

LITA of Contra Costa Love Is The Answer WINTER 2023

A Non-Profit Public Charity since 1980



Bayberry Health Care Garden Club pictured July 2023

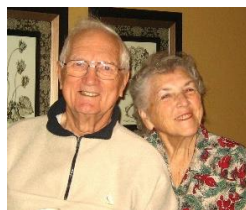
LITA Gardens rest from December 'til mid April. Call or write us. LITA needs many more community hands! Please inquire if you'd like to become a weekly seasonal garden volunteer at a LITA served facility near you. Gardens at Tampico HC in Walnut Creek & Pleasant Hill Post Acute Care Needs YOU in 2024

LITA of Contra Costa's Interior Patio Garden at Bayberry Skilled Nursing and Healthcare Center in Concord drew the attention of Bay Area News Group's Share the Spirit Foundation who sent their Times reporter Jason Mastrodonado on October 17 to interview the garden club. See **December 25th East Bay Times** for a detailed human interest feature about this and all LITA of Contra Costa programs. Early spring 2023 Bayberry resident Lynn Jaeger cheered on high school volunteer Katey Alva and Victoria Ryan hauling in tall pots, bags of organic soil and assembling a seed planting table. Activity Director Isaac and resident John drilled holes and filled pots with soil. From day one, Lynn was our top gardener. She promoted her friend Lily Alvarez whose life was also brightened by hours spent in the sun helping in the garden with her roommate Lynn, along with sweet Activity Assistant Greta. They kept things watered between weekly garden visits from LITA's Director.

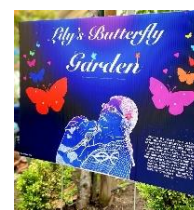
Ken Berner donated in Honor of the Memory of Kathleen Berner and Patsy and Kenneth Berndt. In memory of her sweet enthusiasm, Bayberry HC garden club Honors their dear friend Lillia Alvarez



Kathleen Berner in 1997



Ken and Patsy Berndt in 2009



Residents memorial sign for Lillia "Lily" Alvarez



Kathleen Berner passed in 1998. She was board president serving LITA for many years. LITA's board & Secretary Patsy Berndt hired Victoria Ryan in 2001. **Kenneth and Patsy Berndt** always gave of themselves in service, especially at Christmas, wrapping gifts to give at LITA facilities.

It was a loss when Lillia Alvarez passed away in November, shortly after being sent to hospital. Friends and staff at Bayberry dedicated their new garden to her: Lily's Butterfly garden. Lillia's family plans to frame the East Bay Times article that details her enjoyment over the last seven months of her life, playing, talking and working with her friends in LITA's interior patio garden.

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Letter from the Director

Wishing All a Safe and Peaceful Winter

Dear LITA Friends, Volunteers and Donors

LITA is grateful again this year to Teen and Parents Service Society, Katey Alva, below, holding her fall stack of artful card work. **TAPS** Highschool students continued making sweet, personalized and very cheerful holiday cards and LITA distributes them at facilities in Martinez, Pittsburg, Concord, Pleasant Hill and El Sobrante. Extra card gifting was possible this year to 420 combined SNF residents at Windsor Manor Care in Pleasant Hill, Vale Care in San Pablo and the Shields Nursing Centers in El Cerrito and Richmond.

For the past 10 years Sarah Peterson and I have met in front of her Berkeley apartment, so I can pick up and deliver her soft colorful hand knit blankets. She's donated over 150 by now. First blanket recipient of 2023 was lovely Bayberry resident, Lynn Jaeger. On Dec 6th she cuddled up under hers, delighted, while we pruned and pattered at our garden session, the first one allowed since a long RSV quarantine. November was misery for Lynn. Her roommate Lily fell ill and never came back from the hospital. Facility nursing isolated Lynn. That Wednesday was the first time in over a month the residents were allowed to gather in the dining hall together and a visitor (me) was allowed in, well-masked of course. I took the picture (below) of the two good friends back in October. Staff and residents all miss Lily but Lynn most of all. Dec 24th is our final zoom caroling show with SNF residents. See LITA of CC's Monday December 25th East Bay Times STS feature. If you have yet to donate to LITA you can use article's online link. Or mail us your check

In Spring 2020 the first person to respond to my outreach for entertainers for a weekly one hour zoom music show for nursing facility residents was retired bank VP John Gruenstein. In 2013 John began as a LITA Music volunteer at Lafayette Care Center then later started his own musical room tours for patients at John Muir Medical Center, well able to empathize with patients due to his own decades long battle with cancer. Since 2020 John has played, sung, zoom-hosted and helped a lot with "booking" our zoom musicians. He's managed to continue, even after June 24 suffering the sudden and heartbreaking loss of his beloved wife Caroline. Below right John sings "live" at Pittsburg in July, followed by a garden hour concert at Bayberry Health Care Center in Concord

