

# FOUNDATION FOCUS

Helping Redlands Community Hospital Care for Generations



## *Message from the President*

**BENGT GUSTAVSSON**

I am honored to share our latest issue of our *Foundation Focus* newsletter, a platform that allows us to celebrate the remarkable achievements and contributions within our loved community. This issue brings to light the compassionate spirit of one of our own employees who has generously donated over many years to Redlands Community Hospital. Their selflessness embodies the values that make our organization a beacon of hope and healing.

Additionally, I am thrilled to announce the incoming Foundation Board Chair, whose dedication and vision will undoubtedly steer us towards new heights of success. Their leadership promises to build upon the strong foundation laid by their predecessor, guiding us towards innovative initiatives that will enhance our ability to serve the community.

Lastly, we pay tribute to a cherished member of our community, the Foundation's past president, Jan Opdyke whose enduring mark on our organization will forever be remembered. The special article in her honor reflects on the legacy she leaves behind and serves as a testament to the profound impact she had on our collective journey. As we delve into these stories, may we find inspiration and unity in our shared commitment to advancing the well-being of those we serve.

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**RCH Foundation  
Board of Directors  
2023 - 2024**

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## Thank You, Kathy!

I would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to Kathy Meredith for her remarkable, nearly five years of dedicated chair leadership for the Redlands Community Hospital Foundation. Kathy's unwavering commitment, strategic vision, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in advancing the Foundation's mission and enhancing the healthcare services provided to our community.

Under her guidance, the Foundation has achieved significant milestones, positively impacting countless lives. Some of her many milestones include:

- Oversaw and implemented the Foundation's long-term strategic plan.
- Guided the Foundation's fundraising efforts through the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic
- Led the board into the Flight Against Cancer Initiative, which established the Center for Cancer Care and currently the fundraising efforts of the Radiation Oncology Center
- Oversaw 4 Golf Tournaments that raised **\$1,015,090**
- RCH Foundation granted **\$14,296,060.15** to benefit Redlands Community Hospital

Kathy's leadership has inspired and motivated us all, leaving an indelible mark on the organization. We are immensely grateful for her invaluable contributions and wish her continued success in her future endeavors. Thank you, Kathy, for your outstanding service and dedication to improving healthcare in our community.

The Redlands Community Hospital Foundation is overseen by a leadership board. The Foundation's Board of Directors role is to carry out the mission of Redlands Community Hospital Foundation by advancing the delivery of exceptional healthcare in the Inland Empire through the acquisition, management and utilization of philanthropic funds for Redlands Community Hospital.



## **Bill Emmerson’s political, fundraising experience brings huge bonus as he begins chairmanship of the Redlands Community Hospital Foundation board**

Over his long career as a politician and dental practitioner, Bill Emmerson has accomplished much: he served as a California state assemblyman, was later elected to the state senate, and spent 26 years as a successful orthodontist. Among his most gratifying achievements, however, is his recent appointment as chairman of the Redlands Community Hospital (RCH) Foundation board.

And why not? As the hospital’s primary fundraising vehicle the Foundation goes a long way toward ensuring that Inland Empire residents receive cutting-edge care each and every day. With Bill at the helm, the prospects of strengthening that prospect are significantly enhanced. “It’s definitely a highlight of my career,” he said of the appointment. “We’re looking at several programs that will increase services to Redlands and the surrounding communities and I’m very excited about that.”

Now a Redlands resident, Bill was born in Oakland and reared in both Corona Del Mar and Hemet. After earning an undergraduate degree in history and political science at La Sierra University he earned his masters and dental degrees at Loma Linda University, eventually opening an orthodontic practice in Hemet and Idyllwild and serving as president of Tri-County Dental Society, chairman of the California Dental Association’s Council on Legislation, and chairman of the Association’s Political Action Committee. “My father was a dentist and I had an interest in it early on,” he said, adding that dentistry was something he had in mind since his childhood.

