

the Redwoods Review

1972-2017 Celebrating 45 Years!

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE IT! A NOT-FOR PROFIT CREATED BY AND FOR THE COMMUNITY

In the late-1960s, a small group of forward-thinking members of the Community Church of Mill Valley sat down to talk about the need for affordable rental senior housing in Marin. Their vision: to create a community based on the principles of dignity, integrity, love, and respect.

There were a lot of questions. *How would it be funded? Where would it be located? Would people come?* Despite the many challenges, the congregation made the bold move to sponsor a retirement center in Mill Valley, and in 1970 formed a not-for-profit organization called "Community Church Retirement Center dba The Redwoods." A small planning grant was obtained and work began.

Over the next two years, with the financial backing of several church members, support of the City of Mill Valley, and a government loan, property at the corner of Miller Ave. and Camino Alto was purchased and construction began.



The Dream Comes True

The early years were often a struggle and the cause of more than a few "grey hairs," but Church members persevered. They not only put in an untold number of volunteer hours shepherding the project, but some even went into their life savings when it looked like funds might be running out.

Jubilant opening ceremonies were held on December 1, 1972 and, just two days later, the "impossible dream" became real – the first nine residents moved in. Things moved quickly over the next few years. In 1974, six Independent Living Apartment buildings (150 units)

were completed. That same year, a key hurdle was crossed when The Redwoods received a HUD Section 8 contract that subsidized rent for 60 low-income residents. During the mid-1970s, the Residents Council, Friends of The Redwoods, and Volunteer Auxiliary were formed, and staff was hired to provide social services, programs and activities.

Expansion Continues

Additions to the campus occurred throughout the next two decades. Most notable was the 1982-86 "New Horizons" \$1 million capital construction

project that included the addition of Assisted Living Apartments and a licensed skilled nursing center as well as enlargement of the kitchen and auditorium. Personal Care Units were added in the 1990s and, over time, the activities room, consignment gift shop and beauty shop were constructed.

Planning for the Future

In the early 2000s, leadership recognized that extensive facility renovation and modernization would be necessary if The Redwoods was to remain viable. A Master Plan was completed to guide future campus development, and in 2006 a Revitalization Task Force was formed to shepherd a \$32.8 million Revitalization Project. Pre-Construction began in December 2013 and a successful \$2.6 million Capital Campaign was launched.

On February 4, 2014, 42 years after the first opening day, the community gathered once again – this time to break ground on Revitalizing The Redwoods. And, the rest, as they say, "is history."

Barbara Solomon, CEO: Leading with Vision and Passion

The Redwoods is a treasured community asset. Many people are responsible for its success, including CEO **Barbara Solomon**. For the past 15 years, she has led the organization with vision, an unwavering commitment to the residents, and superb executive management skills.

A social worker by training and a licensed Nursing Home Administrator, Barbara came to The Redwoods with a wealth of experience leading organizations dedicated to helping seniors maintain their independence. Her passion for seniors is clear; every day, she is driven by one goal – enhancing the quality of life of everyone associated with The Redwoods and providing the support needed for residents to age with dignity.

DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR THE REDWOODS

Barbara joined the organization in 2001. Soon thereafter, “everything was elevated,” according to former Board President **Tom Kostic**.

Within short order, she put into place a superb leadership team, grew programs and services, raised The Redwoods’ profile in the community, and enhanced philanthropic support. But, her first and perhaps greatest achievement was bringing the not-for-profit organization onto much-needed solid financial footing, including building up its reserves, which was essential for future development.

The decisions she has made have not always been easy, but they have ensured a bright future for The

Redwoods. And she has done all of this without sacrificing the soul of The Redwoods or losing sight of its original mission of affordability.

Barbara is admired by many – the board of directors, residents, family members, staff, and community leaders, “She’s an inspirational leader,” explains Board chair Claire McAuliffe, “and brings a unique blend of vision, executive leadership, and passion to her work. She has a real gift for listening, has outstanding judgement, and delivers what is best for the health of the organization.”



