



MASONS OF CALIFORNIA

FRATERNITY REPORT 2023



Change, for the Better

AS WE APPROACH the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Grand Lodge of California, I've been contemplating just how much our fraternity has changed in that time.

We have always worked to provide relief where the need exists—including beyond the walls of our lodges. Now, more than ever, we are meeting these needs in new and creative ways.

This year, we greatly expanded admissions at the Masonic Homes of California. That means that, for the first time ever, services through the Masonic Homes are open to the parents and parents-in-law of eligible

California Masons—including Fellow Crafts and Entered Apprentices—as well as to our fellow members in the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California and the Grand Lodge of Iran in Exile.

That's not the only way we're reaching into the community around us.

Through the California Masonic Foundation, we recently launched an exciting new campaign through the Working Tools Program to invest in pathways into the trades for students in San Diego looking for an alternative to a four-year college degree. This was part of a place-based philanthropic strategy in San Diego, and one we look forward to building on next year in Sacramento.

Meanwhile, the Masonic Center for Youth and Families keeps growing, providing individual, group, family, and senior therapy to Masons, their families, and the community at large. Through MCYAF, we are meeting an important community need at a time of unprecedented stress.

The California Masonic Memorial Temple and Nob Hill Masonic Center have also implemented new strategies to bring more people in, raise awareness of our institution, and to enhance the support they provide to our many important programs. Their contributions to Masonry in California are superb.

Through these efforts and those of our lodges and members, I believe we are "Sharing the Light of Freemasonry" and materially improving the world around us.

G. Sean Metroka
GRAND MASTER OF MASONS IN CALIFORNIA

From the Ground Up



THE FRATERNITY IS STILL FEELING THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC, BUT IN 2023, SIGNS WERE POINTING UP.

TONY ALBRIGHT CAN remember the days when his lodge struggled to hold a single meeting. As secretary of **Chula Vista № 626**, he's seen it all up close. A decade ago, he recalls, its leadership ranks had thinned. Degree conferrals were infrequent, and prospects practically nonexistent. At one point, it got so bad that the lodge couldn't field

enough officers to conduct official business and its charter was suspended. "There were a lot of guys in their 80s, just not a lot of participation," he says. "It was a bad impression of Masonry."

Those days are long gone. In fact, the biggest challenge the lodge faces now is probably managing its bulging degree calendar. In 2023, the lodge had one of its busiest years

aggressive online campaign to heighten awareness of the fraternity and efforts to welcome new Masons and to support existing members, there was a lot for lodges to balance. But at places like Chula Vista № 626, as well as **Old West № 813** and **South West № 283**, which also posted banner years, more work was a decidedly good thing.

In fact, at **Acalanes Fellowship № 480** in Lafayette, it even meant rethinking some old routines. This year, says master Brad Rupert, the lodge incorporated a social hour before each stated meeting dinner so as to provide a better setting for the many prospects who've shown up at their doors. Members have also built a 10-minute presentation on Masonry into the regular meal for those seeking an introduction. The result has been a spike in new member activity.

"It's a lot of little things," Rupert says, "but just staying engaged with our prospects is a big one. We're known as the friendly lodge, so our people know how to talk to new guys and follow up with them."

There should be plenty of chances for them to prove it: As of late 2023, the lodge had four new applicants and eight more inquiries that came in from the web. At Chula Vista № 626, there were 12 new inquiries in the system, plus six candidates and nine applicants—meaning the lodge calendar for 2024 was already filling up.

FOCUS ON MEMBERSHIP

Numbers like that paint a rosy picture for the future of the fraternity. While overall membership is still feeling the protracted effect of the pandemic—during which more than 10 percent of members either were suspended,

"Our people know how to talk to new guys and follow up with them."

moved away, or otherwise left the fold—the past two years have seen a welcome jump in applications, the first step in what for most people is a lifelong commitment to Masonry. In fact, in 2023, California lodges received more applications for membership than in any year since 2016.

That wasn't an accident. Indeed, coming out of the pandemic, increasing membership has been a focus at both the Grand Lodge and local lodge levels. Whereas 2020 and 2021 were about returning to in-person meetings and rebuilding lodges' officers' lines, the past two years have featured a flurry of activity surrounding ways to attract and support new members. In 2023, the fraternity saw 1,087 new Entered Apprentices join the fraternity, a slight gain compared to 2022 and a huge jump from 2020 and 2021.

Some of those moves were highly visible: For the second year in a row, the Grand Lodge conducted a membership awareness campaign on social media to connect interested prospects to local lodges. That effort yielded impressive results, with nearly 14,000 click-throughs and more than 3,100 registered prospects entered in iMember (part of the more than 5,000 prospects entered for the year), evidence of pent-up demand for Masonry in California. Those numbers, combined with similar figures reached during the 2022 campaign (3,700 prospect leads), suggest that for many lodges, the prospect pipeline is active for the first time in ages. At the same time, the Grand Lodge increased its Member Services team to include three new staff positions dedicated to guiding prospects.

But, as many a lodge secretary knows, it's up to local lodges to convert those prospects into members, something that has not always proved to be easy. In 2023, for instance, nearly 45 percent of online prospects were uncontacted by a member of their local lodge, leaving nearly 2,500 interested, would-be applicants waiting in limbo. To that end, 2023 saw the introduction of a new lodge officer position: the prospect manager, charged with leading a lodge-level welcoming committee whose task it is to reach out to and shepherd prospects through the membership process.

