



Bobby Martin

"Chickens in the Back Yard"

Aspen Healthcare 19th Avenue

"Chickens in the Backyard," Bobby's drawing in colored pencil, is based on photographs of Trixie and Pearl, chickens who belong to Aspen's activities director, John Suus.

Bobby was encouraged to join the Art with Elders class, and while shy and timid at first, soon found he liked it. Instructor Virginia Jourdan describes Bobby as "passionate, willing to learn, a fast learner." Art class "gives me something to look forward to," he says. "I get involved with other people, instead of staying in my room alone watching TV. I enjoy working with all the colors; my favorite is green."

Bobby, 66, also enjoys reading the newspaper daily, as well as People magazine and National Geographic. "I don't get too involved with novels," he explains.

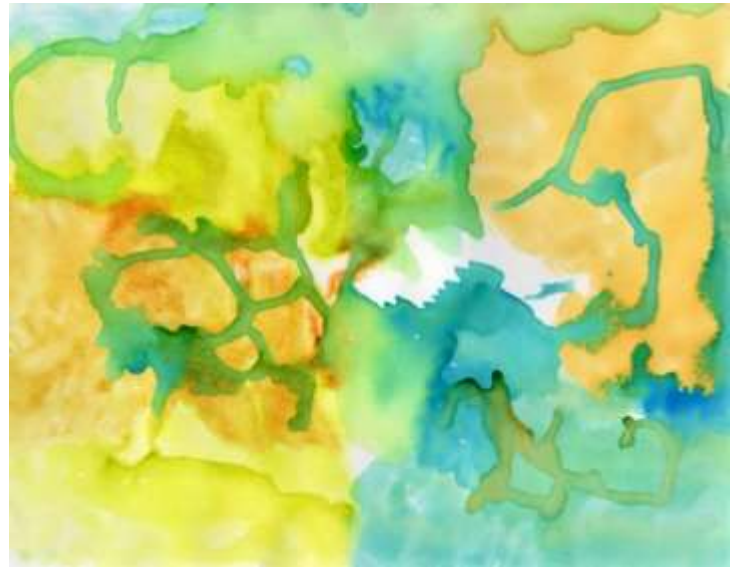
He grew up in a family of six kids in central Florida, 30 miles from Orlando. His parents were from Alabama. He remembers working on his father's large vegetable garden, learning from his dad. "I like to be outside when I can," Bobby says. Education and career were the most important things in Bobby's life. He attended Florida Southern College, and worked hard at his studies. During school, a teacher's aide position at a private Catholic elementary school gave him the inspiration to become an elementary school reading instructor. "I learned a lot from the nuns," he says. He taught for 15 years in Florida, Daytona Beach, and Los Angeles until health challenges forced him to retire.

"I try to think positively all the way through," Bobby reflects.

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Ceola Beasley

"Traveling"

Aspen Healthcare 19th Avenue

Ceola's colorful abstract painting, "Traveling," refers to the way the watercolor paint traveled down the paper when she lifted it up and moved it around.

A native of Louisiana, she moved to San Francisco in 1944. She raised "eight or nine kids" and has "quite a heap" of grandkids. She is in her early 90s.

Her family visits her almost every day, and at Tuesday's art class she gets them to help her paint. Instructor Virginia Jourdan observes, "If you give her a brush and paint, she gets really relaxed and into the painting, meditating on the colors."

In addition to making art, she plays Bingo, goes on lunch outings to Applebee's (she loves pancakes), and attends Bible study. She enjoys music and used to sing at church, when she "was stronger."

Ceola likes to wear beautiful bracelets, rings, and earrings, which sparkle like her smile.

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Lai Man Yee

"Find the Worm"

Aspen Healthcare Pacific Heights

Lai Man Yee, whose sparkling smile and bubbly laughter radiate her lively intellect and warm, inviting sense of humor, was born in Taishan, China on June 6th, 1930. The oldest child, she grew up on a farm with her two sisters and brother. Then as now, "I was interested in everything," she says, and as a child, she loved to read, cook, and create things by hand.

With her family, she moved to San Francisco, where she met her husband and worked in a clothing factory. She and her husband had two daughters and one son, and their life in San Francisco was a happy one.

Lai has lived at Aspen for three years now, where she has an active social life, and many, many friendships. She likes to paint and to draw, and especially enjoys depicting birds and fish. When asked what advice she would give a younger person, she laughs, "Plan everything!"