Later on he served in the state assembly from 2004 through 2010 and the state senate from 2010 to 2013. “While I was in the Legislature I was actively involved with (RCH President and Chief Executive Officer) Jim Holmes and Redlands Community Hospital,” he said, adding that he already had a familiarity with RCH going back to his Hemet days. That familiarity eventually grew into a close relationship, one culminated by his rise to become chairman of the Foundation board.

“The California Hospital Association, representing all 400 hospitals in the state, had legislative proposals that dealt with hospitals and health care,” he said. “It was through that association that I became more involved with Redlands Community Hospital.”

His philanthropic association goes back well before he joined the Foundation board in 2022. “We’ve always donated to Redlands through the years,” he said, adding that his giving has helped to enhance the current cancer initiative as well as the Emergency Department expansion and other services at the hospital. Going forward, Bill anticipates significant involvement with the hospital’s efforts to comply with state-mandated life safety seismic standards, standards that many hospitals may not meet by 2030—forcing closure of some. Those efforts will require significant expense that the Foundation will help RCH to meet. “We’re facing a 2030 retrofit for Redlands Community Hospital, and the entire process will be incredibly expensive,” Bill said. “That’s one of the big challenges that I will be involved with.

“Redlands Community Hospital is very important to the community of Redlands. It enjoys an excellent reputation for good service and I hope to provide some leadership as we strive to provide even better service through giving.”

Bill helped to establish the dental hygiene program at Riverside Community College and to rehabilitate Redlands Fire Station 1, and he also served on the Loma Linda University Alumni Association. Bill served on the Little Hoover Commission, the California Independent Oversight Agency. He and his wife, Nan, have two grown daughters.



## Jan Opdyke: 1952 - 2023

*Longtime president of the RCH Foundation leaves a shining legacy*

The entirety of one's life is sometimes referred to as "the dash between the dates." In Jan Opdyke's case, a simple punctuation mark just won't do.

President of the Redlands Community Hospital Foundation since 2015, Jan passed away Dec. 17 after a six-year struggle with neuroendocrine cancer. Her death came as a shock to those who knew her, and the irony is that she was a tireless supporter—and prime mover—of the hospital's Fight Against Cancer Initiative, which has resulted in the establishment of a new 8,000-square-foot Center for Cancer Care and most recently the launch of a philanthropic campaign to build a brand-new Radiation Oncology Center that will house a new Linear Accelerator and PET/CT scanner. The Center for Cancer Care, which promises to improve and save the lives of countless oncology patients, now serves as a testament to a woman who encouraged support for it and backed that encouragement with generous giving of her own.

"She was one of the most competent people that I ever knew," said her husband of 33 years, Bud. "But she was also quirky, had a sense of humor, and was very, very bright. She cared deeply about people."

Jan, who had lived in Redlands for more than two decades before relocating to Cherry Valley, joined the Foundation in 2015 and led the fundraising efforts for two of our most important recent campaigns: the multimillion-dollar Emergency Department expansion/renovation and the ongoing cancer initiative. She came to the hospital following a successful tenure as senior director of development for the University of California, Riverside, School of Medicine.

"She was really about getting things done," Bud said. "She hand picked the people who work in the Foundation, and she really enjoyed working with her staff and other people at the hospital. She appreciated the quality of care that Redlands Community Hospital provides and integrating philanthropy with that."

Jan was born and raised in Sarasota, Florida, where her family owned and operated a circus, later moving to Alhambra as a high school student. She graduated from UCLA with a history degree and later earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of California, Riverside, and a Master of Divinity degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary. During her long and successful career she also served as director of development for the Presbyterian Church (USA) and director of development for San Francisco Theological Seminary. Along the way she founded a vocational rehabilitation counseling firm and was a longtime lay pastor for Community Presbyterian Church of Redlands. Her life was rich and full.

