

LITA of Contra Costa Love Is The Answer SUMMER 2024

A Non-Profit Public Charity since 1980, serving elderly and disabled in care facilities



Earth Day Patio Garden Party at Tampico Health Care

LITA's Patio Gardens are open April 15 through November. Do call us. LITA needs more community hands! Inquire by email or see LITA of Contra Costa ads on Volunteermatch.org, for more details on how you can become a weekly, bi-monthly or seasonal event garden volunteer at a care facility patio garden near you.

Tampico Health Care in Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill Post Acute Care, Bayberry Skilled Nursing and HealthCare in Concord, Pittsburg Skilled Nursing and Greenridge Senior Care in El Sobrante. They would all welcome an enthusiastic local gardener to come help out, on a regular basis or scheduled as a special patio garden event. Let's talk about it! .



Pleasant Hill Post Acute Care



Bayberry Health Care



Pittsburg Skilled Nursing



Greenridge Senior Care

Ken Berner donated in Honor of the Memory of Kathleen Berner and Patsy and Kenneth Berndt.



So we could hold activities in open air, LITA gardens began spring 2020 in Martinez at Legacy Nursing and Rehab. Then in 2021 thanks to a **Share the Spirit** Grant, LITA developed a new interior patio garden for Pittsburg Skilled Nursing. STS again chose LITA in 2022 and 2023 to feature and fund in order to maintain established programs and open new gardens. This year LITA of CC has been able opened two new Post Acute Care facility interior patio gardens and keep up three others, with welcome help of residents and staff. **Please donate via snail mail at LITA address below or use our new Zelle account dedicated to donations. See Drawing Prizes: original art, gift cards, pottery and a fun gift for Dog lovers**

Litaofcc@gmail.com 925 212 4573 LITA of Contra Costa PO Box 21 Port Costa CA 9456

Dear LITA Friends, Volunteers and Donors

Friendly pets and garden visitor volunteers are beginning to reappear! LITA of Contra Costa runs multiple ads as on volunteermatch.org. LITA’s first 2024 in-person Pet Visitors, Blanca and her pup Lucky spend time delighting all at Greenridge Senior Care. Blanca also contributed a wonderful video of her large Albany High Year end dance ensemble recital performing to the Tina Turner’s classic Proud Mary (played during a recent LITA Friday Musical zoom show). Biggest grant ever this year from “Share the Spirit” to build more LITA gardens and so we did. This means LITA NEEDS HELP: Marge Levy is the first (only)garden semi-regular visitor PAPAC .

During Covid, live music in medical and care facilities stopped. Talented Music Volunteers, since 2020 have done weekly 60 minute zoom shows. Five years later Star Zoomers, Hali Hammer, Randy Burge, Ed Hilton, Alan Brast, Eugene Glen, and more are still entertaining, invited onto big and small care facility screens, all Fridays from 2-3 pm. It warms our hearts that so many residents are still up for enjoying our serenades, sent with love from our living rooms to theirs.

What else is new in 2024 has been zoom duets, like jazz master Rory Snyder, his student Mark and up to five of us from the SGI chorus. Also in 2024 LITA’s zoom emcee John Gruenstein returned to playing in a variety of outdoor venues, like Rossmoor and local parks and fortunately for us, LITA post acute care facilities. As we well know, nothing can beat in-person Live Music. It makes us ask the musical question:”Is that Love in the Air or could it be Spring doing it’s thing?”

Speaking of spring, I mentored Ellie Mitchel during her North Gate High School senior project cum essay in April. Ellie and her dad Andy (top right corner of cover photo) volunteered for the big initial garden set up at Tampico. Then they promoted, mixed and joyfully mingled with a big turn out, planting on Earth Day. Like me, Ellie believes in the vast and lasting benefits of feeling the sunshine, touching earth and caring for a plant or two whenever possible. A special shout out to Walnut Creek store manager Al Brito who leveraged Starbucks treats for all, at that patio party. Below are facility garden photos and only some of our frequent LITA Music zoom volunteers.

May you find time to enjoy peaceful, solo outdoor strolls and walkabouts in good company.

