

# Healthy Giving

## Our Community Comes Together: El Camino Health COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund

**When the coronavirus reached Santa Clara County, concerned community members immediately began asking how they could support El Camino Health.**

On Tuesday, March 17, El Camino Health Foundation staff began working from home and on Wednesday, March 18, we received the first gift to the swiftly launched El Camino Health COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund. We heard from longtime donors and strangers, from organizations and individuals, from adults and children. Together our community donated more than \$2.6 million in monetary gifts and an estimated \$100,000 of in-kind donations – everything from personal protective equipment to meals for

front line staff. More than half of the donations came from individuals who contributed to us for the very first time. Many were accompanied by messages of encouragement and gratitude.

“Thank you for working tirelessly to protect us. Stay healthy,” one donor wrote. “Thank you for fighting the virus! Please accept the donation from a Chinese family. The virus break out first in China but it is the enemy to the human being,” penned another. “United we stand. Thanks to everyone working in the hospital, standing at the front line to help us fight the virus. Take care and stay safe,” echoed a third. “You are

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Over 12 weeks, the foundation received approximately \$100,000 worth of in-kind donations, including N95 face masks, plastic shields, and other personal protective equipment, as well as meals, snack foods, and gift cards.

## El Camino Health Clinical Trials and COVID-19

Under the leadership of infectious disease specialist Dr. Daniel Shin, El Camino Health was able to provide patients early compassionate use access to the



*Edward and Pamela Taft*

investigational drug Remdesivir. The FDA has since issued emergency use authorization for the antiviral drug to treat suspected or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in adults and children hospitalized with severe disease.

Dr. Shin and the physicians participating in the “Compassionate Use of Remdesivir for Patients with Severe COVID-19” clinical study published their promising initial findings in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on April 10. As a result of El Camino Health’s early work, the Taft Center for Clinical Research was selected

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#### Foundation Staff

##### PRESIDENT

Andrew T. Cope  
andrew\_cope@elcaminohealth.org  
650-940-7154

##### DIRECTOR OF FOUNDATION OPERATIONS

Heather Marzynski  
heather\_marzynski@elcaminohealth.org  
650-988-4188

##### SENIOR PHILANTHROPY OFFICER

Lindsay Ehrman  
lindsay\_ehrman@elcaminohealth.org  
650-988-7849

##### ANNUAL GIVING OFFICER

Katie Kehriotis  
katie\_kehriotis@elcaminohealth.org  
650-988-7665

##### MANAGER OF SPECIAL EVENTS

Kirsten Krimsley  
kirsten\_krimsley@elcaminohealth.org  
650-988-4189

##### MANAGER OF DONOR RELATIONS

Bettina Rosenberg  
bettina\_rosenberg@elcaminohealth.org  
650-988-7514

\* of blessed memory

650-940-7154

foundation@elcaminohealth.org  
elcaminohealth.org/foundation

## Message from the Foundation Chair

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended the world as we know it. We can be proud of El Camino Health's robust and leading response. Our Mountain View hospital was one of the first to have a known community transmission coronavirus case and played a key role convincing the Centers for Disease Control to allow hospitals and clinics to test people without a travel history. The leadership team prepared quickly and effectively, setting up a command center to manage supplies of personal protective equipment, information flow, staffing, and implementation of the latest recommendations. We are grateful to you, our generous community, for the monetary and in-kind donations that have helped our hospitals stay a step ahead throughout this crisis.

At the foundation, the work of supporting our community hospitals has continued, although from a safe distance. Staff has been working from home. The foundation board and other committees have been meeting on Zoom. Planning continues for fundraising in the new fiscal year, despite the lingering uncertainties. We welcomed Heather Marzynski, director of foundation operations, to the team and congratulated Katie Kehriotis (formerly Falconer) on her promotion from annual giving coordinator to annual giving officer.

