



**2024
SPRING**



NoahHomes.org

Noah Navigator

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF NOAH HOMES INC.
Caring for People with Developmental Disabilities since 1983

**MEET OUR NEW
RESIDENTS**
pg. 5

**ENCHANTED
VILLAGE RECAP**
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TAKE ACTION
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Multiply Joy

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Why Should You Sponsor?

By becoming a sponsor, you help create lifelong homes for people in need, job opportunities, inclusive communities, and much more! In the U.S., nearly one million households include adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living with an aging caregiver. These caregivers are often dealing with their own age-related health challenges.

In addition to supporting Noah Homes in providing more housing and choices for those in need, sponsors benefit from reaching hundreds of thousands of people in the San Diego community and beyond. Visibility opportunities include social posts, e-newsletters, printed magazines, media, special events throughout the year, and many more opportunities that can be customized to fit your goals and budget.



CORPORATE:

Demonstrate the value of your brand and your community leadership by becoming a corporate sponsor.

NOAH'S PERCH:

Noah's PERCH (Positive Exceptional Relationships Create Happiness) is a social group developed for and by adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The group was created to encourage meaningful social connections within our community. Today, the group boasts over 100 participants who participate in engaging events monthly.

SUMMERFEST:

Summerfest has been a signature event at Noah Homes for over 16 years. Around 500 of San Diego's top philanthropists and changemakers gather to celebrate the success of Noah Homes and raise vital funds for its future programs and services.

ENCHANTED VILLAGE:

The Enchanted Village welcomes thousands of visitors from San Diego and beyond. Guests are surrounded by brilliantly lit trees, magical cottages, light tunnels, live entertainers, hundreds of giant candy canes, over one million lights, interactive displays, and other festive decorations.

Please contact sponsors@noahhomes.org or (619) 660-6200 x150 for additional information!



Scan to view our Sponsorship Brochure!



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COVER: Holly, Chantilly, and Laura welcome their new housemate Shauna (second from left) to Casa de Fe.

Mission Statement

We provide exceptional residential care and choices for adults with developmental disabilities within an inclusive community.

Core Values

- Compassionate Care
- Exceptional Standards
- Servant Leadership
- Dedicated Stewardship
- Advocating Choice

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STATE OF THE ARK

When we asked Noah Homes' families, residents, and friends what makes our community so special, their responses were heartfelt and unanimous: they emphasized the exceptional care that defines us. The joy and zest for life welcomes everyone who steps through our doors, creating a nurturing environment where our residents thrive.

The Noah Homes philosophy aligns with the idea of "Blue Zones"—areas known for their joyful and fulfilling lives. Like these zones, Noah Homes prioritizes a strong sense of community, purpose, and healthy living, fostering an atmosphere where joyous connections and life-enriching activities flourish.

For more than 37 years, Sandra has been blessed to be part of the Noah Homes family. Here, she witnesses daily acts of joy shared among residents, staff, board members, volunteers, families, and the broader community. These collective moments strengthen our bonds and fortify our resilience in facing challenges.

Despite recent hurdles, from community flooding to potential funding delays due to legislative changes proposed by Governor Gavin Newsom, our resilience shines brightly. We're not giving up—together, as a community, we have the strength to overcome any obstacle.

We invite you to embrace this spirit of joy, resilience, and unity. By becoming a part of our community, whether through volunteering your time, making a donation, or simply engaging with us on social media, you can experience a sense of joyful belonging and purpose that is truly unique.

Let's stand together, choose joy, and continue to make a positive impact. Your support means the world to us, now more than ever. We deeply appreciate your generosity and the difference it makes in our ability to provide exceptional care to our residents.

Thank you for being a part of our Noah Homes family.



Sandra Rocco Melville

Sandra Rocco-Melville
Executive Director



M. Iacono

Marc Iacono
President, Board of Directors

MEET OUR NEW RESIDENTS



Mary

- She has a Poodle mix named Olaf.
- She loves to be active and enjoys working out; she is a black belt in karate.
- She volunteers at a boutique and has worked at the Japanese Friendship Garden.



