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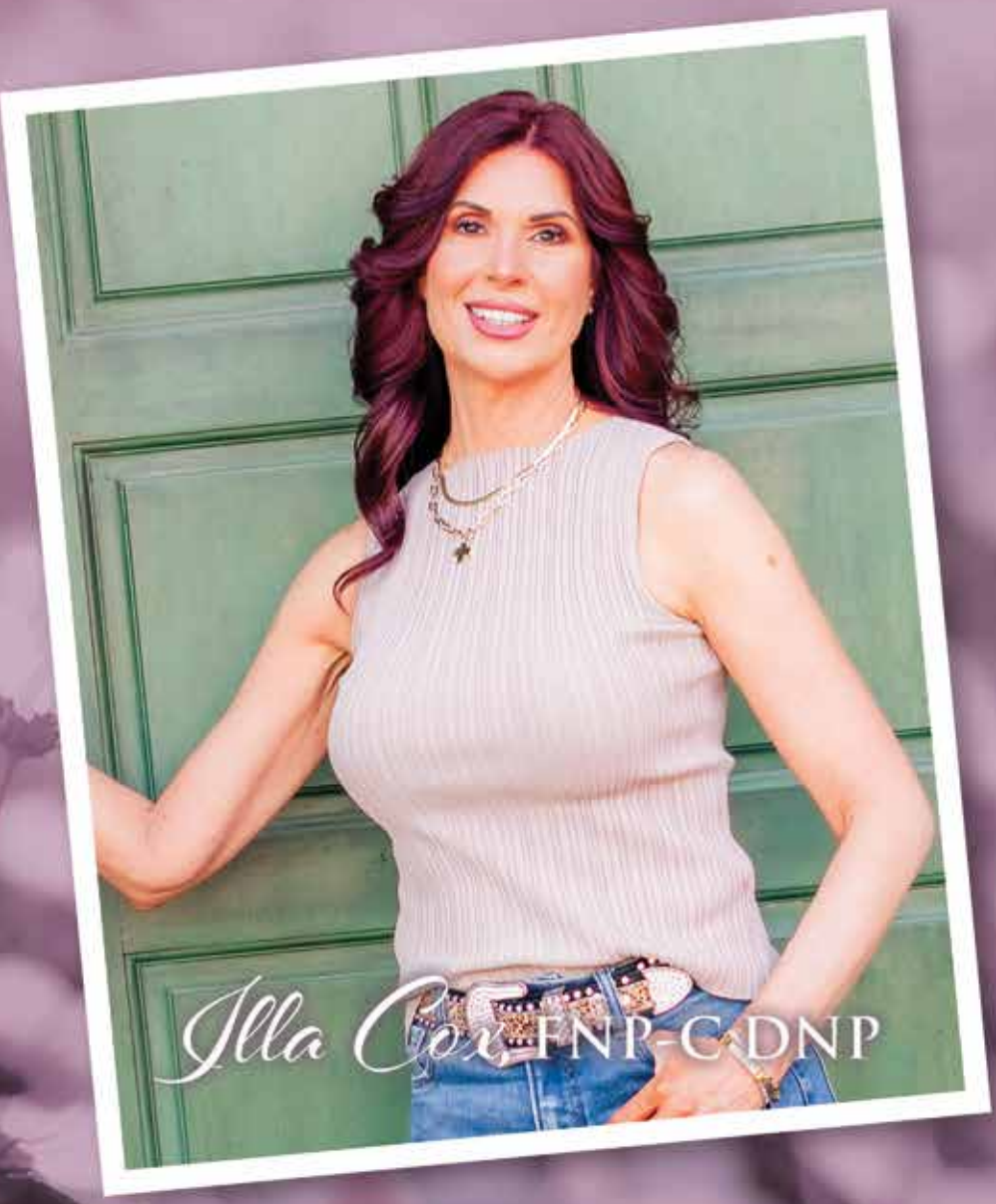
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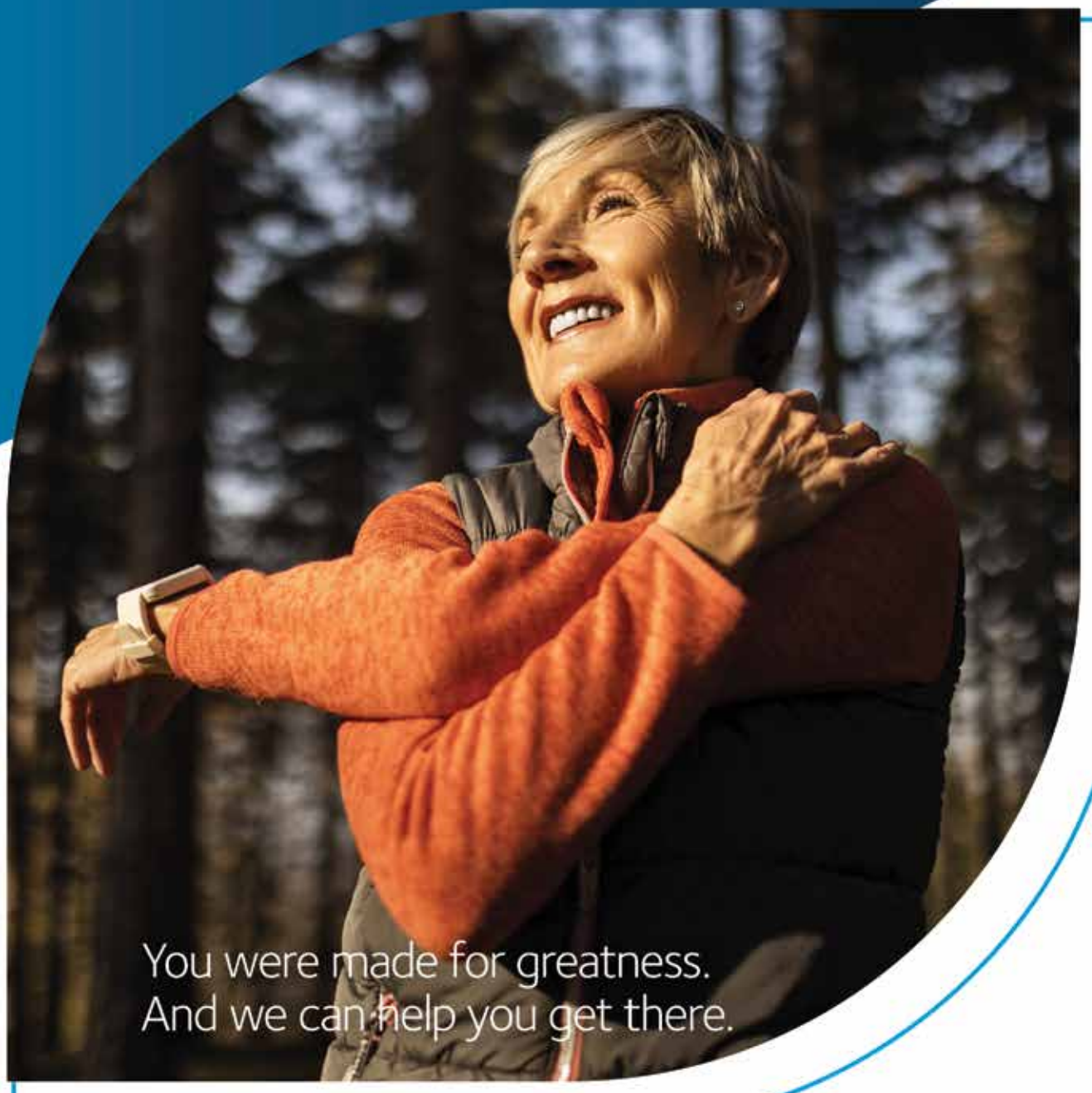
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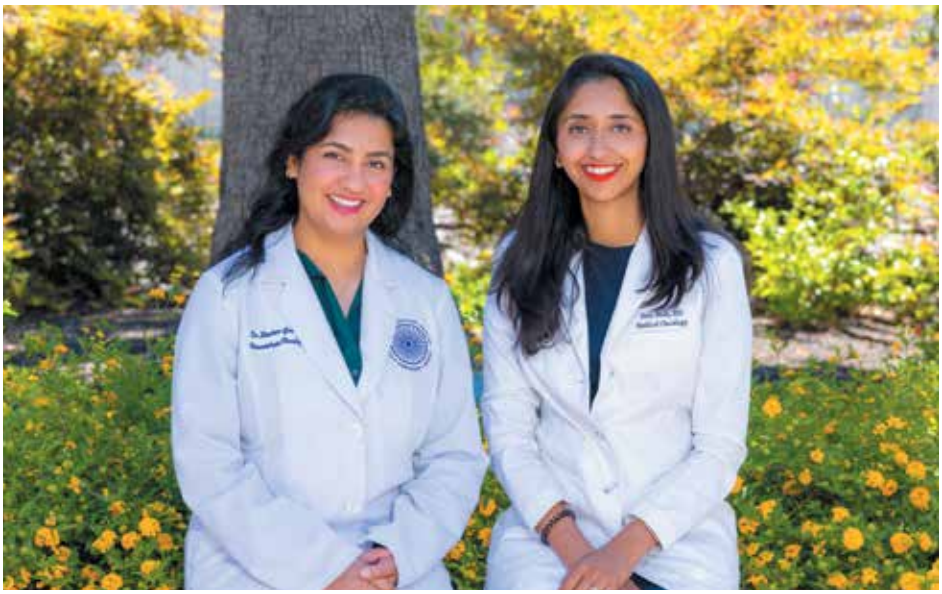
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13
INSPIRATIONS

Dr. Hely Shah and Dr. Ravleen Grewal: "Every day is a constant inspiration."

In this Cancer Awareness issue, we shine a light on Dr. Hely Shah and Dr. Ravleen Grewal, two of the eight oncologists of Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group. The friends and colleagues describe the mentorship, camaraderie and healing culture of the practice.



20
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



29
WAG TALES



24
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



36
ENTERTAINMENT

8
WELCOME
A Time to Pause

13
INSPIRATIONS
Dr. Hely Shah and Dr. Ravleen Grewal: "Every day is a constant inspiration."

17
SPARK JOY
Aarya Menon: Dedicated to Children of Cancer Patients

20
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
Celena Phelan: Artistry, Technical Expertise and Heartfelt Client Care at Lodi's Wig Palace

22
BEAUTY
Tattoo Options for Breast Cancer Survivors

24
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
Health Plan: Celebrating 30 Years

26
SILVER LININGS
At a Distance: Continuing Caregiving

28
SCENE AND BE SEEN
Disco & Diamonds

29
WAG TALES
Max the Therapy Dog: Exuberant and Comforting

30
PETS FOR PEOPLE
Soulful Eyes and A Wet Nose: Canines Understand

33
DESIGN TRENDS
The Case for a Slightly Boring Bedroom

38
SCENE AND BE SEEN
Lincoln Center 75th Anniversary Gala

40
SCENE AND BE SEEN
One Under the Stars

42
SCENE AND BE SEEN
Rose Garden Gala

44
LOOKING BACK
Adventist Health Lodi Memorial: Eighty Years of History

46
RECIPE
Broiled Salmon with Sweet Lemon Glaze

48
HEALTH
Nutrition for Cancer Patients

50
SCENE AND BE SEEN
St. Basil Greek Food Festival

54
CALENDAR
Celebrate Community Events



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A Time to Pause



Even as summer comes to an end, I start each day with a morning stroll through my garden. The beautiful azure blue and limelight green hydrangea blooms are beginning to fade, and the lush coneflowers and daisies are becoming more sparse. The flowering plants climbing the trellis are slowing down, not dying, just sitting for a while. Quietly. They are soaking up the nutrients and preparing for next spring. Through all the seasons, there is necessary snipping and trimming back. Autumn, a beautiful time of the year in the garden, is also a time to reflect on the beauty of this past year's garden. It is beginning to slow down, rejuvenate and prepare itself for the winter months in anticipation of the sun-kissed beautiful flowers of spring.

Ah, slowing down and rejuvenating; it's not really something that happens during the last quarter of the year. School is back in full swing; calendars are beginning to fill up with family gatherings, travel dates and holiday shopping!

Yet I am reminded, as this issue of *HERLIFE* is focused on cancer awareness and health, that oftentimes our lives are put on pause, regardless of the season. These life circumstances actually create a season of its own. A season that has challenges and setbacks, victories and wins and oftentimes waiting, and waiting and waiting for those test results to come in. As I read through this month's stories, I am reminded that our community is blessed — blessed with physicians who guide us through the season, and those who encourage, such as the owners of The Wig Palace and our Spark Joy feature. And of course, we are blessed with the relationships we have in our lives that support and walk with us through the unexpected season.

This is a gentle reminder to get your annual wellness check. Enjoy the busy times ahead while also encouraging you to find and take time to pause, embrace the season that you are in, and move forward with joyful expectation.

I would also like to thank our many *HERLIFE* advertisers for trusting us to tell the wonderful stories of people in our community. It is because of you that we get to publish all these great stories month after month! Thank you so much!

Blessings,

Carrie

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Beauty of the Valley



Rainbow Fountain

There is something about a rainbow that seems to stop us in our tracks. For generations, rainbows have represented hope, promise, beauty, and the possibility of something wonderful just beyond the ordinary. Perhaps part of their magic comes from knowing they are fleeting—appearing unexpectedly when light and water come together in just the right way.