Though new, this effort has already proved effective, with nearly a third of California lodges having identified a prospect manager responsible for handling incoming prospects. At a single online training session, 173 California Masons logged on to better understand the position and the duties associated with lodge welcoming committees. Says Michael Roberts, the senior membership adviser for the Grand Lodge, "Ensuring we have people and systems in place to guide prospects is crucial in rebuilding membership. This is important infrastructure to help set lodges up for success now and in the future."

RETENTION IS KEY

While much attention has been paid to bringing in new members, an equally important part of the overall health of the fraternity is retaining existing members. And in 2023, California lodges made important strides on that front, too.

Demographic trends have worked against Masonic lodges for decades, leading to an overall loss in members going back more than half a century. However, in recent years, that tide has begun to shift. Instead of dealing with members of the Greatest Generation



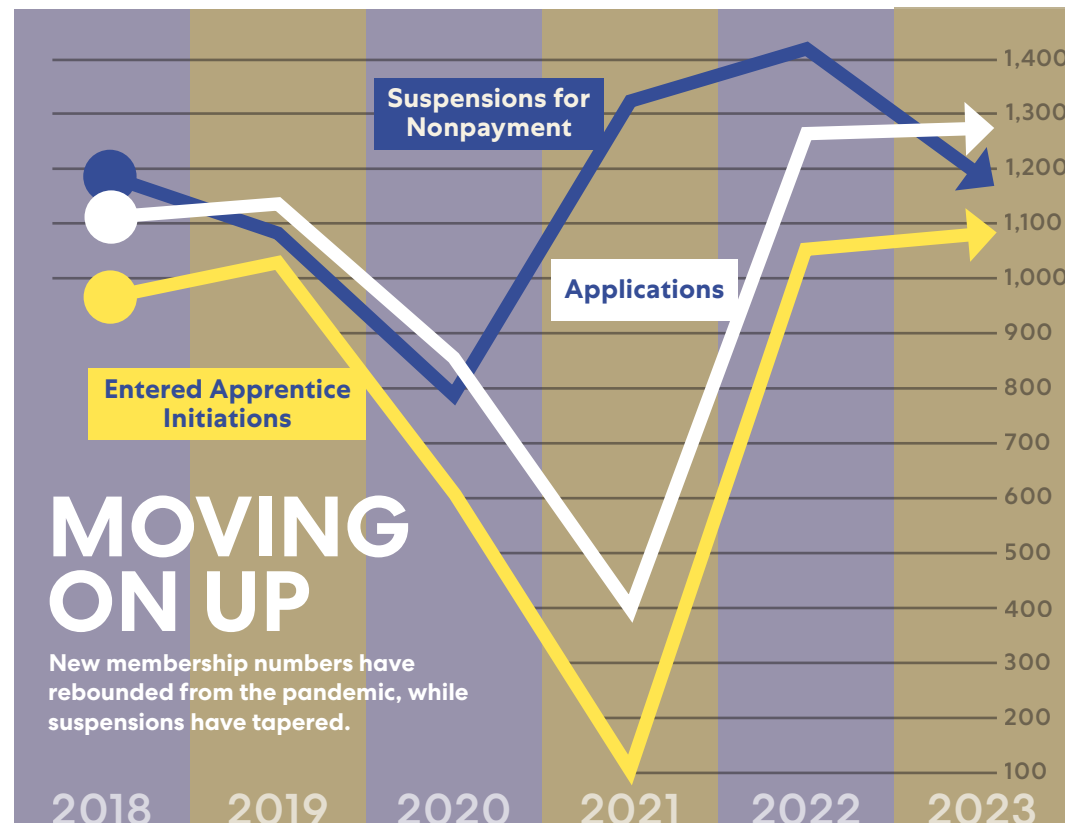
A DOUBLE FIRST DEGREE CONFERRAL AT CHULA VISTA No. 626 ON AUGUST 29, 2023.

aging out of the fraternity, the biggest obstacle to growth now is suspensions.

Since 2018, the fraternity has suspended nearly 6,000 members, mostly for nonpayment of dues. However, research indicates that the vast majority of those members aren't simply demitting; they let their dues lapse either accidentally or because of a simple clerical error, like a change in address. To combat that, the Grand Lodge has introduced several initiatives to streamline dues payments and offer suspended members a lifeline back to lodge.

The first of these was a dues-payment feature accessible through iMember that allows Masons to pay via credit card. Since it launched as a pilot program in 2020, three-quarters of all lodges have opted into this program. Those lodges, in turn, have reported lower rates of suspension for nonpayment of dues.

That's just the start. In late 2021, California Masons approved legislation allowing lodges to partially remit a member's dues because of financial hardship, allowing them to pay what they can and removing what for some members had been a stigma against requesting a full remission.



And this year another feature was rolled out: prepayment. Now, in iMember, Masons can elect to prepay their next year's dues (the amount of which is set at the end of the preceding year). As part of that feature, members can pay in a lump sum or in installments.

Taken together, these back-end changes are helping members more easily afford and pay their dues, remain in good standing, and fortify the fraternity. Thanks to these moves—and the efforts of local lodges to effectively communicate with members—suspensions for nonpayment of dues fell by 20 percent in 2023.

