

LITA of Contra Costa Love Is The Answer Summer 2022

A Non-Profit Public Charity since 1980

Nursing facilities have interior open-air patios. Thanks to our donors, LITA gardens are now providing residents with hands-on outside activity.



Vanessa, AD in Martinez



Ser Magne, AD in Walnut Creek



Marie, AD in El Sobrante



Residents with Melanni Reyes, Pittsburg AD & Greenridge Senior Care AD Marie & her charges



MISSION STATEMENT: LITA of Contra Costa involves youth, families, and aspiring artists as community member volunteers to fulfill our mission to improve quality of life for disabled and senior persons living full time in skilled nursing facilities, rehab and hospice hospitals in Contra Costa County.

Donated funds continue gifting programs that are in place and successful and/or expand to new skilled nursing facilities (SNF) expressing interest. Tablets, sturdy cases, headphones, smart phones are not provided by skilled nursing facilities. LITA has donated one for each LITA served SNF patient in El Sobrante, Pittsburg, Martinez and Concord. (20 sent to a sister facility in Pleasanton, Alameda county) Pleasant Hill SNF has received 40, asking for their census of 90 to 100. Newest demand is for ceiling galaxy starlite projectors. Spring '23 LITA will initiate set up of four additional new gardens. WE hope to reply to long standing requests from LITA served SNF in Concord and Pleasant Hill with San Pablo and Antioch soon to follow. Complete Donor list & LITA Appreciation Awards will appear in our Fall Winter Newsletter

LITA is supported by donations from individuals like you; grants for community work from these foundations: Share the Spirit, Network For Good, Facebook Fundraisers, East Bay Community Foundation; clubs like the Cerrito City Club and Bayview Eagles and corporate donors like The Mechanics Bank, Phillips 66, along with employees and retirees donating their matched donations to LITA from Chevron and Johnson & Johnson.

LITA Music Volunteer regulars who appear on Friday afternoon music zooms for nursing facilities:



John Gruenstein



Randy Burge & Hali Hammer



Victoria Ryan



Rory Snyder



Suellen Primost

John Gruenstein, multi-talented volunteer started with LITA in 2012 as a music visitor at Lafayette Care Center then pioneered John Muir Medical Center music visits and has been LITA's zoom co-producer/emcee/performer since 2020.

Hali Hammer is an award-winning singer songwriter (halihammer.com) and retired teacher who has performed for peace and political causes for 40 years. She is shown above with her partner, Hali Hammer Band member **Randi Burge**.

Victoria Ryan singer, songwriter, recording artist for San Francisco Records and film producer was inspired by her friend Mimi Farina and Bread and Roses. As LITA director she works to improve life for disabled seniors isolated in institutions.

Rory Snyder, Professor Emeritus at Diablo Valley College and 21 years as Director of Jazz Studies. Rory plays an array of saxophones, flutes and clarinet. No surprise to his fans, Rory Snyder is a member of the California Jazz Hall of Fame.

Suellen Primost Peabody trained cellist, improviser, sound healer engaged in orchestral, chamber music, world music and inter-disciplinary collaborations. In the 70's, she and met and toured with recording artist Victoria Ryan. Suellen met worked with John Gruenstein in 2000 bringing their live music to individual patient's rooms at John Muir Hospital.

Dr. Alan Brast is a respected working psychiatrist at John Muir Medical Center. Alan's dad steered him early on toward guitar which Alan played through medical school and beyond. His grandson has joined him for guitar duets on one show.

Celestine Tiller, singer since childhood still shares that joy and talent. She and Victoria met in 2011 in the SGI Berkeley Region chorus. She worked inside facilities in 2016 helping LITA grow, pictured here during a duet Friday June 24, 2022.

Sadie Peake (and occasional guest dancing partner, **Sarah Adams**) energizes and uplifts LITA music shows each month. **Meso Tadeo**, Bay area LITA Music volunteer for years, now zooms talent in from his new home in Port Townsend WA.



Dr. Alan Brast



Victoria Ryan and Tina Tiller



Sarah Adams & Sadie Peake



Meso Tadeo

Singer songwriter in the 60s, recording artist in the 70s and film maker in the 80s and 90s, I was inspired to investigate LITA in 2000 by Jessica Durant, a friend, neighbor and former LITA volunteer visitor. For six years prior to LITA, I'd represented Long Term Care Health industry, driven by concerns over my own aging parents. I met the LITA of Contra Costa board members and they offered me the opportunity to support LITA of Contra Costa's mission as Executive Director. I am the sole employee, administrator, volunteer manager, accountant, clerk, fundraiser, publicist, garden and new programs designer and now a performer for LITA's zoom shows.