Shauna

- She loves to volunteer for the Children's Nature Retreat and Lions, Tigers, & Bears.
- She makes beaded jewelry and has exhibited her work at the Mingei International Museum.
- She use to be a part of the bowling league at Parkway Bowl; she was a part of the Incredibowls.



Rachel

- She is an usher at The Old Globe in Balboa Park.
- Her favorite food is orange chicken from Panda Express.
- She is a talented artist who has sold many pieces of artwork through Sophie's Gallery.



Julie

- She participates in the Special Olympics (bocce ball, speed walking, and softball throwing).
- She has a collection of over 120 stuffed dog plushies and she knows all their names and breeds.
- She loves to watch Animal Planet, the Food Network, and Disney Channel.

PEOPLE FIRST:

Officer Elections

Noah Homes has created the first official People First chapter in East County, San Diego. People First is a group of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who meet monthly to empower each other and discuss the importance of self-advocacy.

Forming an official chapter requires an official cabinet of officers. Residential Support Manager, Hazel

encouraged the folks to sign up for the officer positions they desired. Interviews were held on January 9, 2024, in the Community Center by People First advisors, Hazel and Valerie. After tough deliberations, the cabinet was decided, and following afternoon karaoke the next day, the results were released. Scan the QR code on this page to watch the folks' reactions to the new cabinet members.

President Laura, in her winning speech, said: "I believe it's important to speak up for yourself and advocate for what you want and need." We agree with Laura! We're excited to see how she and her peers work together to make the group successful.

The folks are ready to make a big splash in the community and make their presence known. Meet our new cabinet below.



Laura
President

**Steve, Ryan, Holly, Fran, Chantilly,
Christina S., Kevin, Catherine, & Mary**
Representatives



Christina P.
Vice President



Amy
Secretary



Leah
Treasurer



Jean
Sergeant of
Arms



Tim
Board of
Directors



Alyssa
Board of
Directors



THE NEWLY ELECTED PEOPLE FIRST OFFICERS POSE TOGETHER.



**Watch the folks react to
the election results here!**

Noah Homes WISH LISTS


If you're looking for a way to support Noah Homes, check out our Amazon Wish Lists! We have specific lists for all 10 houses, Noah's PERCH, the Enchanted Village, our Life Enrichment Day Program, and the Administrative Office. All our residents and staff have benefited from purchases through our wish lists.

We do not receive reimbursement from the government for items such as toiletries, linens, room decor, and many

other things it takes to make our houses loving homes. Additionally, several of our residents no longer have living relatives, so community support is integral to their care.

With just a few easy clicks, you can make a difference in our residents' lives today by purchasing something on our wish lists.

**Scan to view
our wish lists!**



NOAH IN THE NEWS

Check out some of the incredible publications and news sources Noah Homes has been featured in over the past few months:



**RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT
MANAGER KAMREN WITH RYAN,
STACY, & STEVE IN FRONT OF
THE MILLENNIUM FALCON.**



A MAGICAL DAY AT DISNEYLAND

For Casa de Caridad & Casa de Flores

Outings are a big part of the Noah Homes experience. The folks have had the opportunity to travel around San Diego, go abroad, take cruises, watch concerts, and much more. Thanks to support from families and donors and our staff's diligent planning, we can provide dynamic, fun, and most of all, social experiences for the folks.

In November, the residents of Casa de Caridad and Casa de Flores visited the second most magical place on earth (the first being Noah Homes, according to board member Philip Curtis), the Disneyland Resort! Disneyland's holiday celebrations

were in full swing, and the folks took in the beautiful decorations and lights and watched the parades.