At Weber Point in downtown Stockton, those same ingredients can create a little magic of their own.

In this image from my *Beauty of Stockton* series, sunlight passing through the fountain's fine mist creates a brilliant rainbow that seems to rise directly from the water. Surrounded by dancing sprays and shimmering droplets, the bands of color transform a familiar Stockton landmark into something almost ethereal.

It is the kind of scene that naturally brings out a childlike sense of wonder. Children visiting the fountain may not be thinking about sunlight refracting through countless tiny droplets of water. They simply see a rainbow appearing before them—and, for a moment, an ordinary afternoon at the park becomes something extraordinary.

Perhaps that is one reason rainbows have remained such powerful symbols. They remind us to look for beauty after the storm, to hold on to hope, and to recognize that some of life's most memorable moments can appear when we least expect them.

Sometimes, all it takes is a little light, a little water, and being there at just the right moment to discover something beautiful. ·



Kevin Richtik is a Brooks Institute of Photography graduate and the owner of Stockton-based Caroline Photography, a studio deeply rooted in the community.

He has photographed thousands of local families and worked with a wide range of regional and national companies with his photography appearing in numerous publications. Kodak has featured his work in worldwide advertising to showcase its products.

In addition, Kevin creates a wide range of fine art images, including sweeping landscapes of the San Joaquin Valley, and is creator of the ongoing Beauty of Stockton photo project, a weekly series that highlights the city's unique and often overlooked strengths, showcasing Stockton's vibrant, positive spirit. The project has expanded to include the Beauty of the Valley.

You can view and share each week's Beauty of the Valley post at: www.facebook.com/kevin.richtik or www.instagram.com/carolinephotography209

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Dr. Hely Shah and Dr. Ravleen Grewal

"Every day is a constant inspiration."

BY RACHEL FENTON | PHOTOS BY KEVIN RICHTIK, CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY

The journey of life is never taken alone. Our lives are interconnected, if only for a moment, with those around us. From the family that surrounded us throughout our youth to the grocery clerks, baristas and healthcare workers we interact with briefly, we all walk alongside each other at some point. But sometimes, the journey of life takes a turn in a direction we never thought we'd be traveling in. When that happens, we depend on the people who walk with us.

The doctors at Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group have dedicated their lives to walking alongside those whose life journeys have gone directions they never thought they'd go, empowering their patients to fight the battles set before them.

For 30 years, Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group has served the community, treating patients with blood disorders and cancer. As an independent hematology and oncology practice founded by Dr. Prasad Dighe and Dr.



Aminder Mehdi, they began small but have grown since their beginning, with eight physicians now dedicating their expertise to treating the community. The flagship location in Stockton is going strong, and the group has expanded to locations in Lodi, Manteca, Tracy and Modesto. Despite being an independent group, they work closely with other larger tertiary centers such as UCSF, Stanford University and UC Davis. "The collaboration, understanding and relationship are quite impressive for a group that's independent," said Dr. Ravleen Grewal, one of the talented physicians who works with Stockton Hematology and Oncology.

Priorities

The term "oncology" is one that frightens many people, but the physicians are quick to soothe their patients' fears. "We do see a lot of benign hematology; if you're referred to us, it may mean something as benign as your hemoglobin's low or your white count's low," Dr. Grewal explained. Her colleague, Dr. Hely Shah, agreed. "A lot of what we do is earlier-stage oncology; we do so much prevention and screening and general care even before they walk into our office."

The practice is a place of healing, not only for their patients, but also for the physicians who work there. "The senior doctors are very approachable, understanding, down-to-earth people," Dr. Grewal said. "Everyone's priority is A) patient care, and B) quality of life, including our quality of life. We take care of patients, but we also take care of each other." Dr. Shah also spoke highly of the practice. "To have this kind of mentorship, not just in our professional but also in our personal lives, is really incredible and says a lot about the culture we have here." Both Dr. Shah and Dr. Grewal joined Stockton Hematology and Oncology around the same time and became fast friends as well as colleagues. They are both quick to sing the other's praises and consult with the other whenever they need advice or support, another example of the strength and camaraderie that surrounds the practice.

Dr. Hely Shah: "I care."

Dr. Hely Shah was born in India and moved with her family to the Middle East for her father's work when she was eight years old before going to Canada, where she went to school and received her training. She chose to study medicine, entering medical school when she was 20 years old. "I was good at biology and liked talking to people; seemed a good enough reason at the time," she laughed, shaking her head at her younger self. But through her studies, she soon realized that medicine was not just a youthful career choice, but a vocation that fulfilled both her strongest interests and the approach to life her parents had engrained in her as a young child.

As she grew up, her family emphasized the value of working hard and caring for their community and the world around them. "Values and empathy. It was a way of life that was embodied by my parents. I know that way of being from having seen my parents practice that in their day-to-day lives," Dr. Shah said. "We had to care about the

world we left behind and care about the world around us." From composting and other sustainable practices to volunteer work with her family, she grew up with these values shaping her worldview. "My time wasn't just meant for myself; it was also to give back to the community. It felt like the right way to do life," she said simply. "I didn't realize that's what I was being taught when I was growing up; those were the lessons my parents were trying to teach without calling them lessons, per se."

Compassion

When she was choosing her specialty in medicine, she specifically looked for something that met her strong sense of intellectual curiosity and deep well of compassion for humanity. "It's fascinating to me that human beings are like a constantly evolving machine, not just from a physical standpoint but also an emotional standpoint," she said. "It's a constantly evolving puzzle." But she doesn't reduce the practice to a mere problem to solve. "I appreciate the privilege that medicine offers of being with patients in critical moments and vulnerable moments when they're looking for guidance," Dr. Shah said sincerely. "Specifically in oncology we're not just offering medical guidelines. There's so much more of patients' lives and goals that go into it." She specifically focuses on collaborating with her patients; she wants to make sure they know that not only does she care, but she is interested in helping them in any way she can and hearing their concerns and ideas. "It's nice to have patients bring in their experience. If I don't have the answer for the questions, I will strive to find the answers. That's my philosophy."

Dr. Shah is tirelessly dedicated to her practice and an excellent physician, but she always makes sure she gives credit to the people who surround her and support her as she works. "Everyone I've worked with in medicine believes in those values of patient care and giving back to the community," she said, expressing her gratitude for the mentors she's had throughout her career and especially at Stockton Hematology and Oncology. "Every day, being around the people that I am, whether it's my family or my colleagues, it's a constant inspiration." She also makes sure she credits her support system for enabling her to do the amazing work she does, refusing to accept all the accolades for herself. "The only reason I can be a very present and – occasionally patient – doctor is because I have an incredible support system behind me," she laughed.

Dr. Ravleen Grewal: "There is room for hope."

Dr. Ravleen Grewal grew up surrounded by doctorates. Her mother was a zoology professor; her father was a veterinarian and one grandfather held PhDs as well. In a way, she considered herself "bound to be a doctor," she said with a laugh. She had looked into other options aside from medical school, such as PA school or pharmacy school, but medicine continued to call to her over all other career choices. When deciding on her specialty, hematology and oncology attracted her for a very personal reason. When Dr. Grewal was a child, her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and passed away.

"Going into oncology ended up being my own healing journey," she said. "Even though that loss never disappeared, oncology gave me redirection; how to channel that grief into compassion, how to transform that sorrow into commitment." She remembers her moth-



Dr. Hely Shah

"I appreciate the privilege that medicine offers of being with patients in critical moments and vulnerable moments when they're looking for guidance."

er's strength as she endured treatments and continued to show up for her family through the midst of it all. That experience and that grief greatly informed how she approaches medicine and her patients. "I know what it feels like when they go home, so I try to do my part," she said. "I do understand some of what you might be going through. I want to try and understand it and help you look at the bright side."

Validation

To Dr. Grewal, the most important part of her job is to bring hope into every room she enters. That hope can look different from patient to patient. Sometimes people need someone to encourage them to keep up the fight, reminding them of their strength and resilience and promising to be in their corner every step of the way. Cancer is commonly depicted as a battle, with patients being encouraged to fight and be strong, but sometimes, people need to hear their struggles validated, that this journey can be hard, and scary and painful.

Dr. Grewal shows up to give her patients what they need, whether that's encouragement, companionship or merely a listening ear. She approaches each person she treats with the same genuine care and warmth, despite whatever fatigue or difficulties she might be grappling with personally. "You cannot be a robot and take care of your patients," she noted. She also knows a large portion of fighting cancer is a mental journey as well as a physical journey, and she works to make her presence as healing as the treatments she prescribes. "There's a lot of anxiety, stress, uncertainty, lack of hope, that comes with oncology, and we have to be able to deliver hope and walk with them through it," she affirmed. "I see you as a person and not as a disease."

Like her friend and colleague, Dr. Grewal emphasizes the importance of her unwavering communal and professional support whenever someone praises her accomplishments. "It's definitely the people that you surround yourself with; it's definitely the people that help influence who you are, what you do and how you view life," she said emphatically. She also credits her mentors from medical school and at Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group for its wholesome environment and how the practice holds strongly to its values. "That's what we keep at the center of it: patient care. And I'm very, very happy that I'm a part of this group," she said.

Community

Dr. Ravleen Grewal, Dr. Hely Shah and the rest of the talented physicians at Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group are all dedicated to the same excellence of care, enabling their patients to keep hope and live to the fullest no matter where the journey of life has taken them. "There's joy here too. There is room for hope. This is why I do what I do," Dr. Grewal said. They all emphasize the importance of community, not only for their patients, but also within the practice itself, supporting their physicians so they can support their patients in turn.

"At the end of the day, all of us got into medicine because we wanted to help patients get through the worst days of their lives," Dr. Shah affirmed. If life's journey takes you through their doors, know that you will not be walking alone; the physicians at Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group will be walking alongside you each step of the way. ◆



Dr. Ravleen Grewal

"I know what it feels like when they go home, so I try to do my part...I do understand some of what you might be going through. I want to try and understand it and help you look at the bright side."

Aarya Menon

Dedicated to Children of Cancer Patients

BY MARY RAFFETTO



High school student Aarya Menon is used to people's surprise when they learn she is the founder of Project Rising Stars, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting children whose parent or caregiver is undergoing cancer treatment. After all, the teen who loves baking, painting, music and socializing was only 15 when launching the nonprofit, an idea that came to fruition after she had spent the previous summer shadowing an oncologist in a cancer treatment center.

"That summer I learned how the patients felt, what they were going through, and I saw how their children suffered, how concerned they were for their parents," Aarya recalled. "It's heartbreaking when a parent is going through cancer treatment and is limited in what they can do for their kids." During cancer treatment, much can start falling through the cracks. From meals to help with homework, to wanting someone to talk with about what's weighing on their minds, many parents and kids are doing the best they can to get through each day.

Deeply inspired to make a difference, Aarya began planning how she might be able to provide Christmas gifts and a holiday party for the kids of all the patients. "I cold emailed every doctor I could in the medical network, telling them my goal of providing these kids with gifts and asking for donations to help make that happen." The donations came, but not only from doctors. People in the community heard about the project and wanted to help. "Laura Iacopi donated a substantial amount, which really got the ball rolling. I will always be grateful to Laura for doing that," Aarya said with emotion.

In a scene reminiscent of a Hallmark movie, kids from Lodi, Stockton and Modesto came for the party, where they enjoyed cookie decorating, games and, indeed, each received gifts as Aarya had envisioned. "Seeing other people happy just brings me so much joy. I love giving back to others and being of real help to them," she enthused. "That Christmas experience is what made me want to do a nonprofit. One patient was crying with gratitude, telling me she couldn't afford gifts for her kids that year and how much it meant to her. It was so heartwarming and honestly made me feel the positive impact I could make on other peoples' lives, which is what I've always wanted to do with my life."

It turns out the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Aarya's mother, Indu, is a teacher of special needs students at Lincoln High School and her father, AJ, is an oncologist at Stockton Hematology and Oncology Medical Group. "I grew up seeing the heart both of my parents have for helping others; they both love what they do and it definitely had a positive effect on me," she recalled. After the Christmas party, the die was cast. Aarya wanted to do more than deliver holiday cheer; she wanted to help kids and families year-round, but she would need help.

Aarya's neighbor, Charlynn Harless, was already a nonprofit director and agreed to help her set up the 501(c)(3). Brooke McCollough of Adventist Hospital became a board member and mentor while Ashley McManus promoted the group on social media. Isabella Calderon helped lead the free meal deliveries through the Stockton and Lodi Community Foundations. Aarya emphasized that Project Rising Stars would be impossible without the extensive help of these and many other individuals.

Dr. Christine Pearston, a licensed clinical psychologist, leads the Rising Stars private support group, a safe, supportive space where kids 5 to 18 and their parents or caregivers can express their feelings, build resilience and know they are not alone. Online meetings and free virtual counseling are also offered through grants from the Cortopassi Family Foundation and the Raymus Foundation. Project Rising Stars exists to ensure no child feels invisible during such a difficult time.