LITA Director

Victoria Ryan



Victoria Ryan



< Blanca & Lucky visit Greenridge:Serious planter & Garden Club>



<PHPAC:Bunny,Mike & Family Katri >



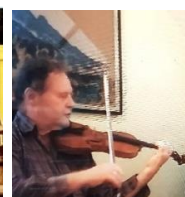
John Gruenstein



Hali Hammer



Randy Burge



Dr Alan Brast



Brooke Aird



SGI Myoho Singers



Ed Hilton



Ellen Rosen's L I T A Recollections

I initially connected with L.I.T.A. through a professional affiliation when I worked at Contra Costa County Social Services (now called Employment & Human Services) as a Social Worker. Beginning in the late 70s, I had an assignment as Co- Coordinator of Volunteer Services + Resources.

Iris Suhl, co-founded L.I.T.A. of Marin County, with her best friend Mae Wygant, She contacted us because she wanted to extend the organization to Contra Costa. As we were a large agency and were familiar with some of the residents and staff from the local Skilled Nursing Facilities, it made sense to work together. I recall numerous meetings in Iris's apartment to discuss recruitment of volunteers, expectations, goals, commitments, sponsors for funding, composition of a Board of Directors and lots of the detailed paper work. The first volunteers were an inter- generational group who were primarily friendly visitors, often paired with a SNF resident who had no or few family or friend visitors. Several of the volunteers also played musical instruments and provided entertainment.

Iris was so clear, enthusiastic and passionate about the need for these often overlooked but essential services and her energy was contagious. I loved being involved in a grass roots collaborative effort that did good work on a shoestring budget.

When I changed job assignment, I continued to send modest annual donations to L.I.T.A. to support their mission. Four decades later, I continue to do so because in the oft cited words of Margaret Meade on a poster I had in my office, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has".

And, in a full circle twist, current Director Victoria Ryan, when going through old L.I.T.A. incorporation papers some years ago, saw my signature on one of them and realized I had been on the first Board. She recognized my name from a donation. We met for lunch (first of many), talked about everything and it was a serendipitous treat to meet her and catch up on the current activities. Shout out to Victoria for keeping the vision alive, expanding the music program and adding the gardening component for residents to enjoy. I still see L.I.T.A. as "the little engine that could". And with a small budget and during long hard years during the worst of Covid, she and the volunteer musicians improvised on Zoom and never miss bringing in some light + dignity with their Friday performances.

On a personal note: From 2006 until 2020, I was primary caretaker for my late spouse. He remained at home and attended Adult Day Centers while I linked up with a wonderful support group. Both resources were lifesavers. For the last 16 months of his life, he was a resident of a small Memory Care home where physical care and attention were excellent. I was able to visit daily, provide connection, touch, exercises etc. Covid lockdowns changed everything. Visits were not allowed and then only through screened windows. He did not die from Covid but the lack of familiar consistent caring contact was disorientating and dramatically accelerated his physical and cognitive decline.

Due to a myriad of reasons, including ownership changes at Skilled Nursing Facilities, the on-site staff members, especially at larger facilities, are often required to do much more with less back-up. My hope for the future is that L.I.T.A. continues on with the goodwill, dedication and creativity that has been its guiding force in providing much needed and joyful contact with SNF residents and that we who can, support their work through donations, spreading the word, volunteering and any combination.

With much appreciation and gratitude always, hats off to the helpers of the world.

Ellen

Five LITA of CC July 6 Drawings to Celebrate A Summer of LOVE 2024

Drawing is on Saturday July 6th Ticket DEADLINE is July 4



Guitarist



Woman with Dog



Michele

1 Three Original signed drawings, by Joan Finton, valued at \$100 each
All approximately 9 by 12 inches, Oil on Milar, unframed



#2 A \$200 Bull Valley Roadhouse Gift Certificate



3 A TJ's Gift Certificate for \$50



#4 A Mata Ortiz pot signed by Lourdes Lopez, burnished & fired: 3"x 4" Valued at \$70



#5 Show Summer Love with Lamb Chop toy for your pup (or for Lucky) Value \$10/Priceless

Indicate number of tickets and which drawing(s) you wish to enter

2 Tickets for \$ 5 ___

5 Tickets for \$ 10 ___

20 Tickets for \$ 20 ___

85 Tickets for \$ 75 ___

200 Tickets for \$100 ___

LITA will copy & enter all tickets you purchase. Enter as many drawings as you wish. Indicate drawing #s and how many tickets

Print name & contact info clearly

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Send your completed ticket & check to LITA of CC PO Box 121 Port Costa, CA 94569

OR Send funds via LITA of CC's new Zelle checking account at US Bank

Use business email: litaofcc@gmail.com and add a Message to indicate your prize selections.