

Friends For Life

Winter 2026

The Celebration of Humankindness



Step inside the Thomas M. Hardt Tower!
Pages 16–17



**Friends of Mercy
Foundation.**
A Dignity Health Member

Dear Friends of Mercy,



Geoff King

*Chairman of the Board,
Friends of Mercy Foundation*

What a year 2025 was!

After a long wait, Bakersfield and Kern County saw the opening of the Thomas M. Hardt Tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest on December 8, 2025.

The community was able to help celebrate this event with the Mercy Gala on October 24th and the Ribbon Cutting on December 4th. And what great celebrations they were.

Our generous community donors contributed almost \$22 million to the Friends of Mercy Foundation, including the Mercy employee giving groups of almost \$600 thousand. Adding the proceeds from our sale of the Karpe Ranch, the Foundation has made almost \$50 million available for the Tower project.

All of this occurred due to the tremendous partnership between our generous Community and the significant financial commitment by Dignity and CommonSpirit Health. This partnership resulted in an initial project commitment of over \$350 million to bring this state of the art and transformational healthcare facility to our Community. This facility

will enable Mercy Hospital to provide the best possible health care to our Community for years to come.

And just think, this is only the start. We now move on to adding more of the latest and greatest medical technology along with the needed doctors, nurses and staff to continue providing the best available health care to our Community.

Thanks again to our generous donors, the Friends of Mercy Foundation Board of Directors and the Foundation staff lead by Toni Harper, the Mercy Hospital management team, doctors, nurses and staff and especially Dignity and CommonSpirit Health for supporting our Community!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff King', written in a cursive style.

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Toni Harper

*Vice President of Philanthropy & Executive Director,
Friends of Mercy Foundation*

On December 8, 2025, at 6:00 AM, the first patient was moved into the Thomas M. Hardt Tower.

By the end of the week, dozens of surgeries were completed and hundreds of patients big and small were getting state of the art care in the Tower—a testament to the collective commitment of so many in our community and beyond. I would like to thank a few important stakeholders.

First, to the Sisters of Mercy, whose enduring spirit of compassion continues to inspire everything we do at Mercy Hospital. Your legacy, stemming from Catherine McAuley, is woven into the very fabric of our care.

To Chairman King and the Friends of Mercy Foundation Board of Directors, both past and present, your commitment is the bedrock of our success. To the Friends of Mercy Staff—there are no words, only love and admiration for each of you!

To our campaign cabinet, every donor, construction team member, corporate partner and individual who has given of time or resources. On behalf of

the thousands of patients and families who will walk through those doors, who you will never know yet you have ensured that they will receive state of the art care with compassion—Thank you!

Finally, to our amazing team at Mercy Hospital—doctors, nurses, leaders, and support staff—you are the face of humankindness. You embody our mission, day in and day out, with skill, compassion, and tireless effort. This tower, and everything we do, is ultimately for you and the patients you will serve.

As Thomas Hardt wisely stated, you only have to walk through our hospital on any given day to see why this kind of giving is so vital. You witness the miracles, the moments of struggle, and the profound impact of compassionate care. That, my friends, is the Spirit of Mercy.



Legacy of

Sisters of Mercy



In 1778, a young girl named Catherine McAuley was born into a comfortable family. However, tragedy struck early, leaving Catherine and her siblings to face poverty and hardship. These experiences, coupled with a deep and unwavering faith, shaped her life's path. She witnessed firsthand the suffering of women and children, lacking basic necessities like food, shelter, and education.

After inheriting a sizeable sum of money, Catherine didn't indulge in luxury. Instead, she channeled her resources into a bold vision: the House of Mercy. Opened in 1827, this wasn't just a shelter; it was a beacon of hope, offering education and support to women and children. Catherine's tireless work attracted other women who shared her passion.