Many residents are huge Star Wars fans—especially Steve of Casa de Flores. He was excited to check out everything Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge had to offer, with his housemates. He and his housemate Stacy particularly enjoyed the Rise of the Resistance ride and snapped a photo with the Stormtroopers before getting on the ride.

We can't wait to go back to the Disneyland Resort again soon!



**CHRISTINA WITH STAFF
MEMBER KELLI AT
TOMORROWLAND.**



**CASA DE CARIDAD POSES
BY DISNEYLAND'S ICONIC
CHRISTMAS TREE.**

ENCHANTED VILLAGE

Recap



Enchanted Village 2023 kicked off its sixth year on December 15, 2023, for an eight-day fundraising and holiday extravaganza benefiting Noah Homes. For the first time ever, State Senator and Noah Homes supporter, Brian Jones and his wife, Heather, conducted a ceremonial “first light” and flipped the master switch to bring the entire Noah Homes property and Enchanted Village to life!

This year, the Enchanted Village welcomed around 7,000 visitors over eight nights (and three were sold-out!). Some of the newest features of the Village this year were several thousand more lights, interactions with new holiday characters, and a spectacular light show that featured a special voiceover by the residents of Noah Homes.

It truly takes a village to put an event of this scale together. This year, over 500 community volunteers provided us with much-needed manpower and positive energy to contribute to another magical event. Some of our wonderful volunteer groups included SDGE, the SPRITES of East County, Mesa College, CHASE, and City National Bank. Additionally, thanks to your ticket purchases, we were able to employ 10 residents to work at the Enchanted Village.

The Enchanted Village prides itself as an inclusive event for all, and we are thankful for support from local press (NBC 7, CBS 8, FOX 5, KUSI, and more) and local influencers such as @daniellabraggtravels, @bytheseamommyandme, and @sandiego_mamas, who helped get the word out.

Volunteer and sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact volunteering@noahhomes.org and sponsors@noahhomes.org for more information. Follow us on Instagram at @enchantedvillage to stay up to date on all things Enchanted Village and be the first to know the 2024 event dates.

We look forward to welcoming more community members in 2024 as Enchanted Village quickly establishes itself as a yearly holiday tradition. Thank you all for your support!

Enchanted Village®
at Noah Homes

a. Residents Leah & Jean worked all eight nights! | b. Several thousand more lights were added to brighten up the Enchanted Village. | c. Families enjoyed all the new photo spots at the Enchanted Village this year, most notably one by the singing holiday tree. | d. People of all ages dressed up in the holiday spirit. | e. Children and adults alike got their faces painted by our elf friends from Royal Entertainers.

MULTIPLYING JOY

Multiplying joy through acts of service moves our mission forward! We want to introduce you to individuals who have significantly impacted Noah Homes and its 90 residents by donating time, talent, funding, and heart.



MAX AND THIERRY WITH COMMENDATIONS THEY RECEIVED FROM SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON.



DEBRA WITH HER DAUGHTER, LEAH, WHO LIVES IN CASA DE ESPERANZA.

Volunteer Spotlight: Max & Thierry Henot

Max and Thierry are a father-and-son duo who began volunteering at Noah Homes in early 2022. The two of them quickly integrated into the Noah Homes team and consistently give their time (and muscle!) to assist with all kinds of projects. Most recently, the pair played a pivotal role in helping set up the Enchanted Village, in addition to taking down decorations after the event. They are always eager to lend a hand.

Apart from their extensive volunteer efforts, Max and Thierry stay very busy with activities, from water sports, to rugby, to traveling back to Thierry's home country of France. Max is also an active participant in our Noah's PERCH program, where he was a standout at our surf day last year. Our Facilities and Events teams are so grateful to have the consistent support that these two have given over the past two years. Thank you for all that you do for Noah Homes, Max and Thierry!