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Janet Bertha Wilson

"Relaxation"

Aspen Healthcare Pacific Heights

A San Francisco native, Janet was born on February 7, 1951 across the bay in Oakland because the hospital in San Francisco was full. The youngest of four - her siblings are Richard ("Dick"), Marge, and Geraldine ("Jerry") - Janet always liked writing and reading. Also, her grandmother was an avid knitter who taught her grandchildren how to knit.

Calm, reflective, and soft-spoken, Janet has been a resident of Aspen for nine years now. She still enjoys reading, particularly the Bible, and watching television. She has been painting and drawing since she was a child, so she naturally gravitated to the art class here. She especially enjoys working with pencils, watercolor, and poster paint.

When asked what advice she would give, based on her life experience, Janet says, gently but seriously, "Do thoughtful, good things in the smallest ways. It's funny how much of a difference it really makes."

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Willie Shipman

"Colored Squares"

Aspen Healthcare Pacific Heights

Growing up in Montgomery, Alabama, Willie Shipman was athletic and loved playing sports – as a center fielder in baseball, a guard in basketball, and football too. In high school he started doing art, including drawing and painting. Willie likes using brushes, and prefers realistic art.

These days, he is a regular in the Art With Elders weekly class, where he experiments with making collages on cloth. He carefully arranges and glues small rectangular and square pieces of felt into a colorful pattern. He prefers darker colors, especially blue and green. "Making art keeps me calm," he shares.

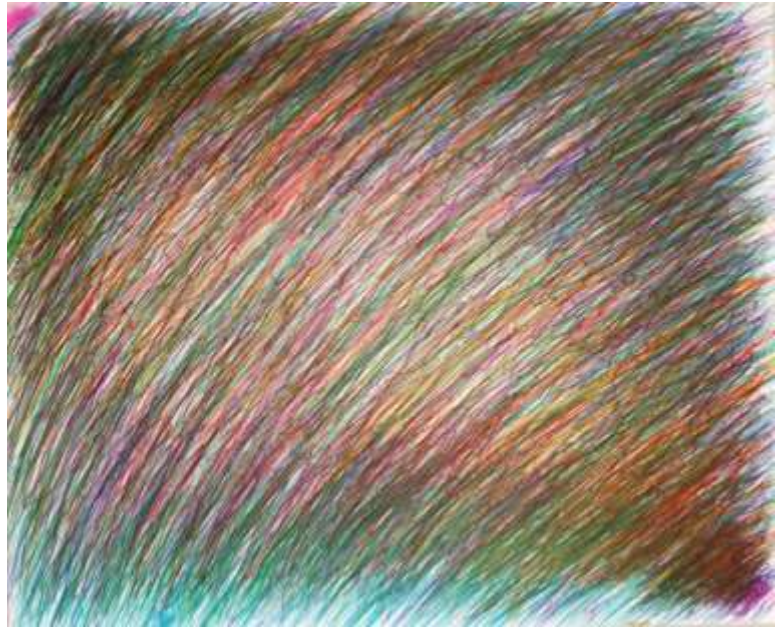
Born May 27, 1944, as a young man Willie served in the U.S. Air Force in Oakland and San Francisco. Remembering how he liked the northern California climate, he moved to the Bay Area in 1962, living in Oakland for a while and then on Jones Street in SF. He worked as a longshoreman on the docks, and also did masonry work laying brick and concrete.

Easygoing and thoughtful, Willie enjoys reading the newspaper and nonfiction books about history. He plays cards and Bingo, and always shows up for events with live music. He is a music lover who used to sing at church, in school, and in the service. "I like all kinds of music, like jazz. Gospel's all right. But not rock."

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Nina Ng

"Messy"

Aspen Healthcare Pacific Heights

Ninety-seven-year-old Nina speaks only a little English, but she's still learning. "I like to learn," she says. "Learning makes me happy."

This gentle elder artist, born in Hong Kong, worked as a teacher and has three daughters, one son, and two grandchildren. Her happiest moments came when studying in college, and she still revels in the times she's been able to return to Hong Kong.

Nina also reportedly likes to eat. Once she gets up in the morning, she enjoys reading the Chinese newspaper at Kindred, and her caregivers report that she's never given a mean look to anyone.

Nina's philosophy is "just try," and that's what she's been doing in her art class. Though Nina doesn't think her art is good, her teacher Rafael disagrees. "She's a rookie," he explains, "who started with scribbles and has developed her own language of line and movement."