When the current fiscal year closes on June 30, three dedicated foundation board members, Roger Borovoy, Linda Heider, and former chair Russ Satake,

will transition to the foundation's Honorary Board. We are grateful for their leadership and generosity over the past

nine years and welcome their continued involvement in their new roles.

Despite the pandemic, there is much to celebrate. In January, our Los Gatos and Mountain View hospitals were among 407 of 4,500 hospitals to earn the Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) 5-star overall hospital quality rating, the highest bestowed. In March, our Cancer Center received the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer outstanding achievement award. This year marks the 10th anniversary of ASPIRE, El Camino Health's pioneering adolescent mental health program. Chinese Health Initiative too is celebrating a decade of serving our community.

Because of COVID-19, the foundation was unable to update the donor board monuments in the Mountain View hospital lobby for fiscal year 2019. Instead, we are honoring our donors virtually on the foundation website, [elcaminohealth.org/foundation](https://elcaminohealth.org/foundation). As always, we remain grateful for your generosity and concern for the health of our community.

Stay healthy and safe,



John A. Conover, Chair  
El Camino Health Foundation  
Board of Directors



*We are grateful to you, our generous community, for the monetary and in-kind donations that have helped our hospitals stay a step ahead throughout this crisis.*

## The Joanne Byrne Complementary Cancer Treatment Fund

*When Joanne Byrne was going through treatment for stage IV metastatic breast cancer, complementary healing programs like massage, energy work, meditation, and guided imagery provided enormous emotional and physical relief. She felt grateful that, as a single woman of limited resources, she was able to partake of these alternative therapies thanks to strong support from her family, community members, and a grant from the U'ilani Fund.*

Joanne, who was born at El Camino Hospital in 1963 and was a lifelong resident of the Los Altos-Mountain View area, succumbed to the disease at age 47, two and a half years after she was diagnosed. She had spent her life giving back to her community as a volunteer and as an employee of both the City of Los Altos and Los Altos Community Foundation. As she was nearing the end of her life, she and her sister Mary Hernandez discussed how wonderful it would be if other single women facing cancer could get financial help to access alternative healing activities they might not otherwise be able to afford. "The holistic therapies Joanne found most helpful were not covered by insurance," Mary explains. "When you have other bills to pay you are less likely to try them because they just add to your financial burden when you aren't feeling well."



Mary Hernandez and Joanne Byrne

Last fall, a gift to El Camino Health Foundation from the Joanne Byrne donor advised fund at Los Altos Community Foundation established the Joanne Byrne Complementary Cancer Treatment Fund at El Camino Health's Cancer Center. The fund will be available to single women who are facing their cancer journeys alone and need help paying for complementary therapies such as nutrition counseling, psychosocial support, yoga, massage, and mindfulness classes – programs that are designed to relieve side effects and help them live their lives as normally as possible while undergoing cancer treatment.

"Joanne was a big believer in giving back," Mary says. "She would be very



Joanne Byrne

happy that another woman facing cancer is able to participate in some of the activities that provided such relief to her, and to be remembered in the process." Mary, who was Joanne's primary caregiver during those difficult two years, hopes the fund will also lessen the burden caregivers face locating resources to ease their loved ones' suffering.

"This gift exemplifies Joanne's spirit," Mary says. "I am hopeful that people in this community where Joanne grew up will feel her presence through something that wouldn't otherwise be here."

*"Joanne was a big believer in giving back," Mary Hernandez says. "She would be very happy that another woman facing cancer is able to participate in some of the activities that provided such relief to her, and to be remembered in the process."*

## CANCER CENTER EARNS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

In March, El Camino Health's Cancer Center was one of just 48 cancer care facilities in the United States to receive the 2019 Outstanding Achievement Award from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC). The award is granted biannually to accredited cancer programs that exceed nationally recognized standards for the delivery of quality cancer care. Just

seven percent of the programs surveyed from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 received this recognition. "These cancer programs currently represent the best of the best when it comes to cancer care," says Lawrence N. Shulman, MD, MACP, chair of the CoC.

