

Friends For Life

Winter 2024

Your impact in
the hospital and
beyond our walls



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

Dear Friends of Mercy,



Geoff King

*Chairman of the Board,
Friends of Mercy Foundation*

Even with a world in turmoil, we in Kern County and Bakersfield have so much to be thankful for.

Since the advent of the Friends of Mercy Foundation thirty five years ago, the Foundation, formed by pioneers in our community, began a process of philanthropy to benefit the Sisters Of Mercy and Mercy Hospital. Through many years of philanthropy, the Foundation has supported operations, capital acquisitions and patient care at Mercy Hospital.

Fast forward to 2024, the community has given generously to support the addition of the new Tower now under construction. Hopefully you have all had the opportunity to drive by the Southwest campus and see the steel and other improvements now being constructed. This addition would not have been possible without the support of our generous community.

...the community has provided more than \$40 million dollars to be contributed to the construction of the Tower.

Before this project could be started Dignity Health required the community to support this project financially. And did it ever; through the Foundation, the community has provided more than \$40 million dollars to be contributed to the construction of the Tower.

The ultimate goal of our Foundation and the Hospital is to provide the best possible health care available as well as state of the art facilities to meet the growing health care demands of our city.

With your support, the Friends of Mercy Foundation will continue to lead the way to support Mercy Hospital in its many duties and increasing expectations in providing Bakersfield and Kern County with the best health care possible. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Mercy Foundation, Foundation staff, the doctors and staff of Mercy Hospital and Common Spirit Health, we thank you for your past support and ask for your continued support as we work to continue to build upon the Mercy Hospital platform to provide the best medical care available to Bakersfield and Kern County.

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From the Homework Club to the Hallowed Halls of Harvard

Gustavo Luna looks back on his life so far with nothing but gratitude. As a fourth-grade student, he was new to this country and didn't know the language. His mother decided to enroll him in the Homework Club at the Mercy Hosptial Outreach Center. It was a decision that would shape his future in ways he could have never imagined.

"It's funny because most of my career has revolved around after-school programming and specifically tutoring, and it all traces back to my time at the Homework Club," said Luna, Founder of Kern Tutoring in Bakersfield. "It's just one example of how educators and mentors have changed my life."



Gustavo volunteered as a tutor at the Center while he attended Bakersfield High School and was hired as a summer intern while he pursued his undergraduate degree at Fresno State University. To this day he remains close with the staff members at the Mercy Outreach Center who poured into him throughout the years.

"It imprinted on me what education, educators, and mentors are meant to be. As an educator, that imprint has had a lasting effect on how I treat my students and staff members," said Luna. "I see my mission as one where I want to uplift, empower, and provide opportunities for youth the same way I was given at the Mercy Outreach Center."

Now 36, Gustavo is well on his way to making his dreams a reality. His mission to positively impact education throughout the Central Valley



"I saw a need for local educational programs that truly invested in our community. I also wanted to impact future educators."

Tutoring is just a part of what Kern Tutoring does. Most of the organization's focus is supporting school districts with Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention services, which include small group instruction in reading or math for students on local school campuses. Most recently, Kern Tutoring was contracted by the Kern

County Superintendent of Schools to develop a coaching program for local youth experiencing homelessness or foster care.

"There are some needs that the mainstream education system cannot fill," says Luna. "Places like Kern Tutoring and the Mercy Outreach Center work to fill the

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has led him to the hallowed halls of Harvard University. He recently completed a master's degree in education and is now in his second year in the Doctor of Education Leadership Program (Ed.L.D). The program is specifically designed to develop executive education leaders.

Gustavo was recently selected for the prestigious Harvard Presidential Public Service Fellowship. The fellowship provided him with funding to support literacy and leadership development for schools in the Navajo Nation in Arizona. He visited the area and worked with school leaders, educators, and students to uplift the voices of the entire community.

Gustavo also mentors undergraduate students at Harvard as a residential academic advisor and proctor. In this role, he lives in the historic Harvard Yard and plans activities for first-year students. He's even been given a very special nickname by his students and colleagues.

"They call me 'The Mayor of Harvard,'" Luna jokes. "I guess it's because I know a lot of people and make new friends with ease. I always know what's going on around campus."

While he pursues his post-graduate degree at Harvard, Gustavo continues to operate Kern Tutoring in Bakersfield, an organization he founded out of his passion for education and mentorship.



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gaps in the traditional K-12 education system and further support students in their educational journey.”

As far as his journey goes, Luna will continue to center his life around service. He hopes to eventually lead a national non-profit or philanthropic organization. Whether that road will bring him back to Bakersfield remains to be seen.

“I am open to whatever the future holds,” said Luna. “Originally, my goal was to come home and impact the entire Central Valley, but I am discovering that we can have a national impact regardless of where we are.”