Susan Badger, Chief Operating Officer (L) and Barbara Solomon, Chief Executive Officer (R)

LEADING THE REVITALIZATION EFFORT

All would agree that, without Barbara’s leadership, Revitalization would not have happened. For five years, she spent countless hours shaping the project, raising the funds and co-leading the team of architects and builders with COO, **Susan Badger**, for what was a massive and daunting undertaking.

There were multiple, ongoing challenges, including regulatory requirements, financial issues, and complex logistics – not the least of which was the temporary relocation of residents. But with Barbara and

Susan’s vision, perseverance, and positive attitude, Revitalization became a reality.

“Everything she does is to make life better for the residents.”

~Hector Richards, resident

Resident **Betty McAfee** sums it up: “Barbara and Susan have done a remarkable job with Revitalization – keeping 340 residents safe and relatively happy during a time of enormous change.”

Susan Badger, COO, has been with The Redwoods for eleven years, and also comes with a strong leadership background with senior communities. A licensed Nursing Home Administrator, she oversees all daily operations of The Redwoods, including the Health Care Center (HCC) and Assisted Living and other departments, and partners with Barbara in high level strategic planning. Highly visible within the organization, she is known for her close relationships with employees, residents and families alike.

WHAT DOES BARBARA THINK ABOUT THE REDWOODS?

“I don’t know of anywhere else like it. The sense of community and the remarkable staff. How everyone supports one another. The casual atmosphere. The fact that one’s economic background doesn’t matter. The residents’ energy, engagement and their fascinating backgrounds. The fact that we were created by the community and are part of the fabric of Mill Valley. It’s an amazing place!”



Why I Love The Redwoods!

*The Redwoods is a special place – its culture, the excellent care, its setting.
Above all, it's about community.*

"My parents lived at The Redwoods for 15 years. The care and opportunities to thrive were everything my family could have asked for – so much so that four of my siblings have signed up to move in!"

--Conny Ford, family member

"The Redwoods is an incredibly special place because of its heart. It's an inclusive, exciting community and it's spunky!"

--Harriet Kostic, former Board member and Community Church of Mill Valley member

"It's about the people – this collection of people who are friendly, liberal, innovative and self-starters, and the staff who become our friends. We take care of each other. Everyone, from Barbara Solomon to all the staff and volunteers, has a genuine desire to serve."

--Carrie Schoenbach & Joseph Levine, residents

"The warmth and friendliness is on the top of my list. When I come home from a trip, everyone on staff is happy to see me."

--Elizabeth Merriman, resident

"As employees, we have one common goal, backed by heart and commitment, and that's to cultivate a home for our residents."

--Maria Plurad, Assisted Living Clinical Director

"To work here, you must have a love and respect for old folks. Every day I do what I can to help them feel that this is their home and I am so often rewarded by their gratitude."

--Paul Thermidor, Kitchen Production Supervisor, employee for 35 years!

"Dad moved here 15 years ago, and was given a new life after the long illness and death of our mother. He was happy and comfortable at The Redwoods and sadly passed away in early February at 99 years old. The Redwoods has truly been a blessing for our entire family!"

--Penny Weiss & Stephanie Cuneo, family members

"I love the fact that The Redwoods and the residents give back to the general community – sponsoring the Celebration of Service Awards, raising scholarship funds for employees and their families, and participating in activities like the Alzheimer's Walk."

--Kathryn Graham, community member

"I love the location by Mt. Tam and the marsh – it's beautiful. When we were looking for a place to live and asked about The Redwoods, people said 'that's where all the interesting people live.'"

--Betty McAfee, resident

"There is an economic diversity here – it somehow makes life real in this place, and it adds different points of view."

--Audrey Hazen, resident

"Each resident has a wonderful story to tell-often with such clarity and wisdom and humor that it takes my breath away."

--Phyllis Sachs, volunteer since 2011

"My mom has lived at The Redwoods for 7 years, beginning in Residential Living and now at the Health Care Center. The Redwoods has been a true gift."

--Barry Schenbaum, family member

About The Redwoods

A free standing, not-for-profit and non-denominational senior community, our mission is to maintain a creative, affordable community that promotes good health, well-being and security. Located in Mill Valley, Ca. we offer independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing and an array of innovative programs.