While 2025 was jam-packed with studying for AP tests and SAT prep, Aarya was also preparing for her Arangetram, a stunningly beautiful dance production presented after ten years spent mastering the many cultural dances that tell stories of South India's religious history. Aarya performed the equivalent of an Olympic decathlon of classical Bharatanatyam dances after practicing them for over three hours every Sunday for eight months, plus many hours during the rest of the week.

Aarya said the demanding experience taught her that "mindset is the foundation for everything you do and even what you attract into your life." The process of bringing a nonprofit organization to life is a tall order on its own, but Aarya concluded, "Shifting to a mindset of ability and confidence was everything." ◆

To learn more, visit projectrisingstars.org.



STILL HER:
The Woman Behind the Pink Ribbon

BY KIMBERLEY BORGENS
CEO, PODCAST HOST, SPEAKER, COACH, AUTHOR

Every October, pink ribbons appear as we recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We see fundraising campaigns, statistics, survivor stories, and reminders about screenings. All of these matter. But before we focus on the disease, let's take a moment to focus on the woman.



The woman who heard the words, "You have cancer."

The woman waiting nervously for test results. The woman who has endured surgery, treatment, scars, hair loss, exhaustion, and the uncertainty of what tomorrow may bring.

She is still here.

And she is still a woman.

Breast cancer changes many things, but it does not change a woman's value. Yet in a world that often celebrates relentless strength, there can be pressure to be brave every moment, grateful every day, and inspiring to everyone around her. The truth is far more human.

Some days she may feel strong. Other days she may feel angry, frightened, exhausted, or hopeful. Sometimes she may feel all of those emotions at once. Every feeling is valid.

Real superheroes are not women who never struggle. They are women who continue showing up as themselves, even when life looks nothing like they expected. They keep taking the next step, even when the road feels uncertain.

This October, let's remember that support does not require grand gestures. Sometimes it means offering a hand, sitting quietly through tears, sharing a laugh, or simply being present.

And when she puts on her heels and steps back into the world, make room.

She still has dreams to pursue, goals to achieve, and places to go.

Because being a Superhero in Heels was never about being invincible.

It was always about being unapologetically herself.

Listen to Superheroes In Heels with Kimberley Borgens in your favorite podcast app or to learn more and get podcast transcripts, visit KimberleyBorgens.com.

Superheroes in Heels Episode 63, "In Over Your Head? How to Keep Going and Step Into Your Power." **Strength isn't about having an easy path, it's about continuing to show up and step forward when the path gets hard.**



CHECK IN *with Dr. Ruby Gill*

LET'S CHECK UP ON...
WHAT IF CANCER AWARENESS STARTED BEFORE THE DIAGNOSIS?

By Dr. Ruby Gill, MD, ABOIM, ABFM
Double Board-Certified in Family & Integrative Medicine
Menopause Society Certified | Fellowship-Trained in Aesthetics

We talk a lot about finding cancer early. Perhaps it is time we talked just as much about creating a body in which disease has a harder time thriving.

Every October, ribbons appear, screening reminders circulate and conversations about cancer become louder. All of that matters. Early detection saves lives. But as a physician who has spent much of my career focused on prevention, hormones and metabolic health, I keep coming back to a different question.

Are we getting better at preventing cancer—or simply getting better at finding it?

Cancer and cardiovascular disease remain two of the leading causes of death in America. Meanwhile, colorectal cancer is appearing with increasing frequency in younger adults, people who historically would never have considered themselves part of the "cancer age group."

Our genes have not dramatically changed in one generation. Our environment has.

We live surrounded by convenience such as ultra-processed foods, prolonged sitting, artificial light late into the night, chronic psychological stress and an endless stream of digital stimulation. We work through lunch, sacrifice sleep in the name of productivity and then spend our last waking hour doom scrolling in bed.

We cannot live inside an isolated bubble protected from every chemical, pollutant or environmental exposure. But we can become more thoughtful about the burden we place on the body and more intentional about building its resilience.

PREVENTION IS OFTEN SURPRISINGLY UNCOMPLICATED

Nutrition remains foundational. A predominantly whole-food, plant-rich diet provides fiber and phytochemicals while reducing reliance on ultra-processed foods. This becomes particularly relevant as we examine the concerning rise of colorectal cancer in younger adults. Maintaining muscle, exercising regularly, limiting alcohol, avoiding tobacco and supporting metabolic health are equally important.

And then there is one of our most powerful—and chronically neglected—forms of biological repair: sleep.

Sleep is not simply the absence of being awake. During healthy sleep, the body regulates immune activity, metabolic and hormonal signaling, inflammatory pathways and cellular repair. Poor or disrupted sleep has been associated with elevations in inflammatory markers such as C-reactive protein (CRP) and interleukin-6 (IL-6), while circadian disruption can alter immune function, cortisol rhythms and metabolic health.

Why does inflammation matter? Because chronic inflammation is not merely a lab value. Persistent inflammatory signaling can contribute to cellular damage and create biological conditions associated with the development and progression of disease, including certain cancers.

Yet we routinely trade this restorative physiology for another hour of work or another hour on our phones.

Protecting sleep is not lost productivity. It is preventive medicine. Stress deserves a similarly sophisticated conversation.

Acute stress is normal and adaptive. Chronic stress is different. Persistent activation of our stress response alters cortisol and catecholamines such as adrenaline and norepinephrine and can increase pro-inflammatory signaling. Chronic stress has been associated with elevations in inflammatory cytokines including IL-6 and TNF-alpha.

Does being stressed mean you will develop cancer? Absolutely not. Human evidence does not support such a simplistic conclusion. But laboratory research suggests prolonged stress signaling may influence the biological environment surrounding an existing tumor, including immune function, angiogenesis and pathways involved in invasion and metastasis.

This is why mental health, depression, social connection, exercise, mindfulness and nervous-system recovery belong in a conversation about whole-body health. Stress management isn't just about feeling calmer. It changes physiology.

WE ALSO NEED TO UPDATE THE HORMONE CONVERSATION

For decades, many women heard a frighteningly simple message: hormones equal breast cancer. The science has always been more nuanced.

In November 2025, the FDA moved to remove broad boxed-warning language regarding breast cancer, cardiovascular disease and probable dementia from menopausal hormone therapy labeling following review of the evidence. Importantly, estrogen-only therapy in the Women's Health Initiative was not associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.

That does not make hormone therapy appropriate for everyone. Cancer history, genetics, age, timing, route and formulation all matter. But women deserve individualized risk assessment rather than medical decisions based upon an outdated blanket fear.

CANCER CARE DOESN'T END WHEN TREATMENT DOES

There is another population we sometimes forget during cancer awareness: the survivor.

Finishing chemotherapy, radiation or surgery does not necessarily mean someone immediately feels well again. Fatigue, disrupted sleep, metabolic changes, loss of muscle, sexual dysfunction, anxiety and nutritional challenges may persist.

This is where integrative medicine can beautifully complement oncology, not by replacing cancer treatment, but by helping patients rebuild health around it and after it.

Perhaps cancer awareness should ultimately mean more than looking for disease.

Screen. Know your family history. Pay attention to your body. But also protect the health you have today.

We cannot eliminate every toxin, rewrite every gene or control every outcome. But the human body is remarkably adaptive. Give it nutritious food. Let it move. Let it sleep. Let it recover. Understand your hormones and metabolic health. Reduce the exposures you can.

Prevention isn't about living in fear of cancer. It is about building a body resilient enough to keep living well. •

Schedule your integrative medicine consultation with Dr. Ruby Gill today! Take the first step toward thriving again with personalized, evidence-based care tailored to your unique needs. Let Dr. Gill help you reclaim your health, confidence, and joy!

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult with your physician or qualified healthcare professional before starting any new treatment, including supplements, to ensure it is appropriate for your individual health needs.

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Celena Phelan

ARTISTRY, TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND HEARTFELT CLIENT CARE AT LODI'S WIG PALACE

BY MARY RAFFETTO

"Wigs have come a long way..."

- CELENA PHELAN, LODI ENTREPRENEUR



Lodi entrepreneur Celena Phelan, owner of Salon Two Twenty, the Wig Palace and the Academy at Salon Two Twenty, always knew she would become a hair stylist and a businessperson. "I just loved hair and I knew since the eighth grade that this was what I wanted to do. I loved making people look beautiful and helping to build their confidence," she said.

Twenty-two years later it's a love that continues to grow as she expands the breadth of her business. In January, as an adjunct to the salon, Celena and her husband, JC, launched a fully credentialed cosmetology school. It was their way of addressing the fact that many cosmetology students are becoming licensed but are not as prepared as they need to be for the real work ahead.

In a move she feels was also predestined, Celena purchased the Wig Palace last fall, after witnessing firsthand how many women struggle with hair loss and thinning hair. "God knew I needed to own this wig store and planted the seed 20 years ago when I worked in a beauty shop," she recalled. "Over time I got to know Bobbie Stoller, the owner of The Wig Palace, who would often come in to buy hairspray."

Last year when Celena saw the business was for sale, she had a strong feeling about it and asked her husband to look into it. He found that the Wig Palace was an excellent fit for their values and purpose in the community. "Bobbie was incredibly accommodating to ensure a smooth transition and even stayed on for months, training each person individually and just gifting us with her decades of expertise," Celena said. "So many things fell perfectly into place. It was definitely more than a coincidence; it was divine intervention."

Wigs and hair toppers were not something Celena had worked with before, so she and her staff devoted themselves to extensive training to ensure the highest level of service for their customers. "I was actually shocked to learn how much a new style or wig could do for a person, and to see how much it literally changed their lives; the before-and-after photos prove it," she said. "Now the Wig Palace is my favorite and most fulfilling job of all."

Celena remembers the day she fitted her first cancer patient for a wig. "It felt very emotional," she shared. "Laying hands on those special patients is comforting because this is where I am supposed to be. They just want to look and feel normal again. And helping them to address these issues makes you realize how unimportant your problems are.

"Wigs have come a long way from what people might remember," Celena assured. "They are far more comfortable and there are other options, like toppers, which are clipped on to cover the top of the scalp, or 3/4 wigs that also clip on and are very easy to wear. Whatever your dream style is, a wig or topper makes it possible." With two favorites she wears frequently, Celina said, "I just love the wigs. I put them on and I'm out the door in 15 minutes. It's never a bad hair day!"

Celena continued, "Unlike mail-order wigs, here there are no surprises." Her assistants, Taylor, Lindsey and Rachel, say that when a customer finds the right wig, she knows it instantly. They are trained to custom fit, style and trim the wigs, though often no change is needed at all. Sharing the wisdom of experience, they urge customers, "Don't just buy any wig; find the one that you cannot leave without. We want you to have many options and for you to find the wig that looks extremely natural and keeps you comfortable in your own skin."

In addition to providing an extensive inventory, Celena renovated a large back room, creating a luxurious lounge where customers can try on all the wigs and hair enhancers they wish in total privacy. "It's a little like trying on wedding dresses," she observed. As Taylor nodded in agreement, Lindsey added, "It's very sacred what's going on here. It's the perfect combination to work together for this shared cause; it's something we've never seen in a salon."

"When you get to witness a person in your chair and they see, in the mirror, their old self return, the surprise and emotion of it, to get to be part of that, there is nothing better," Celena confided. "The work we do here at the Wig Palace has brought a real sense of warmth and helped me to slow down and appreciate life more. My heart needed this." ◆

Visit the Wig Palace by Two Twenty Hair Co., 320 N. California Street, Lodi, (209) 339-4083; and Salon Two Twenty, 220 S. Church Street, Unit 2, Lodi, (209) 498-7517.

TATTOO OPTIONS FOR BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS

BY GAIL SILVERSTEIN

It's the news no one ever wants to hear: breast cancer. After the shock wears off and the chemotherapy treatments start, you settle into another type of reality. Hair begins to fall out, leaving you depressed and shopping for wigs on the internet.



But what can be done about your eyebrows and eyelashes? Will your reconstructed breasts ever look normal again without nipples? How safe are permanent and semi-permanent tattooing, especially now with a compromised immune system? Many choices are available but perform your due diligence beforehand.

After cancer treatments, hair loss varies widely, from thinning to patchy clumps that fall out; how much depends on a person's genetic composition. Hair loss includes eyelashes and eyebrows, and many women want to forgo the daily hassle of painting on brows or applying false lashes that droop. Fortunately, there are semi-permanent options with fruit and vegetable-based pigments and permanent choices with traditional ink.

Microblading, a semi-permanent makeup technique, uses a cosmetic tattoo pen to make tiny notches that deposit pigment into the superficial layers of skin. The outcome is fuller, more distinct brows. With a skilled technician wielding the subtle microblading pen, ladies can choose from an assortment of diameters to control each stroke, achieving the desired thickness, color and shape. The process takes about two months from start to finish as there is a follow-up six to eight weeks later to tweak color, shape and fullness. Aftercare is minimal but the brow area needs to be kept dry for ten days post-procedure. With no down time and a reasonable price tag, this is a viable short-term solution as microblading lasts one to three years. Not everyone suffers from eyebrow loss, so wait

until after chemo to gauge what type, if any, of cosmetic enhancement you may need.

