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Newsletter of
Children's Hospital Branches, Inc.
Fall/Winter 2023

Published quarterly by CHB, Inc.
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As I write this letter, we have just witnessed the beginning of another horrific war. My thoughts and prayers continue to be with the Ukrainian people and now with all those impacted by the situation in Israel.

As we gear up for the holiday season, we reflect on all we have achieved since our last publication. The summer began with Branch members assembling bags of donated food for the Food Farmacy

to distribute to needy families visiting the Outpatient Center. We were able to witness firsthand the appreciation of these families. We are hoping to coordinate more opportunities to volunteer in the future.

At our All Branch Annual Meeting at CHORI in September, we were treated by the hospital's foundation to a lovely lunch and, more importantly, we were introduced to the dynamic Dr. Noemi Spinazzi, founder and Medical Director of Charlie's Clinic. Charlie's Clinic was named after our

Lilac Branch also raised money in a most delicious way with an online sale of See's Candy. Cacao Branch did the same with the sale of countless flavors of popcorn. We hope that everyone had an opportunity to purchase these treats for family and friends.

Though we bid farewell to our longest standing event, The Winter Ball, we look forward to the second annual Valentine's Dance hosted by Hill Branch. This event will take place once again at the University Club in the California Memorial Stadium at UC Berkeley on February 10th, 2024. Rowan Branch will again produce their 23rd Annual Shopping Spree and Luncheon at Round Hill Country Club on April 22nd, 2024. Mark your calendars now for these upcoming events!

And not to "toot our own horn", but UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland was recently ranked ninth in the nation in newborn specialty care. In the fields of cancer, diabetes, endocrinology, gastroenterology, GI surgery, kidney care, and neurology, just to mention a few, they continue to be ranked among the top 20 in the nation. Our dedicated doctors are the reason we

"I Wish You All a Blessed Holiday Season!"

dear friend and past hospital president Dr. Bertram Lubin's son who has Down Syndrome. Dr. Spinazzi spoke to us about her gratitude for the donation from the Branches and educated us on the importance of her work. Her energy and passion were contagious and reignited our passion for what we do for "our" children.

The Bambino Shop continues to thrive, supporting the hospital with the neverending dedication of so many women receiving, sorting, and pricing the amazing donations. They kicked off their holiday shopping season with a celebration on Saturday, November 4th. On that same evening, Lilac Branch introduced a new event—Casino Royale, a casino style gaming night. A good time was had by all at the Benicia Clocktower, enjoying a delicious buffet, playing casino games and dancing the night away. Lombardy Branch hosted a shopping event at the Lazy K in Lafayette on November 13th. Everyone enjoyed shopping knowing the good they were doing to help our beloved Hospital. And Rowan Branch hosted another opportunity to buy holiday gifts with a "Sip and Shop" event on December 3rd at the Alamo Women's Club. Attendees were treated to holiday shopping, champagne and nibbles.

continue to be recognized as a top pediatric and trauma center. We applaud the commitment and devotion of our doctors.

I wish you all a most blessed holiday season!

2023 Board of Directors

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eileen Caponio..... | Rowan, President |
| Gretchen Gibson..... | Hill, V.P. |
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| Marianne Malenk..... | Chinquapin, Bud Branch |
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| Lucy Talbot..... | Hill |
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| Linda Webber..... | Lilac |
| Julie Davidson..... | Lombardy |
| Clare McDonald..... | Lombardy |

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Cece Werson..... | Hawthorne Emeritus, Advisory |
| Kerry Plain..... | Garden Emeritus, Non-voting |

General Meeting

After some unexpected morning rain, the sun came out for a beautiful outdoor luncheon in the courtyard outside the CHORI library after the All Branch General Meeting on Tuesday, September 26th.

