



Inside Friends House

Everyday Life Inside the Friends House Neighborhood

Resident Profile: Kay Kerriden

by Barbara Hodgkinson



Kay, as a relative newcomer to Friends House, surprised us all by her willingness to serve as Clerk of the FASE Board after only serving for one year on the Board. The by-laws do not prohibit a resident Board member or a non-Quaker from being Clerk but her selection was a “first.” She is already proving to be an effective and clear-thinking Clerk, and she is eagerly learning about Quakerism and its unique style of leadership with the help of several other residents.

We wondered how her experience made her suitable for this challenging position — the word “audacity” came to mind! When asked, she said that her eight years of service as a publicly elected trustee of the Petaluma Health Care District was excellent training. Soon after she began her first term, the District became involved in an important battle with St. Joseph Health Care System, which wanted to end its maternity care services at Petaluma Valley Hospital; this would have left a huge gap in locally available care. The way

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Location, Location, Location

by Betsy Harrell

While watering my dry patio plants, I overheard a voice beyond the bushes say to someone else, apparently far away, “It hasn’t rained here since early June and may not again till November. We don’t have precipitation intermittently all year, the way you do.” By now the rounded hills above Friends House have turned from emerald to pale gold, and, like every summer afternoon, the sky today was blue, blue, and the late sun was slanting down entrancingly. I watered my white pansies, and eavesdropped.

“Right,” rejoined the voice, “it is a dependably fabulous climate for planning barbecues or vacations. Besides, when it’s hot here, the air isn’t humid like where you live. And out West there are virtually no bugs compared to in the East. You really should visit! This is the best, the sweetest climate in America.”

Since I’d originated on the East coast and have fallen totally for Sonoma County living, I was becoming more curious about this conversation. What I tell my faraway friends is that Santa Rosa lies in a temperate, north-south band sandwiched between the cold Pacific coast to the west and the valleys and mountains to the east which experience fierce heat and snows—whereas in our location we don’t suffer extremes.

The speaker waxed persuasive. “When you arrive, we’ll investigate San Francisco, and then it’s only an hour’s drive to Santa Rosa... A glorious big city—I mean San Francisco—with so many places I’d like to show you! Museums are wondrous, as are the symphony, white

sailboats tacking under Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars... Yet,” the litany continued, “Santa Rosa’s a pleasant, small city, simple to get around in. It’s the county seat and has excellent shopping and medical services. I’d take you to the Downtown Market which is quite a summer scene, with jugglers, food and music... Well, mainly our city sits on a plain, with surrounding vineyards marching in parallel lines over an undulating, Mediterranean landscape. Definitely we’d go wine tasting!!”

“Listen. We’d walk around Spring Lake, only minutes from Friends House. The Pacific is 55 minutes away to the West, and I know a hike we’d take over Red Hill to Sand Beach. Driving south along curvy Route 1 hugging the coast, we’d slurp clam chowder at Bodega Bay or, further south, might spy elephant seals at Point Reyes. Going north, we’d pause at the spectacular cliff above where the



Spring Lake Park in Santa Rosa.

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Russian River reaches the Pacific and watch pelicans swooping for fish as the tide comes in, and then, further on, we’d visit the Russians’ Fort Ross. You know they settled our shore in the 19th century? Another day we’ll follow the glorious Russian River through giant redwoods, to swim or paddle off a sandy beach... Sure, I know you like swimming! And if you visit long enough, we can drive 4½ hours to the high Sierras to splash in frigid Lake Tahoe or dip in Yosemite Valley’s tumbling Merced.”

“By then, you might decide to move to Friends House for good! You could be my neighbor!”

*Friends House —
Creating Sustainable
Community*

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9:00 AM - 4:00 PM*

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Executive Director
707-573-4501

Paddy Coreris
Director of Development
707-573-4508

Apartment Resident Services
707-573-4504

Health Care Unit
707-573-4517

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Services for the Elderly**
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**Message from the Executive Director
Jim Johnson**

Reflections

These last eight years at Friends House have been very special for me. I have met and become friends with a large number of really great people who have lived, worked, and volunteered here. It's a unique place. The community maintains an aura of specialness enhanced by old time workers, Friends, community people and volunteers.