While cancer patients are prepared for hair loss, losing eyelashes often comes as a shock. In addition to giving expression to the eyes, lashes protect the eyeball from environmental allergens and filter sunlight. Traditional fake eyelashes have their drawbacks; chemo patients often suffer from dryness and eye tearing, making them uncomfortable to wear, or they droop because there's nothing to hold onto. Others may have allergic reactions to the eyelash glue. Breast cancer survivor Codilia Gapare created Eylure London C-Lash, which was designed for women who have lost natural lashes; it rests on a much thicker, transparent band so these falsies stay in place. Prescription Latisse® is another excellent possibility if there are some remaining hairs or for when lashes begin to grow back. Stay away from eyelash extensions; your remaining lashes after chemo are more delicate and fragile. Remember that bacteria can grow in an open tube, so be careful with mascara usage.

Perhaps you've undergone a mastectomy and now, glancing at your new profile in the mirror, discover you loathe the surgical scars left behind. For many women, getting realistic-looking nipples tattooed after mastectomy can create a new lease on life. "Studies have proven that restoring the breast mound and the nipple restores the woman's sense of self. It's something that's often closely tied to her sense of femininity," said plastic surgeon Dr. Neil Tanna, who specializes in breast reconstruction surgery and performs areola tattoos.

If you're not undergoing reconstruction or areola tattooing, consider a mastectomy tattoo. Some survivors opt for colorful, meaningful breast tats that can decorate their entire décolletage or cover their chemo port scar. Anything the mind can imagine can be inked, such as a pink ribbon, flowers or a lucky ladybug. Be sure to consult with an experienced tattoo artist who will create on the canvas that is your body rather than just poorly cover up a scar.

How safe are these options? Although there's not much scientific evidence about the long-term effects, survivors' concern about contracting cancer from any of these permanent procedures appears unsubstantiated. In doctors' offices and highly regarded tattoo parlors, the inks used are generally safe. Keep in mind that chemo changes how a woman's skin interacts with both organic and ink pigments, so waiting until after treatments conclude is wise. Risk of infection may be higher after chemo, so be patient and use that time to conduct research. Check out various tattoo studios and artists to be sure they use hygienic practices, are licensed, and have experience dealing with breast cancer survivors. Check online client reviews of tattoo artists; or better yet, interview a couple of former clients. Whatever you decide, doctors recommend waiting two to five months after surgery before getting inked.

A final word: consult with your own physician for the green light to be certain that your incisions and any possible radiation-related skin conditions have fully healed. Face the future with confidence and know that you are stronger than you think — you are a survivor! ◆

SOURCES: *workingwomanreport.com, regionalcancercare.org, aedit.com, allure.com and goodhousekeeping.com.*









Health Plan

BY JO ANN KIRBY | PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEALTH PLAN

Health Plan ("Health Plan") marks its 30th anniversary this year, recognizing three decades of service to local communities and a continued commitment to improving access to care for residents across the region. Since its founding in 1996, Health Plan has grown alongside the communities it serves and the evolution of California's Medi-Cal program. What began as a locally established health plan serving approximately 40,000 members in San Joaquin County now supports nearly 400,000 members across Alpine, El Dorado, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties.

Throughout that growth, Health Plan has remained rooted in its mission to provide accessible, community-based care—working to ensure members can get the services they need, when they need them. A significant milestone came in 2014 with the expansion into Stanislaus County, increasing access to care for thousands of additional residents. Continued progress followed, including achieving National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) accreditation in 2015, reflecting a commitment to quality and accountability.

In recent years, Health Plan has expanded its Medi-Cal Plan into Alpine and El Dorado counties as Mountain Valley Health Plan and launched a Medicare Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP), designed to better coordinate care for individuals eligible for both Medi-Cal and Medicare across its entire service area.

"Reaching 30 years marks a profound milestone that reflects decades of expansion, innovation, and unwavering commitment to equitable, high-quality care," said Health Plan's Chief Executive Officer, Lizeth Granados. "We remain steadfast in our dedication to expanding our support as a trusted local partner so individuals and families can remain confidently connected to the care and services that empower them to thrive."

Health Plan is proud of its 30-year legacy of community-focused care that is making a measurable difference. Health Plan's work extends beyond traditional healthcare, supporting programs and partnerships that address the real-life factors that impact health—such as food access, housing stability, preventive care, and chronic disease management. Through close collaboration with community-based organizations, providers, and local agencies, Health Plan continues to help remove barriers and improve access to culturally responsive, timely care.

"Over the past three decades, we've seen how our steadfast







Celebrates 30 Years Serving Local Communities

dedication to the health of our communities drives meaningful and lasting improvement," said Health Plan's Chief Operations Officer, Liz Le. "That dedication continues to guide how we invest in impactful programs, support our local providers, and move forward with confidence to ensure a healthier, more vibrant future for our region."

Part of Health Plan's enduring legacy is its commitment to investing in health care education in the areas it serves, which are medically understaffed due to shortages of health care professionals.

For example, this past March, Health Plan awarded a $2.5 million capital grant to Stanislaus State to expand nursing education and workforce training at the University's Stockton Campus, supporting the creation of the Health Plan of San Joaquin Health and Human Services (HHS) Training Center. The investment will fund a dedicated suite of simulation training laboratories and clinical skills labs on the second floor of Willow Hall, strengthening and expanding hands-on training for nursing students preparing to serve communities across the Northern San Joaquin Valley. "This investment represents a powerful commitment to the health of our region," said Stanislaus State President Britt Rios-Ellis. "By strengthening clinical training in an underserved region such as ours, Health Plan of San Joaquin's partnership will ensure high-quality care for families throughout the Central Valley. This vital program will guarantee that nurses and other health care professionals can train here, graduate, and serve our beloved Central Valley."

Communities across the Northern San Joaquin Valley face persistent shortages of health care providers and ongoing health disparities. Many counties are federally designated medically underserved areas and health professional shortage areas, highlighting critical gaps in access to care. These conditions are compounded by high levels of social vulnerability — including poverty, limited transportation and crowded housing — which create additional barriers to timely, preventive care.

As Health Plan reflects on 30 years of service, the organization remains focused on the future—continuing to strengthen member experience, support providers, and invest in community-based solutions that promote long-term health and well-being. ◆

To learn more about Health Plan, www.hpsj-mvhp.org.

AT A DISTANCE: CONTINUING CAREGIVING

BY ANN E. BUTENAS

Many baby boomers are faced with a new challenge: worrisome signs of their parents' frailty, loss of memory and overall decline in health that may require more of their time and attention. For those who live within close proximity of parents, caregiving is relatively easy. However, if you live far away, whether an hour or in a completely different state or country, caregiving presents some unique challenges.



Baby boomers have held the title of daughter or son all their lives, but some now wear the hat of long-distance caregiver, which brings new responsibilities. There is no specific playbook for this matter and no single way to be a caregiver; everyone's situation is different. You have to factor in elements such as family dynamics, financial resources and the ability of your parents to provide guidance for the support they want. As a caregiver, however, there are two main responsibilities you can expect: serving as a gatherer of information and a coordinator of services.

Being prepared before a crisis hits is imperative. Have a discussion about where important records, phone numbers, email addresses and other contact information is kept. Keep a notebook to log the important information you gather. You can create one digitally or simply use a three-ring binder with pocket dividers. Be sure this notebook contains relevant information about your parents' medical care providers and medications. If you are relying on paid caregivers, consider maintaining a separate notebook in which medication administration, vital signs and other key physical and mental health status information can be documented.

Other responsibilities may include assisting with finances, money management or bill paying. You may need to arrange for in-home care by hiring professional caregivers or home health or nursing aides, as well as get help for necessary durable medical equipment. If in-home care is not appropriate for the situation, you may have to find care in an assisted living facility or nursing home.

Your parents will also rely on your emotional support and occasional respite care for a primary caregiver. It will also be important for you to keep family members and friends updated about your parents' overall health status. If you have a primary caregiver, ask that individual how you can be most helpful. Communicate with friends who are caregivers to obtain any suggestions about ways to help and look into local resources that might be useful to you.

Visit your parents as often as possible. This gives you the chance to see if there's something that needs to be done and it's the perfect time to give the primary caregiver some relief for a short time. Develop a solid understanding of your parents' health issues and other needs, learning as much as you can about their condition and any necessary treatment. This will help you fully understand what is going on, and it can prepare you for the course of an illness, so you can better assist during a crisis and in overall healthcare management of your parents. Obtain written permission under the HIPAA Privacy Rule to talk with providers. If at all possible, the family member with permission should be the one communicating with all healthcare providers.

Over time, the needs of your parents can and will change. It's never too early to consider possible future needs. Have a conversation with a social worker who has experience in planning for eldercare. There are many options to consider and being informed allows you and your parents to make the best decisions about their care.

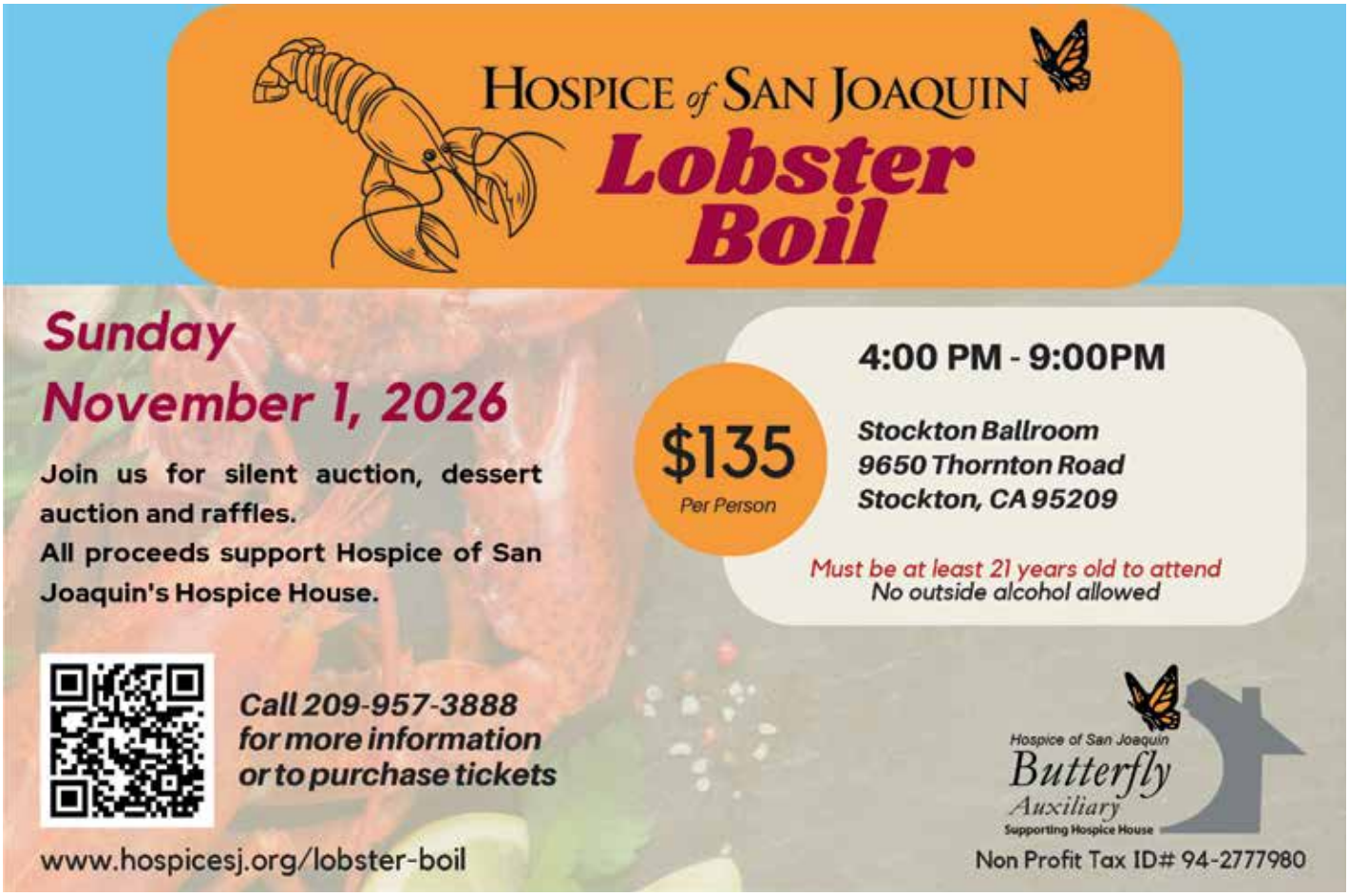
If you feel overwhelmed, it's okay to call a friend or professional to help. Consider consulting an objective advisor who is knowledgeable about Medicare and Medicaid so you can sort out all issues related to health care eligibility and coverage. A social worker or geriatric care manager can help arrange a family meeting to prepare a plan of care.

No one can be a master of everything, and this requires a team effort. Find people who live near your parents who can provide a realistic view of their situation. In some cases, this may be the other parent. You can also schedule conference calls with doctors, the assisted living facility team or nursing home staff so other relatives can be part of the conversation.

You may want to give the person for whom you are caring a cell phone and ensure he or she understands how to use it. Program phone numbers of doctors, friends, family members and yourself into the phone.