Branches Board President Eileen Caponio led the group through the meeting program. She started with a review of Branch activities since our last meeting in the spring, inviting members from the Lombardy, Cacao, Rowan and Hill Branches as well as the Bambino up to share updates on their past events as well as any upcoming events they have planned. Beverly Ingram, our liaison at the foundation, provided a general update from the hospital, sharing information about the New Pediatric Mental Health Building as well as adorable photos of the new therapy dog Arnie. She then introduced Dr. Noemi Spinazzi, founder and medical director of Charlie's Clinic, serving patients with Down's Syndrome and their

families. Charlie's Clinic was named for the son of Branches friend and former hospital president Dr. Bert Lubin, who was Dr. Spinazzi's mentor. Dr. Spinazzi educated the group about the unique level of support provided to patients and their families at Charlie's Clinic, where an appointment involves meetings with all of the specialists relevant to a patient's care. She expressed gratitude for the funds donated by the Branches that enabled the purchase of equipment and supplies that dramatically improve the quality of patient's lives.

While this equipment is not expensive, it is often out of reach for patient families. Dr. Spinazzi was an extremely dynamic and engaging speaker, leaving all attendees inspired to continue the important work of supporting the hospital.

After the meeting's conclusion, the foundation provided a delicious lunch in a lovely setting. We are grateful for their generosity.

*We ♥ our
Volunteers*





Betty Jo Olson

Oct 28, 1927 - Sept 21, 2023

that her positive personality and her sense of humor would get her through life.

Betty Jo always had dreams of going to college. In post-war America, when women's career choices were limited to becoming a nurse, a secretary, or a teacher, Betty Jo chose the natural profession for her, a kindergarten teacher. In the 1950s, she moved to San Francisco, where she was a kindergarten teacher in South San Francisco. It was in San Francisco that she met her future husband, artist Bjorn Olson. Their first date was seeing Billie Holiday and Nat King Cole, performing at the Plush Room and Venetian Room, respectively.

After teaching, Betty Jo used her height to her advantage and became a model—showing off fashions from all the major San Francisco and Oakland department stores. With all her modeling and her fundraising events, Betty Jo's photos appeared regularly in The Oakland Tribune Society pages. In 1968, an East Bay paper did a full story on Betty Jo entitled "The Fairest of Them All".

In the early 1970s, Betty Jo's volunteerism stretched to Goodwill Industries' GIVS—Goodwill Industries Volunteer Services. She became president of "The Goodwill Bags"—a group of dedicated women who modeled fashions from the 1890s to the 1940s for civic, social, and religious groups to raise funds for Goodwill rehabilitation programs. Betty Jo worked with Goodwill throughout the 1990's and 2000's.

Betty Jo lived in her beloved home in Berkeley, California, until her passing on September 21, 2023. She was 95. In her later years, Betty Jo expressed endless positivity and gratitude about her life well lived. She was a loving aunt to three nephews and six nieces. Betty Jo was preceded in death by her husband Bjorn Olson, who died in 2007, and her son Christopher Olson, who died in 2021. She is survived by her daughter Elizabeth, and her grandchildren, Sean Olson and Emily Leonard.

"Every child deserves access to healthcare". Those were words that Betty Jo Olson spoke repeatedly in the many speeches she gave in support of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Oakland.

Since the 1960s, Betty Jo has been involved in fundraising and volunteering with the Branches. Betty Jo's home branch was Acacia, where she put in countless hours organizing fashion shows, auctions, and other large events, all in support of the hospital. From 1998 to 2015, Betty Jo was president of the Branches' board of directors. She called this period a "beautiful trip-of-a-lifetime".

Betty Jo's love of children can be traced back to her upbringing in Marshall, Minnesota. Born October 28, 1927, the second in a family of five girls, Betty Jo grew up in an idyllic neighborhood full of children. In the 1930's, winters were brimming with sledding and snowmen. Spring-time was spent playing hopscotch with her sisters and neighborhood pals. Saturdays were cleaning days in her home, and she often got her little sisters to help dust by making cleaning a game. In high school, Betty Jo grew to 5'10" and was taller than "the center on the basketball team". She often told her family that because she was so tall, she could never get a date. Betty Jo learned early on

Bambino Holiday Opening



Bambino was closed to shoppers from Tuesday October 31 through Saturday November 4 in order to transform the shop for the Holidays, skillfully managed by Carol Maes. True to tradition, there was a private party for about 30 volunteers and Branch members on Saturday November 4 to kick off the holiday season.