*Cancer Center physicians Robert Sinha, MD, Shane Dormady, MD, Shyamali Singhal, MD.*





# OUR COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER *continued from page 1*

working in the front line to protect us and we will stay home to help. Be safe! Thank you,” added another.

Members of the foundation board of directors swung into action, donating their own gifts, soliciting matching donations, and making thank you calls. Foundation President Andrew Cope and a handful of staff members took turns manning the office a few hours each week to process mail, accept the material gifts, and coordinate their distribution to hospital departments.

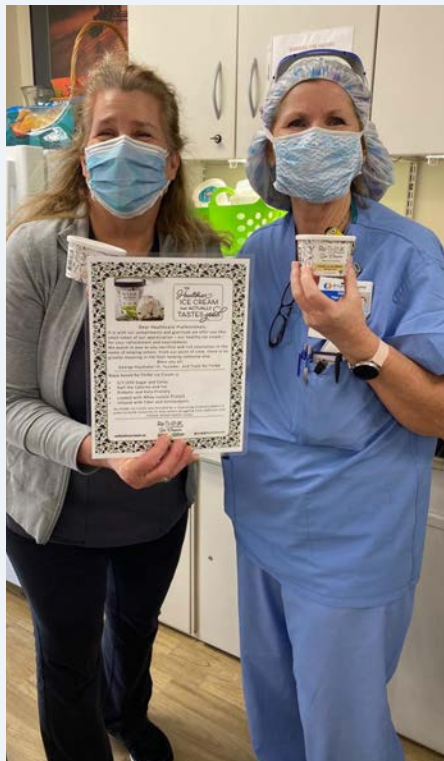
The foundation, in consultation with our hospitals' executive leadership team, is strategically allocating the funds received, prioritizing the areas of more urgent need. Thus far the monies have been used to cover the unanticipated and burdensome costs of:

- Staffing the COVID-19 command center to coordinate all aspects of the coronavirus response.
- Preparations, including erecting triage tents outside both emergency departments.
- Third party medical staffing.
- Purchase of personal protective equipment.
- Child care at the YMCA for the children of El Camino Health employees.
- Financial assistance for employees experiencing significant hardship due to the virus.
- Thank you gift of vests for all El Camino Health employees.

“Support from our community has made an enormous difference, helping us through the immediate crisis and as we prepare for the future,” says El Camino Health CEO Dan Woods. “Our staff has worked tirelessly. Every gift and every message of hope inspires us.”



*During Nurse Appreciation Week in May, the district's first responders lined up their vehicles and teams outside the front entrance of the Mountain View hospital and cheered for the nurses as they ended their shift.*



*ReThink Ice Cream of Napa donated 864 cups of ice cream that were distributed to nurses in Mountain View and Los Gatos.*

## *In-Kind Donations Included:*

- 482 gift cards
- 69,964 masks
- 26,404 face shields
- 3,730 hospital gowns/coveralls
- 1,334 hand sanitizers, Clorox wipes and disinfectants
- 450 shoe covers
- 119 safety goggles and eye protectors
- 26 boxes of gloves
- 3,624 ear savers
- 3,800 meals
- Various beverage drinks, vegetable instant noodle soups, desserts, Girls Scout cookies, etc.
- Apartment/housing assistance



## El Camino Health Clinical Trials and COVID-19

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as one of 133 worldwide sites to participate in further Remdesivir COVID-19 clinical trials. Dr. Shin is the principle investigator on two phase 3 randomized studies, one to test the efficacy of the drug in patients with severe COVID-19 and the other to test its efficacy in patients with moderate COVID-19 compared to standard of care treatment.

Dr. Shin and the physicians participating in the “Compassionate Use of Remdesivir for Patients with Severe COVID-19” clinical study published their promising initial findings in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on April 10.

The Taft Center for Clinical Research is also activating a COVID-19 study that is sponsored by the Mayo Clinic. It will provide access to investigational convalescent plasma for patients in acute care facilities who have severe or life-threatening COVID-19, or who are judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening disease. Dr. Shin is the principle investigator. This is an unfunded study and El Camino Health will need to bear all associated costs.