These women became known as "the walking sisters," a stark contrast to the cloistered nuns of the time. In 1831, at the urging of the Archbishop of Dublin, they formally established themselves as the Sisters of Mercy. Their influence spread throughout Ireland and beyond. Their commitment to education, healthcare, and social justice transformed communities by establishing schools, hospitals, and orphanages.

In 1910, at the request of the Archbishop of Los Angeles, and with the urging of parishioners from St. Francis church, 4 young Sisters of Mercy arrived at the train station in Bakersfield to establish a Catholic hospital to meet the needs of the growing community. Now, more than a century later, Mercy Hospital's legacy, built on the foundation laid by Catherine McAuley and all of the Sisters of Mercy who have graced our halls, continues to be interwoven in the lives of countless individuals in our community who have been touched by the Sister's healing ministry.



Legacy of

Adelaide Karpe

Housed in the Friends of Mercy Foundation are the annals of the Sisters of Mercy. In one of the volumes, a typewritten entry dated Oct. 1, 1971, states, “The sisters visited with Adelaide Karpe and her husband, Arthur. The latter is 86 years old and sick. Even with the services of the nurses around the clock, he looks poorly. Mrs. Karpe was most gracious and seemed exhausted from being up at night, off and on for a week.”

Adelaide noticed Sister Marian Joseph Kelly, the ICU manager by day, also working tirelessly as a bedside nurse at night. Faced with nursing shortage, Sister Marian Joseph explained her dedication arose from a sense of duty. Arthur passed away shortly after, but the compassion of Sister Marian Joseph made a profound impression on his wife. Adelaide and Sister Marian Joseph became close friends and trusted confidantes. Having a philanthropic spirit, as did Arthur, Adelaide asked if she could gift a piece of land to Sister Marian Joseph to be sold to build a new hospital in the growing Bakersfield community.

As one who had taken a vow of poverty, Sister Marian Joseph requested that it be left to Mercy Hospital.

In 1944, the Karpe Family purchased a 1,167 acres plot near Arvin for \$10. When Adelaide passed away in 1979, the land was worth \$1 million. The same piece of land was sold in January 2021 for \$26 million. Those dollars are the first recognized gift to the expansion of Mercy Hospital Southwest and construction of the Thomas M. Hardt Tower.

This gift was a result of the connection of a Sister of Mercy and a grateful patient who was a visionary. Due to Adelaide’s generosity, we are able to transform the health care landscape in Bakersfield with the building of the Thomas M. Hardt Tower. Adelaide and Sister Marian Joseph, and their acts of connection and compassion, remind us of the enduring and boundless power of Humankindness.



Legacy of Friend Raising

The Friends of Mercy Foundation, a non-profit organization in Bakersfield, California, boasts a rich history deeply intertwined with the city's healthcare landscape. Its origins trace back to 1910 with the donation of the St. Clair House, which became the first Mercy Hospital. This initial hospital was built and sustained through the generosity of the community, reflecting a long-standing philanthropic spirit.

Formally established in 1988 by Jim Burke and other community leaders, the Friends of Mercy Foundation emerged as a formalization of this long-standing community support. **Mr. Burke envisioned an organization focused on “friend raising” rather than fundraising.** Since then, the Foundation has raised over \$100 million to address the evolving healthcare needs of the community. This includes providing funding for equipment, technology, and various outreach programs.

Today, the Friends of Mercy Foundation continues its vital work in supporting Mercy Hospitals and sharing the mission of the Sisters of Mercy. To become a Friend of the Foundation, visit us online at SupportFriendsOfMercy.org.



Legacy of

The Hardt Family



Tom Hardt, a Bakersfield native who spent decades developing and building the city's landscape, made a transformative gift to reshape Bakersfield's future. His unprecedented multi-million dollar contribution to the Friends of Mercy Foundation, allowed for the construction of the Thomas M. Hardt Tower. In addition to 106 private patient rooms, the Tower adds state-of-the-art operating rooms, adult and neonatal intensive care units, and expanded cardiac care. Tom and his wife Barbara's generosity isn't just about bricks and

mortar; it's about building a healthier community. Having witnessed firsthand the exceptional care provided by Mercy Hospital, and driven by a strong commitment to Bakersfield, they are ensuring residents receive advanced medical treatment close to home. This act of profound generosity reflects Tom's transition from building homes and neighborhoods to building a legacy of compassion and care for others. The Thomas M. Hardt Tower stands as a testament to his vision and a beacon of hope for the community's future health.