Wherever his life takes him, one thing is certain: Gustavo will never forget where he came from and the people who have encouraged him along the way.

“I am so thankful for my life,” said Luna. “I look back at where it all started in the 4th grade and my life has done a 180-degree pivot. If you would have asked me what Harvard was like back then, I wouldn’t have known. I could never have imagined the life I have now.”



Kern Tutoring
IN-PERSON & ONLINE LEARNING

www.KernTutoring.com

661-304-6061 • 661-304-7637

35 Years



James L. Burke
Founding Chairman
Friends of Mercy
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1988

Foundation Founding

Over \$92,974,272 raised including some of these notable campaigns:

- Florence R. Wheeler Cancer Center Campaign
- The Family Birth Center Renovation Campaign
- Mercy’s New Century Campaign
- S.A. Camp Companies Robotic Surgical Center Campaign
- The Hardt Foundation Tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest

1990

Mercy Charity Golf Classic

\$2,307,314 raised

of Friends of Mercy

2006

Catherine McAuley Society

\$2,137,185 raised to purchase 118 pieces of equipment including:

- Advanced retinal scanning for NICU babies
- Blue Light Cystoscopy for detection of bladder cancer
- Arctic Sun to treat cardiac arrest patients
- Intra-Operative Radiation Therapy for breast cancer patients

2010

William Howell Century Club

\$1,334,000 raised to purchase 64 pieces of equipment including:

- Advanced ultrasound for Interventional Radiology procedures
- Cogent Hemodynamic Monitoring System for critical patients
- State of the art ventilators
- Digital mobile C-Arm

2010

Our Spirit of Giving –
Employee Giving Campaign

\$1,993,621 given to support:

- Music Therapy program
- Homemaker Care training
- Simulation Equipment
- Hardt Foundation Tower
- Sister Judy Endowment for Women and Children

2013

Legacy Circle

\$213,000 raised to purchase 38 pieces of equipment including:

- TCO2 Monitor for the NICU
- A Pediatric Project - Broselow carts and iPads.
- Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing program
- Code Crimson Equipment
- Fluent Fluid Management System

2021

Sale of the Karpe Ranch

Foundation sells the ranch donated to Mercy Hospital in 1979 from grateful patient Adelaide Karpe for \$26,000,000

2023

Naming of the Hardt Foundation
Tower at Mercy Southwest

Foundation receives a \$5.5M gift from the Hardt Foundation to ensure all in our community have access to state-of-the art care



**Friends of Mercy
Foundation.**

A Dignity Health Member

Older, wiser, and more creative!

At the spry age of 69, Terry Armendariz Murray of Bakersfield is proving it's never too late to express yourself. Instead of slowing down in retirement she's found a way to stay active and inspired by taking classes at The Art & Spirituality Center at Mercy Hospital Downtown. The Center is funded in part by the Friends of Mercy Foundation.

The Center offers patients, caregivers, and community members an opportunity to experience the healing benefits that may come from creative expression. It's also a place for those who just want to come into a quiet and reflective space to read, pray or learn something new.

"I graduated with a degree in art and now that I'm retired, I wanted to get back into it," said Terry Armendariz Murray. "I like to challenge myself and learn new things. The classes at The Center are so enjoyable and the people are so nice and welcoming."

It was her sister-in-law who first encouraged Terry to attend an exercise class at the center, and once she did, she was hooked. Now Terry is a regular in two classes per week, Tai Chi and an art class focusing on iconography.

"The art class is challenging, but Joyce the instructor is so encouraging and really guides us through the process," said Murray. "Tai Chi allows me to really live in the moment and leave the stress of the day at the door."

Located at Mercy Hospital in Downtown Bakersfield, The Center is a beautifully sacred

