# Friends For Life

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF MERCY FOUNDATION / 2020

"Our treasure is our history and legacy, and it lives on in our actions."

—Sister Judy Morasci, RSM





Our outreach centers have been sustained through your generosity. Most importantly, you have joined with us in spirit, acknowledging that we are in this together.

# Dear Friends of Mercy,

As we close a year that is unlike any other, and our hearts remain uncertain, Mercy Hospital and the Friends of Mercy Foundation continues to stand as reassurance to all in our community of the healing presence of our ministry – to serve every individual with excellence and humankindness. Individuals, families, small businesses, large corporations, schools and churches have supported our caregivers with food, supplies and financial resources. Our outreach centers have been sustained through your generosity. Most importantly, you have joined with us in spirit, acknowledging that we are in this together.

In a year of great change, this year will also mark the end of an important era with the retirement of our beloved Sister of Mercy, Judy Morasci. Sister Judy's 26 year dedication to Mercy hospital, and 61 year devotion to the Sisters of Mercy has shaped healthcare in Bakersfield, and her advocacy has impacted the health system at a national level. She has stood authentically and steadfastly to ensure compassion for every person, regardless of their circumstance or station in life. We encourage vou to read on as we celebrate the service of Sister Judy and share how you can be part of continuing her extraordinary legacy.

With heartfelt appreciation for your generosity, we kindly ask you to consider remitting the enclosed envelope with a gift to support the newly created Sister Judy Morasci Endowment for Women and Children, which will provide grants to organizations beyond the walls of our hospitals who support the healing ministry of service to the critical needs of women and children.

Please know that we continue to hold you in our hearts that you are bearing any burdens with courage and that you are holding onto hope for our shared future.

DruXa

Toni Harper, Vice President of Philanthropy, Friends of Mercy Foundation

Geoff King, Chairman of the Board, Friends of Mercy Foundation

# Hi all,

It's hard to even know where to begin as we look toward the close of a year filled with historic change and challenges. I am certain historians in the future will be writing about 2020 as a marker in history not unlike many of the ones we're familiar with. The most obvious of these is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, and of course. locally at home. As I write this we are preparing for whatever the winter holds for us in terms of not only COVID, but the annual appearance of flu season. That being said, we are much more prepared than we were in the Spring, and feel confident we can take care of the community, our friends and families that come through our doors. We hope and pray for a minimal season.

The influence of the pandemic has forced hospitals and systems to retrench and alter most of their strategic plans, and CommonSpirit Health is no different. The most significant impact for Mercy was the delay of the groundbreaking of the new tower, as the toll on our system finances took hold. The good news is that we have continued our architectural and engineering work and successfully moved the initial stages of the plans through the required state approval process. CommonSpirit Health has allocated funds to continue and look toward breaking ground next summer.



Finally, we have two major retirements upcoming in the next few months. First, my boss and mentor for over 20 years, Jon Van Boening, will be retiring in 2021. He has passionately

in **2021**. He has passionately supported our hospitals and our mission during his time as Central California Division President, and previously as CEO of Memorial Hospital. On a personal note, his support of me has been a blessing and the reason I chose to remain in Bakersfield to further and finish my career (not yet!) as the leader of Mercy Hospitals. I lack the ability to fully express my appreciation of him and all he has done for me, Mercy and Memorial Hospitals, and our community. We wish him nothing but the best and good health in his upcoming retirement.

### Second, Sister Judy Morasci, our Vice President of Mission Integration for the last 26 years, has announced her retirement effective January 1, 2021.

