



# community matters

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## HEROES WORK HERE!



### Leadership at All Levels

As the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic set in, the healthcare staff at each Life Plan Community and at Support Services rose to the occasion and continued to do what they do best: provide excellent care to our residents. Covia has always had strong health care delivery and infection control procedures, but the pandemic has made the planning and training required to maintain safety more evident.

At Spring Lake Village, Jodi Arnheiter, RN and Director of Staff Development, and Sherry Taylor, RN and Director of Nursing, have led the local infection control response. Jodi, who has worked at Spring Lake Village for over 10 years, was trained by the Association for Professional Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) — the leading professional association for infection control specialists. The training includes epidemiology, microbiology, science-based infection prevention practices, and implementation of practices in a long-term care setting.

“We are so lucky to have Jodi on our staff. From the first day, she was providing daily guidance on what we had to do to be prepared,” reports SLV Wellness Director Diane Waltz. Jodi communicates frequently with the Sonoma County Public Health Department on any new data regarding the current situation, as well as reviewing the updates from CDC and the California Association of Long Term Care Medicine (CALTCM). Jodi’s colleagues praise her calm, reassuring presentation of the facts and actions that need to be taken.



Jodi Arnheiter recently became certified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the newest infection control practices.

At Webster House Health Center, Executive Director Linda Hibbs shared her gratitude for her staff’s hard work: “I’m impressed with the dedication and compassion you have demonstrated to our residents, families, and staff. This has been a challenging time with many of you anxious about the COVID-19 virus implication and the economic future of family members. Thank you for your professionalism and willingness to be a team of heroes! The care you show for our residents makes Webster House such a great community.”

Organization-wide, the COVID-19 response is led by a task force of nine executive leaders representing Operations, Life Plan Communities, Affordable Communities, Clinical Care, Human Resources, IT, Community Services, and Communications. Grant Edelstone, Covia’s Senior Director of Risk Management, and Cynthia Shelby, RN and Regional Director of Quality and Care, are critical team members, providing guidance for local staff on best practices for infection control and compliance with local and state regulations.



The nursing staff at San Francisco Towers have provided excellent care to the residents in the Healthcare Center and were well protected with personal protective equipment.

In Oakland, Lisa Hiltbrand, the daughter of Helen Hiltbrand, a resident in the healthcare center at St. Paul’s Towers, expressed her gratitude for the staff, whose compassion and care for their residents was especially important during a time when family members had to stay at a distance. “Since the beginning of the restrictions due to the virus, their extreme dedication and professionalism have been exemplary. The nurses and staff have gone to extraordinary lengths to support my mother. Ranka and the other nurses have organized regular Zoom meetings for my siblings and me,” Lisa says. “It is such a relief to see our mother when we cannot be physically with her. These extra steps are even more spectacular as they’re taken in a time when the staff’s workload has been increased. I know they are taking extra time for interacting with residents due to the lack of visitors,” she says.

As conditions changed rapidly, Grant’s support to track and implement changing mandates and rules was invaluable. St. Paul’s Towers Executive Director Mary Linde, who is also a nurse by background, says, “I am so grateful that Grant is on our team, especially right now with the onslaught of information coming from multiple regulatory agencies. Grant ensures that we all get the information and sends it to us with a concise recap. He also finds the information for us when we are scrambling to meet the demands of our situation. And he does all of this with patience and kindness.”



St. Paul’s Towers Executive Director Mary Linde cheers on a resident with a socially distanced high five.

**Leadership** continues on page 2



“I have been astonished and amazed in the most beautiful ways at watching the staff adapt to how they deliver care. Staff who are normally behind the medication cart are now finding ways to do one-on-one activities with residents.”  
— Mary Linde, St. Paul’s Towers Executive Director

For the past three years, Cynthia Shelby has worked across Covia, providing support to the six health care centers at Covia Communities. She, along with other members of the Clinical Team, offers guidance on the complexities of skilled nursing, including regulatory requirements, preparing for surveys from state regulators, billing questions, staffing concerns, training, and even filling in for key roles as needed.

“A key part of our mission is the continuum of care and how the full team helps residents transition through changes,” says Covia President and CEO Kevin Gerber. “The continuum of care is also about the whole person — not just thinking about their physical needs, but all of their needs.”

Covia has been able to get staff the supplies they need, ordering personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks in larger quantities and distributing to the communities as needed. Shelby, as part of Covia’s COVID-19 Task Force, reports daily on the needs and concerns of the skilled nursing teams, as well as the creative solutions they are implementing — such as turning sections of the health care center into isolation areas should a COVID-19 positive resident need to be kept separate from others.