Legacy of The Pandols

Guided by a lifelong faith in Christ, Jack and Carolyn Pandol view their resources not as their own but God's provision to be shared. This contribution is an act of faithful stewardship and builds upon the legacy of their parents, Donald and Izetta Camp, and Jack and Winifred Pandol, who were also devoted supporters of Mercy Hospital.

The Pandols' deep commitment to service stems directly from the values instilled by their parents, who were pillars of business and philanthropy in our community. This act honors their parents' memory and continues their tradition of service through Christ. Raised with a deep appreciation for

compassion, hospitality, and excellence—values embodied by the Sisters of Mercy—the Pandols witnessed firsthand the power of Humankindness during their parents' time at Mercy Hospital. Additionally, they recognized the critical need for expanded facilities and services to meet the growing demand. Jack and Carolyn congratulate all those associated with Mercy Hospital as they extend the healing hands of Christ and bring relief to those in need.

"We've been blessed by Christ for all of our lives. Everything we are and have is His. We are simply faithful stewards. We give to empower the people who minister to the sick and dying in this building, and to be the hands and feet of Jesus to deliver tremendous healthcare."

—Jack and Carolyn Pandol

Legacy of The Bidart Family

“Our gift is offered humbly, with gratitude and appreciation for the healthcare mission of the Sisters of Mercy in Kern County.”

—Mr. Leonard Anton Bidart

“True contentment doesn’t bloom on its own. It grows from the depth from what you give.”

—Narendra Modi

*Come, O life-giving Spirit, transform us, stir up in us the flame of love which is your gift.
Give us wisdom to see as you see. Give us understanding to hear as you hear.
Give us courage and strength to walk the way of justice and integrity.
Kindle in us wonder and awe, that we may have grateful spirits.
You who dwell within us, praying unceasingly, fill us with love and devotion.
Holy Wisdom, guide us in the choices we must make.
Give us discerning hearts that we may choose what is good, in accord with your desire.
Lord God of mercy, finish in us the work you have begun.
Amen.*

—Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy





David and Catherine's contribution has supported the transformation of intensive care services including tripling the bed capacity to 24, equipping the unit with cutting-edge technology, and creating a more therapeutic atmosphere.

Legacy of

The Gay Family

David and Catherine Gay have been long-time supporters of the Friends of Mercy Foundation and Mercy Hospitals and were among the first to support the Thomas M. Hardt Tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest. Inspired by their family's experiences receiving care at Mercy, they and their daughter Emily recognized a need to expand services on the westside of Bakersfield. When asked to support this effort, their response was decisive and generous.

As champions of business, philanthropy and education, this investment reflects not only their commitment to the community they cherish but also their deep respect for the Sisters of Mercy and

Mercy Hospital's century-long legacy of compassionate care, one they are ensuring will continue to thrive for decades to come.

*To connect the rich with the poor
The healthy to the sick
The educated and skilled to the uninstructed
The influential to those of no consequence
The powerful to the weak
To do the work of God on earth*

—Catherine McAuley,
Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

Legacy of The Wright Family

Inspired by the deep family connection to Mercy Southwest, the Wright Family Foundation's transformational gift established the Wright Family Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in honor of the patriarchs of their family, William Wright Sr. and Stephen Downs. Both men were dedicated advocates for children and respected leaders in Kern County business and philanthropy.

The Wright Family's legacy of generosity continues through the creation of 18 private suites within the NICU. These suites provide a vital haven for families during critical times, fostering stronger bonds and enhancing the health and development of newborns.