Board Member Spotlight: Debra Elwell

Meet Debra Elwell, a Noah Homes board member, parent, advocate, and rock star volunteer! Debra is the proud mother of Noah Homes resident, Leah, and enjoys planning creative events for Leah and her fellow residents like tea parties, art projects, house visits, and apple picking. Debra likes to stay busy during her retirement, and volunteering at Noah Homes is her passion. She got involved when Enchanted Village made its debut six years ago and has been devoted to its success ever since.

For Debra, welcoming new guests to the Enchanted Village and educating them about the mission of Noah Homes is extremely rewarding. Debra has devoted countless hours over the holiday season to preparing for our annual holiday lights event. From decorating Christmas trees, to facilitating volunteer orientation, to providing on-the-ground support during the events, she has been an instrumental part in the success of our biggest holiday fundraiser. She truly has gone above and beyond to make Enchanted Village the spectacular production that it is today. Thank you for being such a passionate friend and ally of Noah Homes, Debra!



THE HADACEK FAMILY ALSO MADE A GENEROUS GIFT OF \$100,000 TO NOAH HOMES AT SUMMERFEST 2023.

Family Spotlight: The Hadacek Family

Dave and Peggy Hadacek heard about Noah Homes at a San Diego Regional Center Board Meeting. Their daughter, Holly, moved into Noah Homes in 2022 and lives in Casa de Fe. They volunteer their time to many organizations, especially those doing good work for those in need. “Noah Homes fit that description,” Dave and Peggy said. “Noah Homes has limited funds to support their housing and related social programs. If we can

help ease some of the burden on the organization, we are happy to serve.” They love that the staff refers to the residents as family and see firsthand the care and love the staff has for the folks. Every week, Dave and Peggy volunteer their time to assist with administrative and facilities-related tasks.

When asked if they had any advice for anyone wanting to get involved

with Noah Homes, Dave said: “The giver is always blessed in the act of giving. Volunteering is a special way to give. All it takes is time and making it a priority. It is rewarding for us to volunteer. We have gotten to know some of the staff and residents – all are special! We are blessed to know and help them out in our small way.”

Donor Spotlight: A Lasting Gift from the Sally Family

Will Sally lived at Noah Homes in the late 90’s and moved back in the mid-2000s after a brief break. He was an active resident of Casa de Felicidad, where his lively and amiable personality was well-known. He loved to make beaded necklaces for his friends and staff members. His parents, Magdaline and Aloysius visited him often and attended Noah Homes events. While at Noah Homes, he and his family forged strong relationships with the staff and other residents. Even when Will had to eventually move out permanently due to medical issues, Residential Support Manager Tina Quinagon and other staff visited him frequently at the hospital, still making sure he felt connected to the community he loved so much.

Will passed away in 2022, and he and his family left an incredible gift of \$1,250,000 to Noah Homes in their family trust. It was a generous surprise—and a testament to the loving care the staff provided for Will and his family over the last two decades. Thanks to their gift, we can continue to be the model for excellent residential care for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



WILL SALLY

HOUSING SUMMIT | 2023



Across the U.S., millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)—such as Down syndrome and autism—are looking for lifelong homes. The need for housing continues to grow as more people with I/DD outlive their family caregivers and look to live full and independent lives. At Noah Homes, we recognize that the housing shortage impacts not just our community here in San Diego; this nationwide problem needs to be addressed on a much larger scale.



To combat this issue, Molly Nocon took the initiative to launch the inaugural Disability Leadership Network Housing Summit, a three-day nationwide conference involving more than 70 stakeholders from six states. This event was hosted at Noah Homes from September 6-8, 2023, and brought together leaders from more than 20 local and national businesses and nonprofit organizations, all motivated to solve the housing dilemma.



We had the privilege of welcoming guests from California, Colorado, Maine, Florida, Texas and Nevada. Participants included builders, legislators, oversight agencies, media influencers, and service providers. From panel presentations to interactive discussions, the Housing Summit provided a valuable opportunity to network with like-minded people and be exposed to top-notch speakers, researchers, as well as movers and shakers in the I/DD world. Many felt empowered to return to their own communities and effect change, knowing that solutions exist and are within reach.