Donations to El Camino Health Foundation enable the Taft Center to participate in unfunded studies with great scientific merit, like the Mayo Clinic COVID-19 trial. In April, Pamela and Edward Taft made an additional gift to ensure El Camino Health has the resources to continue engaging in this important work, which gives patients early access to promising therapies like Remdesivir.



*Our front line staff received messages of gratitude and encouragement from young and old.*



*Chef Chu's donated more than 1,000 meals for El Camino Health staff.*



Foundation leadership volunteers Russ Satake (pictured), Romina Ahuja, Phyllis Dorricott, Julia Miller, and Donna Shoemaker called donors to thank them for donating to the El Camino Health COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund.



*Colton and Hayden Sweatt attached handmade cards to the 30 meals they donated for El Camino Health's Los Gatos hospital staff.*

*“Our staff has worked tirelessly. Every gift and every message of hope inspires us.” - El Camino Health CEO Dan Woods*

# CHINESE HEALTH INITIATIVE MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Ten years ago, El Camino Health established the Chinese Health Initiative (CHI) in order to better meet the distinct healthcare needs of local Chinese residents. To date it has served more than 7,800 community members.

Within our hospitals, CHI serves as a catalyst to ensure a culturally comfortable patient stay. It helps departments arrange translation services, provides Chinese-language newspapers and visits by Chinese volunteers, and ensures comfort food choices are included on the menu. Out in the community, the Chinese Health Initiative collaborates with other organizations to provide education and screenings for diseases like hypertension and diabetes that disproportionately affect Chinese residents. It encourages wellness through a program of Qigong classes and lectures that integrate eastern and western approaches to health and prevention. It also organized a Chinese-speaking physician network and compiled a bilingual “Health Resource Guide for Chinese Seniors in Santa Clara County” to improve access to the healthcare system. Most recently, it launched an intensive, culturally tailored Diabetes Prevention Program. During COVID-19, Chinese Health Initiative has been an invaluable source of accurate information.

Tenny Tsai, who serves on both the Chinese Health Initiative Advisory Board and Chinese Health Initiative Philanthropy Council, joined the



*Annual health fair.*



*Chinese Health Initiative volunteers (2019 health fair).*

Diabetes Prevention Program. “In just a short time I can see the difference it is making in terms of my weight and overall wellbeing. I was participating as a leader and now I am a beneficiary as well,” she says. Tenny also appreciates the Chinese-speaking physician network. “Having the support of doctors who speak Chinese and understand your culture boosts confidence in the care you are receiving and helps to support your recovery. It is just wonderful.”

While much of the Chinese Health Initiative’s budget comes from El Camino Hospital and El Camino Healthcare District community benefit funds, donations to El Camino Health Foundation have provided critical support at every step of the way. Philanthropy seeded the hypertension and diabetes awareness programs, the new Diabetes Prevention Program, Mandarin-language educational workshops about the lifestyle changes that can improve health, and the development of Chinese-language resource materials.

What’s next? Raising mental health literacy and easing access to mental health care. Studies show that Asian Americans are three times less likely than their Caucasian counterparts to

*“Having the support of doctors who speak Chinese and understand your culture boosts confidence in the care you are receiving and helps to support your recovery. It is just wonderful.”*

*- Tenny Tsai*

seek treatment for a mental health concern and their symptoms are more severe when they do. The Chinese Health Initiative, in collaboration with the Scrivner Center for Mental Health & Addiction Services, is developing a five-year plan to address the serious gap between the community’s need for mental health care and its access to culturally appropriate treatment.

“We are grateful to the community for their generous support of Chinese Health Initiative. Over the past 10 years, they helped us sustain our mission to improve the health and wellbeing of so many members of our community. Together we’re making a difference,” says Chinese Health Initiative Manager Jean Yu. “It is the best investment you can make for your own health and that of your family and community,” adds Tenny. You can make a donation in honor of CHI’s 10th anniversary online at [elcaminohealth.org/giveCHI](https://elcaminohealth.org/giveCHI).