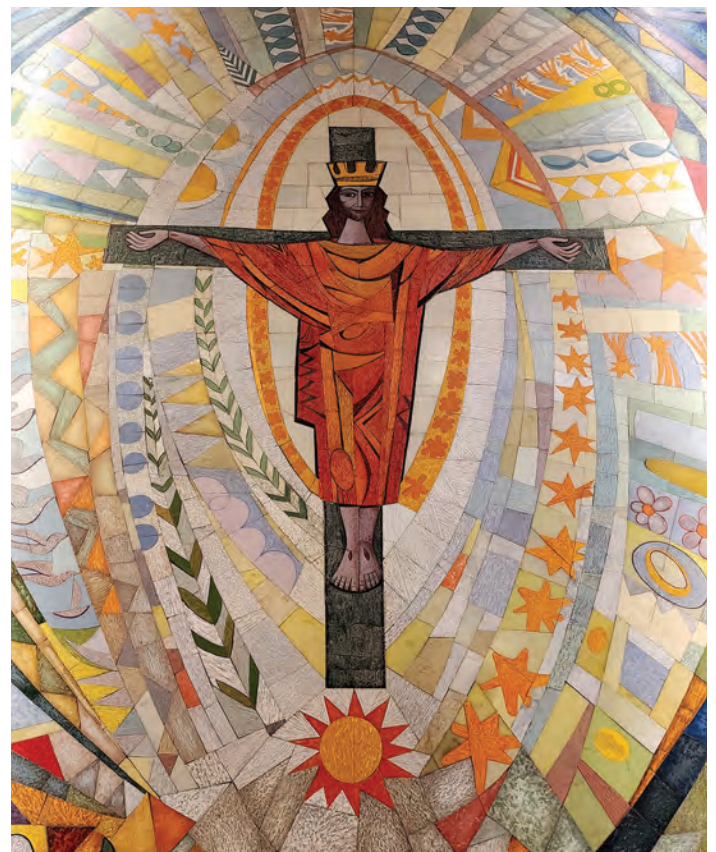


space situated inside the hospital's former chapel. It features stained glass windows, a floor to ceiling mosaic, and countless pieces of artwork. It's the perfect backdrop to encourage creativity and calm.

All programs are led by experienced facilitators and are free of charge. Classes are open to anyone 18 and older and there are even a few specially designed classes for kids.

The peaceful atmosphere and motivating classes are an inspiration to Terry, but she says it's her fellow students, now turned treasured friends who make the experience truly special. Two of her favorites are Joyce her 90-year-old art teacher and Julia, a 91-year-old retired nurse.

"It feels good to be with people who want to learn something new and better themselves," said Murray. "I really admire them. It's a great community of people. We share stories with each other and so many of them are inspiration to me."



Terry has discovered a special human connection at the Art & Spirituality Center that cannot be replaced, an experience she wants to share with the community.

“Sign up! Just go and try it,” said Murray. “I didn’t know what to expect and it turned out to be such a wonderful experience. The center has so many different classes, really something for every interest. It’s such a gift to the community.”

To view the current schedule of workshops or to register for a class online, visit www.dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/artforhealing. If you would like to learn more about the Art and Spirituality Center or any of its programs call (661) 632-5357.



Beaming with Pride

On Tuesday, December 12, 2023, construction crews topped-off the Hardt Foundation Tower by placing the final beam at the highest point of the structure, symbolizing the completion of this important phase.

The beam carried hundreds of signatures from staff, hospital leadership, donors and board members. The achievement marks a significant moment in the construction process, bringing the community one step closer to realizing the vision of this exceptional hospital expansion project. It serves as a testament to the incredible teamwork, expertise, and relentless pursuit of excellence demonstrated by all involved in the planning and construction of the Hardt Foundation Tower.





The Hardt Foundation Tower remains on schedule to be completed in 2025.

In addition to the 106 private patient rooms, the building will be the home of:

- *The David and Catherine Gay Family Intensive Care Unit*
- *The Wright Family Neonatal Intensive Care Unit*
- *The Drs. Ravi and Naina Patel Oncology Floor*
- *The Beverly Camp Women's Cancer Program*
- *The Pandol Main Lobby in honor of Jack and Winifred Pandol and Don and Izetta Camp*
- *The Leonard and Anton Bidart and Family Surgery Waiting Area*
- *State-of-the-Art Cardiac Catheterization Suites*
- *Expanded Neurosurgery Capabilities*
- *6 Additional Operating Rooms*



2000 Robotics Cases

S.A. CAMP COMPANIES Robotic Surgical Center

In 2018, the S.A. Camp Companies Robotic Surgical Center at Mercy Hospitals opened its doors due to the generous support of the community through the Friends of Mercy Foundation.

It is now the leader in surgical innovation for the Central Valley. In 2023, our team celebrated more than 2,000 robotic surgical procedures in less than five years at both Mercy Hospital Downtown and Mercy Hospital Southwest; and patients have experienced faster recoveries, reduced pain, and exceptional outcomes as a result.



The S.A. Camp Companies Robotic Surgical Center at Mercy Hospitals has received nationally-recognized Center of Excellence designations from Surgical Review Corporation (SRC) in the following specialties:

- *Colorectal Surgery*
- *Hernia Surgery*
- *Minimally Invasive Gynecology*
- *Minimally Invasive Surgery*
- *Robotic Surgery*



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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.

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These Founders Circle members have made gifts that qualify them for an individual glass tile at the following levels:

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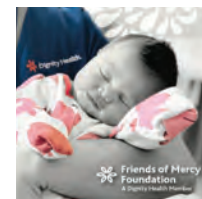
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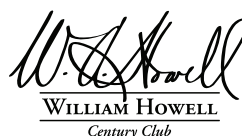
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