For More Information: 415-383-2741 ♦ www.theredwoods.org ♦ 40 Camino Alto, Mill Valley, CA. 94941 ♦ 

We've Come a Long Way!



Late 1960s

Members of the Community Church of Mill Valley (CCMV), identify the need for affordable housing for seniors; dignity, integrity, love, and respect are guiding principles

1970 - 72

Church forms not-for-profit organization ("Community Church Retirement Center dba The Redwoods"); property purchased & construction begins

Dec. 3, 1972

First 9 residents move in

1974-1976

Six Independent Living Apartment buildings completed; HUD Section 8 contract subsidizes low-income residents; Resident Council, Friends of The Redwoods, Volunteer Auxiliary formed; social services and activities staff hired

1980s

"New Horizons" capital construction project completed – includes refreshed Health Care Center, renovated kitchen in HCC, and upgraded auditorium, and new community room for expanded activities

1990s

Organization becomes non-denominational – board of directors transitions to a community board; Community Church of Mill Valley no longer has fiduciary responsibility; lower interest rates obtained through refinancing; Robert Sinclair Scott organic garden created; Senior Prom and Celebration of Service events launched



1972 Dedication Ceremony



Three new Redwoods projects
The Redwoods' Retirement Center in Mill Valley broke ground Sept. 8 on three major building projects costing an estimated \$545,000. The three projects—the remodeling of both the Center's central kitchen and 24-hour health care center and the conversion of a residential wing into a personal care unit for the frail elderly—are being funded entirely by non-governmental dollars.



Pictured in 2014, Community Church of Mill Valley members and founders of The Redwoods (L to R) LaVerne Uhte, Jack Bartlett, Peggy Hewett and Marjorie Kuhl. Also pictured, retired CCMV Pastor Pam Shortridge.

2000- 2006

Master Plan developed; Revitalization planning begins -Task Force forms, loans obtained, Capital Campaign launches

2014-2016

Revitalization construction begins; Groundbreaking Ceremony held

Spring 2017

Revitalization completed; discussions begin regarding next phase of renovations

The Redwoods Today: We're Revitalized!



A Message from the Board President



2017 is a landmark year for The Redwoods: we are celebrating our 45th anniversary and will be cutting the ribbon on our Revitalization Project. Since 1972, we have been home to a vibrant, award-winning community of seniors. Our successes – and the major investment in the future – are due to the residents, family members, staff, volunteers, donors, and community members whose ongoing support makes The Redwoods the special place it is today. Thank you!

Claire McAuliffe, President, Board of Directors



Groundbreaking 2014 (Left to right) Richard Moore, Linda Clever, MD, Dave Dow, Kathy Dow, Susan Badger, Barbara Solomon, Anne Jeffrey, Kathleen Foote, Joanne Spotswood, Stephanie Moulton-Peters

Today, The Redwoods is not only considered one of Mill Valley's jewels, but has broken the mold for senior communities across the U.S. Our Revitalization Project, which was made possible by the generous support of the community, has transformed the campus and we are now poised to serve the community for decades to come.

2017 Board of Directors

OFFICERS

- Claire McAuliffe, *President*
- Bruce Scott, *Vice President*
- Andy Berman, *Secretary*
- Scott Miller, *Treasurer*
- Paula Reynolds, *Member At Large*

MEMBERS

- Betsy Bikle, *CCMV Rep.*
- Betsey Cutler
- Immediate Past President*
- Jayne Greenberg
- Margaret Harrington, *M.D.*
- Genevieve Moore
- Sarah Oliver
- Keith Phillips, *CCMV Rep.*
- Thomas Silk
- Michelle Steinhart
- Brian Swartz