After too many years to count, Carol Maes is retiring from managing the Holiday season. As a small token of their gratitude, the Bambino staff and volunteers presented her with a "Nice List" certificate during the party.

On Sunday November 5, the shop reopened with a line of people waiting to come in and shop, and the weekend was a big success grossing about \$4,100. Even more impressive is their \$143,455 donation to the hospital this year! Way to go, Bambino Shop!

During the holiday season, the shop's "Winter Wonderland" is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 11-3 and Saturday and Sunday from 12-4. (Note: see next page for details on donation drop-off times). The last open day for 2023 is Saturday December 23.



Earlier this year, Bambino volunteers gathered in the shop to celebrate their combined efforts to contribute \$143,455 to the Branches in 2022.

BAMBINO SHOP

OPEN

HOURS

TUE, THU, FRI

11 AM – 3 PM

SAT & SUN*

12 – 4 PM

*Holiday hours: Sundays open only through November and December

HELP THE BABIES & CHILDREN!

DONATE TO BAMBINO

We accept donations
Wednesdays & Thursdays 11am-1pm
Saturdays 10am-12pm

Please **call the shop** ahead of time
 if you want to **donate furniture**
 510-658-7473

Five-bag maximum for
 each donation drop-off

Large or small, donations are always
 welcome, provided the items are
**clean, undamaged and ready to be
 priced** for the sales floor.



Lilac Branch gathered together with friends, family, community members and members from other Branches, including Rowan, Chinquapin and Lombardy, for a very exciting casino night. The event was held in the historic Benicia Clocktower. About 100 guests enjoyed a scrumptious BBQ meal, silent auction items, a DJ and plenty of different types of gambling tables. The grand prize winner for the casino received a \$200 gift certificate for Don Giovanni's restaurant in Napa.

All told, Lilac was able to raise close to \$16,000 during this fun evening, \$1,400 for Charlie's Clinic specifically. Congratulations, Lilac ladies!





CACOA BRANCH + DOUBLE GOOD

Gourmet Popcorn

FUNDRAISER

NOVEMBER 30TH - DECEMBER 3RD

With every purchase of popcorn sold, 50% of profits will benefit Children's Hospital Branches, benefiting UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. The children are grateful for your support!

Order at

www.popup.doublegood.com/s/438bjo2x

• HILL BRANCH PRESENTS •

SAVE THE DATE

HAVE A ♥ HEART

FOR THE HOSPITAL

AN EVENING BENEFITTING
UCSF BENIOFF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OAKLAND


DATE
02/10/2024

TIME
5:30PM
for the sunset

HEARTY HORS D'OEUVRES • SILENT AUCTION
LIVE BAND & DANCING

UNIVERSITY CLUB LEVEL | UC MEMORIAL STADIUM | BERKELEY, CA

EMAIL: HILLBRANCH@HILLBRANCH.COM WEB: HILLBRANCH.ORG

 CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL BRANCHES

 UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

Lombardy Shopping Event at Lazy K Hello Holidays!

On a sunny fall afternoon, the Lombardy ladies gathered at Lazy K once again for a special holiday shopping event.

The following local vendors also set up their best gift items and generously donated a portion of their proceeds:

- Blu Bird Village
- Susie's Baked Goods
- Sharon Cohune Fine Art
- Lauren French Beautycounter

Lombardy had created some gorgeous gift baskets full of amazing items, which enticed many guests to participate. The raffle alone raised close to \$2,000 for the hospital! Thank you to Lazy K, the generous vendors and community members who contributed to making the day a success!



Food Farmacy

Many families that come to UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland for care rely on inexpensive, processed foods because healthy foods are unavailable or inaccessible in their communities. With a focus on prevention, physicians and other health care providers at our hospital have made the connection between food insecurity and children's health and well-being for many years.

Partnering with the Alameda County Community Food Bank and Phat Beet Farms, the hospital hosts two Food Farmacies a month for patients and their families. Participants are offered whole grains, fruits, vegetables, eggs

and protein – all free of charge. Additionally, staff are available to enroll families in Cal-Fresh, provide health education information, and offer discounted Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food box enrollment and cooking demonstrations.