Reporting to the LITA board and working directly with nursing facility activity staff, I coordinate weekly and or seasonal Love Is The Answer skilled nursing facility activities. Since Covid, my pay is what budget allows. After 22 years, I feel privileged to donate hundreds of hours work to LITA each year. LITA served facilities 2022: Legacy Nursing and Rehab in Maritnez, Greenridge Senior Care in El Sobrante, Vale HC in San Pablo, Windsor Rosewood Manor Care in Pleasant Hill, Bayberry Health care in Concord, Tampico HC in Walnut Creek and Pittsburg Skilled Nursing. LITA has provided electronics donations for some additional locations.

Spring 2020, I introduced a weekly one hour LITA musical variety show on zoom, with music volunteer John Gruenstein. It is free for any and all nursing facilities. John is zoom host, our anchor man, folk singing guitarist and banjo player. My show niche is singing Mexican and other Latin classics wearing floral hats a la Frida Khalo. Between us we have attracted top notch jazz and classical and musicians as well as drumming belly dancers. Individuals and corporate donations since 2016 have allowed LITA to gift hundreds of personal iPods tablets, headphones, iPhones and fun electronics to now well over 600 resident skilled nursing facility patients.

In 2021, thanks to Share The Spirit Foundation, I began setting up the first of LITA's interior patio gardens for residents to enjoy open air and if so moved, get in hands-on gardening time. We have LITA patio gardens now operational in El Sobrante, Pittsburg, Martinez and Walnut Creek. A third of LITA's funding comes from individuals and family trusts. To date LITA has won grants for its community work from foundations like Share The Spirit. Chevron, P66 and Johnson & Johnson employees or retirees who designate matched funds for LITA.

I've heard of no local agency that does all that LITA does. At age 75, I am constantly seeking young successors interested in experiencing the diverse rewards and responsibilities inherent in carrying on LITA's mission to improve quality of life for our most vulnerable senior and disabled citizens living in skilled nursing facilities.

Thank you for remembering LITA of Contra Costa and often the most invisible segment of society we serve. May you each remain hopeful, healthy and as active as your circumstances and our times will allow!

Love is the Answer



**Victoria Ryan, director
LITA OF CONTRA COSTA**

LITA OF CONTRA COSTA LOVE IS THE ANSWER

PO Box 121 Port Costa CA, 94569

Founded in 1981, LITA of Contra Costa involves youth, families and aspiring artists as community member volunteers to fulfill our mission to improve quality of life for those disabled, senior and impoverished persons living full time in skilled nursing facilities, rehab hospitals and hospice facilities in Contra Costa County. Since Covid SNF suspended LITA holiday events, group caroling, one on one matches and pet visits. LITA's Music Awakenings iPod, Tablets and Smart phone program had been popular since 2016. Covid rendered the devices essential, though not Medicare nor industry provided. Activity Directors ask for sturdy fire tablets with kid cases, headphones and chargers. The tablets in addition to entertainment like LITA's free Music variety show on zoom, (supported by musician and dancer volunteers) allow residents to play bingo and get face time with family from their bed., They want air hocky and basketball tables for recreation. LITA provides these too. LITA set up four very well received SNF interior patio hands-on gardens with funding last year. We have requests for 4 more.



High praise for these and other Skilled Nursing Facility Activity staff, establishing LITA patio gardens and making sure their patients get the wide array donated personal electronics that are delivered to each facility personally by LITA of Contra Costa director, Victoria Ryan.



Vale AD Sharon Lobato in San Pablo



PSN AD Melanni Reyes & gardeners



Bayberry AD Margarita Ronquillo Concord

LITA of Contra Costa, Non-Profit Public Charity since 1980

Start a fundraiser for LITA of Contra Costa on Facebook LOVE IS THE ANSWER www.litaofcontracosta.org

or call Victoria Ryan, LITA director at 925 212 4573 or send us an email to litaofcc@gmail.com



LITA of Contra Costa, Non-Profit Public Charity since 1980

Mail your donation check to PO Box 121, Port Costa, CA 94569-00121