## Our Chinese Community Rallies for El Camino Health

Local Chinese organizations and residents have contributed overwhelmingly to the El Camino Health COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund, with both monetary gifts and in-kind donations. "Let us fight against COVID-19 together as a community. As an American Chinese, I will continue supporting El Camino Hospital and other medical providers," one donor told us.



HUST Silicon Valley Foundation, which was established by alumni of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, partnered with Wuhan University Overseas Alumni Science Foundation to make a significant financial gift. Chef Chu's restaurant in Los Altos has provided more than 1,000 meals for hospital staff. Many organizations, including Enlight Foundation and Home of Christ Church in Cupertino contributed N95 masks and other personal protective equipment. Other local Chinese churches stepped up too. Chinese Health Initiative helped to coordinate additional donations of personal protective equipment from Tianmu Foundation, Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association, and Silicon Valley Chinese American Computer Association.

"As a Chinese living in the U.S. I want to support our community," another donor wrote. "Let's beat the virus together and get success soon!"

## Hope to Health 2020 Grant Supports NICU

*Hope to Health (H2H) members met virtually on April 27 to hear from representatives of El Camino Health's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), their 2020 grant recipient. Dr. Stephanie Miller, neonatologist and co-lead of the Family Centered Care Committee, and Jody Charles, RN, clinical manager of the NICU and maternal child education, talked about the anticipated impact of the two programs H2H is funding this year, Reach Out And Read (ROAR) and nurse education and research to reduce chronic lung disease.*



*Hope to Health members met through Zoom on April 27.*

Newborns in the NICU, especially premature babies, are at risk for delayed neurological development. Parent contact, including holding and vocal interaction, is proven to improve long-term outcomes for the infants while also reducing parental depression and anxiety. Through the ROAR reading program, each newborn's family will receive a book bag with the ROAR/El Camino Health logo, a children's book in either English or Spanish, and a hands-free breast pumping strap to assist the mother with pumping while holding and reading to her baby. Dr. Miller announced that the first book to be distributed will be newly released *The Magical Yet*.

Reducing lung disease in very low birth weight infants will be another top priority for neonatal intensive care unit staff over the next five years. Hope to Health's second grant will provide funding for NICU nurses to attend local and national conferences and workshops, where they will be introduced to the latest evidence-based practice, which they can then share with colleagues. As our NICU nurses implement changes and see improvement, they will submit their own abstracts to journals and conferences so

they can share the effective approaches they develop with other organizations. In addition to improving care for these at-risk newborns, the grant will help El Camino Health meet its goal of maintaining Magnet designation for nursing excellence.

Following the formal presentation, the members enjoyed catching up with each other as they shared some quarantine humor, and exchanged tips on grocery delivery services and other strategies for managing during shelter in place. They all agreed the Zoom get-together was a great way to lift spirits. "Today's meeting was informative, filled with positivity for using the grant funds," Los Altos Hills resident Barbara Bogomilsky commented.

Hope to Health is a philanthropic council of individuals who pool their donations annually and choose which El Camino Health program focused on women and families that they wish to philanthropically support. The more members, the greater their impact and new members are always welcome. Contact Kirsten Krimsley, manager of special events, at [kirsten.krimsley@elcaminohealth.org](mailto:kirsten.krimsley@elcaminohealth.org) or 650-988-4189 if you would like to learn more.

# Fulfilling the Promise: Patients Move Into the Taube Pavilion on June 10



After months of anticipation, the Taube Pavilion has opened for patient care. “The patient move-in went very smoothly,” reports Michael Fitzgerald, APRN, executive director of the Scrivner Center for Mental Health & Addiction Services. “Staff are all smiles behind the masks and full of thank yous for the beautiful space created for them to do their amazing work.”