“We’re making history,” says Shelby. “We’re doing things we’ve never done before. We’re introducing lots of new technologies, new ways of doing things, new ways of communicating to our families. Everyone as a team comes together for that.”

**Moved by the dedication and quality service provided by staff during a difficult and critical time, many residents and family members have made gifts to the Covia Foundation in support of their community’s general fund or employee emergency fund. For information, contact Katharine Miller, Covia Executive Director, at [kmiller@covia.org](mailto:kmiller@covia.org) or 925.956.7414, or make a gift online at [covia.org/donate](https://covia.org/donate)**

## Sheltering in Place — Adapting to a New Way of Life



Servers at Canterbury Woods prepare meals for delivery to residents, a result of dining rooms being closed due to COVID-19.

Community life at Covia shifted with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of the shelter-in-place orders — residents, staff, and program participants found new ways to stay connected. Group activities and communal dining were put on hold while residents stayed safer at home, but resident resiliency and staff dedication quickly allowed for new realities.

A primary challenge for dining services at each community was shifting from a seated dining room experience to packaging all meals for delivery or take-out. Dining staff rose to the occasion with creativity, experimentation, and flexibility. At Canterbury Woods, residents even volunteered to help coordinate the orders for their neighbors so everyone could get what they wanted. To enhance their regular meal offerings, the San Francisco Towers dining staff offered a weekly door-to-door cart with wine and cheese and fresh produce from the farmer’s market.

At St. Paul’s Towers, a server went out of his way to bring Margaret Hasselman, an SPT resident, part of her meal that had gotten left out of her bag. “Last night after I returned to my apartment from picking up my dinner at

the bistro, I heard a knock at my door. It was Roderick! He came up to my 12th floor apartment to bring me crudités that were missing from my bag,” Margaret says. “I still am so delighted that he would do that. Such an act of kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness.”

At Webster House, Executive Director Linda Hibbs checks in on residents by personally delivering glasses of wine door to door in the evening. At Canterbury Woods, the “Good Humor Crew” was a big hit, with dining staff going door to door delivering ice cream. “It makes me feel like a kid again!” says one happy customer.

Activities directors also had to adapt, and staff and residents alike began embracing the virtual possibilities for group activities. Spring Lake Village, which has a robust wellness program, created a schedule of fitness classes for residents to enjoy via the Zoom online platform, accessed by computer or tablet. A parcourse with exercises to be done outside along the walking path was also created as a way for the residents to get exercise while socially distanced. Musicians who would typically perform for an audience in the Spring Lake Village Montgomery Center recorded concerts to be enjoyed online. Residents also staged impromptu concerts in courtyards for neighbors to enjoy from their windows and doorways.

At St. Paul’s Towers, the program team organized a socially distanced virtual happy hour where residents visited the lounge to pick up a glass of wine, sparkling water, or portioned ingredients to make their own cocktail of the day. Residents took their beverages back to their apartments and tuned into a Zoom session to catch up and enjoy each other’s company.

Social distancing may mean that our residents and staff can’t be physically close, but fortunately, there are still plenty of ways to connect with each other and the outside world while staying safe at home.



Residents enjoy choosing from an array of ice cream treats delivered door-to-door by Canterbury Woods dining staff.





# Social Call: Staying Connected with Card Writing

Social Call, a program of Covia Community Services, connects older adults with volunteers for one-on-one visits in person or over the phone. With physical distancing and shelter-in-place mandates, all visits have shifted to the phone, and the Social Call team added a new service to brighten the days of older adults isolated by the pandemic. Volunteers have written more than 7,000 cards with personal notes that were sent to Covia Community Services participants, residents of Covia Communities, and residents at other senior living communities. During this uncertain and isolating time, opening the mailbox to a personalized card can go a long way to brighten spirits and help someone feel connected to the wider world.

The team of people who mobilized to write cards included existing Social Call volunteers, Covia employees who had been working from home, as well as more than 200 new volunteers who signed up specifically to write cards.

Covia Foundation Development Associate Michelle Haines was excited to participate. Michelle says, “I love putting smiles on people’s faces. This is a challenging time for humanity, and it’s important that people know that we’re all in this together and that no one is alone. Lonely maybe, but definitely not alone.”