On July 13, Branches members came together with moms and daughters from the National Charity League to volunteer at the Food Farmacy, preparing bags of donated food for distribution to families visiting the Outpatient Center. It was very gratifying to see the appreciation of these families first hand.



Patients and families who've been referred to the Food Farmacy program can pick up bags of food on the following days:

On the second Thursday of each month, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., next to the main hospital entrance at 747 52nd Street in Oakland.

On the second and fourth Thursday of each month, 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., in front of our primary care clinics at 5220 Claremont Avenue in Oakland.

Branches members who have food items to donate (e.g., lemons from your tree) can bring them to the relevant location at the days/times listed above. If you are interested in volunteering for preparation and distribution of food bags, please reach out to Branches Office Manager, Sara Davison DeVries at sara@childrenshospitalbranches.org.

Ronald McDonald House

With the opening statement “No one does community like Oakland!”, Laura Boudreau, CEO Ronald McDonald House Charities Bay Area, welcomed guests on May 20th to the grand opening Block Party of the new Ronald McDonald House directly adjacent to the hospital. Food Trucks and fun activities encompassed the entire block in front of the new house and kids and adults alike celebrated this long-awaited milestone.

Ronald McDonald House Charities have been actively providing services on the Children’s campus for several years and Laura shared that RMHC delivered 6,000 meals to hospital families in 2022.

Dan DeKalb, Oakland City Council Member representing the hospital area thanked RMHC for helping meet the needs of the community and emphasized their reputation for being great neighbors.

The neighborhood association was deeply appreciative of RMHC renovating the house to its current beautiful state.

Oakland Mayor, Sheng Thao, expressed how happy she was that the Ronald McDonald House Charities provides so much support for food, rest and other services. She explained that the new house provides highly specialized housing for the most vulnerable children recovering from stem cell transplants and other procedures that require close monitoring by hospital staff. The mayor emphasized that Oakland is honored to have such a world-renowned hospital, founded in 1912 whose mission is to treat every child no matter their ability to pay. “Access is everything” said the mayor and emphasized that hospital and RMHC share a common mission to not separate families during a challenging health crisis.



Opens Near the Hospital

In 1977, a group of McDonald's Franchise operators headed by Scott Landon, major Bay Area operator, put together the first of many RMHC organizations around the world. Stanford Children's Hospital was the first and UCSF was second for RMC Bay Area to build houses for families traveling great distances to be near their hospitalized children. Scott emphasized that "The Oakland house is a dream come true!"

Judy Beamer, Chief Nursing Officer emphasized that the hospital's work is all about patients and their families. Dr. Mark Walters, Interim Chief of Hematology/Oncology was thrilled that his department can offer so much more guaranteed accessible care with the new Crisper technology being delivered onsite at the house.

A grateful parent shared with the audience that her son was born with a rare

congenital disease requiring a stem cell transplant at UCSF Benioff Mission Bay and they were housed at the RMH San Francisco. She shared that "the hospital doesn't only care for the patient, but for the whole family during what can be a most stressful time.

The new Ronald McDonald House will be officially named the Ronald McDonald Oakland Larry Triplet Family Center. Larry Triplet, chair of the Black McDonald's Operators Association and one of the largest Bay Area franchisees, has given abundantly of his time and money for years and years. Larry was touched by the honor and exclaimed "I'm truly honored; it's far better to give than to receive and it's even better to be in a position to GIVE! I know I've done the right thing."





Children's Hospital Branches, Inc.

@CHORI Campus

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Oakland, CA 94609-1673

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SUPPORT OUR UPCOMING EVENTS!

Valentine's Dance, Hill

February 10, 2024 (Saturday)

University Club Level, UC Memorial Stadium, Berkeley

General Meeting

February 13, 2024 (Tuesday)

Outpatient Center Auditorium, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

Shopping Spree, Rowan

April 22, 2024 (Monday)

Round Hill Country Club, Alamo

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

April 24, 2024 (Wednesday)

Sequoiah Country Club, Oakland

Please consider donating on our website: childrenshospitalbranches.org/donate
You may also mail your donation to the office; look for the donation envelope inside.