The clinical team has continued to deliver critically needed care while making adjustments to ensure patient safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Inpatient admissions to the old behavioral health unit were limited to one patient per room until testing became available for coronavirus. Patients are participating in group therapy while keeping a safe distance apart. Participation in most outpatient programs declined, with the exception of ASPIRE, which remains as busy as ever.

*It is widely believed that there is pent-up demand for mental health services since people began sheltering in place. Michael Fitzgerald, APRN, executive director of the Scrivner Center for Mental Health & Addiction Services, is grateful for the additional rooms that the new building offers. “The addition of 15 more beds to a total of 36 will allow us to serve the needs of our community without having to transfer people due to lack of space.”*

Some services, like parent support and education groups and after-care groups are being conducted remotely. Scrivner Center staff has also been busy on other units of our Mountain View and Los Gatos hospitals, counseling COVID-19 families and helping those dealing with grief at this particularly difficult time.

It is widely believed that there is pent-up demand for mental health services since people began sheltering in place. The stress of isolating at home, coupled with an economic crisis of suddenly high unemployment and future uncertainty has caused levels of anxiety to rise. Michael Fitzgerald is grateful for the additional rooms that the new building offers. “We have typically operated at full capacity in the old building,” he notes, “and that was before this crisis. The addition of 15 more beds to a total of 36 will allow us to serve the needs of our community without having to transfer people due to lack of space.” The building’s additional capabilities and flexible configuration will also allow the staff to safely treat any psychiatric patients diagnosed with COVID-19.

Together, we have realized our dream of building a pavilion that honors patients, staff, and community. We can look forward to the milestones yet ahead, including the razing of the old behavioral health unit and completion of the James and Akiko Satake Family Garden. Together, we continue to fulfill the promise of better mental health and addiction care for our community.

## A Day of New Beginnings

June 10 was a day of new beginnings for Scrivner Center patients and staff, and they marked the transition from the old inpatient unit (1 South) to the Taube Pavilion with meaningful art projects. In the morning, the clinical team and their patients created a collective mural using free form materials to represent all the things they were ready to leave behind, with either a fond farewell or a firm shutting of the door. “This was the foundation for freeing us up to visualize our desired new beginnings,” shares occupational therapist Cathy Adams.

In the afternoon at 1 South, each patient received half a cut out paper star and choice of quotes to write on it. Quotes like “Each Day is a New Beginning: Take a Deep Breath and Begin Again” would serve as the spark for motivation to make the change. The patients decorated their half stars with watercolor. When they arrived at the Taube Pavilion, they found and decorated the other half of their stars, bridging their work from the old to the new, then placed the completed stars on a collaborative night sky mural. The occupational therapists next asked the patients to choose internal qualities or goals, such as mindful awareness, self-compassion, curiosity, commitment to personal wellbeing, that would shape and guide them in the process of moving forward. The patients wrote these commitments in metallic ink on the black background of the mural. Finally, with a scattering of twinkly sparkles they finished a personalized El Camino night sky for their first night in their new home.



*Patients created a meaningful mural to mark the move from the old behavioral health unit to the Taube Pavilion.*



# HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY ASPIRE!

After-School Program Interventions and Resiliency Education® (ASPIRE), El Camino Health's multi-week, intensive, outpatient adolescent mental health program, is marking its 10th anniversary this year. It has been a decade of pioneering achievement supported at every turn by generous philanthropy.