Volunteers are “giving someone a little visit and hug via mail,” says Social Call Program Manager Amber Dean. The program has been providing volunteers with suggestions on how to reach out in meaningful ways — from sharing what they are grateful for to discussing what they have been doing when outside activities have been restricted.

Recipients who have received cards have been sending positive messages to the Social Call team in gratitude. “I want to say

“I was really feeling down and then a card came in the mail, and it meant so much.”  
— Social Call participant



Volunteers have even been expressing their creativity by making their own cards to brighten a senior’s day. Pieces submitted for the program have included homemade cards made from stamps, scrapbooking paper, and stickers.

thank you for the beautiful card I received...a lovely note expressing their concern for me and wishing me all the best. I truly, truly appreciate that so much, you have no idea,” says one participant who received a card. Another recipient notes that “I was really feeling down and then a card came in the mail, and it meant so much. It really made my day.”

The card writing campaign has also had a positive impact on the volunteers who are creating the cards. Haines notes that what she enjoys most about the project is “knowing that I made a difference in the life of a beautiful stranger and that the world is a better place for having done so. Love wins!” ▼

## Supporting the “Heroes Who Work Here”

The residents of St. Paul’s Towers wanted to do something special for the team members who were caring for them while the community was closed during the pandemic.

“I have such gratitude for the hospitality and service from the staff,” says Irene Olson, a two-year resident of St. Paul’s Towers. “My family is as excited as I am that I’ve been safe and secure.”



Betsy Baron, St. Paul’s Towers Senior Living Counselor, came up with a way for residents to express their appreciation. She got out her sewing machine and started making face masks — and gave one to every resident who made a gift of \$35 or more to the Covia Foundation for the Employee Emergency Fund at St. Paul’s Towers. By June 1st, residents had donated more than \$10,000.

The Covia Employee Emergency Fund provides assistance to employees who face a crisis situation and need help. Since its inception, nearly 150 Covia employees have applied for help, and the Employee Emergency Fund has been there. Examples of assistance include help for an emergency roof repair, unexpected funeral expenses, or transportation aid after the theft of a car.

The Employee Emergency Fund was originally started by staff members, with many making regular gifts by payroll deduction. During recent times of crisis such as the Santa Rosa firestorms in 2017 and 2018, and today’s global pandemic, many residents have joined in to support their staff. Gifts to the Employee Emergency Fund make a real difference in the life of a Covia team member who is in need of help. This support is all the more vital now as, together, we weather the pandemic and continue our tradition of community.



Residents of St. Paul’s Towers demonstrate their enthusiasm for wearing masks to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Gifts to the Covia Employee Emergency Fund can be made online at [covia.org/donate](https://covia.org/donate). Or use the envelope in this issue of *Community Matters*. ▼

“I was concerned about the finances of our front line hourly staff, who may have family members who were losing their jobs or having their hours cut, threatening their household income and stability. I also knew that there were SPT residents who felt the same. They were anxious to help.”  
— Betsy Baron, St. Paul’s Towers Senior Living Counselor



# Market Day Delivers in Times of Need



Volunteers and staff organize food delivery boxes at Lytton Gardens, a Covia Affordable Community.

Jean was down to a few cans of soup and saltine crackers and was afraid to venture out for groceries. Like many seniors, she faces increased risk from COVID-19 and has limited transportation options, so her food supplies were dwindling as the pandemic stretched on.

Covia’s Market Day stepped in and provided fresh produce and staples to Jean and more than 2,300 other seniors living in affordable senior housing communities.

“The gesture alone helped my spirits,” says a resident of Presidio Gate Apartments in San Francisco. “The bananas and berries were most appreciated and the sweet potatoes were good mashed.”

In March, Market Day announced its 24 market gatherings would temporarily close as the public health crisis mounted, and staff worried that low-income seniors would be going without fresh fruit, vegetables, and



Each delivery contained a variety of fresh produce, from blueberries to broccoli, pears to zucchini, along with a pound of rice.

staples. Seniors who shop at Market Day have easy access to nutritious food at wholesale prices, set up in their affordable housing community, church, or local senior center.

Many shoppers say Market Day lifts their spirits and increases their appetite for fresh food and their interest in cooking for themselves.

The recent Market Day deliveries carried that nutrition right to the doorstep of 2,399 seniors and offered a cheery hello from a friendly staff person (from behind a face covering, of course!)