Finally, one of the most powerful tools lodges have to stabilize membership is restoration. Through a Grand Lodge campaign launched in 2019, more than 2,000

members have been restored to good standing by paying a simple flat fee. In 2023, that included 340 members across 167 participating lodges. If every lodge in the state opted into the program, it's estimated that overall losses would be cut by a third.

NEW LODGES

Preserving and expanding the footprint of the fraternity in communities around the state is paramount to ensuring its future. That's why, since 2016, the Grand Lodge has made the development of new lodges a high priority. Indeed, in that time, 38 new lodges have been successfully instituted, including four in 2023 (**Sonora U.D.** and **Pilares del Rey Salomon Nº 886**, as well as two new research lodges: the **Edwin Sherman Research Lodge** in Oakland and the **California Hispanic and Latin American Research Lodge** in Long Beach).

These new lodges help reinvigorate the fraternity by providing a Masonic presence in places that have not previously had one and by offering members more options and Masonic perspectives than ever before.

In many cases, new lodges also cater to new audiences. Among these, **GAT Jose Rizal Nº 882**, **MW Manuel Luis Quezon Nº 874**, and **Andres Bonifacio Nº 879**—all formed since 2019—honor a decidedly Filipino Masonic heritage; two others are dedicated to exploring the tradition of Latin American Masonry. Another new lodge, **La France Nº 885**, is carrying the torch as the only Francophone lodge in Southern California and, as a result of new legislation, will use the Scottish Rite ritual that's commonly practiced in Europe and Latin America.

New lodges, paired with new members and new tools for supporting them, add up to a new day for Masonry in California. ■



Working Together

AT MARIN Nº 191, A NEW MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN IS BRINGING THREE LOCAL LODGES TOGETHER.

FOR A LODGE WITH such a celebrated past, **Marin Nº 191** in San Rafael has been particularly forward-looking of late. This year, along with its sister lodges, **Mill Valley Nº 356** and **Ross Valley Nº 556**, the group will launch a district-wide online membership campaign. The result, lodge leaders hope, will be a surge of interest in the historic lodge, not to mention a new model of cooperation between neighboring lodges.

What's the idea behind this district-wide social media campaign?

Barry Young, Master: The main credit goes to Michael Paynter, our district inspector. The idea goes back several years, in terms of reaching out, but with the Grand Lodge running its campaign the past two years, we

finally had a program in place to get the word out in an organized fashion. So we're working with Mill Valley and Ross Valley, and at the same time trying to coordinate more informal programs together, since they go hand in hand with the online program.

What kinds of informal programs are you envisioning?

Our lodges have typically come together to do one big event during the year. Mill Valley for a couple of years hosted a big bocce night; we've also done a picnic. Right now, we're planning on having a table lodge event together in June.

Why is it important for your lodge to work with its neighbor lodges in Marin County?

Like many communities in the Bay Area, it's very expensive here in Marin. So we've had a lot

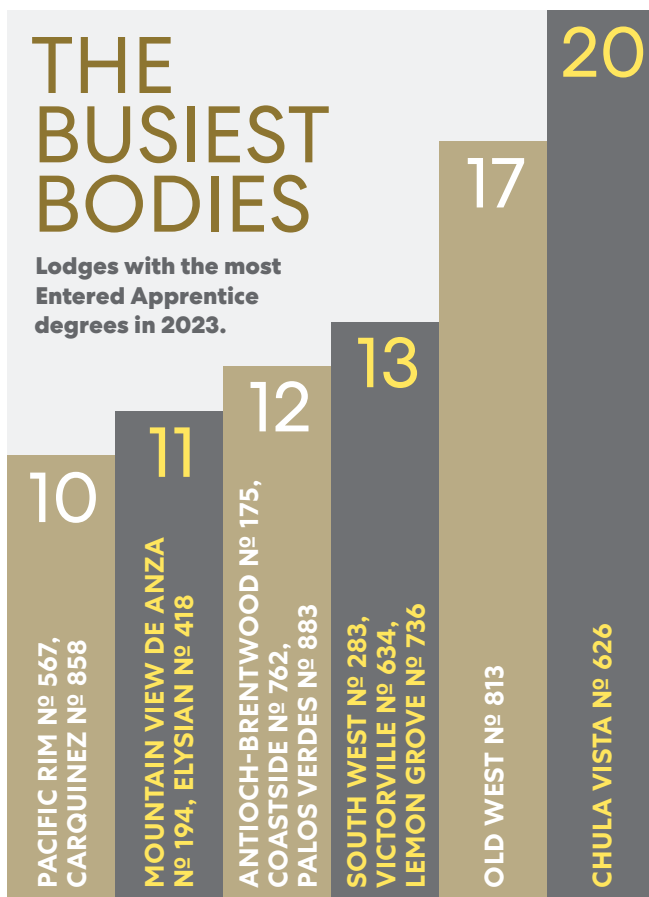
of people who've had to move elsewhere. It's especially hard on younger folks, and that affects membership for all our lodges. Marin still has a small-town flavor to it, so we all want to broaden our horizons.

What's your vision for the future of the lodge?