To say that Sister Judy holds an iconic place in the history of

Mercy is an understatement. Sister Judy will also be the last Sister of Mercy to occupy this role after 110 years of Sisters of Mercy being in leadership roles at Mercy Hospitals, so it is indeed the end of an historic era in our history. Sister Judy's passion and zeal of our mission is well known, as is her boundless support of the poor and disenfranchised of our community. Her contributions are many and noteworthy. It will be difficult to imagine Mercy Hospitals without her walking the halls

and nurturing our patients and staff. The good news is Sister Judy will be volunteering with the Friends of Mercy Foundation to help further the mission and goals of that organization. So while we say goodbye to her in her previous role, we welcome her into her new endeavor with the Foundation. We are all grateful and thankful for all Sister Judy has done for all of us, and we wish her good health and happiness in her retirement. I wish you all good health and happiness as we move into the holiday season, and hope that you and your families have time together to celebrate the blessings we do enjoy, as well as look forward to a new year in 2021. Thank you all for your support of our hospitals and our mission, you have created many lasting legacies with your generous support.

Bruce Peters, *President/CEO Mercy Hospital Downtown Mercy Hospital Southwest* 

# Friends of Mercy Foundation Leadership

### 2020-2021 Board of Directors

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# Mercy's Christmas Miracle



### Mallaurie and Lance Vermillion of Bakersfield were blessed with two healthy sons.

Wanting to add to their family, the couple endured three losses prior to becoming pregnant with a miracle baby we now know as Blair. In the middle of the second trimester, Mallaurie began experiencing bleeding and was admitted to Mercy Southwest. On Christmas Eve, in spite of efforts by nurses and doctors, Mallaurie went into labor. As the source of the bleeding was unknown, doctors were fearful about performing surgery. "This was the baby girl I had always dreamt about, and I was convinced she was going to die and I may die with her," Mallaurie recalls. It was in the operating room, during a C-section, that the source of Mallaurie's bleeding was discovered – her uterus had filled with blood clots, causing her and Blair distress.

At 6:38 AM on December 24, 2019, at 25 weeks gestation, weighing 1 pound 9 ounces, Blair Vermillion was born. The nursing team rushed Blair to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) where she was placed on a ventilator. As with other miracle babies, her under developed lungs were struggling. Blair's condition was



stable but fragile – anything could happen at any moment. **However, she is a fighter, known by her family as "a warrior."** Setbacks occurred yet Blair's caregivers at Mercy Southwest always had hope for her, and boundless encouragement and support for her parents. Prayer, coupled with the gift of modern medicine and a stellar team of nurses, respiratory therapists, doctors and social workers, Blair was finally on her way to a full realization of health.

As Blair grew stronger, her oxygen levels improved and she was able to feed more and interact with her parents who spent every free moment with her. Then, outside of the NICU, the unexpected happened... the world was thrown into the midst of a pandemic, COVID-19. Mercy Hospitals began taking precautions including the difficult decision of limiting visitors to prevent the spread of this newly discovered virus. Mallaurie was able to rest assured that her baby girl was safely in the hands of the NICU nurses at Mercy Southwest. "It's the nurses who are there every single day, every minute of every day watching your baby and making sure that they're okay."

On April 24, 123 days after her birth, Blair was going home! However, Mallaurie knew this meant saying goodbye to nurses she had begun to call family. The bond between the care team at the Mercy Southwest NICU and the parents is indescribable. Not only had the Vermillions become part of the Mercy family, Mercy had become a part of theirs.



For any parent, having to leave their child in the hospital is unimaginable. However, new technology that the Foundation is bringing to



At home, Blair continues to grow and exceed milestones! Blair will soon be celebrating her first birthday, a day her family prayed would come. Mallaurie and Lance will never forget the compassion shown to them and their family by the care team at Mercy Southwest Hospital. "We are so overwhelmed with gratitude that we could never, ever explain to them. **They saved our baby's life. They truly did.**"



Mercy Southwest Hospital will allow patients, families and friends to watch over their miracle at all hours of the day with the NICView.

Each baby in the NICU will have its own, secure live feed so that family will not miss a single moment. With your support, we can give families the comfort of being able to see their baby when they cannot be by their side. With the pandemic, this technology has never been more meaningful. Support our efforts to keep our tiniest patients and their families connected at all times by making a gift today.

Individual cameras may be sponsored and personalized in honor of someone special for \$2,500.