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H.K. Cheung

"Family"

Aspen Healthcare Pacific Heights

Mr. Cheung was born in Hong Kong in 1947 and has seven brothers and sisters.

A very quiet and easy-going person, he's happy to do all sorts of activities at Kindred and especially likes to read, watch television with his roommate, and play Chinese checkers in the day room. He also enjoys eating. "Anything goes" is his philosophy of life.

In his art, Mr. Cheung is now moving from drawing animals into portraits. He is very focused and concentrated on his art in class and gets to work immediately.

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Jade Lee

"Buddha's Retreat"

Belmont Village Albany

Jade Lee was born in the countryside in Korea, where she lived with her grandmother. Raised as a Buddhist at a time when Confucianism was the national religion, her grandmother brought her to a Buddhist temple with natural springs when she was six years old. They both found solace there.

Education was not a priority in her family, but she was headstrong and wanted a career. She studied home economics in college and then became a pharmacist. She married at 23, and her father-in-law insisted that she stop working. She and her husband, accompanied by their two children, immigrated to America to escape the Vietnam War and to ensure that she could continue to work.

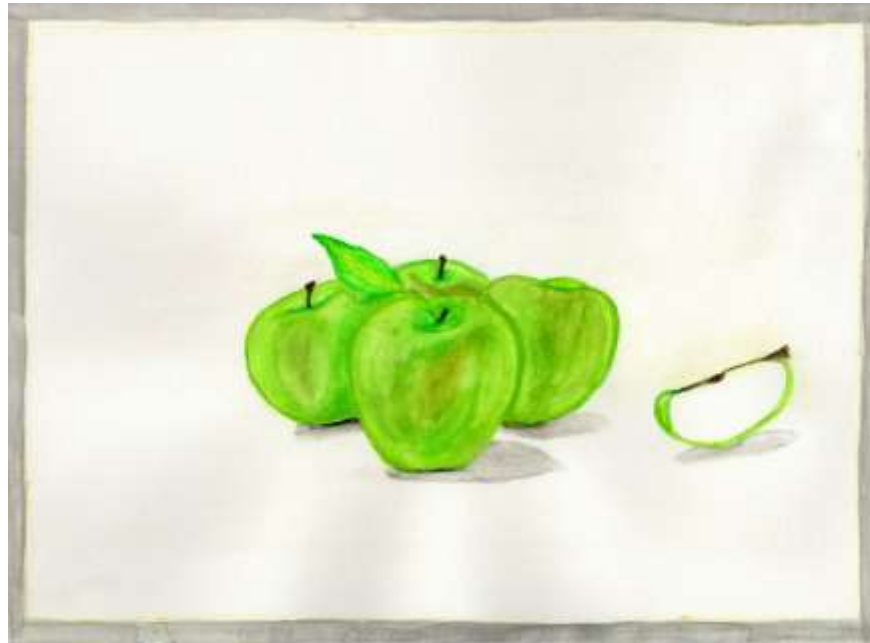
She worked as a translator while studying at UC Berkeley to become a microbiologist specializing in immunology. After graduation she worked for 35 years with the California Public Health Department, a job that she loved. When she retired at 63, she and her husband traveled all over the world. Her favorite destinations were Canada and Patagonia/Antarctica.

She enjoys needlepoint, embroidery, and watching travel programs and discovered art and acrylics at Belmont Village. She sees the United States as a land of opportunity and freedom.

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Celia Lee

"Apple a Day"

Belmont Village Albany

Celia was born and raised in Nogales, Arizona. She came to California after she graduated from High School. She then moved to Berkeley and attended San Francisco City College. While living in Berkeley and attending school, Celia worked at the ASUC Bookstore on campus. She later moved to San Francisco and lived at the YWCA. She began working as a dental assistant and did clerical jobs for a temp agency. Celia retired after working for many years for a law distributor, similar to Nolo Press.

The happiest moment of her life occurred when she was 30 and got married. She met her husband at a dance in Chinatown. She loves Disneyland in Florida and visited several times, and enjoys reading science fiction novels.

Celia has had a rich creative life. She took ballet and tap lessons in grade school, and studied modern dance in college. She also enjoys Spanish dancing and performed in Mexico. She began taking art classes in grammar school and has continued to paint and take pottery classes.