In loving honor of



William T. Wright Sr.



Stephen M. Downs



My God, I am yours for time and eternity. Teach me to cast myself entirely into the arms of your loving Providence. With the most lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate, tender pity. Grant me, O most merciful Redeemer, that whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me. Take from my heart all painful anxiety; suffer nothing to sadden me but sin, nothing to delight me but the hope of coming to the possession of You, my God and my All, in your everlasting kingdom. Amen.

—Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

Legacy of



The Patel Family

From humble beginnings in apartheid South Africa and rural India, Drs. Ravi and Naina Patel embarked on extraordinary journeys that culminated in remarkable achievements in American medicine and a profound commitment to global philanthropy. Their story is one of resilience, dedication, and a deep-seated desire to give back.

Dr. Naina Patel dedicated three decades to the field of cardiac anesthesiology, showcasing her expertise and unwavering commitment to patient care. Simultaneously, Dr. Ravi Patel built the Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center, one of the nation's largest freestanding cancer centers, a testament to his vision and leadership.

Their success, however, never overshadowed their commitment to family and our global community. Drs. Ravi and Naina Patel, along with their sons Amar and Rishi, believe the whole world is their family.

They have dedicated their resources to addressing homelessness, promoting better education, caring for the environment, providing nourishment, and fostering a sense of spirituality.

Drs. Ravi and Naina Patel's generous contribution to the Thomas M. Hardt Tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest in Bakersfield exemplifies their enduring commitment to holistic cancer care. They believe that healing encompasses both the body and the soul, requiring not only world-class treatment but also an environment of love, light, and compassion. Their gift ensures that patients will receive this comprehensive care close to home.

We should be shining lamps, Giving light to all around us

—Catherine McAuley,
Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

Legacy of



Beverly Camp Endowment

Beverly Constance Camp. A woman known for her gregarious, animated, magnetic, and selfless energy. Despite her influence as a community leader, she remained grounded in her Italian roots and humble beginnings. A devout Catholic, Beverly was deeply committed to a life of service. She played a pivotal role in Catholic Charities of Bakersfield, and was the Chairwoman of the capital campaign for the Thomas M. Hardt Tower. Her contributions earned her countless honors. Though she faced the challenge of breast cancer, her spirit remained radiant, and only fueled her passion to make a difference, ensuring that every person has access to quality healthcare in their community.

Beyond her charitable contributions, Bev's life was deeply rooted in love for her friends, family, and unwavering Catholic faith. She was fiercely loyal

to those around her, expressing her love through cooking, especially her cherished Sunday pasta-and-meatball dinners. Beverly had a rare gift for nourishing not only one's body with food, but also one's spirit with her unwavering belief in each individual's inherent worth. She believed every person, regardless of their station in life, deserved a seat at the table and all are equal and deserving in God's eyes. Her legacy of love and compassion endures through her husband Jim, her family, and all who were touched by her grace.

Whether you arrive at Mercy Hospital via Beverly Camp Way seeking relief or with blessings to share, know that this is a space for connection and healing. If your heart is weary, receive the grace and healing for your body and soul. If your heart is full, extend that fullness to someone who is in need of comfort and mercy.



Legacy of

The Bhambi Family

Bhambi Heart and Brain Center Coming in 2027!

For over 30 years, I have had the profound honor of serving the people of the Central Valley. This community's strength, resilience, and generosity have inspired me and my family daily. From the outset, our goal has been to provide compassion, innovation, and cutting-edge care to the community.

Our partnership with Mercy Hospital is a testament to this shared mission. Establishing the Bhambi Heart and Brain Center marks a deeply personal milestone, symbolizing our dedication to enhancing healthcare and uplifting the community that embraced us so warmly.

"We're privileged to be part of the new Thomas M. Hardt Tower and look forward to expanding access to world-class care for residents of Kern County and beyond. We believe this institution will elevate hope as it elevates healing for all who enter—a lasting symbol of what's possible when a community unites with purpose and heart."