THE DISABILITY LEADERSHIP
NETWORK

NOAH'S PERCH

Springs Forward

Noah's PERCH is a social group developed for and by adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And boy, we've been busy these past few months! We closed the year with our Enchanted Village Sensory Friendly Night, where PERCH members came together and enjoyed the village's magic before the larger crowds arrived. In January we were pleased to welcome PERCH friends old and new to our annual New Year's Mixer. We discussed resolutions for 2024, shared our favorite memories of the past year, played get-to-know-you games, and even broke out into a dance party. Our

Sweetheart's Ball in February got a few upgrades this year—we had a DJ spinning tunes all night long and two fabulous ballroom dancers, David and Megan Fan who performed three dances for us. What a treat! All of us in PERCH are looking forward to warmer springtime weather and getting out and about in San Diego as this new year kicks into gear.

Interested in joining Noah's PERCH, or know anyone who might be? Visit our website at NoahsPerch.org and apply today.



BRIDGET AND JOHN SHARE FUN FACTS ABOUT THEMSELVES WITH THEIR GROUP AT THE NEW YEAR'S MIXER.



PERCH PARTICIPANT GABE DANCES THE NIGHT AWAY AT THE 2024 SWEETHEARTS' BALL.



JULIE TAKES A PHOTO WITH BALLROOM DANCER MEGAN FAN AT OUR SWEETHEARTS' BALL AFTER MEGAN AND DAVID'S PERFORMANCE.

A SUCCESSFUL DAY of Giving

Grief is tough. In 2023 alone, our caregivers in Noah Homes' two Memory Care Homes have mourned the loss of four beloved residents. Every day, these amazing people help adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and dementia live a life of dignity and ensure their final moments are filled with love.

In September 2024, we participated in San Diego Gives' annual Day of Giving to raise critical funds to provide resources such as grief counseling, continued education and training, staff appreciation day, gift cards for gas and restaurants, and much more.

Thanks to you and the rest of the San Diego community, we were able to raise \$10,135 in both online and offline

donations and rank in the top 20 among all large organizations participating in San Diego Gives' Day of Giving. Thank you all for your continued support!



YOUR SUPPORT MEANS THE WORLD TO OUR ROCK STAR TEAM.

“You can make a difference in our fight for critical funding...”



KEEPING INADEQUATE RATES THE SAME EFFECTIVELY IS ANOTHER CUT AND AFFECTS OUR RESIDENTS AND STAFF.

TAKE ACTION

Our community urgently needs your support to advocate, not only for Noah Homes, but for our larger community of Californians with developmental disabilities.

In the wake of California’s budget deficit, Governor Gavin Newsom is proposing to delay rate model implementation for developmental services, meaning that \$1 billion in essential funding will be delayed until July of 2025.

This delay presents challenges for Noah Homes and other residential communities like ours. As inflation continues to rise, funding will not be at the same rate.

This delay shows those with developmental disabilities are not a priority to the California government. The legislature already voted to move the deadline for the funding to July 1, 2024 because they recognized the urgency of the need, so we need to continue to stand up for the progress we have already made.

Consider taking just a few minutes to contact your local representatives by scanning the template linked here, you can make a difference in our fight for critical funding for Californians with developmental disabilities.



Scan to find your representative!



Scan to read our “letter to your senator” template!



IN MEMORIAM

Recounted by Jerry Godinez, Senior Residential Support Manager

Mary Angel Mueller

JUNE 26, 1968 — OCTOBER 12, 2023

Mary moved into Noah Homes in September 1992. She was part of a generation of Noah Homes residents who grew up and aged together, enjoying the opportunities living at Noah Homes offered them: paid jobs, cruise trips, vacations, galas, concerts, and so much more. In her 31 years at Noah Homes, Mary lived in Casa de Esperanza, Casa de Fe, and Casa de Amor.