More than 43 million Americans are currently providing long-distance care for their parents, and that number continues to rise. Fortunately, the internet has an abundance of information and resources to assist you on this journey. A few to consider include the National Institute on Aging, Family Care Navigator, your state government's website and local senior centers. ◆

SOURCES: *pbs.org and nia.nih.gov.*

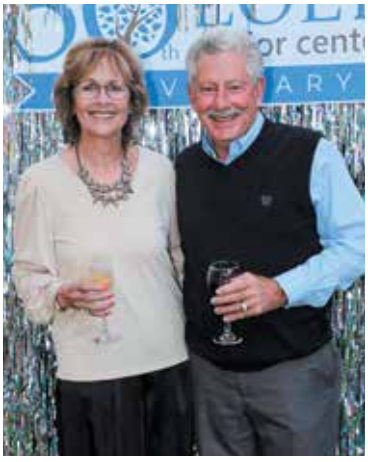


DISCO & DIAMONDS

The LOEL Senior Center celebrated its 50th anniversary with a Disco & Diamonds Golden Anniversary Celebration on September 12, 2026, at Capecchio Ovest. The party featured a champagne reception, disco celebration and dancing under the stars. The LOEL Senior Center enriches the lives of seniors in the Lodi community with vital programs including nutrition, social connection and housing stability.◆

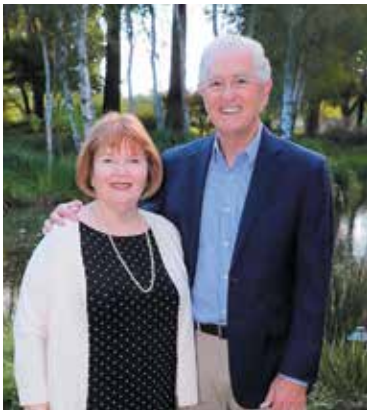
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN



















Max the Therapy Dog
EXUBERANT AND COMFORTING

BY *HERLIFE* STAFF



Q: Tell us about yourself?
A: My name is Max. I am a big, confident boy with a very calming presence. I love helping; I can remain calm and sweet in busy situations. I help humans feel better and lower their stress. I can be meticulous about my collar and scarves though. I want to be presentable and comfortable. Oh, and did I tell you? My eyelashes are real. It makes the girls jealous.

Q: What's your fave vacation spot?
A: The BEACH! My older brother and best friend, Hank the Bernedoodle and I zoomed all over, rolled, splashed and covered ourselves in sand and water. We may have run through some humans' towels, but I was good and didn't take anything that wasn't mine. Still not sure why Mom hasn't brought us back since.

Q: Where do you like to play?
A: Brookside in Stockton is our playground. Hank and I are both four years and we have so much energy. We are also golf cart enthusiasts. We ride in Mom's golf cart at the Brookside Country Club. Everyone knows us here and comes up to say hello!

Q: What's your guilty pleasure?
A: I love being petted oh so much, preferably without interruptions. Sometimes humans stop petting me for some reason, so I politely nudge them to remind them what they were doing.

Q: Describe your naughtiest deed?
A: Counter surfing! One evening, while Mom walked her guests out, an order of In-N-Out fries mysteriously vanished and the carton was found on the floor. Apparently, squinting my eyes when questioned gave me away.

Q: What's your current obsession?
A: My teddy bear and mama, Adrienne Hotchkiss. I like to take teddy with me throughout the house. I am also a certified mama's boy and I take my job very seriously. I'm not nosey, I just follow her everywhere because somebody has to make sure she's okay. I keep her within eyesight at all times. I like being right beside her.

Q: Tell us your favorite, most wonderful treat?
A: When human food falls from the heavens directly into my path. Sadly, I have a very sensitive tummy, so Mom says that human food is forbidden. No pup cups for me. I just wait until I'm blessed from above again.

Q: Where do you go to get pampered?
A: My spa days are spent at Sycamore Lane Kennels in Lodi. I sit still and let them make me feel handsome. My absolute favorite treatment is being brushed. I love the way it feels; it calms and relaxes me.

Q: What's would you like everyone to know:
A: I volunteer with my mom. I am a certified therapy dog. She has volunteered with Hospice of San Joaquin since 2013 and together we visit hospice patients to bring comfort and joy. I also help at Camp Caterpillar, a grief camp for children who have lost a loved one. One time, there was a boy who was terrified of dogs. I gave him space, patience and my gentlest self. Eventually, he began petting me and was glued to me for the rest of the day. When his dad arrived, he proudly shouted, "Hey Dad, this is Max!" I felt like the goodest boy in the whole world. We also volunteer with Animal Friends Connection, visit senior living communities, convalescent homes and schools. I always put my best paw forward because helping people is important. Well, I may exaggerate about my paw, Mom has spent countless hours trying to get to "shake" my paw; nope, don't want to do it. But I do know how to pray.

Q: Where were you adopted from?
A: I was adopted in the parking lot of Animal Friends Connection, where I first met Mom and Hank. Hank and I ran around together in the pen, and I knew immediately that I wanted to be with them. I was one year old, and they became my fourth and forever home. ◆

SOULFUL EYES AND A WET NOSE: CANINES UNDERSTAND

BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

There have been many difficult times in my life that canine companions have provided a snuggle and a listening ear. Honestly, sometimes this comfort lasts longer than the human support, especially in the wee hours of the morning. When I wake up at 2:00 a.m. and my human companion is no longer there, my little Doodlebug is.



A 2026 study excerpted by the National Institutes of Health indicates that cancer patients who owned dogs had a significantly lower five-year mortality risk compared to those who did not. Yes, it's encouraging to know that research proves what pet owners know.

"Surveys of cancer survivors indicate that dog walking significantly increases daily light physical activity. This sustained activity can enhance cardiopulmonary function and reduce muscle atrophy, ultimately improving quality of life and potentially influencing survival outcomes," note the four authors of the well-researched study. "Additionally, studies highlight the role of canine companionship in alleviating depressive symptoms, reducing loneliness and mitigating social isolation, providing psychological and social explanations for the observed protective effect of dog ownership on five-year survival rates in cancer patients." The cancer treatment process often involves psychological challenges such as depression and anxiety, both linked to poor prognosis. The unconditional companionship, emotional support and motivation provided by pets may help reduce loneliness and social isolation, fostering a more positive outlook on illness.

MOOD AND STRESS IMPROVEMENT

Walking your dog helps you connect with neighbors, which provides socialization. Plus, walking in nature contributes to positive mental health, and exercise helps with cancer prevention. Patients frequently report that their pets help to keep them calm and lower their blood pressure. "They are always excited to see me and provide me with unconditional love; having my pup around makes life more enjoyable," said an anonymous study participant.

RECOVERY AND INDEPENDENCE

"Service dogs" bring to mind guide dogs for the blind. But med-

ical service dogs can also be trained to bark for help, retrieve a phone, assist in walking, and opening and closing doors. They can be trained to pick up dropped items or turn lights and appliances on and off. This can be especially helpful for cancer patients who have lost a limb or have difficulty getting around as a result of treatment.

CAN DOGS SMELL CANCER?

This question has fascinated researchers for years. Canines smell up to 1,000 times more accurately than humans. In multiple laboratory studies, dogs have been able to detect certain cancers by smelling breath, stool or urine samples. An eight-year-old female Labrador retriever trained in cancer scent detection correctly identified 91 percent of breath samples and 97 percent of stool samples from patients with colon cancer.

In 2016, Tsunami, a three-year-old German shepherd at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center, identified ovarian cancer malignancies from tissue samples with 90 percent accuracy. Six dogs trained at the Veterinary Department of Pingtung University of Science and Technology in Taiwan had an average positive diagnosis rate of 84 percent when using exhaled air samples for training the dogs to recognize cancer in lung cancer patients. Dogs might one day be used in conjunction with existing diagnostic tests to detect cancer at its earliest stages when it's most treatable.

PET ASSISTANCE WELLNESS (PAW) PROGRAM

This program, initiated in 2020 by CancerCare, offers financial assistance to qualified individuals who are in active treatment and share their home with a beloved cat or dog, educational content that speaks to the specific challenges of caring for a pet while a patient is undergoing treatment and access to CancerCare's free programs and services such as resource navigation and support groups.

One of the free resources provided by CancerCare advises, "If you're comfortable, please let your veterinarian know about your cancer diagnosis. Your veterinarian and you can plan for how to best take care of your pets during your cancer treatment. For example, your treatment may occasionally result in your having difficulties with routine pet duties such as dog walking, lifting heavy things such as large bags of pet food, etc. Your cancer treatment may also result in your experiencing fatigue on occasion. Having a plan in place for your pet that includes family, friends, colleagues — or even your friendly veterinarian — can give you the peace of mind to know that your beloved pet is well taken care of."

PROTECT YOURSELF DURING TREATMENT

While pets offer companionship and love, they can also accidentally provide illness when your immune system is compromised. To stay safe, keep up with your pet's annual checkups and vaccinations. Avoid pet scratches or bites and keep nails clipped. Wear gloves and wash your hands after exposure to your pet's body fluids or feces. Illnesses can be spread via pet urine or feces. Saliva can carry illness, so don't let your pet lick any open cuts or near your nose and mouth.◆

SOURCES: *pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, ncfr.org, aicr.org, cancercare.org and nypost.com.*



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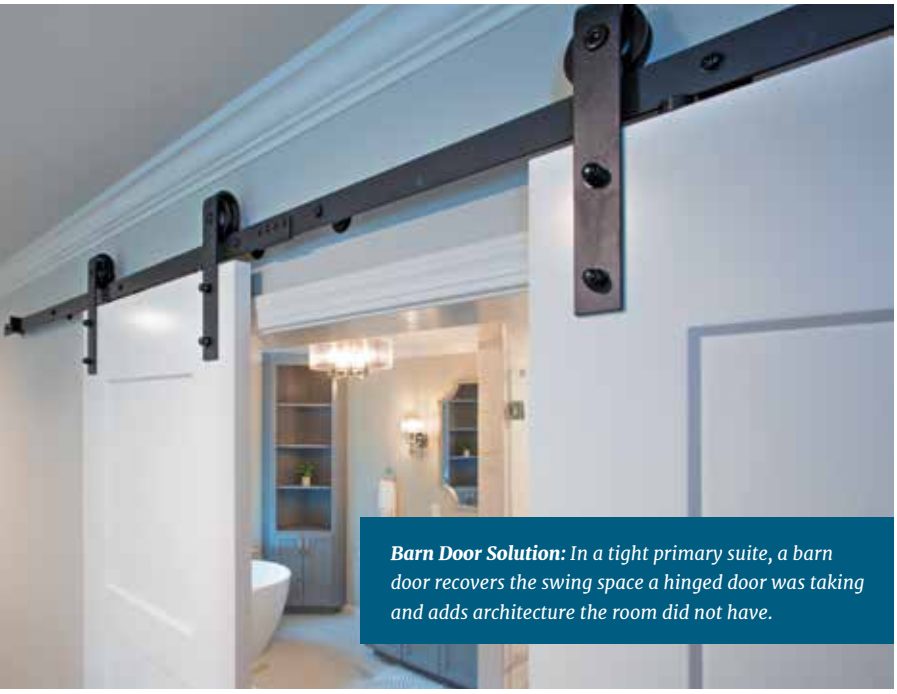
Primary Bedroom Overview: *A restful bedroom starts with bed placement, a solid wall behind the headboard, and enough room to walk on both sides.*

THE CASE FOR A SLIGHTLY BORING BEDROOM

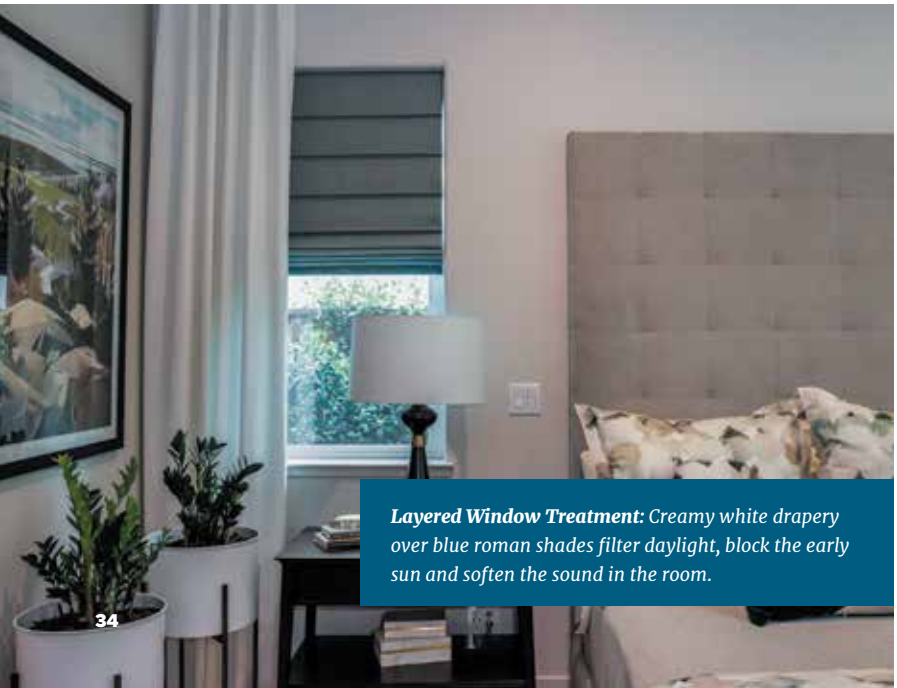
BY KATHLEEN JENNISON | PHOTOS BY KEVIN RICHTIK, CAROLINE PHOTOGRAPHY



Reading Chair: *A chair with arms, a small table and a lamp behind it turns a corner into somewhere worth sitting.*



Barn Door Solution: *In a tight primary suite, a barn door recovers the swing space a hinged door was taking and adds architecture the room did not have.*



Layered Window Treatment: *Creamy white drapery over blue roman shades filter daylight, block the early sun and soften the sound in the room.*

After 18 years of bedroom projects, I can tell you the most restful rooms in a house are rarely the most interesting ones.