# Mercy Hospital Auxiliary grants \$15,000 in scholarships to four college bound students

The Friends of Mercy Foundation is proud to give programmatic support to the Mercy Hospital Auxiliary who generously funds college scholarships for Junior Auxilians as they graduate from high school.

Beginning in 1995, the Auxiliary awarded four scholarships totaling \$400. Since then, they have awarded 107 scholarships totaling \$219,700. The proceeds from the Gift Shops at Mercy Hospital Downtown and Mercy Hospital Southwest has grown the program to a budget of \$15,000 a year.

Gail Burch, long time Auxilian and chair of the Scholarship Committee says it is "fun to see their accomplishments. They are well-rounded students. They always say thank you to the auxiliary."

From the Friends of Mercy Foundation, the student recipients, and our community, we have so much gratitude for the Mercy Hospital Auxiliary and their unwavering support to furthering the mission of the Sisters of Mercy in our hospital and beyond our walls!



### Keshav Patel Highland High School University of California, Los Angeles

"I absolutely loved volunteering because I truly enjoyed helping family members of patients, communicating with people on a daily basis and the environment that was at the hospital."



### Imaranjit Matharu Stockdale High School Bakersfield Community College

"I decided to volunteer because I wanted to know what it was like to be working alongside the staff of a hospital. I have learned things that only volunteering can teach, and although I didn't help patients directly, I felt as if I was playing a role in saving someone's life."





### Insiyah Merchant Stockdale High School University of California, San Diego

"Volunteering at Mercy has been one of the best experiences I've had. Sitting at the information desk and running our Coffee Cart allowed me to interact with patients, visitors, and staff. I've had wonderful conversations with all kinds of people and learned that compassion is one of the most important things in healthcare."

### Harleen Gill Independence High School University of California, Berkeley

"I chose to volunteer at Mercy Southwest Hospital because I wanted to spend my extra time giving back in any way possible. I was not only able to help and give back but also gained communication, organization, and time management skills."

# When Covid Hits Home

### Lena and Ken Stonecipher are no strangers to Mercy Hospitals. In fact, Ken may be one of the few people who knows every corner of both campuses.

As Director of Plant Maintenance, he has walked the hospital halls for more than 36 years. Never did he expect to one day walk through the doors as a patient, and then once again as a patient's spouse.

In August 2020, Ken began to not feel well. He visited the Mercy Downtown Emergency department, where he was diagnosed with COVID-19. Ken was admitted to the hospital where he would spend the next 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  days. Although Ken has been a long time employee, his role does not always include interacting with the frontline clinical staff. In fact, to most of his caregivers he was not Ken, Director of Plant Maintenance, rather he was Ken, our patient. Ken recalls, "We had fantastic care starting as soon as we walked through the door. The ER was great and efficient, as was X-Ray and lab. Every nurse was wonderful and helpful and I saw a caring attitude from each staff member." After almost a week in our care, Ken was discharged home only to return to the Emergency department, but this time for his wife Lena who was experiencing an unusually high fever. A fever that would eventually be attributed to COVID-19.

Due to strict visitor and infection control restrictions, Lena was unable to be by Ken's side as he recovered from the virus. Now,



Lena would have to embark alone on her own recovery. She remembers, "8 days in a room alone was a huge challenge for me, not just physically but emotionally and spiritually as well". No matter how tough the days, Lena found comfort in God and her caregivers. "I'm so grateful that the staff could 'read' my struggles, and would stop to chat with me. It seemed that when I shared my faith in God, different people would share a story back. I felt comfort hearing their stories." Lena was finally discharged and able to return home. Reunited, Ken and Lena were on their road to recovery together. And thanks to donor plasma, the Stoneciphers continued to grow stronger each day.

Lena and Ken will forever have a place in their hearts for their caregivers. Not only had the Mercy staff cared for their bodies, but also their minds and souls. "We were cared for, loved on, and encouraged with dignity."