The potential is here for more community involvement. We're really trying to build that bridge and get established with more community groups in town. Another simple thing is having our stated meeting dinners at different restaurants around town, just getting our name out there. I want to have a really vibrant lodge. We want to have a nice mixture of members that reflects how the community really is populated and to be more ingrained with the community. ■

THE BUSIEST BODIES

Lodges with the most Entered Apprentice degrees in 2023.



Watch a Video

SCAN THE QR CODE TO SEE A VIDEO PROFILE OF THE LODGE.

A Force for Good



IN 2023, THE CALIFORNIA MASONIC FOUNDATION BROUGHT ITS RESOURCES AND RELATIONSHIPS TO BEAR ON A SINGLE COMMUNITY—AND SHOWED THE TRUE IMPACT OF MASONIC PHILANTHROPY.

SHORTLY AFTER SHE TOOK OVER as executive director of the college-readiness nonprofit Reality Changers of San Diego, Tamara Craver started calling around to introduce

BY IAN A. STEWART

herself to some of the organization's closest partners. High up on that list was the California Masonic Foundation, which for years had worked with the group to identify deserving high school graduates through its Investment in Success scholarship program. "When I met

with Doug [Ismail, president of the California Masonic Foundation], he asked me, 'How can we be helpful?'" Craver recalls. "His goal was to create a true partnership."

Craver explained that what her organization needed, more than anything, was connections to other charitable foundations and community groups. So Ismail invited her to a ball game. "We got to sit in the owner's suite," Craver says. "Doug introduced me to [SVP for community affairs] Tom Seidler and raved

to him about the work Reality Changers had done in helping first-generation students not only reach college but thrive there."

Fast-forward four years, and that introduction had turned into something even Craver couldn't have imagined. Last March, Craver, Ismail, Seidler, and 10 beaming young students found themselves standing on the field at Petco Park being introduced to the crowd as the first recipients of a brand-new college scholarship—the result of a novel partnership between the three organizations that will fund 10 awards annually worth up to \$10,000 each to help students who have overcome personal adversity pursue higher education. "When I witnessed those students on the field being recognized like that, there are many defining moments in people's lives," Craver says. "I could tell that was going to be one of those moments for them."

The scene was especially meaningful for the contingent of Masons on hand representing the California Masonic Foundation, as it encapsulated a new and successful approach to its philanthropic work that was very much in evidence in 2023. Last year, the Foundation pursued a place-based strategy, focusing much of its community efforts on organizations serving young people in San Diego. And it did that through something California Masons have proved especially adept at: bringing people together.

The new scholarship program—which is named in honor of Johnny Ritchey, the San Diego-born ballplayer referred to as the "Jackie Robinson of the West" for breaking the color barrier in the Pacific Coast League in 1948—was just the start. In September, Grand Master Randall L. Brill and members of the Foundation joined with representatives of the San Diego Unified School District



STUDENTS FROM REALITY CHANGERS OF SAN DIEGO AND FOUNDATION PRESIDENT DOUG ISMAIL FLANK A BUST OF JOHNNY RITCHEY, THE NAMESAKE OF A NEW SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED THROUGH THE PADRES AND THE CALIFORNIA MASONIC FOUNDATION.

to announce a new three-year gift worth \$390,000 from the Working Tools program to expand the district's College, Career, and Technical Education (CCTE) programs. The money will fund new course offerings, staffing, and outreach for its automotive technology and repair and its building and construction trades courses to reach a further 3,000 students districtwide.

Sarah Vielma, director of CCTE programming for the district, says the funds will help build a pathway to well-paid jobs in expanding fields for the 64 percent of San Diego Unified students who don't immediately enter a four-year college program after graduation. According to local employment projections, San Diego County is expected to add nearly 200,000 jobs in the construction and automotive trades by 2030.



FOUNDATION PRESIDENT DOUG ISMAIL ANNOUNCES A NEW THREE-YEAR, \$390,000 GIFT TO SDUSD TO EXPAND ITS TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.

“While our automotive technology and building and construction trades programs have the lowest enrollment due to current budget and staffing restraints, they also garner the highest levels of interest among students,” Vielma says. “Through this funding, these programs will now be able to accept and serve more students who are eager to take advantage of CCTE in new locations across the district.”

As with the Johnny Ritchey scholarship, the gift was realized thanks to the Foundation’s longstanding relationships with local partners, including the literacy nonprofit

“By funneling our resources and connections into one community, we see just how impactful our fraternity can be.”

Raising a Reader as well as nearby community colleges and members of the Masonic Public Education Advisory Committees. Through those networks, the Foundation was able to craft and ultimately deliver on one of its largest-ever pledges. For that work, the Foundation received the San

Diego Business Journal’s Nonprofit and Corporate Citizenship Award.

Lastly, the Foundation and the Padres Community Foundation announced that together they would begin work on an ambitious project to reinvigorate a single local school: Perkins Elementary.

The problems at Perkins, a K-8 school in the Barrio Logan neighborhood, reflect some of the biggest challenges facing California schools today. Thirty-seven percent of kids at Perkins are currently experiencing homelessness. Two-thirds are considered chronically absent. Virtually every family at Perkins is living in poverty. The result is that students there live through significant trauma and stress every day. It also means that teachers and administrators are dealing not only with students’ grades and test scores, but also more fundamental issues like their hunger, safety, and health.