Sarah Armstrong
"Backyard Gardener"
Belmont Village Albany

Sarah Armstrong is a trailblazer. Born in 1944 in Oil City, Pennsylvania, she graduated from Cornell with a liberal arts degree in government, intending to become a college teacher. Frustrated with the politics of higher education, she changed careers and worked in Human Resources for three different companies over a total of 39 years. She was a pioneer of benchmarking "best practices" at her first company, where she used this technique to develop the HR department. She says that life was challenging in those days for a woman who wanted a career in management.

The high point of her career was working at ITT (formerly International Telephone & Telegraph), which was like "being paid for going to graduate school in business." She was the first woman to become a department head there. She was then hired by Campbell Soup Company where she was in charge of executive and employee pay and benefits. She retired from Campbell in 2006 after 20 years of service.

Knowing that she loved Berkeley, she bought her house here several years before she retired. She plays classical piano and has recently taken up the cello. She enjoys spending time with her three children and three grandchildren. Her advice is to "know who you are and stand on your own two feet."



Margaret Mary Miller
"Remembering When"
Belmont Village Albany

Margaret Mary was born in Chicago in 1949, the youngest of three children, and moved to California in her early teens. At the age of 20, Margaret Mary was accepted at the prestigious Brooks Institute of Photography and fell in love with the art. She was 1 of 2 women among 250 men.

She met her husband at Brooks and they moved to Redding CA, where her daughter Kate was born. She opened a photo studio, and over time found her next passion: flower design. She became the owner of a flower shop where she learned to love floral art. In 1985 she made some life changes, and after a divorce she moved to Sacramento.

Struggling with personal losses she needed to find her essence. She volunteered at Loaves and Fishes, working on the front line with homeless people in need of mental health services, and became a full time employee. She later became director of the Service Center, handing out up to 1,000 lunch tickets. She then founded "Sister Nora's Place," a shelter for homeless schizophrenic women. Margaret-Mary spent years developing leadership programs and supporting individuals in her community. She has often been celebrated for her compassion and authenticity.

Now at Belmont Village, she enjoys creating floral designs, exploring painting and reading to her grandkids. The biggest lesson she discovered and embraced: "We are all the same."

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Jayne Ross-Matsuda

"Tomcat"

The Carlisle

Sure that she was destined for a more-than-average life, Jayne Ross fled her childhood base in New Jersey for New York City as soon as she could.

Her father was willing to pay only for post-high school courses that would provide "practical skills". No college for her. The first class she took? HOW TO BECOME A PBX OPERATOR! But working the switchboard for several Manhattan-based companies infused her with a life-long fascination with business and launched several careers that eventually landed her in upper management positions at CBS. It was also in New York that she married George Matsuda.

Daily immersion in the broadcast business led Jayne to take acting lessons which she then used to land roles in TV commercials. From there she went into actual television programming where she especially enjoyed being part of the cast of "Law and Order." After forty years in New York, she and her husband moved to Seattle and from there, eight years ago, to San Francisco.

By her own admission, Jayne has had a long-time but erratic interest in the visual arts. It has only been at The Carlisle, in the Art With Elders class, that she has found teachers who can instill the discipline required to learn the skills that result in a deeply satisfying art practice.



Bob Nelson
"Fall Flame"
The Carlisle

Bob was born in Milwaukee ninety-six years ago. The oldest of two sons, he has fond memories of his warm, loving mother. After graduating from Michigan State, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service from 1943 to 1947, near Mt. Lassen, living on a tent platform with his beloved late wife, with whom he had four children. "Jill shared all of my adventures and successes, and she learned to love the outdoors as much as I did."

Always drawn to water, they lived on Pewaukee Lake, Wisconsin after returning to work for his family's film processing business. Upon retirement, the couple moved to Marco Island, Florida, becoming avid sailors. "Jill was the first woman elected Commodore of a racing yacht club," he says proudly. Bob also started painting in earnest, mainly watercolor landscapes.

Bob began losing his eyesight in 2009. He moved to San Francisco four months ago and dove right into Carlisle life, joining the art class, the foreign policy discussion group, and the food and dinner committee. Now legally blind but undaunted, he's trying acrylics and oils. True to his indomitable spirit, Bob advises, "The first brushstroke is the most difficult. You never know if it will turn out well, but you never know until you try. Just do it!"