One of the reasons for our good fortune is a dedicated core of volunteers doing board and committee work as a form of worship. That's how Friends describe their meetings for business: meetings for worship. It may be difficult for us non-Friends to understand, but I believe their view contributes intangibly to our cohesiveness and sense of uniqueness. It can give the business meetings a particular sense of purpose beyond the mundane. But it may take a Friend to appreciate that.

We have one really dedicated Friend who has just left our service. Kale Williams Jr., is junior to his father who took him as an 18 year old into service with the American Friends Service Committee. Kale has volunteered at Friends House, on the board and committees, for around fifteen years. In the early 1970's, Kale spent eighteen months doing humanitarian service during the Biafran war in southeastern Nigeria. I believe Kale, raised in an activist Quaker family, had his character tempered by experience and training so he realized the value of building community, selflessly contributing hundreds of hours to the Friends House cause. It's part of

Friends faith and practice, this type of service. I also thank his parents. It seems quite propitious to be raised a Quaker. I really appreciate Kale.

With another reflection I see Nola Fallis. During my tenure, Nola has worked as the manager of the Assisted Living center. She started in the beginning as a Certified Nursing Assistant on the Health Care Unit under the leadership of Millie Burt, first Director of Nursing. Nola worked loyally at Friends House almost throughout our history, and was part of the team that brought Assisted Living here. That service center started on Benicia Drive in what is now apartments 68, 69 and 70, but moved to the existing building when Commons D was constructed.

Nola represented Friends House, and her tribe, the Mountain Maidu, when the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, (now Leading Age) had their last national conference in San Francisco. She and Jane Mills, who represented the Religious Society of Friends, walked in procession at Moscone Center and spoke about their faith traditions at the interfaith service, honoring religious diversity within this national association of non-profit provider of services for elders.

Chong Gilardoni is another of the revered veterans of the Friends House community. Chong has been a night guardian on the Health Care Unit, helping to ease the pain especially around end-of- life transitions for so many of the apartment residents and others. You read about Chong in our winter newsletter, and we want to wish her all the best as she continues to minister to elders in other venues.

These are just a few of the people who have touched me in my tenure. I have been very fortunate.

Resident, Clare Morris (left) recently donated the proceeds of her new book, "Falling Into Light - A Mother and Daughter Give Birth to Each Other," to Friends House.



There's Never a Cookie-Cutter Day!

by Betsy Harrell

Melody's work here encompasses any kind of support for the so-called independent, apartment residents as well as assisted living residents. Giving support requires focusing attention upon each unique individual, for each has varying need levels and requires different types of support. Simple support might just mean giving directions to a certain physician's office, while complex support might be determining the best way to provide assistance to a resident at home.

How can she determine appropriate support for each? She looks at the whole situation, which might entail solely the resident or a large group of relatives, too. Sometimes Melody's role feels like detective work, for several reasons. People don't always know or recognize—can't put their finger on—what their needs are. Some dislike talking about their problems or find articulating them hard. So, through a process of conversation-observation-evaluation, problem solving happens; that's what leads Melody and the resident to make decisions about suitable support.

Melody Allmond, Resident Services Coordinator, has been working with seniors since 1977. She came to Friends House in 2008 and shares an office with her counterpart, the Resident Services Nurse. When sometimes this pair is seen deep in conversation as they circle the Ring Road in step, it's felt they also share good communication. One of Melody's recent accomplishments was attaining a Risk Manager Certification in Aging Services, which required

taking courses and passing exams.