Ask a homeowner where they want to start, and almost nobody says the bedroom. They say the kitchen. The great room. The powder room that has embarrassed them since 2011. The bedroom lands at the bottom of the list, right below the garage, because no one sees it. It gets the leftover furniture, the leftover budget and a bedspread that was purchased under fluorescent lighting during a moment of weakness.

Then life happens. A hard diagnosis. A long stretch of caregiving. A parent who needs help. A season where the day takes everything you have and the only thing you want at eight o'clock is a room that does not ask anything of you. That is when people find out what their bedroom is actually made of.

Rest Is Not a Decorating Style

A restful bedroom is not a color palette. It is a series of decisions that keep the room from arguing with you. There is a whole category of bedroom advice built around the word calm. Soft neutrals. A few candles. Maybe a eucalyptus branch in a vase.

That is not design. That is a photo shoot. Rest comes from a room that works at two in the morning, not one that photographs well at two in the afternoon. Can you find the light switch without waking the person next to you? Is there somewhere to set down a water glass, a phone, a book and whatever else the week has handed you? Can you get to the bathroom without navigating a furniture obstacle course? A room can be beautiful and still be exhausting. I have walked into plenty of them.

Start With the Bed, and Be Honest About the Wall

Almost every bedroom problem I see traces back to bed placement.

The bed wants a solid wall, a clear view of the door, and enough room on both sides for a person to walk and a nightstand to live. That sounds obvious until you meet the primary bedroom with three doors, two windows, a fireplace and one usable wall that happens to be four inches too short for a king.

This is where an honest conversation has to happen. Sometimes the answer is a queen instead of a king, and the room gains three feet of breathing space. Sometimes the answer is moving a door. In one Lodi project we solved a tight primary suite with a barn door, which bought back the swing space a hinged door was stealing and gave the room a piece of architecture it did not have before.

Two nightstands, by the way, even if only one

person sleeps there. Symmetry settles a room down. It also means the second side is ready when someone needs to sit with you, which is not something most people think about until they need it.

Lighting Is the Whole Argument

One overhead fixture and a wall switch is not a lighting plan. It is a habit.

If I could change one thing in every bedroom in America, it would be the light. A single fixture in the middle of the ceiling, operated by one switch, is a hospital corridor with better bedding. You need layers, and in a bedroom that means at least three: Ambient light for making the bed and finding a sweater. Task light at each side of the bed, on its own switch, bright enough to actually read by and positioned so the shade sits near shoulder height when you are sitting up. Low light for the middle of the night, which can be as simple as a lamp on a dimmer or a small fixture near the floor that lets you get to the bathroom without a full wake-up call.

Put the ceiling fixture on a dimmer. Put the bedside lamps on switches you can reach lying down. If someone in the house is recovering from anything, this stops being a nicety and becomes the difference between a decent night and a rough one.

Then handle the windows twice. Woven wood shades filter daylight and give the room texture. Lined drapery behind them handles the 6:00 a.m. sun and the neighbor's motion light. In a Stockton guest room we ran slate blue drapery over woven wood shades, and it does both jobs without the room looking like a home theater.

Give the Clutter Somewhere to Land

Here is the part nobody puts on a mood board.

Nightstands need drawers. Real ones. A bedside table with a pretty open shelf is fine until the shelf is holding reading glasses, a charger, hand cream, a remote, three books and a small pharmacy. Then it is just a pile with legs.

Closed storage at the bedside keeps the room quiet. It also protects a person's privacy, which matters more than people realize. Nobody wants their nightstand narrating their health to every guest who walks by.

The same logic applies to the rest of the room. A bench at the foot of the bed with storage inside. A dresser with a drawer that is not spoken for. A closet system that actually reflects what you own now, not what you owned in 2009.

Quiet Is a Design Decision

Sound is half of rest, and hard surfaces are the enemy.

A rug that runs under the bed and out past the nightstands. Drapery, which absorbs far more than people expect. An upholstered headboard, which softens the wall behind you and keeps the room from echoing. A solid core door instead of the hollow one the builder installed.

None of this shows up in a photograph. All of it shows up at three in the morning.

The Chair Is Not for Laundry

Most bedrooms have a chair. Most bedroom chairs are wearing a sweater from Tuesday. I have worked on bedrooms where that chair turned out to be the most important piece of furniture in the house.

Give the chair a reason to exist. A real seat with arms, a small table beside it, a lamp behind it. Suddenly it is somewhere to put your shoes on, somewhere to sit and drink coffee, somewhere for your daughter to sit and talk to you on a day when you would rather not get up.

What Holds Up in a Hard Season

This issue is about cancer awareness, and I am not going to pretend a well-designed bedroom has anything to do with medicine. It does not.

But I have designed rooms for clients in the middle of treatment, for clients recovering from surgery and for clients who were caring for a husband or a mother and needed the house to stop being one more thing to manage. What I learned is that the rooms that hold up during a hard season are the ordinary ones done well.

Good light you can control from bed. A place to put things down. A floor you can cross barefoot in the dark. A window covering that lets you sleep past sunrise. A chair for the person who came to sit with you. Nothing about that is dramatic. All of it matters when the rest of life gets loud.

That is also why I am careful with trend-driven bedrooms. The room you rest in should not have opinions. It should not require maintenance, a decorative pillow ceremony every morning, or four steps to turn off a light. It should be well made, comfortable, quiet and slightly boring in the best possible way.

Start Small, Start Anyway

You do not need a full remodel to fix most of this. New lamps with the switch in the right place. A second nightstand. A rug two sizes bigger than the one you have. Drapery added over existing shades. A door that closes properly. That is a weekend and a modest budget, and it changes how the room feels at night.

The bigger point is this. Every other room in your house is built to serve other people. Guests, dinners, homework, holidays. The bedroom is the one room that exists entirely for you. It deserves better than the leftovers. ◆



Kathleen Jennison is the founder and principal designer of KTJ Design Co., a full-service residential interior design firm in Stockton. With a background in accounting and a sharp eye for proportion, she designs homes for clients navigating a new chapter, pairing creative direction with the documentation and follow-through that gets a project finished. Her work is avant-garde yet livable and always built around how people actually live.

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LET THE MUSIC MOVE YOU

Garage Work Never Sounded so Good

BY TIM DALY



EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Local music teachers interested in having the Stockton Garage Big Band play for students can reach Mike Esau at 209-472-1817, or on his Facebook page: Michael Esau.

It's one of the longest-running musical acts in San Joaquin County, featuring several accomplished current and retired musicians. Yet they play not for the public, but instead for themselves because what they play brings so much enjoyment.

It's called the Stockton Garage Big Band. Self-taught drummer Mike Esau started the band 20 years ago and still directs the 17 piece group every Tuesday, literally in his garage.

"I didn't organize this band to go look for paying gigs. I wanted a place where musicians could do maintenance because music is a perishable thing," said Mike. "If you don't read all the time you start to lose the ability to read music. If you're a horn player and you don't maintain your lip, you lose your ability to play."

Mike's musical path certainly took an unusual route. While his friends in the 50s and 60s embraced rock and roll, Mike heard big band jazz and was hooked.

"I wanted to play jazz clarinet because as a kid, I loved Benny Goodman," said Mike, who unfortunately didn't have access to a clarinet. Family suitcases became a musical substitute. "I set up a drum set, using my parent's wedding luggage, and beat them into shreds. As a kid playing to Goodman records, I wanted to swing. That's what I was attracted to."

For more than 40 years Mike worked at the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office (For 6, he was the face and voice of the department as public information officer). But in off-hours, he was busy nights and weekends turning that love for Benny Goodman and other big bands into his own musical project. Often with other staff members of the sheriff's office, Mike would perform in groups of 3, 5 or even 10 — more than 100 times a year at weddings, fundraisers and company parties.

It was the desire for music to be less of an occupation and more satisfying, that led to the formation of the Stockton Garage (rehearsal) Big Band, still going strong, every Tuesday morning from 10 to noon.

"We used to play dances where someone would say can you play a tango? So we played the tango and they said, no that's not right — You need to play an Argentine tango," said Mike. "You have to please the customer, which is a certain kind of stress. That's work. You get to the point where you want to have fun playing music, and play what musicians want to play."

Retired music teacher Beth Sanders somehow finds time to be one of the 17 regulars. With the ability to play clarinet, saxophone, flute, bassoon and bass, she's also a member of the Stockton Symphony, Valley Concert Band, Valley Community Orchestra, and a frequent member of the orchestra for musicals put on by Stockton Civic Theatre. It's the joy and not the duty of playing music that keeps her Tuesday mornings busy.

"A lot of us play professionally, and a lot of us taught. We do the garage band because it's fun to play. It's a chance to play big band music with friends. And of course, we just like playing jazz," said Beth.

More than a few of the Tuesday crew bring impressive resumes to the Benjamin Holt rehearsal space. Credits among band members include backing world-famous singers in Las Vegas, playing in the Disney World band in Florida, and traveling around the world in military bands.

A new emphasis for the group is taking rehearsals out of the garage and into local schools. Recently at Morada Middle School, Mike ran his group through about 90 minutes of big band tunes, stopping every now and then to work out rough spots, and joking afterwards about what sounded right and what needed more work. The Morada kids were fully engaged, asking questions after each song about the arrangements or instruments.

And to Mike's relief, not one of them requested an Argentine tango. ◆



I am always looking for new and exciting gigs to showcase musicians in our community who deserve recognition. Stay tuned!
Feel free to reach out: ***tim@dalyvideoservices.com.***



LINCOLN CENTER 75TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

Lincoln Center celebrated its 75th anniversary at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum's new Pioneer Village on August 29, 2026. A special thank you to Papapavlo's for the wonderful dinner, Tokay FFA for the beautiful floral centerpieces, Take 2 for keeping everyone on the dance floor and all of the Lincoln Center restaurants that provided delicious appetizers and desserts. The event was produced by SASS! Public Relations in partnership with Lincoln Center and the San Joaquin County Historical Museum. ◆

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN
































& SEED

ONE UNDER THE STARS

The Red Rhino Project celebrated its 20 years of hope, transformation and impact with One Night Under the Stars on September 12, 2026, at a private estate in Morada. Proceeds from the event help underserved communities in Kenya with education, nourishment, mentorship and opportunity. The event included cocktails, dinner, live music, dancing and a silent auction. ◆

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ROSE GARDEN GALA

One-Eighty Programs hosted its Rose Garden Gala 2026 at Wine & Roses in Lodi. The nonprofit faith-based organization provides mentoring, mental health counseling and support services for youth and families. It operates a teen center and helps build community. The gala offered a chance to gather with foundational supporters while enjoying dinner, live music, raffles and auctions, and hear stories of change. ◆

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN























Small Museum, Big Dreams:

What's Next for the World of Wonders Science Museum?

The World of Wonders Science Museum in Downtown Lodi is closer than ever to breaking ground on a project that will not only expand the size of their museum, but also their impact in the community. The small museum, which provides engaging hands-on science education to visitors of all ages, has grown to have a remarkable impact on visitors and classrooms throughout the Central Valley, but they say there are still dreams yet to be realized.

Humble Beginnings

In 2005, local business owner Dan Ingrum posed an interesting question to the Lodi Rotary Club. "What if Lodi had its very own science museum?" His question was immediately answered with resounding support. A group of dedicated volunteers was created with the shared goal of establishing Lodi's first science museum, a place built around curiosity, discovery and the belief that everyone, regardless of age, should ask questions and wonder about the world around them.

This team of visionaries coordinated events throughout Lodi to raise funds, support and share their dream of establishing Lodi's very own science museum. After raising over $600,000 in donations, this dedicated group worked with the City of Lodi and agreed to pay for all the tenant improvements. In May 2008, tenant improvements were started on the 9,000-sq.-ft. empty shell of the Lodi parking garage and were completed in September 2008.

In March 2009, the World of Wonders (WOW) Science Museum opened its doors and the community showed up in droves, excited to experience our very own hands-on science museum. "The local communities have supported the museum from the very beginning," said Sally Snyde, president of the World of Wonders Science Museum. "For over 18 years, because of our unique educational programs and our community support, we are proud to say that the WOW Science Museum has made a positive impact on the lives of children and adults throughout the entire Central Valley and beyond."







Local Impact

Today, the WOW has grown into something so much larger than anyone could have imagined. Each year, the World of Wonders welcomes over 24,000 general admission guests and provides educational programs for K-6 classrooms throughout the Central Valley through in-museum Field Study Trips and mobile WOW on Wheels programs. In the 2025-2026 school year alone, the WOW served over 20,000 students from 188 schools in 38 cities throughout Northern California, but WOW leadership is finding that when it comes to supporting the demand of Field Study Trips here at the WOW, the museum has reached maximum capacity.