Lena and Ken wish to thank everyone who had a role in their care, especially Susie Pence, Shawntina Rasmussen, Rino Mallari, Amanda Sudenga, Lisa Justin, Morgan Topper, and Howard Young.

## The Heart of Mercy: A Legacy Unlike Any Other



After 26 years of service as the Vice President of Mission Integration for Mercy Hospitals, Sister Judy Morasci, RSM, announced that she would retire on Jan. 1, 2021.

In addition to being the central figure of the hospitals' mission for over two decades, she has served the Sisters of Mercy for 61 years.

Judy Morasci was born in San Francisco, and attended St. Peters Academy where the Sisters of Mercy taught. She was struck by the compassion and tenderness of the Sisters, especially toward the poor, women and children. One of the Sisters saw in young Judy a spirit that mirrors that of those serving in the Sisters of Mercy, a religious order founded in Ireland in 1831 by Catherine McAuley. On August 14, 1959, two months after graduating from high school, she moved to Burlingame and the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy where she entered the Novitiate. After she took her vow in 1962, she used her gifts in education to teach at St. Lawrence in Bakersfield, St. Peters in San Francisco, and finally as principal at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Bakersfield. She was later called back to Burlingame to serve as the supervisor of Education. After a sabbatical at Harvard School of Divinity, Sister Judy Morasci came to Mercy Hospital to serve as the Vice President of Mission Integration.

"Her impact is felt by all those she has touched, and to say she is beloved by all is a gross understatement. She had an extraordinary influence on Mercy Hospital and our community," says Bruce Peters, CEO and President of Mercy Hospital.

It is difficult to find words adequate to describe the impact that Sister Judy has on employees, stakeholders, patients and families.

### "Sister Judy is everything that is good about Mercy Hospitals. She is kindness

and compassion. She is spirituality and hope. To spend time with Sister Judy is to have your faith in a better world renewed and reinvigorated," says Michal Yniguez, Administrative Supervisor and Senior Executive Assistant.

Although comforting patients and families is central to Sister Judy's role, she deeply and personally cares for every employee as they are part of her flock. Susan Sharp, RN, BSN, Manager of Endoscopy, recalls "in 2017 after my trauma in Las Vegas, Sister Judy came to my office and sat with me and prayed with me and held my hand while I cried. I will always remember her compassion, sweetness and the care she showed me. She has since that day always checked on me to make sure I was ok. I will miss her terribly. She is such a light for us all."





Mercy Hospital Leadership and the Friends of Mercy Foundation, after consulting with Sister Judy about her wishes, will be establishing the Sister Judy Morasci Endowment to honor her legacy. The annual proceeds of the endowment will benefit local organizations who serve women and children with the most critical needs.

We humbly ask you to honor Sister Judy's legacy by considering a gift to the Sister Judy Morasci Endowment, administered by the Friends of Mercy. This endowment will live in perpetuity, allowing your gift to annually bless women and children for years to come – in honor of our dear Sister Judy Morasci, RSM.

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### Fifteen years after its founding, the Catherine McAuley Society continues to support healthcare in our community through funding of advanced equipment.

Recently, the 126 members voted to use their cumulative gift to fund three VDR-4 ventilators. These specialty ventilators, which only a handful of hospitals in the United States have, enabled Mercy's experienced Respiratory Therapists to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jakob Atkinson, Mercy's Director of Respiratory Care Services stated "these ventilators helped us dramatically throughout the COVID-19 surge and saved numerous lives." It is through the Catherine McAuley Society's generosity that Mercy will continue to support patients suffering from respiratory ailments, now and in the future.