Working with school officials, the Foundation identified several spaces at the school in desperate need of renovation in order to make students and staff feel safe and to create a welcoming atmosphere where they can learn and grow. The first phase of that

work involved installing new gates around the school’s parking lots and renovating a disused teachers’ lounge. Over the coming months, workers will also renovate the school’s ball fields and play areas.

“This work is a concrete example of our Masonic values,” Ismail says. “By funneling our resources into one community, we see just how impactful our fraternity can be. These programs are already making a real difference in young people’s lives.”

San Diego is just the start. Ismail says he hopes to take that place-based strategy and replicate it in future years in other communities. In 2024, the Foundation will focus on the Sacramento area. “This work relies on the kind of relationship building that Masons do best,” he says. “The result is real—and truly impactful.”

EDUCATION IS KEY

Outside San Diego, California Masons’ generosity continued to support several charitable programs throughout the state.

The longstanding Investment in Success scholarship awarded \$270,000 for the year to 174 students—typically those bound for state or community colleges who otherwise would not qualify for such awards. In addition, the C.E. Towne Masonic Award, given in collaboration with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California, distributed \$228,000 to 24 students. Since its inception, that award has been given to more than 100 students for a total of \$710,000. And the Masonic Youth Leadership Scholarship closed in on \$1 million in all-time support, with \$112,000 distributed in 2023. Between those three programs, the Foundation issued

FOUNDATION OF THE CRAFT

Once again, Masons gave generously to the California Masonic Foundation in 2023.

\$1,669,054
TOTAL PLANNED GIFTS

\$3,297,894
TOTAL GIFTS (ANNUAL FUND AND PLANNED GIFTS) TO OUR MASONIC CHARITIES

\$1,628,840
GIVEN TO THE ANNUAL FUND BENEFITTING PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE DISTRESSED WORTHY BROTHER RELIEF FUND, AND MASONS4MITTS

\$860,000 in scholarships to 221 students.

The year 2023 was also a banner one for Masons4Mitts, with a new milestone for single-season giving reached at \$286,580. That includes record-setting seasons in Northern California (\$126,824 to the Giants Community Fund), Los Angeles (\$72,069), and Orange County (\$47,042), spurred in large part by new and energetic leadership among fundraising team captains. Since launching in 2009, Masons4Mitts has raised more than \$2 million to support youth baseball and softball and summer enrichment programs. All told, that represents more than 100,000 leather mitts given to underserved young people.

That spirit of generosity was reflected in overall giving to the Foundation's annual fund, which reached \$1,628,840 in 2023. The number of members who donated was up from 2022, as was the percentage of members who gave and the number of lodge



MASONS4MITTS SUPPORTS YOUNG BALLPLAYERS FROM THE PADRES COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BY PROVIDING NEW LEATHER BASEBALL MITTS TO UNDERSERVED CHILDREN.

officer gifts. Recurring online gifts and Grand Master's Circle-level gifts were also up.

Beyond those numbers, the desire and ability of California Masons to make an impact in their community was on full display in 2023. Says Ismail, "Our success is measured by our ability to impact lives." And by that measure, California Masons are clearly thriving. ■

THE GIVING SPIRIT

Masons4Mitts set fundraising records in three regions in 2023, as well as a new statewide mark.



COURTESY OF SAN DIEGO PADRES



MEMBERS OF ANDRES BONIFACIO Nº 879 AT A LODGE-SPONSORED BLOOD DRIVE.

The Givers

A NEW LODGE, ANDRES BONIFACIO Nº 879, HAS PUT PHILANTHROPY AT THE CENTER OF ITS CULTURE.

WITH 15 PAST MASTERS on its membership rolls along with two district inspectors, **Andres Bonifacio Nº 879** has no shortage of leadership experience. Fittingly, then, despite having only received its charter in 2021, the lodge has already made its mark as one of the state's most philanthropic, both locally and through the California Masonic Foundation.

"As past masters, we all know the importance of duty and when to extend that helping hand to those in need," says current lodge master Edwin Senga. "We also know the challenges and

mistakes that come with being a past master, so we try to be the best examples for the brethren to follow."

As a 100 percent officer-giving lodge, all officers of the lodge pledge an individual yearly gift to the California Masonic Foundation to support the Masonic Homes of California as well as statewide literacy programs, scholarship, and other youth outreach.

Those aren't the only community efforts the lodge takes on. In August, the lodge hosted Malalakbay Na Gurong Mason (Tagalog for "the Traveling Master Mason"), the largest annual

Filipino Masonic gathering in California. There, the lodge raised \$12,000 in donations, with a majority of the proceeds going to renovate the Long Beach Scottish Rite Cathedral. And in July, the lodge hosted its second annual blood drive with the Red Cross, breaking its previous mark with 42 blood donations. Last March, the lodge partnered with local nonprofit Recycle for Veterans for a beach cleanup at Belmont Shores in Long Beach.

This year, the sky's the limit for lodge activity, says treasurer Edmund Leviste. "We're still confirming things for next year—a charity golf tournament, an essay contest for seventh graders in Long Beach... But the goal is the same: keep giving." ■

CAROL TONDAIRES



A New Era of Relief

AS THE MASONIC HOMES OF CALIFORNIA CELEBRATES 125 YEARS, THE ORGANIZATION IS WRITING A NEW CHAPTER IN ITS STORY.