—Dr. Brijesh Bhambi & Family

Each day is a step we take towards eternity, and we shall continue to step from day to day until we take the last step, which will bring us into the Presence of God; let us always walk before God in anticipation of that day.

—Catherine McAuley,
Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

Legacy of



The Anand Family

*M*ercy Hospital Southwest holds a sacred place in our hearts—it is where both our sons, Mukul and Manik, were born, marking some of the most magical, powerful, life-changing moments of our lives. More than just a medical facility, it is where our journey as parents began, and where our family's legacy took shape. The warmth, care, and comfort we received during those unforgettable days made this hospital a true extension of our family.

Over the years, we have come to deeply appreciate how vital this hospital and the Family Birth Center are to Kern County, offering not only advanced medical care but also compassion and hope to countless families. We hope that the Anand Family Birth Center will always be a place where new life is celebrated, and love begins.

With deep gratitude for God's blessings, our family embraces the privilege of giving back to the communities that have profoundly shaped our lives. It is an honor to support the hospital's expansion and help extend world-class healthcare throughout Kern County and beyond.

Let charity be our badge of honor ... so that it may be truly said, there is in us but one heart and one soul in God.

—Catherine McAuley,
Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy



STEP INSIDE

the Thomas M. Hardt Tower

The Thomas M. Hardt Tower, a new four-story, 106-bed patient tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest, has officially opened, bringing cutting-edge healthcare services to the region.

Blessed by Rev. Father Hector Lopez of St. Philips, this 142,000 square foot expansion significantly enhances Mercy's operational capabilities, integrating advanced technology and a strong focus on patient comfort. Key additions include an expanded 24-room Intensive Care Unit, 18 private Neonatal Intensive Care Unit rooms, six new operating rooms, and new cardiology and neurosurgery services, previously unavailable in west Bakersfield. Enhanced food, sterilization, and pharmacy services complete the modernized facility, ensuring advanced, compassionate care for the community.





Don't leave your legacy to chance.



A Free Tool for Peace of Mind

At the Friends of Mercy Foundation, our mission of humankindness goes beyond the bedside. We believe in caring for the whole person, and that extends to ensuring a secure future for our cherished donors, dedicated employees, and the communities we serve.

Here's a stark truth: a staggering 71% of Americans lack a will or trust.

This isn't just a statistic; it's a looming vulnerability for countless families. Without these vital documents, the unexpected can unleash months of stressful, expensive probate—potentially consuming up to 10% of an estate's value and leaving your loved ones in a difficult position.

But there's an empowering solution. Through our partnership with FreeWill, we're offering a brand-new, completely free resource that empowers you to control your legacy.

This secure online tool makes creating or updating your will incredibly simple, providing unshakeable peace of mind and confidence in the plans you make for tomorrow.



Your will is your voice for the future.

It ensures your priorities are honored, your loved ones are safeguarded, and your wishes are carried out with clarity and respect. Whether you're taking this crucial step for the first time or making thoughtful updates, FreeWill transforms a potentially complex process into an accessible, empowering experience.

Don't wait for the unexpected. Make thoughtful decisions and take control of your future with ease and confidence. If you haven't yet secured your legacy, we strongly encourage you to explore this invaluable, free opportunity today.



THE LEGACY OF MERCY

BLACK TIE GALA











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.

Members Moving to the Next Level of Giving

These Founders Circle members have made gifts that qualify them for the following levels:

Karpe Level

Anand Legacy Foundation
Bhambi Heart Foundation

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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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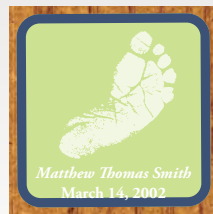
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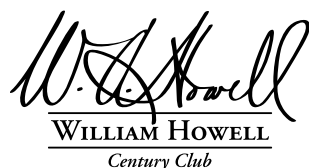
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