If you would like to join this remarkable group of women, visit **www.SupportFriendsofMercy.org** 

### 2019/2020 Members

Cherie Aaron Maureen Andrew Antonette S. Anich\* Marcelle Ansolabehere\* Rosemary Anspach\* Sandy Banducci\* Kay Beavers Edith Bianco Lynda Bittleston Tricia Bland Michele Borel Michele Bouit Doreen Boylan-Abrams\* Alissa Buckey\* Vicki Burger Sharon Bush\* Beverly Camp Pat Campbell\* Debbie Cappello\* Naida Carlton Kaye M. Cartnal Sylvia Cattani\* Susan Cerri-Buck Jennice Cerrina Julie Cesare Michelle Chantry Tabussum Chowdhury, MD Becky Clark Terri Collins Kathy Crettol Sarah Crowley Linda Lee Dane Ioan Dezember\* Fern DiNicola\* Gloria Dominguez Iovce Downs Jennifer B. Drake Simona Dulcich Adel M. Durando\* Mesha Elliott Cherilee Ezell Gina Fanucchi Judith Fanucchi Chrissy Farr Kimberly Fiorini Melissa Fortune Debbie Fowler Marilyn H. Fowler Judy Franconi\* Jan Froehlich Sheila Fry Catherine Gay Pamela Giumarra Keri Gless Carol Grumbles Toni Harper Lavonne C. Hall Catherine Haupt Jane Haupt Mikie Hay<sup>\*</sup> Lauren Helper Kathy Hill Ann Hine Beth Hoffmann Patricia Houchin Christine Icardo Cynthia Icardo\* Nancy H. K. Johnson Cindy Jones Germaine Kimm Lisa King Karen Krausse-Roesle Lorie Kreiser Diane Lake\* Valerie Lallo Dee Ann Lantz\*

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\* Charter Member

William Howell Century Club

### Ten years ago, the William Howell Century Club was formed to address the philanthropic needs of Mercy Hospitals of Bakersfield.

Their commitment to continuing the tradition of giving set by Mercy's first benefactor, Mr. William Howell, Sr., has enhanced the care of thousands in our community.

### Their historical giving of \$1,068,000 has funded more than 30 pieces of equipment/ technology, including:

- **Touchless tonometers**, critical pieces of equipment to check the pressure inside of the eyes
- **iPad based translation program** significantly improving communication with hearing impaired patients
- **BiPAP machines** that physicians and respiratory therapists can use to offer patients the best chance of not requiring mechanical ventilation
- Vein finders that digitally display a map of a patient's blood vessels on the surface of the skin in real time, allowing our caregivers to accurately locate a vein and avoid unnecessary multiple sticks
- **Specialized microscope** used for the partial or complete amputation of a finger or hand following injury

If you would like to join this group of philanthropic men visit www.SupportFriendsofMercy.org

### 2019/2020 Members

Hal Aaron Steve Anderson Ieff Andrew\* Kevin Andrew\* Robert Anspach\* Ariel Auffant Alan Avery Alex Balfour Tim Banks, II Antonio Beccari\* Michael Beckwith\* Leonard A. Bidart\* Scott Black Glenn Bland Jeffrey Buckey Mike Burger William Bush\* Javier Bustamante, MD\* Jim Camp Mike Campbell\* George Cappello\* Fred Carlisle Arnold Cattani P.R. Chandrasekaran, MD Jayaraman Chandrasekhar, MD Anthony Ciarolla, MD\* Garett J. Colatruglio Alfred J. Coppola, Jr., MD\* Mark Costa Steve Del Papa\* Tunde Deru William DiNicola, MD\* David C. Dougherty, MD\* Gordon Downs Franco Felizarta, MD Greg Gallion Ralph Garcia-Pacheco. MD David Gay Barry Goldner\* Raj Gopal, MD Brandon Grimm Angelo A. Haddad Mike Hair\* Christopher D. Hamilton, MD\* S.J. Hardy, MD Bruce Haupt\* Steve Haupt\* Brandon Hawkins, DPM Dan Hay Tom Hoffmann Ed Hopple\*† Donald Houchin Adam Icardo Gary Icardo\* Kamalnath Iyer, MD Tom Jamieson\* Ray Karpe\*

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\*Charter Members †Deceased

## From Mercy's Homework Club to Harvard University

Gustavo Luna's path hasn't been easy. As a fourth grader, he was new to the country, unfamiliar with the language, and his family was struggling. **Gustavo's mother enrolled him in the Homework Club at the Mercy Learning Center, an after school program for underserved children.** Gustavo recalls this time fondly, and soon, he began to thrive in school. Once in high school and taking Advanced Placement courses, he decided to give back to the organization that had changed his educational trajectory, and became a volunteer tutor at the Learning Center.