WHEN TERRY QUIGLEY first stepped foot on the campus of the Masonic Homes of California in Union City last spring, she immediately recognized the significance of the institution. “I could feel the 125 years of history. It’s palpable,” she says. “It’s something you get a visceral reaction to when you walk in.” That sense of tradition and heritage practically permeated the circa-1898 edifice.

BY IAN A. STEWART

But she also sensed something else: an almost limitless potential for change. Despite the Masonic Homes’ long and celebrated history as the “jewel in the crown of California Masonry” (as many grand masters have lovingly referred to it), the organization has evolved many times before, from a widows’ and orphans’ home into a statewide deliverer of care, services, and relief for people across the life span. Quigley recognized that the time had come for its next adaptation.

In 2023, that change began in earnest, starting with the appointment of Quigley on July 1 as chief executive, replacing Gary Charland, who retired after a decade at the helm. With more than 25 years’ experience in senior care, which included serving as COO for Episcopal Community Services in San Diego, Quigley has brought a fresh set of eyes to the Masonic Homes, which, in addition to its two campuses in Union City and Covina also oversees Masonic Outreach Services and the Masonic Center for Youth and Families. Quigley says she appreciated the Masonic Homes’ commitment to care for its members wherever and however works best. She also saluted its willingness to adapt to meet those needs. “There’s a commitment here to coming up with individual solutions, since no two members or their families have the same needs,” Quigley says. “The organization has been really committed to asking, ‘What’s the best solution for this person?’ rather than offering cookie-cutter opportunities for people to get support.”

Not long after her appointment, the finishing touches were being put on what has been a five-year, \$115 million campus redevelopment that has modernized and reshaped both senior campuses: In November, leaders cut the ribbon on the new Citrus Heights Health Center in Covina, a 32-bed residence that will offer, for the first time ever at that location, skilled nursing and short-term rehabilitation services. With its completion, the Masonic Homes now boasts skilled nursing, memory care, and short-term rehabilitation at both campuses, fulfilling a pressing need in those communities and addressing some of the fastest-growing fields in senior living. Thanks to the renovations, overall capacity has increased by 58 percent while the share of apartments

licensed for assisted living, skilled nursing, and memory care has increased compared with those set aside for independent living.

OPENING UP

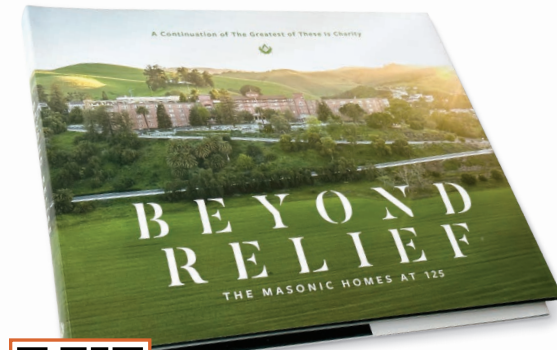
In December came another major development: For the first time ever, the board of trustees announced, the Masonic Homes of California would offer entry to Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft Masons over 65, as well as their spouses, parents, and parents-in-law. The result is an enormous expansion of eligibility, bringing the Masonic Homes’ best-in-class suite of services to more members and their families than ever before.



**NEWLY APPOINTED
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER TERRY
QUIGLEY AT THE
MASONIC HOMES IN
UNION CITY.**

To Sabrina Montes, the chief strategic officer of the Masonic Homes, that's a game changer. "We have the ability, we see the need, and we now have the capacity to expand like this," she says. "This allows us to be a more integral part of our members' lives no matter their age or their needs."

The update to eligibility addresses several changing dynamics, Montes explains. Membership in the fraternity has dropped and the average age of members has come down, the demand for senior living among Masons has declined; at the same time, the need among members for safe, trustworthy, and affordable housing for their own parents and parents-in-law has grown. For eligible Masonic families (those who have been in good standing for the past five years),



SCAN THE QR CODE TO PURCHASE A NEW COFFEE-TABLE BOOK CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF HISTORY AT THE MASONIC HOMES.

entry can be arranged on an "assignment-of-assets" contract, meaning it's partially underwritten by Masonic relief dollars.

"This is going to help make the Masonic Homes the place our members turn first when looking for senior care for themselves

or their families," says Joseph Pritchard, the chief operating officer. "That's something we've been working toward for some time."

FINDING PARTNERS

Other changes at the Masonic Homes were less visible but similarly meaningful in 2023. Working alongside leaders from the Masonic Homes' sister campus, Acacia Creek, the organization engaged senior-living consultants to examine and update the organization's pricing and procedures to bring it more in line with industry standards. It also began working more closely with Acacia Creek on sales and marketing and to route incoming calls for service.

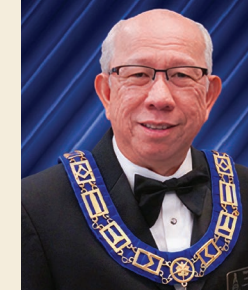
Additionally, the organization in 2023 partnered with the nursing and technical school Unitek College, which has locations in Hayward, Concord, and South San Francisco. Through this new partnership, the Masonic Homes will provide existing and prospective staff members with scholarships and training opportunities so they can obtain advanced professional certification. The first cohort of eight nursing assistants graduated this summer and have all accepted jobs with the Masonic Homes—not only developing their own careers but helping the organization meet the growing need for skilled caregivers.