125 modernized Independent Living Apartments



John L. Levinsohn Center for Dynamic Aging



New Lobby



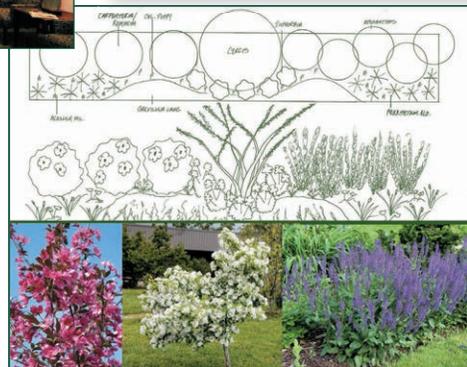
Entryway and Living Room



Revitalized Auditorium

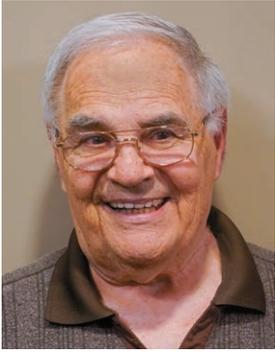


New Dining Room



Beautiful Landscaping coming in Spring 2017

DONOR PROFILE: Making a difference with legacy giving



“I am so grateful for everything about The Redwoods!” **Hector Richards** has lived at The Redwoods for 12 years after living and working on and off in San Francisco since 1964. A neighbor in his apartment building moved to The Redwoods and as soon as

“I am so grateful for everything about The Redwoods!”

~Hector Richards, resident

he was the original “+1” in the Purlettes +1, a knitting group affiliated with Sarah Oliver Handbags. Hector donated his entire Purlettes salary to the Residents Association Scholarship Fund for high school students.

That wasn’t Hector’s first or last act of generosity! In 2006 he invested in the “Buy Out Club” an early version of our Planned Giving Legacy Society where residents made estate gifts to support The Redwoods. “At The Redwoods we didn’t have to buy in (to live

Hector visited, he put himself on the waiting list. He loved the feel of the place.

Hector has been involved in every aspect of life at The Redwoods. He helped organize movie nights when he first arrived, sings in the Rock the Ages Chorus, is Treasurer of the Residents Association, and knits scarves with proceeds to benefit The Redwoods Residents Association. As the only male participant,

here), so why not buy out?” Hector is modest about his giving and he comes by it naturally. Why has he been so generous to The Redwoods? Would he encourage others to think about a planned gift? “Yes! It’s so easy!” said Hector. “And it’s a way of saying thank you. I don’t know where I’d be without The Redwoods.”

The Redwoods At-A-Glance

- 340 residents, (22 couples)
- Average age: 87; 10 people are over 100 years old
- 97% average occupancy
- 10 acre, 15 building campus
- Four levels of care: Independent Living (147 units); Assisted Living (108 Residential Living Apartments and 26 Personalized Care units); HCC Licensed Skilled Nursing facility (50 beds; open to the community-at-large)
- 176 full and part-time employees; 30% have worked at The Redwoods for over 10 years
- The Redwoods is a lively, vibrant place. Residents have a full spectrum of innovative programs and activities to choose from - over 100 each month.
- A volunteer roster of hundreds of community members of all ages
- \$20 million annual budget
- Almost 1/3 of residents receive financial support

To make a gift to The Redwoods:

- ◆ Donate online at www.theredwoods.org, or
- ◆ Send to The Redwoods, Office of Fund Development, 40 Camino Alto, MV, 94941

Questions or to discuss an estate gift: Call Robin Keating, Director of Fund Development at (415) 383-2741 or rkeating@theredwoods.org

DID YOU KNOW?

The Early Years

- A member of the Community Church of Mill Valley went into his life savings of \$10,000 to help purchase the property at Miller Ave. and Camino Alto
- Initially, the campus was going to be called “Bella Vista,” but the Church later held a naming contest. The prize: lunch at The Redwoods!
- When the first furniture arrived on a ship from China, the captain wouldn’t release it because payment hadn’t been made. Once again, Church members came through, and just in time for Opening Day!



Artist’s Discussion



Rock the Ages Chorus



Balance and Fitness

What Does the Future Hold?

