

The Frank R. Howard Foundation

NEWSLETTER • DECEMBER 2016

Frank R. Howard Foundation

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MISSION STATEMENT:

To establish, promote and support programs that maintain, as well as improve, health care for the community of Willits and the entire Northern Mendocino County area. The Foundation will strive to ensure that quality medical services remain an integral element of the region through an acute care general hospital.

Message from the Executive Director

It's been a little more than a year since I've taken on the role of Executive Director at the Frank R Howard Foundation and thought I should provide an introduction of sorts.

I came to Willits in 1989 with my wife, Tracie, and our two kids. I was transferred in with Bank of America and they put us up in the Old West Inn while our house was being built. That first winter was a was a real doozy. One storm brought a foot of snow to the valley floor. Another brought ten inches of rain in a weekend as we peered out our hotel room window, desperate for a break in the weather. We wondered what we had gotten ourselves into. Our children, 4 and 6 years old at the time, now remember their stay in the 'Sheriff's Office' (one of the theme rooms) fondly. Their parents remember mostly relief when, after three months, the rains stopped long enough for their move to Brooktrails from the motel.

I remember being struck by the lack of anonymity. We both grew up in Southern California where there was plenty of it. Even the central valley, where we had spent the previous ten years, had a healthy dose. Here, apparently, it was completely absent. I remember my first trip to Safeway, when a kind woman I didn't recognize approached me in the produce aisle and greeted me by name. She knew where I worked and where I came from. She asked how my kids were adjusting to their new home. She was very friendly and sincere and welcomed me and my family to Willits as she moved passed me with her shopping cart. I was bewildered (I later learned that the Willits News had heralded my arrival in the morning paper with a photo that she recognized). This was going to take some getting used to!

We soon adjusted to this new way of living where community becomes an extension of family. In time, we fell in love with it. Most of the people we know in this world, live in

this town. We feel lucky to work and live in this community that has been so good to us and feel privileged to call Willits home.

My banking career took a turn in 1994 when Richard Willoughby convinced me to leave Bank of America and go to work for Bank of Willits. I wore many hats there and, although challenging at times, I enjoyed my work and made many friends along the way. After the bank's merger with Savings Bank in 2010, I took some time off. After subsequent brief stints with North Valley Bank and Tri Counties Bank, Jann Lamprich approached me with an interesting proposition that afforded me the opportunity to do something different ... and to make a difference ... in our small town. It was an easy decision for me.

My first year with the Foundation has been busy and rewarding. We've accomplished quite a lot since last October. Our beautiful new hospital was opened to new patients and the Lamprich Center was completed and occupied by the Foundation, the Redwood Medical Clinic, Howard Pharmacy, and the Outpatient Rehabilitation Center. The 'Pepsi' funds, held by the Foundation for several years, were used recently to purchase \$4,000,000.00 in state of the art medical equipment which was then donated to the new hospital. Our 'little' hospital now has imaging and lab equipment comparable to those found in bay area hospitals! And, finally, our latest fundraising effort to bring the lions 'Frank' and 'Howard' to our new hospital has produced an outpouring of support from our community. We're off to a good start in reaching our target of \$7,000.00 thanks to your generosity! We recently started the restoration process by 'imaging' the existing lions at the old hospital. These 3D images will be used to create the molds which will then be utilized to replicate the existing lions in bronze. The lions will soon be on their way to our new hospital!

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Finally, I'd like to express my gratitude to Jann Lamprich and the Foundation Board of Directors for placing their faith in me. I promise to do my best to ensure that the Frank R. Howard Foundation continues to be the force that it has always been in ensuring that our community and surrounding area receive the very best healthcare possible.

With Warmth and Appreciation from Avenues to Wellness

By Doreen Blumenfeld, Director

2016 has been a very good year for Avenues to Wellness, the Frank R. Howard Foundation's wellness program. ATW has been well supported by the community and is very appreciative to the Howard Foundation which continues to fund the program.

ATW volunteers were trained in the Stanford Medical School's Chronic Disease Self-Management model and started teaching Healthier Living Workshops to the general public. The Community Foundation of Mendocino provided some grant funds to support this program. Over 80 individuals have now attended these workshops that were held in Willits, Laytonville, and Redwood Valley. They have been well received by the public and supported by health clinics and other local physicians. We hope to offer the workshops to the public in all three locations in 2017 starting in early spring. Please contact us if you have any interest in attending one of these free 6-week groups. These classes are designed specifically for individuals interested in becoming more physically active, adults with on-going health conditions or caregivers, family members or friends of someone with a chronic disease.

We continue to present a free health edu-

cation Speaker Event on the first Tuesday of each month (except for July and August) that is open to the public. These events are filmed and available on the ATW website for those in the community that are not able to attend. In midyear we moved the venue from the Willits Senior Center to the larger community room of the downtown Willits Center for the Arts.

Our second annual Healthy Family Fair was held in May. A variety of health education booths, a children's circuit of physical activities, free food sampling representing the Health Plate concept, a bicycle clinic, a tooth fairy (dental health), and a variety of other health related information and activities was available for the community. ATW collaborated with various agencies to promote and participate in the fair.

We continue to do work behind the scenes as well. Suzanne Picetti, our outreach coordinator, has worked on connecting local cafes to the food hub which offers local organic produce to the businesses. You may notice our monthly health education news column in the Willits News and the Laytonville Observer. We also collaborate with other agencies to work on designated health goals based on the 2015 county-wide Health Assessment.

Suzanne and I are exploring offering a 6-week series called the "Good Mood Group" in 2017 for individuals dealing with anxiety and depression.

May you have a warm and peaceful new year!

A Garden Thank You

By Ananda Johnson, Garden Director

The Commonwealth Garden (CG) team wants to thank the Frank R. Howard Foundation, the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, Sparetime Supply, MCS Construction, Cold Creek Compost, Sanhedrin Nursery, and the many in-kind

and monetary donations given by community businesses and individuals. The garden team knows that it is the support of this community that allows them to do the job they love . . . grow beautiful, organic produce. This support makes it possible for CG to provide food to the hospital, the Willits Food Bank, and the Willits Senior Center, as well as plant starts to the Willits Senior Center, local school gardens, and other garden projects in the Willits community.

During the peak season, all of the produce made available to the public at our garden stand is available on a suggested donation basis. It has proven to be very well received by the community, hospital employees, local neighbors, and those driving by.

We are honored that our community lets us know that the garden is a valuable community asset by not only making donations for the garden's continuing success, but by also coming by the garden when it has other events: Dave Watt's (Sanhedrin Nursery) pruning classes, garden transplanting, planting, and weeding days, and most recently, "Holiday Lights, A Winter Wonderland".

Mellisa Bouley, serves as the Garden Supervisor, turning the garden into its own Eden between her knowledge and skill. This year the garden was blessed to have Quinnton Bowlds join us and prove himself a garden worker extraordinaire. Keith Johnson continues to be a Jack of all Trades and fills in absolutely everywhere. And, the garden was fortunate to have several exceptional volunteers; Eileen Cary, her 2nd year with CG, continues on through the winter. HMH/AH schedules auxiliary and employee volunteer work days at the garden as well as provides support for special events. Parlin Fork Work Crews continue to be an invaluable resource at the garden.

During these wintery days, when the greenhouse is in full production, we are busy planning the 2017 gardening season. For more information, please contact Ananda at (707) 459-2777.

**WE BELIEVE
IN THE
POSSIBLE**

Or Current Resident

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Howard Community Healthcare Foundation**
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