- 2010 – ASPIRE launched in Mountain View for high school students experiencing significant depression or anxiety and at risk of harming themselves. The program teaches specific skills to help youth more effectively manage the inevitable crises they will face in life.
- 2012 – ASPIRE opened in Los Gatos.
- 2015 – The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited the ASPIRE curriculum, enabling high school students to receive class credit upon completion.
- 2016 – ASPIRE programs for middle school students and transition age youth (18-25) opened. ASPIRE Prep launched to provide additional support for youth age 13-18 before they enter the formal program.
- 2018 – El Camino Health formed an ASPIRE consortium with three hospitals in southern California. Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in Oregon joined the following year.
- 2018 – The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved a first-of-its-kind-in-the-state contract with El Camino Health that defrays the cost of ASPIRE for the county's Medi-Cal patients.
- 2018-2019 – El Camino Health therapists presented the suicide prevention program "A Healthy Mind" to all 10,000 students in the Fremont Union High School District. That partnership continues with ongoing training for school staff.
- 2019 – El Camino Health opens an ASPIRE resource center.

Generous philanthropic support provided the seed money for ASPIRE's launch and has helped bridge the gap between the cost of care and insurance payment; cover the cost of unreimbursed services like free screenings, follow-up care, and programs for parents; increase the number and timeliness of free screenings and referrals; open additional tracks to accommodate growing demand; develop programs tailored for specific populations; support community outreach; and fund two endowments that secure ASPIRE's future.

We can be proud that we came together as a community to support the development of this exceptional program. [Please make a donation in honor of ASPIRE's 10th anniversary.](#) Help us continue to fulfill the promise for our community's youth and young adults in the years to come.

## ASPIRE TAY: LEARNING TO LEAD A PURPOSEFUL LIFE

Michaela had always felt things in extremes and started exhibiting symptoms of distress when she was a teenager. As she was completing her final semester at Santa Clara University, the stresses associated with graduating, looking for a job, and entering the full world of adulthood became overwhelming, and she had her first manic episode. On the advice of her therapist, she admitted herself to El Camino Health's Mountain View hospital. She stayed on the inpatient unit for two days and participated in the Adult Mood Program for a short time before transitioning to ASPIRE TAY, El Camino Health's intensive outpatient therapy program for young adults age 18-25. "It was a pivotal point for me," she recalls.

She found ASPIRE TAY to be purposeful and educational. "Every day I was exposed to things I could take with me.

I gained a new level of self-awareness and learned about medication management and how to regulate my emotions," she says. Michaela's parents joined her for group therapy one night each week with other patients and their parents, a component of the program she feels was invaluable. Throughout she felt very supported.

Today, Michaela is a busy graduate student, studying for her master's degree in occupational therapy at the University of Southern California. Her choice of profession was inspired by the occupational therapists who worked with her while she was in ASPIRE TAY. Only two percent of occupational therapists choose to specialize in mental health. Michaela will be one of them and she hopes to persuade others to do so too. When she starts her clinical practice she is determined to involve the families of her patients, just as she experienced at



*Michaela and her psychiatric alert dog Niko.*

El Camino Health.

"I learned to thrive in spite of a scary diagnosis, type 1 bipolar disorder. Now I appreciate my full range of emotions instead of hating them so much," Michaela concludes. "The ASPIRE TAY foundation is helping me live a full, purposeful life. I am truly grateful."

# NORMA'S LITERARY LUNCHEON RAISES \$159,000 FOR EL CAMINO HEALTH'S NEW CARDIO-ONCOLOGY CENTER

Writer Lisa See transported a riveted roomful of 200 women from Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club to the world and culture of Asia, particularly that of Chinese women, during Norma's Literary Luncheon on February 6, 2020. "For centuries, the only stories being told were told by men. We have barely touched the tip of the iceberg when it comes to stories about women. I am trying to tell stories that have been lost," she said.

See, whose great-great-grandfather migrated from China to California during the Gold Rush, spoke about the insights, research, and tales that inspired her to write novels with themes focused on women's bodies and relationships. From a story about rural women with painfully bound feet who developed their own secret written language and maintained lifelong "sworn sister" friendships to that of the strong, resilient free diving women of Jeju Island, her novels describe the universal experiences of love and pain that women share through the powerful bonds of motherhood and friendship.