Initiatives like those are potentially transformative as the Masonic Homes of California enters its next phase, redefining the organization's mission and setting its sights on the next 125 years.

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES ARE GROWING

While those changes were underway, elsewhere in the organization business continued as usual—or rather, it continued to increase. Masonic Outreach Services, which

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



MEMBER SINCE 2016
CORNERSTONE SOCIETY MEMBER
GRAND MASTER'S CIRCLE DONOR
METROPOLITAN Nº 352
ANDRES BONIFACIO Nº 879

Edmund Leviste

What about Freemasonry has kept you so active and engaged?

I was a Senior DeMolay, so I've been around the fraternity since the 1970s. I remember when I joined Masonry, I didn't have many expectations. I just wanted to join for the sake of it. And as I progressed through my degrees, I was given opportunities to be a lodge officer and I even started participating in the degree team. It reminded me of my time in DeMolay, and I found it to be really fulfilling.

And that's inspired you to donate to the Masonic Homes of California?

Yes, I especially love to support the Masonic Homes. It's something you don't see anywhere else. Masons take care of one another and their widows. Not many other groups do that. So I love the philanthropy side of the fraternity. I see the real purpose of it: to make an impact on others and on mankind.

What drives you to give back?

I've visited many lodges, and not all of them prioritize charity as much as they should. I want to help change that mindset. So whenever I visit a new lodge, I always encourage everyone to give back or to join the Grand Master's Circle. By giving, you're putting more visibility and awareness on that part of the fraternity. As Masons, we're here to give more than we receive. ■

MORE SUPPORT FOR MORE PEOPLE

The Masonic Homes of California by the numbers.

2,945

CALLS TO THE MASONIC ASSISTANCE HOTLINE IN 2023

378

CLIENTS SUPPORTED WITH CASE MANAGEMENT OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH MASONIC OUTREACH SERVICES

285

SENIOR RESIDENTS AT THE MASONIC HOMES' RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES IN COVINA AND UNION CITY

1,553

CLIENTS SERVED THROUGH MCYAF—A 3X INCREASE COMPARED WITH PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

connects Masons and their families with local supports, relief funds, and case management in their own community, worked with 378 clients throughout the state and beyond while also resuming Lodge Outreach Services meetings for the first time

“We have the ability, we see the need, and we now have the capacity to expand like this.”

since 2020. Through that program, California Masons are trained to reach out to members locally and to refer them to services offered through the Masonic Homes and other providers. In 2023, the Lodge Outreach Program trained 189 California Masons representing each Masonic district of the state. In one single online event, Masonic Assistance staff also informed more than 400 Masons, widows, and family members about the

range of community-based services offered through MOS.

The Masonic Center for Youth and Families also saw demand for its mental health, educational assessments, and therapy services soar. Prior to the pandemic, MCYAF typically managed around 500 clients per year. In 2023, that number tripled—the result of major growth in telehealth services, community-based partnerships with local schools, and service to seniors living at the Masonic Homes’ retirement communities. MCYAF was also certified as a mental health partner to Kaiser Permanente, potentially opening its services to more than nine million people in California.

125 YEARS AND COUNTING

This year of change was perhaps never more sharply put into relief than during the Masonic Homes’ 125th anniversary celebration in June, for which the organization created a new coffee-table book, *Beyond Relief*, detailing its history and evolution. Staff and residents gathered that night to celebrate all that the Masonic Homes of California has become and to consider all that it still aims to achieve.

Services that didn’t exist or barely registered just a generation ago, like memory care, mental health and wellness, and telehealth, have all become integral to the organization, leaders noted. All of those services are now housed behind the same doors that first swung open in 1898.

The theme that emerged that evening was clear: For all the growth it has seen in 125 years, the overarching mission of the Masonic Homes has remained the same: to provide the best care possible to those in need. Considering where the organization is heading as it launches its next iteration, Quigley is adamant: “That much will never change.” ■

GROWING UP

Overall capacity, especially in specialty care, is up at Union City and Covina.

62

MHC APARTMENTS NOW LICENSED FOR MEMORY CARE, UP FROM EIGHT PRE-RENOVATION

58%

INCREASE IN OVERALL CAPACITY AT THE TWO CAMPUSES SINCE 2018

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The Hiram Award reflects the esteem and respect of a Mason’s peers. It is given in recognition of their extraordinary devotion to the community.



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Sunny Simeonpresto Dalan, Suisun № 55
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NOVEMBER 1, 2022-
OCTOBER 31, 2023

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LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



MEMBER SINCE 1979
REDONDO Nº 328 • BEACH CITIES Nº 753
BIG BEAR Nº 617 • GARDENA MONTETA Nº 372
ROUND TABLE Nº 329

Freddie Davis

This year, you were presented the John Heisner Award for Volunteerism for your work with Masons4Mitts. How did you first get involved with that program?

Nine years ago, [Foundation president] Doug Ismail reached out to me about getting involved as a captain for the Dodgers' region, and I was absolutely all for it. Since then, it's really become a passion of mine. The Los Angeles region broke its fundraising record twice in a row, this year and last. I like to help raise money for the other Masons-4Mitts teams, too. While it's a great cause to support kids, it's also an opportunity to build relationships with other lodges.

