health at [www.harvard.health.edu](http://www.harvard.health.edu) cautions us to march in place and stretch those feet with quick exercises to protect from chronic inflammation.

If we don't, we may end up on the couch for weeks in pain!

We discover **Golden Nuggets** of Information so you can increase your **Gold Mine of Knowledge**, through your trusted internet sources, favorite bookstore, or neighborhood library.

## RONA BARRETT'S GRAY MATTERS: The Podcast

"Whether you laugh with me - or cry with me - I'm so glad you're here to join me - in finding out what the adventure of aging is all about."



Groundbreaking entertainment reporter, now advocate for vulnerable seniors, Rona is giving voice to her acclaimed Gray Matters book and column.

In the spirit of the Rona Barrett Foundation, the new Gray Matters: The Podcast, is a weekly dose of thought-provoking, funny and useful insights on issues that matter to our senior loved ones and those who care for them. Subscribe today and don't miss an episode!

**SUBSCRIBE HERE: [ronabarrettfoundation.org/podcast](http://ronabarrettfoundation.org/podcast)**

To read more stories and anecdotes about aging, purchase Rona Barrett's Gray Matters by visiting [www.ronabarrettfoundation.org](http://www.ronabarrettfoundation.org) or call 805.688.8887. All sales proceeds benefit the Rona Barrett Foundation and its programs and services for seniors in their time of need.