Seniors at 11 affordable senior housing communities have received Market Day deliveries, including Bethany Center (San Francisco), Jennings Court (Santa Rosa), Presidio Gate Apartments (San Francisco), Oak Center Towers (Oakland), Shires Memorial (San Jose), Allen Temple Arms (Oakland), Broadmoor Plaza (San Leandro), Cottonwood Place (Moreno Valley), Emerson Village (Pomona), Marin City (Marin City), and Stoneman Village (Pittsburg). ▼

“I can’t tell you how much the groceries were appreciated by my residents. I’ve seen the need for food increasing. This is so generous of Covia and it is definitely needed.”


— Cottonwood Place staff member

Market Day is a program of Covia Community Services. Find more information about Market Day or make a donation to support this vital program here: [covia.org/services/market-day](https://covia.org/services/market-day)


## Circle of Friends Luncheon Update

We regret to say that the 2020 *Circle of Friends* Luncheon is canceled, due to uncertainty about the ability to gather safely in a large group. A special virtual celebration of the *Circle of Friends* will be planned for August for the residents of our Life Plan Communities.


Support of the *Circle of Friends* Resident Assistance Fund is needed now more than ever. To make a donation, please contact Katharine Miller, Covia Executive Director, at [kmiller@covia.org](mailto:kmiller@covia.org) or 925.956.7414, or make a gift online at [covia.org/donate](https://covia.org/donate) ▼



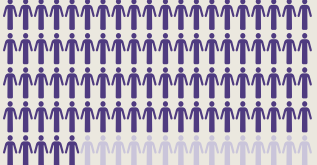
Who We Serve through the *Circle of Friends*




The average age of residents who receive assistance is 91 years.



They have lived in our communities an average of 17 years.




85% are single, primarily women who have outlived their spouses or partners.



38%

38% are living in Assisted, Memory, or Skilled Care.

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# Value of Virtual Connection

Over a decade ago, long before COVID-19 would drastically alter our world, Covia developed a resource to promote social engagement among older adults and combat loneliness and social isolation. That program, Well Connected, is now a nationwide social connection and lifelong learning program that is free and open to all older adults — not just Covia residents or its affiliates.

“The program was initially designed for low-income, extremely isolated, frail older adults who needed more engagement,” says Tracy Powell, Covia’s Vice President of Community Services. “It was a lovely but small support system rooted in engagement and volunteerism,” she notes, initially offering 10 free one-hour classes per week. Over the last few years, the programming has grown “in sophistication and audience.” Participants, who currently come from 46 states, can now choose from over 80 classes and groups that are offered every single week. The programs vary from support groups to topical discussions to interactive courses, all available by phone or online.

**“At the heart of it, this is all very central to our mission as an organization: building community wherever people are.”**  
— Ron Schaefer, Covia Chief Operating Officer

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Well Connected participation has skyrocketed. Prior to the social distancing and quarantining requirements brought about by the crisis,

Well Connected had about 2,000 participants. Then, in the first two weeks of April alone, 200 new participants joined — a 10 percent increase in just two weeks after 10 years of operation. Since the onset of COVID-19, Well Connected has had a total of 685 new participants. Now staff are getting calls from other senior living operators interested in enrolling their residents.

“There has been a huge increase in terms of enrollment and interest,” Powell says. “There have been 50 to 75 organizations so far just through the end of May that have contacted us and asked if they can join and find out more about what’s involved in virtual programming.”

Social Call, another Covia Community Services program, matches individuals for one-on-one social connections. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, many of these friendly visits were conducted in person based on shared interests and geographic proximity. Now, Social Call happens entirely by phone, lifting the geographic limitations and significantly expanding the possibilities for connections based on interests and compatibility — especially since the program has seen a huge increase in volunteers as well as participants.

Another project that Covia has spearheaded in response to COVID-19 is “Enduring Inspiration,” a worldwide call for art made by older adults. The program was developed in partnership with Ruth’s Table, an arts



Seniors from all over the United States participate in Well Connected and Social Call for creative engagement and social connection — all via the phone.

center named in honor of the internationally-known artist Ruth Asawa that is a part of Covia’s Bethany Center affordable housing community in San Francisco.

Seniors around the world are encouraged to make any kind of art and send it in — a recipe, a collage, a painting, a drawing, or anything else that can be easily mailed — for a juried exhibit that will be held at the freestanding gallery space at Bethany Center once it is safe to do so. Covia is also developing art packets and embroidery kits to send out to seniors in their communities so they can create their own art.