The luncheon, a memorial tribute to El Camino Health benefactor Norma Melchor, raised more than \$159,000 for a new Cardio-Oncology Center, where patients at risk for cancer treatment-related heart and vascular



disease will be monitored. More than 50 percent of such patients are breast cancer survivors. The clinical staff will monitor them, treat them appropriately if symptoms worsen, and work with the oncology team to determine the best chemotherapy options for cancer patients with preexisting heart conditions. "This is a new field," Dr. Jane Lombard, medical director of El Camino Health's Women's Heart and Wellness Center, explained. "We will be the only community-based cardio-oncology clinic in the Bay Area, with only two others in the West, housed in Mayo, Scottsdale and Cedars Sinai. The majority of cardio-oncology clinics are in academic

centers in the east."

The Melchor family generously sponsored the luncheon and three generations attended. Event Chair Judie Wolken thanked them for carrying forward "Norma and Jack Melchor's legacy of commitment to our community hospital" and "for enabling this roomful of diverse women to connect through literature year after year." She and committee members Betsy Dawes and Mary Scrivner are already planning next year's fundraiser. Save the date, Thursday, February 4, 2021, when Cathy Guisewite, creator of the iconic Cathy comic strip, will be the featured speaker.



Above: Lisa See

Left: Kay Melchor, Lindsey, Olivia and Lucy Melchor, Alice Melchor, Judie Woken, Betsy Dawes, Lisa See, and Mary Scrivner



# A Legacy of Commitment

*“As a person with a broad range of interests but who made her career in the health sciences, my mom enjoyed her more than two decades of volunteer work in the El Camino Hospital Auxiliary,” Evelyn Richards wrote in the note she enclosed with her mother Erika Nord Richards’ bequest to El Camino Health Foundation. “Thank you for helping to direct the gift to the Health Library & Resource Center.”*

Erika Nord Richards was born in Berlin during World War I and grew up in Hamburg, where she enjoyed piano lessons and music, sailing and playing several sports. By her late teens, conditions in Germany were getting difficult. Her parents sent her briefly to Stockholm, where she studied exercise and massage, and then alone by ocean liner to the United States. She was 20 years old, knew little English, and had just \$10 in her pocket.

She soon made her way from New York to Chicago, where a Hamburg acquaintance, a young doctor, arranged a position in a hospital physical therapy department. That young man, Richard, eventually became Erika’s husband. In the years before they married, Erika received a certificate in physical therapy, earned her citizenship, and joined the U.S. Army, intent on giving back to the country that had accepted her family. In 1949, she and Richard settled in Waukegan, IL and a few years later had a daughter, Evelyn. They relocated to Los Altos in 1966, attracted by research and teaching opportunities for Richard at Syntex and Stanford Medical School. Erika continued working as a physical therapist and became very involved in her new community, particularly with the League of Women Voters.

After Richard died in 1983, she maintained a very active life until her



*Erika Richards had a 20-year association with the El Camino Hospital Auxiliary, volunteering in the medical and patient libraries in Mountain View.*

death a year ago at almost 103. Always expanding her diverse interests, she took classes in fields ranging from photography to Morse Code, and earned a certificate in Travel Careers. She traveled throughout the United States and to all continents but Antarctica, attended concerts and plays, swam and exercised regularly, gardened, participated in Great Decisions foreign policy groups and played bridge, which became a passion. She also began a 20-year association with the El Camino Hospital Auxiliary, volunteering in the medical and patient libraries in Mountain View.

“I know she very much appreciated the friendships she made there and hoped that her assistance was useful to patients,” Evelyn explained. “Likewise, I trust that her bequest can contribute in a meaningful way to continuing her dedication to providing useful information to patients, families, and medical professionals.”



*Evelyn and Erika Richards*

El Camino Health and the foundation are grateful to Erika Nord Richards for her generous bequest, which will continue her legacy of commitment to the health, education, and welfare of her community.

If you too would like to endow the future of El Camino Health by making a legacy gift that keeps on giving for years to come through your estate plan, [please contact Senior Philanthropy Officer Lindsay Ehrman.](#)

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- Evelyn Richards