Melody has five daughters and a Scottish terrier. A Sacramento native, after high school she began as a nursing assistant in a skilled nursing facility. Later, as patient care coordinator, she gained experience in admissions, discharge and planning. She's also been clinic supervisor in a medical specialty practice. In 1994 while working at Sutter Health as long-term care project manager, she obtained her RCFE Administrator Certificate and became an administrator in several large and small assisted living communities. Besides these varied careers, at different times Melody owned and ran a coffeehouse and catering business in the Sacramento area. She prefers North Bay living because Sacramento was "too hot."

Asked what she finds challenging about her job, Melody amplifies earlier points: "It's that no two days are alike. This is rewarding for me because I strive to try different ways of solving things.

As every situation is different, there's never a cookie-cutter day!" One will be calm and everyone is feeling settled (her aim), but the next day or the next hour anything can happen. Sometimes everything happens at once: an urgent call for staff help in deciding what's required (call 911?), while simultaneously trying to arrange in-home services for another person, and meanwhile advising an aide needing guidance on medications, and just then somebody calls to say another car has taken his parking place. At such times, Melody feels "up to my eyeballs!" Yet she doesn't show it.



Melody Allmond (at right), Resident Services Coordinator with Maria Hernandez, assisted living caregiver.

"Resident Profile: Kay Kerriden" continued...

in which this conflict was resolved was a learning experience for Kay. She found that reaching consensus on the board was much more effective than a simple majority decision, and public input was also important. All of this is now basic to her work at Friends House.

Kay's early college experience was at Mills College, where she had a full scholarship but interrupted her education to marry after two years. She was able to finish her degree years later, after being laid off from her job as adult education and field director for the Girl Scout Council in Santa Rosa. Kay took the opportunity, while on unemployment compensation, to complete a college degree at Sonoma State

University in 1977. Becoming a computer programmer through a trainee position at EDS (Electronic Data Systems) led to a job as a systems analyst and manager for Fireman's Fund Insurance. Kay saw her work there as translating: she was interviewing the top executives and portraying their ideas in programmer-friendly language for the techies. She sees her work as resident representative on the FASE Board as another kind of translating.

Along the way, Kay raised two daughters, divorced after eleven years of marriage, and a year later found her life partner, Bonnie Arthur, who is still with her. In 2008 they took advantage of the brief window when same-sex

marriage was legal in California and had a joyous ceremony. Bonnie also has two daughters, and together they have six grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Kay tells us that her source of spiritual development and serenity is her 28 years as an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous. We find her a warm, lively, intelligent and invaluable member of our community!

Did You Know?

eScrip donations from January – June totaled \$641. Go to www.escrip.com and sign up in support of Friends House.

If you're an Oliver's shopper (senior discount on Wednesdays), sign up for eScrip at the store or online at escrip.com/olivers.

Book Donations

Friends House Library needs used books. Contact Harriett Gordon at 707-576-6606 or ffrybooks@yahoo.com.



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Frieda Tomlin is among several residents who enjoy hiking.

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- **Unrestricted donations** are very important

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- **Friends House Support Fund** to enable the admission to the apartments of residents who do not meet the minimum income or net asset requirements. The fund may also be used for apartment residents who have exhausted their assets.
- **Employee Holiday Fund** – Employees are not permitted to accept “tips” from residents and their families. Monies are distributed in December in an equitable fashion to all staff.
- **Solar Fund** to solarize campus buildings.
- **General Endowment Fund** for the purpose of providing income for the operations of Friends House.

We are grateful to our generous donors and acknowledge them in our insert this issue.

If you have questions or need more information, or would like to have your name removed from our mailing list, please contact Paddy Coreris, Director of Development, at 707-573-4508 or email her at pcoreris@friendshouse.org.

Thank You!

We are very thankful to all the generous individuals, Quaker meetings, foundations, and businesses for supporting Friends House and sharing our passion to help seniors with their aging adventure by providing quality residential, social, and health services to them at the lowest feasible cost. As the wave of baby boomers heads our way, we trust that Friends House will continue to have the help and support it needs to be ahead of the wave.

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