"When it comes to how many students we can serve each year, we are limited by the fact that we have only one classroom that can only seat 30 students at a time," said Erica Herold, assistant executive director of the World of Wonders. According to Herold, during the busier times of the school year, typically between early March and late May, teachers wanting to bring their classes to the WOW are often surprised to hear that there are no available Field Study Trip time slots available.

After several years of turning away classroom teachers due to limited space, the WOW board of directors faced another pivotal question. What if the museum expanded? With an expansion, the museum could create space for classrooms and expand their collection of hands-on exhibits for the public.

Big Dreams

Now, ten years later, the World of Wonders' dream of expansion is finally being realized. "In the last decade, we have worked with three different potential partners and experienced a global pandemic. This process has taken longer than we originally thought, but we are finally seeing the vision become a reality," said Snyde.

The expansion of the World of Wonders Science Museum will be located in Downtown Lodi across the street from the current museum. The project looks to quadruple the amount of public exhibit space and provide a professionally curated museum experience for guests. Within the walls of the future museum, we will showcase a carousel full of animals from the Central Valley. It will be a piece of art and history of our Valley. The building that currently houses the WOW's exhibits will be converted into more classrooms to allow the museum to host more classes at one time. In addition, the section of North Sacramento Street in front of the museum will be converted into a pedestrian-only plaza, allowing visitors and students to cross safely between the two buildings.

In addition to the museum's expansion and partnering with Pacific Development Group, the project includes the construction of a downtown convention center and a boutique hotel, which will be operated by outside entities. The project is currently expected to break ground in late 2027, but the public can expect to see the first sneak peeks of the interior design of the museum's expansion at the World of Wonders Science Museum's annual gala on November 14, 2026. "We have made a lot of progress with the expansion this year, and we are excited to share our progress with the community," said Herold. "Ultimately, we hope the community will share our excitement for this project and continue to support us in making this dream a reality." •

2 N Sacramento St • Lodi, CA 95240 • 209.368.0969 • wowsciencemuseum.org

This feature was made possible through nonprofit capacity-building support from the Lodi Community Foundation. Are you nterested in leaving a legacy or maximizing your charitable goals? Let's talk...

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LODI COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Adventist Health LODI MEMORIAL

Eighty Years of History

BY FRANKCARLO MILLS, FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Clipping of Emil Bender opening the hospital at the ribbon cutting



Lodi Memorial under construction, courtesy of the **Lodi News-Sentinel** *Collection, at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum.*



Almost everyone in Lodi is familiar with Lodi Memorial Hospital and Adventist Health, but their presence in Lodi, as invaluable as it has been to our community's wellbeing, would not have been possible if the people of Lodi had not decided that the town needed its own public hospital. In the wake of World War II, Oscar Ditmanson and Vincent Webb, local members of the Disabled American Veterans, formed a committee to build a local hospital. Their efforts led the construction of Lodi Memorial Hospital, our town's first public hospital and vital pillar of local healthcare.

Prior to Lodi Memorial, Lodi had only two hospitals, both private. The first, Buchanan Hospital, was built in 1910 as the Buchanan Sanitarium after its founder, Robert Buchanan, set up practice in Lodi in 1909. The second, Mason Hospital, was completed well after the death of the man who started it, Dr. Wilton Marcellus Mason.

The idea that eventually became Lodi Memorial began in 1945, when public accountant Vincent Webb investigated the need for a hospital in Lodi at the request of Lodi Chapter 59 head Oscar Dit-

manson. Webb found only 60 beds and 11 doctors spread between Mason and Buchanan. The two met with other Lodi figures to discuss building a hospital for Lodi and decided to form a nonprofit organization funded by public subscription, writing articles of incorporation for the Lodi Memorial Hospital Association on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1945, a date, alongside the "Memorial" part of the name, chosen to honor the 4,000 men and women from the greater Lodi area who served in the armed forces during World War II. Between 1945 and 1950, they successfully raised enough money to start building the hospital in 1950 and opened it on March 30, 1952, to a crowd of more than 8,000 visitors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Five years later, it received its first full accreditation.


New Hospital Will Open To Out-Patients

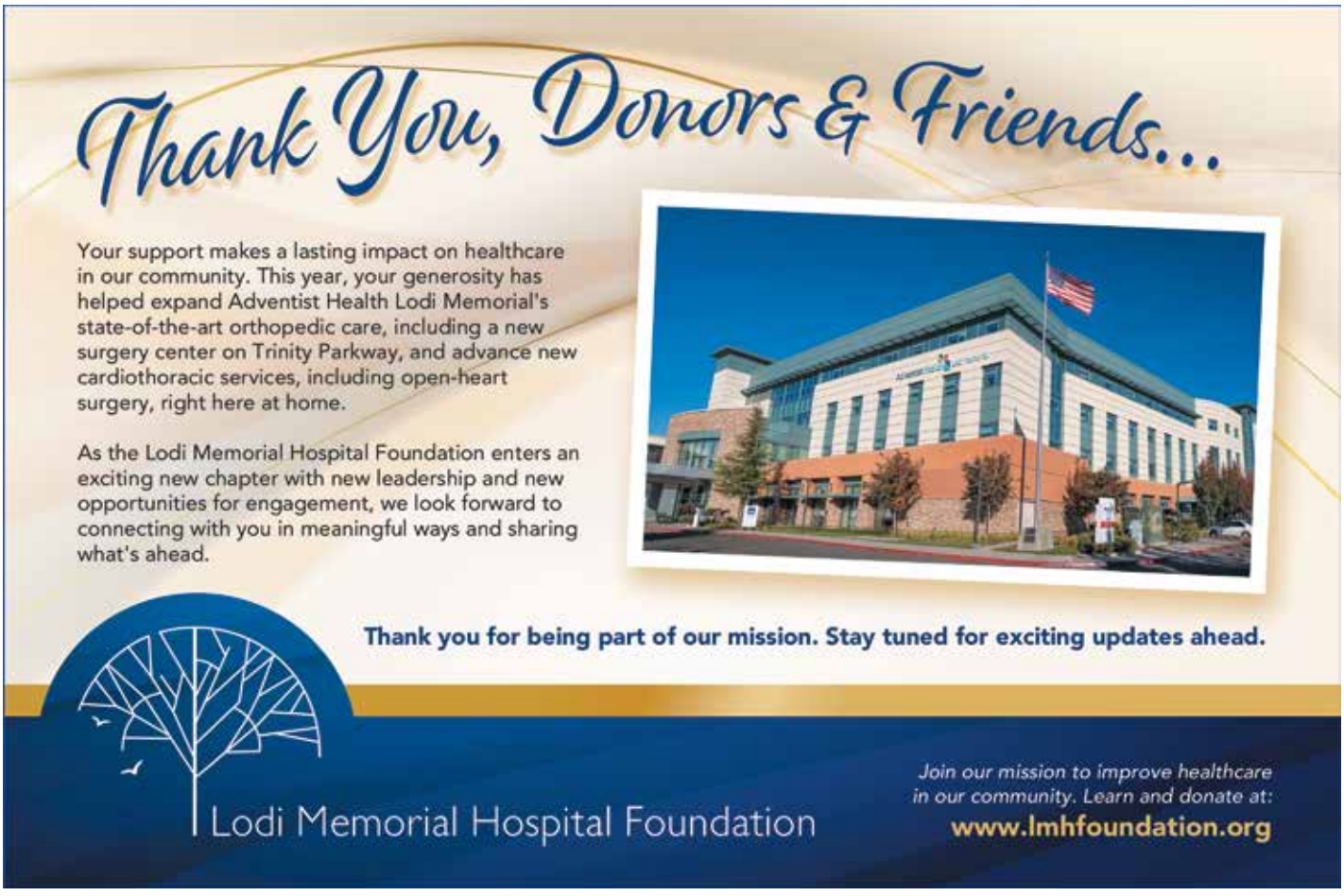
Lodians Will See Dream Of Seven Years Come True

The first photo and clipping of the X-Ray machine, with a technician: Courtesy of the **Lodi News-Sentinel** *Collection at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum*

The hospital grew in size over the years to serve the town's increasing needs. Overcrowding was a problem, and the facility was forced to turn patients away in 1963, despite having just completed two new wings. In 1965, plans for additions were initiated, and new construction was completed in 1968. The 1980s brought further expansions, which were funded by the newly established Lodi Memorial Hospital Foundation. The third and largest expansion of the hospital during the 20th century took place in 1982, when 47,000 square feet of space were added at a cost of $8.5 million. The 1990s saw further expansion, with the purchase of the Doctors Hospital of Lodi to use as a West campus, the establishment of an adult daycare service, a West Fitness Center, two new outpatient units and a growing presence in Galt.

The 21st century brought further evolution. First, a south wing was built in 2009, and then Lodi Memorial renamed itself Lodi Health in 2013. In 2015, Lodi Memorial joined the national conglomerate Adventist Health, a partnership that brought capital necessary to grow the cardiology and oncology departments and improve the capacity and reaction times of the emergency department. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit San Joaquin County in 2020, Adventist Health worked tirelessly to ensure our citizens got the essential care, testing, vaccinations and treatment they needed.

Adventist Health Lodi Memorial, alongside Diana J. White Cancer Institute at Adventist Health Sonora, were the first two Adventist Health facilities to achieve APEx, or Accreditation Program for Excellence, accreditation from ASTRO, the American Society for Radiation Oncology, America's fastest-growing radiation oncology accreditation program, for its radiation oncology team. This honor to Lodi, and the ways both Adventist Health and Lodi Memorial have met the needs of not only our residents but San Joaquin County overall, were all made possible by the need two veterans saw in 1945 for Lodi to have a public hospital and the support of Lodi's people to ensure it happened. ◆



BROILED SALMON WITH SWEET LEMON GLAZE

RECIPE & PHOTO PROVIDED BY BELLYFULL.NET



INGREDIENTS

1¼ pounds salmon, cut into 4 pieces
1 teaspoon dark brown sugar
Zest from one lemon and one lime
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Position a rack in the oven 3 inches from the broiler. Line a sheet pan with aluminum foil and place the salmon on the pan. Fold the thin part of the fillet under to create a more even piece of salmon. Place the sugar, zest, salt and pepper into the bowl of a small food processor and process for 1 minute or until well combined. Evenly spread the mixture onto the salmon and allow to sit for 30 minutes at room temperature. Turn the oven on to the high broiler setting and wait 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, place the salmon into the oven and broil until the salmon reaches an internal temperature of 131 degrees F. or until the salmon just starts to flake when pricked with a fork. Be careful not to overcook the fish or it will be dry. Remove your salmon from the oven and place and move to a plate. Serve immediately. ◆

NOTE

I recommend using a thermometer to ensure your salmon is cooked perfectly every time. I insert a ThermoPro Spike thermometer into the thickest part of the salmon and set the temperature doneness to 131 degrees F. The thermometer app will alert you when the salmon is done.



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NUTRITION FOR CANCER PATIENTS

BY LISA BUTLER

Cancer, one of the leading causes of death worldwide, is prevalent and petrifying. Most people recognize that simple lifestyle habits such as following a healthy diet could help prevent many cancers. Mounting evidence suggests that nearly 1 in 20 cancer cases could be avoided through consuming a more nutritious diet.



Prevention aside, what may be more significant is that nutrition is thought to play an important role in treating and coping with cancer. Eating nutritiously regularly is important, but when a patient is being treated for cancer, this can be difficult to do, especially since side effects play a role in how a cancer patient feels. The disease can also affect the way a body tolerates certain foods and uses nutrients.

But the American Cancer Society says to eat up. A healthy diet helps the body function at its best, especially if cancer is present. Eating well also builds strength and energy, allowing a patient to better cope with the side effects of treatments and protocols. In fact, research shows that some cancer treatments work better in people who are well-nourished.

Getting all the necessary nutrients and calories when a person is healthy is not usually an issue, but when someone has cancer, this can be tricky. Cancer can change what the body needs before, during and after treatment.

BEFORE TREATMENT

Before treatment starts, it's wise to focus on healthy foods as much as possible. The treatments may cause side effects that can leave a patient feeling weak or nauseous. Getting good nutrition beforehand can help make the body feel better and stronger.

There may also be days when someone doesn't feel like eating at all, so planning ahead of time is important. Experts say to stock the fridge with healthy foods that take little time to prepare. Good choices

may include nuts, applesauce, yogurt, pre-chopped veggies and microwaveable brown rice or other whole grains. Frozen entrees, either store bought or homemade, make good choices as well. This might be the time to ask for help from family or friends to bring meals for the first days or weeks of therapy.

DURING TREATMENT

During treatment, most nutrition guidelines suggest eating lots of protein and healthy calories to keep the body resilient and help repair damage from any treatments. Besides protein, other healthy choices include vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Experts also recommend limiting red meat while reducing fat intake, sugar, salt and alcohol. But, with the likelihood of side effects or feeling sick in general, cancer and the treatments that come with it can change the way the body tolerates certain foods and uses nutrients.