(continued)

Still, folks at the hospital will remember her as someone who for nearly a decade facilitated a culture of philanthropy that significantly enhanced the hospital and the care it provides to our neighbors throughout the Inland Empire while helping to maintain its standing as a community hospital that provides treatment in a loving, family-centered environment. During her years with the hospital Jan encouraged Stater Bros. Charities to become the hospital’s most consistent large donor and helped grow the Redlands Community Hospital Foundation Golf Classic for the Ken Corwin Cup into the hospital’s largest and most visible fundraising event. One colleague described her as “a remarkable person, incredibly competent, smart, funny and a good friend.”

“She understood that fundraising was a relational business,” Bud said. “You start with a relationship and giving follows. People don’t just give money because they have money. They understood that Jan could be trusted and the money would go where it was intended to go.”

“I don’t think cancer changed her,” Bud said. “She was always hopeful.”

Jan is survived by her husband, Bud, and her son, Aaron. The family wishes to thank the Redlands Community Hospital Hospice staff and has asked that in lieu of flowers, friends contribute to Redlands Community Hospital Foundation in her memory, designating either the Cancer Center Fund or Hospice Fund.

## *Tribute to Jan Opdyke*

*“Jan Opdyke was a wonder! Kind, tireless, upbeat. She elevated RCH Foundation to a level not seen before in terms of funds and friends raised. She was our friend, so much more than just an employee. We will miss her enthusiasm, sense of joy, and commitment to Redlands Community Hospital.”*

**- Stan and Ellen Weisser**

*“Jan Opdyke was the visionary and driving force behind the Foundation’s initiatives and fund raising campaigns. I so appreciated her spirit of philanthropy for our community. Jan’s love and compassion for all those around her was inspiring and will be greatly missed.”*

**- Kathy Meredith, Former RCH Foundation Board Chair**



*“Who knew that when I agreed to help raise money for the new Emergency Dept at RCH that I would also make such a wonderful friend and would learn so much about philanthropy? Jan always knew how to make you feel so successful and proud of what you accomplished, even if she had to remind you 5 times. Jan remembered to put the donor first and to point out the good their gift would do. I will miss the cookies and boxes of candy she always seemed to bring with her. She never let cancer get in the way of doing her job and is an inspiration of how to carry on. “*

**- Bill Hatfield**



## For Debbie McNew, RCH is home— Supporting it philanthropically just makes sense

People give philanthropically for many different reasons. For some, it fulfills an inherent need to help other people. For others, it simply makes them feel good. For Debbie McNew, her reason for giving isn't a complicated one. She has worked at Redlands Community Hospital (RCH) for the majority of her years on earth and when RCH asked for donations early on she responded with a definitive, "Why not?" That was 30 years ago and she still enjoys financially assisting the only hospital she has ever known.

Debbie is a lifelong Fontana resident whose allegiance to the hospital is a testament to its reach throughout the Inland Empire. She joined the hospital's Radiology Department in 1989 and has remained there throughout her tenure at RCH, now working as a scrub tech in the cardiac catheterization lab; she has worked in the cath lab since the late 1990s.

She began giving to the hospital in February 1993. "From time to time they ask if we can give—back then they were probably building something and they needed donations," she said of her first gift 30 years ago. "I said, 'Okay.' Every year they came back again and I said, 'Okay.' I don't have a problem donating for a good cause, and I think Redlands is a good cause." For the first four years Debbie gave sporadically. Then, she bumped up her giving in 2010, deciding to support the hospital regularly through payroll deduction. During the Emergency Department capital campaign she continued to give regularly while also contributing to the ED expansion.

"I said I would give for that, plus at the same time I continued with my regular donation. When I found out I was double gifting I thought, 'Whatever. It's just for a couple years,'" she laughed. When asked why she ramped up her giving to a regular schedule, Debbie shrugged. "It's just a good cause. I have been here most of my life, and why not? I'm here more than I'm at home."