May you all enjoy rest and nourishment in good company this Winter Holiday Season



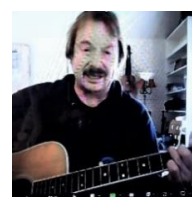
LITA Director Victoria Ryan



Victoria Ryan, Director Katey TAPS Volunteer Sarah Peterson and Lynn with lap robe Lily & Lynn in October John G's Pittsburg patio concert

Present (& a few past) LITA Music Awakening Volunteers: Zoom Performers & Media Volunteers

I'm amazed and inspired by the perseverance of LITA's talented Music Volunteers. Top two rows are longest serving performers on LITA's weekly Zoom. I was thrilled when violinist Brooke Aird agreed to appear twice a month with accompanist William Beatty. Then Brooke had to take 3 months off to recover from a serious heart surgery. His recovery shone throughout his first return LITA zoom in a thrilling minute Mozart Sonata with renown pianist Jerry Kuderna. John, Ed, Hali and Randy are folk masters, Alan ranges wide with oldies and pop songs, Tina, Keli, Johnnie and I harmonize on World Peace songs, bebop, pop and gospel. I love Spanish and Mexican music, Rory represents jazz. Sadie Isadora Peake performs Middle eastern drums and belly dances.



John Gruenstein Zoom host Co-host Victoria Ryan Randy Burge & Hali Hammer Ed Hilton Tina Tiller



Dr Alan Brast William Beatty & Brooke Aird Jerry Kuderna & Brooke Sadie Peake Rory Snyder Suellen Primost



Earliest performers on LITA's Zoom shows during height of Covid, the Smiths, Meso and Sheila, stayed longer but hearts and soul of Will, Joe, Beverly, Chin and Mark have not been forgotten.

Meso Tadeo

Sheila Cushman

Keli & Johnnie Smith

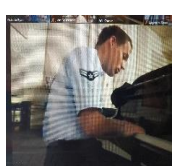
Will Comer

Joe Belson

Beverly Crane

Chin Chin

Mark Shaw



Activity Directors circulated a huge list of holiday songs amongst their residents, offered by LITA. Responses resulted in each person getting a song book with lyrics their 20 top favorite titles, so everyone who wanted to could sing along with us on the Friday December 18 Holiday zoom. Well attended by skilled nursing audiences at Concord, Pleasant Hill, Martinez and Pittsburg facilities.

LITA of Contra Costa Music and Media Compassion Project, provides tablets, headphones and Friday zoom shows to help enhance quality of life, maintain better connection with the world, reduce anxiety and keep an open channel with family & friends on zoom & Facetime. Since 2014 individuals, clubs, foundations and corporate donors help LITA provide and then maintain several hundreds of West County SNF residents with a means to enjoy music, movies, media and more.

THEN AND NOW Think how much music and media delivery has evolved over the past 10 years. LITA started in 2014 obtaining and loading iPods for hospital residing seniors. Now iPods are no longer made! LITA has since turned to tablets as a sturdier, easier, and more affordable option than iPads. Tablets are still in use and much in demand. Facilities ask for new devices, for a number of good reasons, so we don't take used equipment unless professionally refurbished.

ENJOYING THE FREEDOM TO MAKE PERSONAL MUSIC AND MEDIA CHOICES

Homer, the 100 year old gentleman below left resided long at Legacy Nursing and Rehab and was an early LITA iPod recipient. To his right, Julie resides at Greenridge Senior Care. A veteran at Pittsburg Nursing agreed to a photo, enjoying his headphones. Lovely Marlena (center) volunteered in 2019 loading iPods. Dr Jenny at CCRMC was passionate in 2020 to get Music as Medicine going with LITA donated iPods. Preston at Legacy loves his blues. Margaret's iPod was a joy for her at Greenridge .



Donors to LITA of Contra Costa in 2023 Clubs and Civic organizations **Cerrito City Club, Bayview Eagles**, Trusts and Foundations: Bay Area News Group's **Share the Spirit** and the **Beswick Family Fund at East Bay Community Foundation**, Corporations **Mechanics Bank** and **Phillips 66**, retiree matching fund donations from **Chevron, Johnson and Johnson** retiree, **Frank Jurik**, Volunteer/donors: **Sarah Peterson** , **Jenny Lin, John Gruenstein** and **Rory Snyder, Victoria Ryan**, LITA board members, **Linda Larsen Daniels, Joan Finton, Barbara Schneider, Mike & Bunny Daly** and **Sandy Olson, Sarah Peterson, Ken Berner, John & Anne Mann, Ridge & Monica Greene, Ellen Rosen, Lawrence and Barbara Quirico, Jack Freethy, Olga Knight, Barry & Bret Zorthian**. New donors **Christopher Flores** and **Jeannine Homich**.