Building strength during treatments becomes very important, since a better diet may help a patient tolerate effects of the cancer as well as the protocols. This may mean eating things that aren't normally recommended when you are in good health. For instance, a cancer patient might need high-protein, high-calorie foods to keep up their weight, while someone else may need thick, cool foods such as ice cream or milk shakes to help ease the pain of sores in the mouth. The type of cancer present and the various treatments, as well as any side effects experienced by the patient, should be contemplated when trying to figure out the best ways to get the nutrition the body needs.

Cancer or cancer treatments can affect a patient's sense of taste. Food may seem to lack flavor or seem too sweet, salty or metallic. Generally, these changes are short term and will improve over time. Doctors and nutritionists suggest patients who were following a particular diet before their diagnosis, such as low sodium, low fat or a diet for diabetes, may find it beneficial to relax those dietary restrictions for a while.

AFTER TREATMENT

After treatment, a patient's diet is just as important or more important moving forward. Eating well will help a patient regain strength and energy, rebuild tissue and feel better overall. Talking with a doctor or care team before making major changes in diet is very important. Working with a registered dietician who specializes in cancer can be beneficial as well.

There's no diet that can cure cancer and research does not show that any particular way of eating can lower the chance of recurrence. But for most people, sticking to healthy, nutritious foods and limiting sugar, caffeine, processed foods and alcohol will be the best bet moving forward.

Patients and their families can find many helpful resources on their own when it comes to eating to fight cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends the book "What to Eat During Cancer Treatment," by Jeanne Besser and Barbara Grant, which contains more than 130 recipes, practical tips and suggestions to help patients and their caregivers anticipate and overcome the major challenges of eating well with cancer. ◆

SOURCES: *cancer.org, mayoclinic.org and webmd.com.*



ST. BASIL GREEK FOOD FESTIVAL

The 67th annual St. Basil Greek Food Festival took place September 11 through September 13, 2026, at the church in Stockton. Attendees enjoyed the sights and sounds of Greek culture and the opportunity to taste all kinds of Greek cuisine made by parish volunteers who had spent weeks preparing for the event. ◆

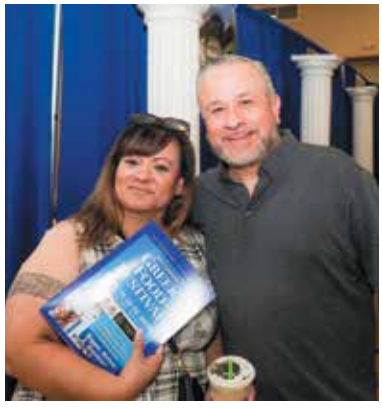
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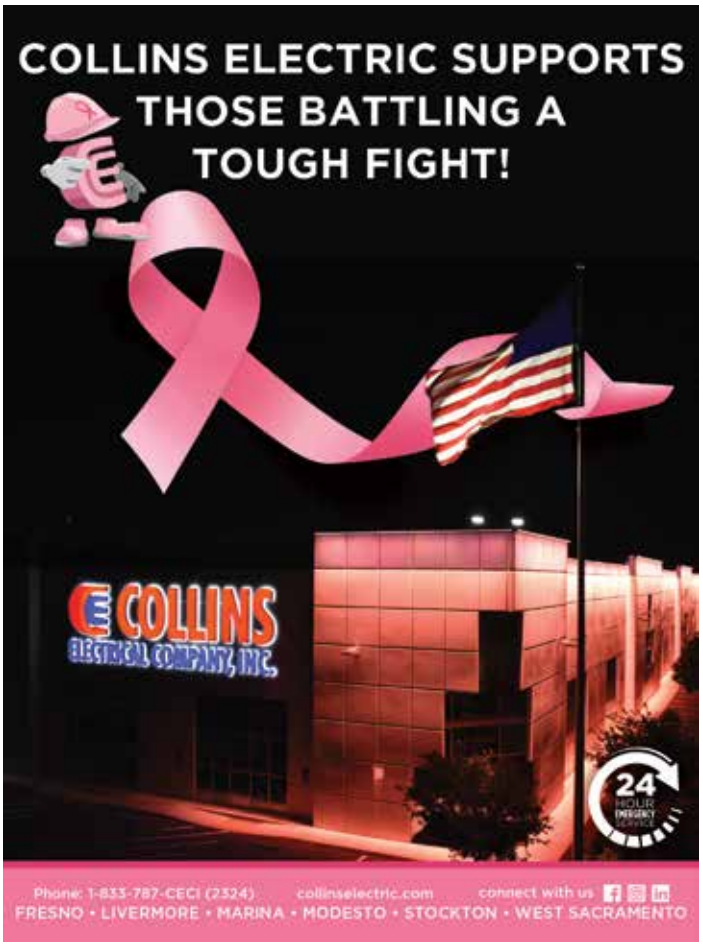


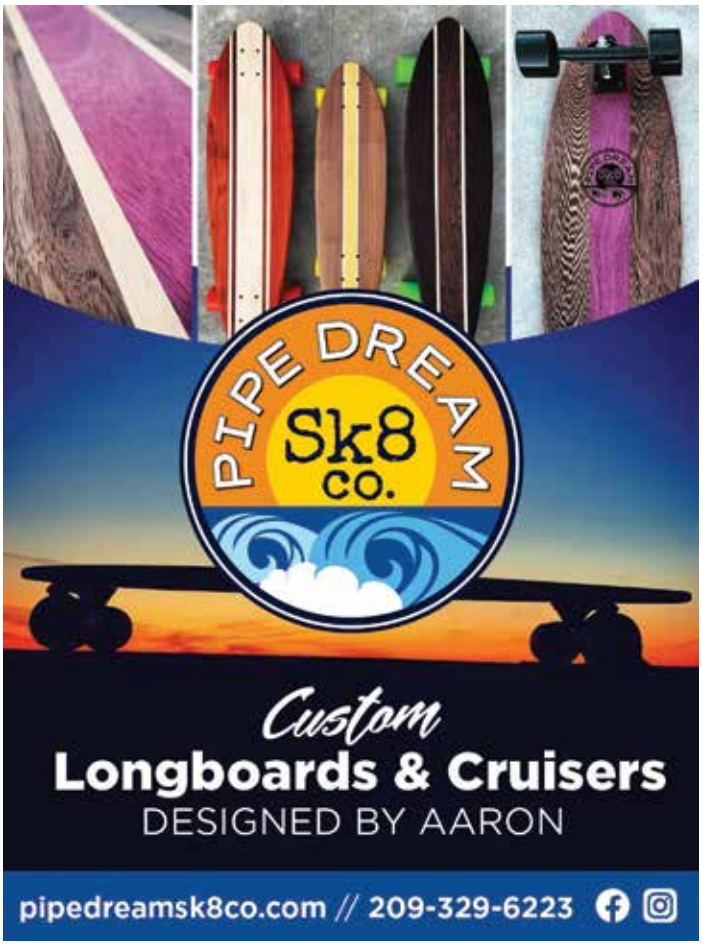












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EMERGENCY FOODBANK OF STOCKTON/SAN JOAQUIN

Run & Walk Against Hunger

11-26-2026

PRESENTED BY: AARON JUDGE ALL RISE FOUNDATION®

THANKSGIVING MORNING
NOV. 26, 2026

What? Kids Fun Run | 5K Run & Walk | 10K Run
Who? Families, walkers, runners, friends, co-workers
Where? Stockton Ballpark
Time? Kids Fun Run - 8am | 5K Run & Walk and 10K Run - 8:30am
Why? To support the Emergency Food Bank Nutrition Programs
Info? RunAgainstHunger.org



REGISTER NOW



EMERGENCY FOOD BANK
Nutrition • Education • Health



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ST. MARY'S
TENUI NEC DIMITTAM

DON'T JUST HEAR ABOUT SAINT MARY'S. EXPERIENCE IT.

Scan here to inquire today!

Applications for the 2027-2028 school year open October 12th!

Come meet us. Tour the campus. Talk with Admissions and Financial Aid. Spend a day as a Ram through a Shadow Day. Find out what makes Saint Mary's different—and why our students love calling it home.

A quality, college-preparatory Catholic education is an investment in your child's future, and we're committed to working with families to help make that education possible.

CONTACT OUR MARKETING, ADMISSIONS, AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR TODAY TO SET UP A CAMPUS TOUR, SHADOW-A-RAM DAY, OR ADMISSIONS APPOINTMENT!

IRELAND STEVENSON
ISTEVENSON@SAINTMARYSHIGHSCHOOL.ORG
(209) 957-3340 EXT.190

Come experience Saint Mary's. Find your place in the Ram Fam.



CELEBRATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

OCTOBER 3
Lodi Woodbridge Rose Show
Clements School Community Center
Info: Message @lodiwoodbridgerose on Instagram

OCTOBER 4
Lodi Street Faire
Downtown Lodi
Info: visitlodi.com

OCTOBER 3-4
Manteca Kiwanis Pumpkin Fair
Downtown Manteca
Info: mantecapumpkinfair.org

OCTOBER 8
24th Luke Award
Church of the Presentation
Info: pacificitalianalliance.com

OCTOBER 9
Orange and Black Ball
Janssen Lagorio Gymnasium
Info: (209) 946-2230

OCTOBER 9
Trunk O' Treat
Micke Grove Regional Park
Info: (209) 953-8800

OCTOBER 10
San Joaquin County Tractor Fest
San Joaquin County Historical Museum
Info: (209) 331-2055

OCTOBER 10
SJV Youth for Christ Auction
Hutchins Street Square
Info: (209) 466-0359

OCTOBER 17
Stockton Chorale: 75 Years Concert
Central United Methodist Church
Info: stocktonchorale.org

OCTOBER 18
Stockton Symphony Spooktacular
Atherton Auditorium
Info: stocktonsymphony.org

OCTOBER 17-18
Lodi Open Studio Tour
Various locations
Info: lodiopenstudios.com

OCTOBER 20
SUSD/Stockton PD Trunk or Treat
Cesar Chavez High School
Info: (209) 937-8796

OCTOBER 24
Dia De Los Muertos Street Fiesta
Mexican Heritage Center & Gallery, Stockton
Info: (209) 969-9306

OCTOBER 24
Trick or Treat on the Mile
Miracle Mile
Info: stocktonmiraclemile.com

OCTOBER 28
Pacific Trick or Treat
University of the Pacific
Info: pacific.edu/calendar

OCTOBER 31
Run for the Brains! 1K, 5K, 10K
Lincoln Center
Info: runsignup.com

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 1
Hospice of San Joaquin Lobster Boil
Stockton Ballroom
Info: hospicesj.org/lobster-boil

NOVEMBER 6
YMO Celebration
New American Legion Hall, Lodi
Info: ymo-yourkidneymykidneyourkidney.org

NOVEMBER 7
Lobstermania
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds
Info: loelcenter.org

NOVEMBER 14
The WOW Gala
WOW Science Museum
Info: WOWScienceMuseum.org

Dignity Health.
St. Joseph's Medical Center

A member of CommonSpirit

Comprehensive cancer care. Close to home.

With the right care, a cancer diagnosis can be met with strength, clarity and hope. Here in Stockton, the St. Joseph's Cancer Institute at St. Joseph's Medical Center offers a comprehensive, patient-centered approach, from diagnostics to advanced surgical services, medical and radiation oncology, lab, innovative therapeutics and more in a seamless program tailored to your needs. As the only accredited cancer center and NAPBC-accredited breast center in San Joaquin County, our clinical strength is backed by services that care for the whole person, with social work support, survivorship programs and nurse navigators to guide patients and families along the way. Learn more about us at **dignityhealth.org/stockton/cancercare**.

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Advantage D-SNP (HMO)

One plan. More benefits. Peace of mind.



Do you know someone with Medicare and Medi-Cal?

Health Plan of San Joaquin/Mountain Valley Health Plan Advantage D-SNP (HMO) brings Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits together in one easy-to-use plan — with one ID card and one dedicated care team to help coordinate their care.

Help someone you care about discover the benefits available to them:

- ☑ $145 over-the-counter quarterly allowance
- ☑ Extra vision and hearing coverage
- ☑ Dental coverage through Denti-Cal
- ☑ Flexible prescription program
- ☑ Mail-order prescription program
- ☑ Access to a large network of doctors, specialists, and pharmacies
- ☑ A dedicated care team to help coordinate your needs

Whether you're managing your own health or helping someone you love, having the right support can make all the difference.

Medicare and Medi-Cal

ALL IN ONE!

Know someone who may qualify?

Share this information with them and help them take the first step.

Learn more or enroll today

1-855-973-2273 (TTY: 711)
www.hpsj-mvhp.org

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Health Plan of San Joaquin/Mountain Valley Health Plan Advantage D-SNP is an HMO with a Medicare and a Medi-Cal contract. Enrollment in Health Plan of San Joaquin/Mountain Valley Health Plan Advantage D-SNP depends on contract renewal.

Health Plan of San Joaquin/Mountain Valley Health Plan Advantage D-SNP (HMO) Customer Service: Call 1-888-361-7526 (TTY: 711), 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week from October 1 through March 31, and Monday to Friday from April 1 through September 30. The call is free. Messages received on holidays or outside business hours will be returned within one business day. You can also visit www.hpsj-mvhp.org.