Since she joined RCH Debbie has provided more than 760 gifts, helping the hospital to provide programs and services that without dedicated giving it would not be able to provide. It makes sense—she and many of her extended family members have all received excellent care at Redlands Community Hospital. "It's going for a good cause," she said. "You donate to some organizations and you don't know where the money is going or whether it will end up in someone's pocket. With Redlands, I don't feel it's going into someone's pocket—I feel it's actually going to help care for the patients. I'm all for helping out if someone needs assistance."

In essence, RCH is Debbie's hospital. "I have not been to any other hospitals; this is the only hospital I know. I wouldn't even know where else to go." Good thing—dedicated supporters such as Debbie are a true blessing, not only to the hospital they support but to the neighbors that RCH serves with family-centered care. She plans to support it as long as she can. "Probably for years more to come," she said. "As long as I'm here, I'll just keep it going."



## **In his own philanthropic way, Rod Cruz is helping To make a difference at Redlands Community Hospital**

To Rod Cruz, few things are more important than good health. As the owner of a hospice company in Redlands, he’s reminded of that each and every day and it’s one reason why he decided to financially support Redlands Community Hospital (RCH) nearly a decade ago.

A native of Manila, The Philippines, Cruz immigrated to the U.S. in 1985 and soon began working for the United States Postal Service. He put in 27 years there before retiring from a San Bernardino processing center in 2014—one year after officially starting AmeriHealth Hospice Provider, Inc. in Redlands.

Long familiar with RCH, Rod began supporting the hospital with occasional gifts in 2014. He’s been doing it ever since. “The majority of my (hospice) patients are referrals from Hospitals in our local area,” he said. “Over the years I watched as all of the other hospitals in the area grew big with brand new buildings and I began wondering where Redlands Community Hospital’s support was coming from. I decided that it was my hospital and I wanted to help it grow in my own little way.”

His “own little way” initially involved periodic small gifts. It was, he said, “a calling”—a calling to help other people. And why not Redlands Community Hospital? His mother, father and sister all received excellent treatment there and Rod himself has received care at Redlands. In fact, his son was born at RCH. He has seen the quality of medical care that’s provided through the hospital up close. “In 2014 I started giving intermittently,” he said. “In 2021 I committed to giving continuously”—monthly.

While much of his giving has not been designated to any particular program, he has given to the hospital’s cancer fund. His father (2000) and his sister (2014) both suffered with cancer before passing away and he has supported the cancer fund in their memory. “It’s your hospital,” he said when asked why residents of the community should financially support RCH. “Going to another hospital can be like going to another state. Redlands is local, it’s our hospital and that’s why I support it.” He added: “The community likes to refer to itself as ‘our backyard’ and I take pride in doing that, too. I want to spread the word to the people of Redlands that they should support the hospital, too.”

He doesn’t stop there—Rod also believes that personal safety is important and to that end he gives to the Redlands Police Department. “Those are my two areas of charitable contribution—the hospital and the police. The hospital provides for our health, the police provide for our safety. We’re all going to use the hospital someday, and we’re all going to need the police someday. How simple is that?”

If you are interested in setting up recurring giving to the RCH Foundation, please contact us 909-335-5540 or visit our website at [www.redlandshospital.org/foundation/ways-to-give/donate-online/](http://www.redlandshospital.org/foundation/ways-to-give/donate-online/)



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350 Terracina Blvd.  
Redlands CA 92373  
[redlandshospital.org/foundation](http://redlandshospital.org/foundation)

**Save The Date**

Redlands Community Hospital's  
**42nd Annual Golf Classic**  
for the Ken Corwin Cup

**DATE**  
Thursday  
June 20, 2024

**LOCATION**  
Redlands  
Country Club

**FORMAT**  
4-Person  
Scramble

100% of net proceeds to  
benefit the  
**Radiation Oncology Center**

Sponsorship information contact:  
[BGustavsson@redlandshospital.org](mailto:BGustavsson@redlandshospital.org)  
**909-335-5540**



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