Jim Goldner
"Up in Smoke"
Cypress Golden Gate

Jameson Goldner ("Jim"), a native Californian from Burbank, was one of the founders of the School of Cinema at San Francisco State University. Hired in 1963, by 1967 he had helped develop a fledgling film program which grew into one of the top 25 film schools in the country today. Professor Goldner found his calling in teaching, bringing tremendous passion and caring to his work with students for over 50 years. Retiring in 2015, the beloved teacher had achieved a great legacy through all the students he inspired and nurtured. "Filmmaking is a calling, a way of life – something that can really benefit the world," he once remarked.

The grandson of a rabbi, Jim spent time in the Hollywood studios as a child and knew he wanted to work in movies. He attended UCLA's masters program in the late '50s, together with Francis Ford Coppola. Moving to San Francisco to work with his mentor, a university professor who was cataloging WWII Nazi propaganda films, Jim made the Bay Area his home. He and his wife Geri Rossen of Berkeley have been together for 31 years. His daughter Naomi Goldner and 3 grandchildren live nearby in San Francisco.

Jim's favorite cartoonist was Walt Kelly, creator of Pogo, because "he was deeply political, very astute, and popular enough to survive the McCarthy era." At SFSU he taught a class on the blacklisting of the Hollywood Ten, and one on Films of the Holocaust, among many others. His own contribution to that genre, "When I was 14: A Survivor Remembers," is an award-winning Holocaust documentary about local activist Gloria Hollander Lyon.

"I never know what I'm going to draw. Improvisation is important," he muses, deeply concentrating as he slowly sketches the same cartoon character, Poochie the dog, at age 81 that he created when he was 7. "This AWE art class is a major thing. I don't think of anything else."



Victoria Chan

"Falls"

Cypress Golden Gate

Victoria (Vickie) Chan considers herself a lucky woman. Born in Hong Kong in 1931, she remembers people dying in the streets during the Japanese occupation, which began when she was ten. "I'm a Christian," she says. "I always thank God."

When World War II ended, she attended an English high school and entered nursing school, following in the footsteps of her mother, who was a mid-wife. She undertook advanced nursing studies in England returning to Hong Kong to work as a head nurse until the communist take-over in 1967. It was then that she and her husband, an engineer, moved to the U.S. with their two young children. Vickie worked for many years at Laguna Honda Hospital, first as a staff nurse on the night shift and later as head nurse. After her retirement she enjoyed frequent trips to Europe and China until a serious fall limited her travels. Now the grandmother of five goes to church and plays mahjong weekly, exercises and does tai chi every morning, and enjoys watching Chinese movies. Her AWE classes are the first time she has ever painted.

She feels she's learned some lessons in life: "Always look forward, forget the past, trust in God, don't complain, and be happy."

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Jean Wirth

"Field of Flowers"

Cypress Golden Gate

A native San Franciscan, Jean is happy to be back in the neighborhood where she grew up. The daughter of a motorcycle policeman and a secretary, she has a twin sister, Joan.

Jean was a champion competitive swimmer in her youth and grew up with a passion for sports and outdoors. She majored in physical education at Ohio State University, and has worked with both seniors and young people, mainly teaching swimming and leading hikes.

She learned a lot from the seniors, she says, but it was really the children—her students at a school for the blind—who taught her the most. She loves to talk about her experiences when she was doing her doctoral dissertation on teaching movement to blind children. It was the students who taught her how to read braille.

Jean has never painted before. "I love this class," she says with a smile. "If you make a mistake, it's okay. You just paint over it. If I weren't here, I never would have learned how to paint."

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Agnes Ko
"Bay Sunset"
Cypress Golden Gate

Agnes had never painted anything until she came to the Cypress. She credits the wonderful AWE teachers for her achievements. She was born in Guangzhou, China (formerly known as Canton). As an adult, she followed her older sister and brother to the United States. She taught kindergarten in China and continued in that profession in the States. After retirement she travelled extensively with her brother, sister-in-law and friends. Her favorite memories are of St. Petersburg, Russia and Singapore.

She is a classically trained pianist, but has only played for her own enjoyment and that of her friends and relatives. She plays every evening at the Cypress in the Fine Arts Room. In addition to painting, gentle daily exercise and playing the piano, Agnes reads a lot. She is currently reading *The Greatest Pianists: From Mozart to the Present*.

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Patricia Bixby

"Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez"

Heritage on the Marina

Patricia was born in Woburn, MA in 1928. Her father was a mechanical engineer, and her mother was a housewife. An athletic child, she was always active playing tennis, roller skating, softball, and swimming. Art surrounded her as she grew up, but she only drew, never painted. "I looked at it in awe," she recalls.