“At the heart of it, this is all very central to our mission as an organization: building community wherever people are,” says Ron Schaefer, Covia’s Chief Operating Officer. “These programs help bring people together and create connections.” ▼

## Crafting a Legacy

Throughout the recent challenging times, the strength of resilient community and caring connections with one another have never been more apparent. For more than 50 years, members of the Covia Foundation Heritage Society have helped to build the foundation of that resiliency. Heritage Society members pledge a future gift to Covia Foundation to help support their community, the *Circle of Friends* Assistance Fund, or a cherished Covia program. These legacy gifts throughout the years have buoyed the resilience, quality, and strength of Covia communities and services.

You don’t have to be wealthy to make a difference. You just have to plant a gift in your estate plans. Your wishes will grow from there, enriching the community of caring and services for seniors.

**What types of gifts can I leave to the Covia Foundation in my will?**  
You may leave items such as cash, property, land, securities or real estate. Every gift, no matter how small or large, can make a difference in the lives of seniors.

**Can I support a specific program in my community with my gift?**  
Yes, you may support a specific community or program. You may also designate your gift be used where the need is greatest. These unrestricted gifts are especially valuable, as they provide flexibility to respond to changing needs and priorities.

**Is a gift through my will tax deductible?**  
The Covia Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Charitable gifts are deductible to the full extent of the law. However, we suggest you seek advice from your tax advisor. Administrative charges are not deducted from gifts.

**I already have a will — can I still leave a gift to the Covia Foundation?**  
Yes. Simply specify the Covia Foundation as a beneficiary of a particular account (such as a savings account or a retirement account). You can also amend your will with simple language (referred to as a codicil) to include a gift to the Covia Foundation.

**How do I get started?**  
Please contact Katharine Miller, Covia Foundation Executive Director (925.956.7414 or kmiller@covia.org), to discuss your priorities and options. The Covia Foundation receives and administers all charitable gifts made to support Covia Communities, Covia Affordable Communities, and Covia Community Services.

*Please notify us of your intentions to provide a bequest gift so that we may include your name as a member of the Heritage Society on the Honor Roll of Donors.* ▼



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The 9th Annual Celtic Cup Golf Tournament has been canceled due to the pandemic. Covia Foundation will return to Berkeley Country Club next year, so save **April 26, 2021** for the 10th Anniversary Celtic Cup.

We are so grateful to this year’s sponsors and participants who have pledged their support despite the cancellation. Their support will directly help provide services for vulnerable and isolated seniors during these difficult times. You can help match those dollars — and make a difference to seniors in need — by making a gift at [covia.org/celticcupgiving](https://covia.org/celticcupgiving) ▼

# Covia and Front Porch Affiliate: Greater Impact, Greater Good



Covia and Front Porch, both leading California-based not-for-profit providers of senior living, services, and affordable housing, recently announced an affiliation. The affiliation will create one of the nation’s top not-for-profit organizations providing senior living, affordable housing, and community services for more than 10,000 people. The combined organization will ensure long-term stability, achieve economic benefits, manage costs, and scale and access resources across 54 communities.

“Aligning our leadership, experience, and expertise creates an opportunity to better meet the evolving expectations of a growing population of older adults,” said Oliver Wesson, Chairman of the Front Porch Board of Directors.

The affiliation is subject to regulatory approvals and is expected to close in early 2021.

“Our affiliation with Front Porch creates a strong organization going forward that will support the changing needs of our residents.”

— Vincent Forte, Chairman of the Covia Communities Board of Directors

Front Porch was formed in 1999 when four experienced non-profit organizations came together in partnership. The Front Porch partners continually grow their services and philanthropic missions to better serve the community. For more than 50 years, Covia has helped individuals live well and age well, anywhere they call home.

“Combining with Covia strengthens our long-held goal of building strong and engaging communities, connecting people with the services and relationships they need to thrive,” said John Woodward, Front Porch CEO. ▼

<div><b>covia</b> Live Well and Age Well — Anywhere You Call Home</div>	<div><b>Life Plan Communities</b></div> <div>Canterbury Woods San Francisco Towers Spring Lake Village St. Paul’s Towers Webster House</div>	<div><b>Affordable Communities</b></div> <div>Bethany Center Friendship Manor Jennings Court Lytton Gardens Oak Center Towers Presidio Gate Apartments Shires Memorial Center</div>	<div><b>Community Services</b></div> <div>Home Match Market Day Rotary Home Team Social Call Well Connected Senior Resources</div>	<div> 925.956.7400 • <a href="https://covia.org">covia.org</a> </div>
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