While maintaining his honor roll status at Bakersfield High School, his family situation remained challenged. "I lived at different homes, so I didn't really have that family to fall back on. That's where the learning center staff stepped in." Following graduation, Gustavo would continue his studies at Fresno State University, and interned during the summers at the Center. He recalls the kindness of his Mercy family when he "didn't have a ride back to Fresno to begin my second year. Somehow staff got approval to use the hospital's van and that's the vehicle they dropped me off in at college."

It was during college that Gustavo knew he wanted to start a tutoring program that provided similar services to those he had. Kern Tutoring, Gustavo's business, is meeting the needs of the community and has worked in partnership with the Mercy Learning Center, and local school districts and non-profits.

Now, Gustavo continues his passion for education by pursuing a Master's in Education at Harvard University. He plans to utilize his experience at Harvard to improve the education of students across the Central Valley.

Gustavo still feels a connection to Mercy and our community outreach efforts. "I will always be fond of the Mercy Learning Center. It is impossible to measure the positive impact the Department of Special Needs and Community Outreach has in our community."







rcy ( MERCY HOSPITALS

### Same Giving Hearts, Different Looking Year

One month before the Legacy Circle at Mercy was to gather for the first time in 2020, statewide social distancing guidelines were put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the group was unable to meet in person, their commitment to Mercy Hospitals remained as strong as ever.

This year, the 37 members voted to use their \$18,500 cumulative gift to fund the Code Crimson Mass Transfusion Project that will reduce the response time and the infusion times of live saving blood products increasing the survival rate of our patients that experience maternal hemorrhage.

If you would like to support Mercy Hospitals and become a Legacy Circle member, please visit www.SupportFriendsofMercy.org



### 2020 Members

Ashley Anchordoguy\* Mike Anchordoguy\* Roya Armon Hillary Boylan William Brown Robin Bunvan K. Samantha Cardenas Andreas Dauner Misty De La Torre\* **Emily Duran** Mark Durando Ralph Garcia-Pacheco, MD Emily Gay-Dauner\* Francisco Gomez Toni Harper\*LCSW, DBH Joe Hay\* Sofie Hay, PhD Steven Jelmini, DPT, OCS Jennifer King-Wickensheimer\* Valerie Lallo Anthony McNinch Lauren McNinch **Diane Nieblas** Amy S. Olson, RN Timothy M. Osborn Joe Peters **Mystie Peters Doug Pierce** Megan Pierce Justin Salters **Emily Salters** Katherine Thomas, MD Jessica Turrubiates Joel Turrubiates Kristin Weber\* Joseph Whittington Michael Wickensheimer

\*Charter Member

# **Founders Circle**

The Friends of Mercy Foundation gives special recognition to its donors who have contributed a total of \$10,000 or more. We sincerely appreciate the support and generosity of our Founders Circle members listed on these pages.

### Founders Circle Members Move To Next Level Of Giving

### Benefactor Level

The following Founders Circle members have made gifts that qualify them for an individual glass tile at the Benefactor Level:

The Lazzerini Family Foundation Bank of America Leonard and Susan Bidart James and Beverly Camp

### Patron Level

Hal & Cherie Aaron †Dr. George and †Millie Ablin

The Estate of Millie Ablin

The following Founders Circle members have made gifts that qualify them for an individual glass tile at the Patron Level:

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The following Founders Circle members have made gifts that qualify them for an individual glass tile at the Sponsor Level:

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Shawana, Tonya &Brett McCane

†Mr. and †Mrs. James L. Burke

Dr. Javier and Laurie Bustamante

### **New Members**

We are truly grateful to the following donors, who with their generous donations have recently become members of the Friends of Mercy Founders Circle:

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