So this takes you to other lodges in the area?

A few years ago, there were no Masons4Mitts captains in the Inland Empire or San Bernardino area, so my co-captain Gabriel Lopez and I started traveling to places like Twentynine Palms, Yucca Valley, Victorville, Barstow, and Big Bear. Now we have regular supporters of the program in those areas. And, being a past master, I'm able to jump in at these lodges' meetings if someone is unavailable,

so that helps them build their lodge culture. I want them to know we're not just there to solicit donations.

That sounds like a rewarding part of the job.

It really is. When I visit another lodge, I tell them their \$200 or \$300 donation is just as meaningful as these lodges that can donate thousands. Even when the lodges are 150 miles away and the kids they're helping out are from L.A., these guys still want to support a great cause. And that's what has really given me the fire to keep going these past nine years.

I understand you're also a strong supporter of the Masonic Homes.

The Masonic Homes is very dear to my heart. My lodge raises money for it every year, and we currently have a member living in the new Shared Housing program in Covina. Back in July, Redondo Nº 328 visited the Masonic Homes there. We have a lot of new Masons joining the lodge, and I want our all brothers to understand that when they're joining Masonry, they're also supporting the Masonic Homes.

Is philanthropy an important value in your family?

Definitely. My father and grandfather were both Masons, and I was in DeMolay as a kid. That really set me on course. In DeMolay, we did a lot of charity projects for local causes and telethons, and that's carried over to my Masonic journey. ■

100% Officer Giving

Lodge officers lead by example, demonstrating to all members that charity is one of the most treasured values of our fraternal heritage.

Acalanes Fellowship Nº 480
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Andres Bonifacio Nº 879
Bay Cities Nº 337
Clarence F. Smith Daylight Nº 866
Columbia-Brotherhood Nº 370
Escalon Nº 591
Garden Grove Nº 351
Granada Hills Nº 373
Ionic Composite Nº 520
Liberty Nº 299
Live Oak Nº 61
Lodi Nº 256
Martinez Nº 41
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San Fernando Nº 343
San Leandro Nº 113
Seven Hills Nº 881
Texas Nº 46
The Thirty-Three Nº 878
Tyrian Nº 439
Welcome Nº 255

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“The brotherhood and volunteerism were definitely the reasons I joined the fraternity. Giving back to my community is the most important thing to me.”

—BRADLEY GREER,
 HARDING SAN JUAN
 No. 579

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

First-Time Donors to the Annual Fund NOVEMBER 1, 2022–OCTOBER 31, 2023

To first-time donors, we salute you! Your generosity this year has made all the difference.

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MEMBER SINCE 2008
SACRAMENTO No. 40

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



Tristan Brown

I understand you work in public education. Was that your introduction to the Foundation?

Yes, I'm the legislative director for the California Federation of Teachers, which is the state union of teachers. Doug Ismail and I met a few years ago at a Teacher of the Year Award ceremony. I was already a Mason, and I knew that we give special tribute to public schools, but I wasn't too sure, from a statewide perspective, what that support looked like. So I was definitely happy to see some square-and-compass lapel pins at that event.

Did making that connection bring you closer to the Foundation's work?

Well, yes. Doug told me he was putting together some attempts to have the Foundation make an investment in [career and technical education]. That, to me, is a sorely underfunded

part of our system, and it's something a lot of people can relate to—they remember a time when shop classes were still a thing and wonder why they're not anymore. But funding those programs is expensive. Getting a car to work on in auto shop, or raw materials for wood and metal shops—there's not enough money in the budget. So when I heard they were putting money into that, I was happy to help.

Working in politics, do you ever encounter other Masons who work in the Capitol, either in lodge or outside of it? What's that like?

There are one or two in our lodge, but usually [Capitol staffers] go back to their home districts on the weekends and I think would rather belong to a lodge there. But of course, just walking the halls or being out at a restaurant, you see someone with the square and compass on and get into a conversation. I think it helps. In this business, trust and honor go a long way, and you build that over time. But if you're two Masons who can meet on the level, you know that whatever's coming out of my mouth, you can bet the house on it.

What advice would you give someone who hasn't donated before?

There's a thought that you have to come in with a big clearinghouse check to make a difference. But honestly, if you can set aside a couple bucks a month and have it on an auto-giving program, it makes a huge difference and adds up fast. You look back after 10 years, and that could be like a \$10,000 check, and you've made a huge difference. So I'd encourage folks to give what they can and be another brother linking hands together to make this work a little easier. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

- Warren L. Browne
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Legacy Giving

NOVEMBER 1, 2022–
OCTOBER 31, 2023

Gifts received through trusts, estates, and the Foundation's life-income giving program are among the most important forms of support and a powerful reminder of Masonic charity.

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CELEBRATING A GOOD CAUSE

DONORS AND MEMBERS of the California Masonic Foundation including president Douglas Ismail (left) and Masonic Homes board member Gary Peare gathered at the Masonic Homes in January to celebrate the conclusion of the Let's Write the Future campaign in support of the expansion of services at the Masonic Homes. Scan the QR code to see video highlights of the event.



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WHERE MASONS CREATE AN UNDENIABLE AND LASTING IMPACT



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