When she moved to San Francisco in 1969, she never expected to stay here." It was quite the opposite of Boston! A drastic difference," she laughs. Patricia was very satisfied with her career as a Jungian psychotherapist, working directly with patients. "It's a healing profession. And dreams are fascinating to me. I liked helping people become more self-aware through their dreams." She enjoyed attending the theater and the ballet, continued to play tennis (until she was 65), and also took two years of figure drawing classes at City College of San Francisco.

Patricia, who recently had an exhibition at Heritage on the Marina, began painting after her retirement. She enjoys figurative work, portraits especially, and her favorite medium is charcoal, although she also likes working in oil and acrylic. "Be as creative as possible," she says. "Make use of your talents."

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Mary Roper
"Untitled Portrait"
Heritage on the Marina

Mary Charlotte was born in Devon, England. When World War II began, she joined the British Auxiliary Territorial Services, the women's branch of the British Army. Though she enjoyed being in the Service, her happiest moment was when the war was over and her brother returned safely from Egypt.

Following the war, Mary worked for a while in England and after a few years, moved to Vancouver, Canada. She has had a variety of occupations. She has done secretarial work, bookkeeping, and taught pre-kindergarten and elementary school children. After finishing work in Canada, she and friends came to San Francisco for a visit. She hasn't left since, except to visit family in England.

In earlier years she was an avid tennis player. Now, in retirement, her hobbies include art (acrylic painting), reading, and knitting. She is amazed at her long life, as no one else in her family has been long-lived. Around the Heritage, Mary is known as an easy-going and pleasant person, with a sharp sense of humor.

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Gloria Learned

"Back Home"

Heritage on the Marina

Elegantly ebullient, with a warm, self-deprecating sense of humor, Gloria is 91 years old. Born in Tucson, Arizona, she grew up in Santa Barbara with her brother, Mark, and still has fond memories of a playhouse her father made for her, which even had a sink with a brass faucet and running water.

For their honeymoon, Gloria and her husband bought one-way tickets to Europe. In Paris and Darmstadt, she taught English to U.S. soldiers who did not speak English, while he was a journalist for the Stars and Stripes. They had four daughters.

Gloria loves the outdoors and enjoyed hiking by the lakes in Marin. She is still very active, attending Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, movies, and other outings with her daughters, granddaughter, and great-grandson. Always creatively inclined, she studied calligraphy, and also loved knitting and embroidery, but only began taking art classes five years ago. Recently, Gloria was enthralled by perspective drawing exercises taught in class, and she is excited to master this new challenge.

"The greatest thing in the world you can have is a sense of humor," Gloria says. "Sad things happen to everyone, but it will get you through anything, if you can manage to laugh."



Lotchanna Sourivong

"Color Field, Shades of Blue and Gray"

Laguna Honda Hospital

A bright and determined individual, Lotchanna was born in Laos and moved to Santa Rosa, CA at the age of 4. She finished college and has traveled around the world, working variously as a barista, translator, community organizer, researcher, and more.

Lotchanna, called Channa by her friends, says her participation in the Art With Elders class allows her to learn new skills and increase her eye-hand coordination, as well as her patience. She describes herself as a "feisty and adventuresome risk-taker" adding that working in class has also helped her learn to control her temper by cultivating in her a sense of calm and patience. Some of her adventures include bungee jumping in Spain and driving cars in the desert of Saudi Arabia, an uncommon pursuit for women in that region. Her hobbies include travel, gardening, cooking, reading, and art.

Channa knows much about art thanks to visits to galleries and museums. She especially enjoys surrealist artists, such as Salvador Dali and appreciates abstract art like that of Jackson Pollock. Currently, Channa is working with acrylics on abstract compositions, frequently painting in layers, and even experimenting with torn paper and tape to create 3-dimensional paintings. Channa values her "art family" and believes "there's a reason behind everything."

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Michael (Max) Davidson
"Vintage Fashion in Black"
Laguna Honda Hospital

I've been an artist in one way or another for as long as I remember. I try everything in terms of media. I have worked a lot in gouache as a designer, but now I'm interested in exploring new and different techniques.

I was actually surprised to discover how much the program has fundamentally reinvigorated and sustained my quality of life. These precious few days per week to be out of the room making art mean a lot to me. Those conducting the classes are not just art instructors, but in a way, creative guides, encouraging students to think and not be told how to express themselves. The program also offers opportunities to engage in altruistic activities by supporting fellow students and facilitating constructive exchanges of creative insights and encouragement.