Q & A with Barbara Solomon, CEO,
and Susan Badger, COO

Q. What does the short-term future look like?

A. By early Spring, the last projects of the Revitalization should be complete – including the John L. Levinsohn Center for Dynamic Aging with new wellness & fitness programs in place, the courtyard, library, and the landscaping should be completed as well. A big “Thank You” to everyone, especially the residents. It’s been a long process, including three years of construction. We did it!

Q. Is there a plan for more renovation or expansion?

A. A second phase is in preliminary discussions, but it will be some time before we have specific plans and several years before any work would begin – if only because we all need a break!

We’d start by continuing to upgrade what is currently in place, such as renovating Assisted Living and Health Care as well as creating new outdoor spaces. After this work is completed, we would launch an extensive project to add more affordable housing. All of this would require appropriate approvals and financial support from our friends and neighbors.

Q. What new programs or services are you working on?

A. We are very excited about a program that is being developed in collaboration with Marin Community Clinics (MCC) to provide primary medical care on our campus. As a first step, our bus will take residents to MCC’s

Larkspur Clinic for services. Soon thereafter, MCC will be running what we call a “suitcase clinic,” at which MCC clinicians will be on our campus at selected times. Assuming there is strong resident interest, we would then open an actual clinic at The Redwoods.

We’re also going to be expanding our intergenerational programs, with a likely focus on more cyber service/high tech training provided by high school students.

Q. What won’t change at The Redwoods?

A. The Redwoods will always be committed to its not-for-profit mission of providing affordable rental housing to moderate and low income seniors. We will work hard to retain the culture that make us so special – the strong sense of community; the high quality of care; resident-driven programs; and, the focus on physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health.

Q. What will be the role of philanthropy in the future?

A. We are a not-for-profit organization, so philanthropy will continue to play a strong role. One area that will require philanthropic support is Assisted Living.

The need is great, but there is currently no HUD or Medi-Cal subsidy and the care is expensive – it can cost up to \$50,000/year. Many residents cannot afford it, so they remain in Independent Living or go to the Health



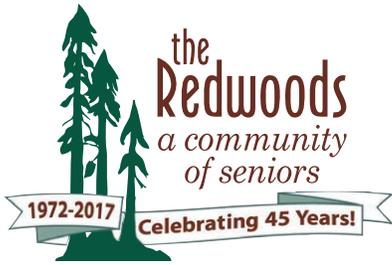
Care Center, both of which receive state funding. Assisted Living would be a natural fit for philanthropic support.

Q. What will senior housing in Marin be like 10 to 20 years from now?

A. The demand for senior housing is going to increase exponentially as the senior population increases. Those wanting to move to a senior community will be looking for amenities such as the Center for Dynamic Aging, our state-of-the-art, comprehensive wellness center. More people will be working later in life, so senior communities will need to adapt program choices and provide more transportation options.

We also anticipate seeing more intergenerational and mixed residential/retail housing. The “village” concept, in which services are brought into the home, will continue to grow; but it isn’t for everyone, as some would benefit from the on-site service and social interaction in a community setting.

Finally, the shortage of skilled nursing home beds in Marin is a great concern. Although the need is steadily increasing, most facilities are limiting or even eliminating beds. Given this reality, The Redwoods is absolutely committed to keeping our Health Care Center open.



40 Camino Alto
Mill Valley, CA 94941
www.theredwoods.org

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN RAFAEL CA
PERMIT NO. 2



Stay current on Facebook! "Like" us and share with friends!
Go to [Facebook.com/TheRedwoodsMillValley](https://www.facebook.com/TheRedwoodsMillValley)

The Redwoods 45th Anniversary Celebration!

Mark Your Calendar!

**Community Open House on
Sunday, June 25, 2017 2:00 - 5:00 pm!**

Join us to commemorate 45 years of providing a culture of opportunities for our senior community, and to celebrate the amazing results of our revitalization! Tour the campus and see our new Center for Dynamic Aging, beautiful organic garden, replanted grounds, new dining room, parking lot, entryway, lobby, living room, and library. Join a class in our revitalized auditorium, sing along with Rock the Ages, hear trends about Aging in Marin, and meet residents. Don't miss your opportunity to enjoy a day at the "Best of Marin" senior community!