Mary was a great swimmer, a devout Catholic and a sweet lady with a great sense of humor. She had a habit of pulling people's hoodies over their head for fun and then bursting out

laughing with her unique giggle. She loved to show her affection by giving people multiple hugs throughout the day.

Mary visited her sister in their hometown of Las Vegas, Nevada, two or three times a year - and she flew there by herself up until five years ago! She loved her trips to Vegas, where she could shop (and gamble a little bit). She was the youngest of six children.

Mary was loved by many, and she touched the hearts of countless staff over the years.



Maria Luisa Calderon

OCTOBER 12, 1965 — NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Maria moved into Noah Homes in June of 1989. In her 34 years here, she had the opportunity to live in Casa de Fe, Casa de Caridad, Casa Delight, and lastly, Casa de Amor, where she lived since March 2022.

Maria was a lady with a great sense of humor. She enjoyed having conversations with staff and her peers. She could understand English and Spanish, loved Mexican food and music (especially mariachi), and enjoyed getting Starbucks ("Caramel Frappuccino, please!"). She was also known for always wearing beautiful bracelets, earrings, necklaces, and rings. She had a vast collection of accessories and would not leave

the room without any on. She also enjoyed perfumes and body sprays.

Maria was always the first to volunteer to go on outings; she loved them! She was also featured in our original Client Rights video (made in the '80s), and many of us like to recount the classic scene of her walking into Casa de Fe for the first time with her parents, suitcases in tow.

She lived a life full of many challenges, but she taught us all how to be resilient, to stay strong, and to never give up. In her memory, play songs by Selena or some Mexican mariachi music, or order a venti Caramel Frappuccino.



NOAH HOMES DONORS

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A Note From Noah's ARK ANGEL FOUNDATION

“The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.”
~ Billy Graham

What does it mean to be a Legacy Creator? As a Certified Financial Planner, many of my clients come to me with a singular focus on implementing strategies that will allow them to leave a better financial legacy for their children. However, my experience serving on the board of Noah’s Ark Angel Foundation has shown me that legacy planning encompasses so much more than dollars and cents.

As the newly elected Board Chair of Noah’s Ark Angel Foundation, I am committed to ensuring that the legacy we create for the residents of Noah Homes will endure from generation to generation. The Ark Angel Foundation exists to forever ensure the financial security and stability of Noah Homes. One of the primary ways we do this is by investing in the Noah’s Ark Angel Foundation Endowment.

In November of 2020, Noah’s Ark Angel Foundation received a major gift of \$2 million. Requests for matching went out to the Noah Homes community, and we were able to match the full \$2 million. Since then, we have raised an additional \$1 million in gifts of stock, property and cash, bringing our Capital Campaign Endowment contributions to \$5 million to date. Our campaign goal is to reach \$20 million.

A total Endowment of \$20 million will fund, through interest, Noah Homes’ annual deficit created by the state funding model—approximately \$1 million annually. Despite budget cuts, competition for

workers, and increasing care needs as the residents reach their senior years, Noah Homes continues to prove resilient. To uphold our best-in-class standards and remain a globally recognized model, we must break free from our reliance on state reimbursements. A robust Endowment will allow us to do just that.

A fully-funded Endowment ensures our residents continue to receive the love and support they need throughout their entire lives. It also eliminates the need for additional fundraising staff and frees up valuable resources to create more housing opportunities and other potential revenue streams for the Foundation, such as national franchising, housing partnerships with developers, and exploration of innovative supported living options to better meet the needs of our community.

By making a gift to the Endowment, you can help us build a lasting legacy for the Noah Homes family. To donate, visit naafgiving.org or scan the QR code below with your phone camera. A gift of any size will help us move closer to our ambitious goal. I invite you join the men and women listed on the next page who have already said “Yes” to the call to become Legacy Creators. If you have any questions, please email info@noahsarkangel.org.

In gratitude,

John Rey
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