Expression through art is a great leveler. Everyone's work has real merit. The possibility of great art is as likely here in these small classes as in the most rarified circles. It's a great honor to be included in the show.

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John Lindgren

"Standing Tall"

Laguna Honda Hospital

John's wardrobe exemplifies just how much color is important to him. The green of his shirt and baseball cap complement his green eyes perfectly and highlight his gaze, which is warm, alert, and intelligent. After a stroke four years ago that impaired his ability to speak, art is now his primary means of expression. He enjoys creating his art in any medium available.

Born in Saudi Arabia fifty years ago, where his father worked for the Saudi oil company Aramco and his mother was a housewife, John moved to Washington state when he was fifteen. The second oldest sibling, with three sisters, he recalls a happy childhood. John lived in Seattle for thirty years, where he worked as a file clerk and contract paralegal. As an adult, he especially enjoyed food, with barbecue as a particular delight, and travel, having visited Thailand, Scandinavia, and Germany among other places.

John's debilitating stroke also made him unable to use his right arm. He has taught himself to use his non-dominant left hand to paint, thus demonstrating two of the qualities he values most in himself and that he believes have been of most help in his life: patience and curiosity.



Walter Jourdan III

"Portrait"

Laguna Honda Hospital

"This old body ain't down yet," Walter declares. Diagnosed with hydrocephalus in his youth, after fifteen surgeries and many health challenges he asserts that he is "on a journey to keep going no matter what. I'm not giving up now."

Born in Many, Louisiana, Walter came to the Bay Area as a young child, attended both City College and San Francisco State University and received a business degree. He credits his mother, an important inspiration and voice in his life, with instilling in him a strong sense of determination.

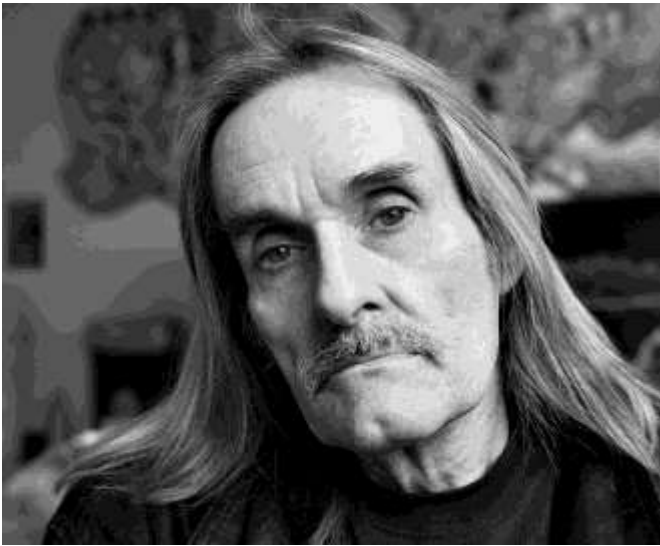
Walter was employed by the Hydrocephalus Foundation for ten years, worked as a teacher's aide in sign language and ran a catering service at San Francisco City College. He's particularly pleased with his Cajun catfish jambalaya and German chocolate cake. Walter plays piano, speaks conversational Tagalog, Cantonese and Mandarin, and loves to sing.

He is "flattered and flabbergasted" by the attention he receives for his artwork. Walter enjoys the AWE classes and believes they have a positive impact on his goal of getting well.

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Jessie Brown

"Blue and Violet Arcs"

Laguna Honda Hospital

A man of many skills and experiences, Jessie loves to tell stories—of his time working as a cook for the Children of God cult, surviving a near drowning in Cozumel and shootings in Manhattan, and laughing with his parents at live performances of comedians Phyllis Diller and Mort Sahl. He's been in the Bay Area ever since his friends in New York convinced him he was "cut-out for San Francisco."

Jessie has been involved in art in some form since his childhood, when he used to draw with colored pencils on the wall. It was his childhood experience antiquing with his grandmother that sparked his interest in interior decorating. And he still laughs when describing a room he once outfitted in the worst possible taste-- complete with lava lights, Mexican velvet paintings, and fuzzy leopard print. It was "tacky, tacky, tacky," Jessie admits with pride.

To the comment--"You've had quite a life," Jesse will respond, "I still do have quite a life." Through all his adventures, this gentle and spiritual person, who describes himself as "independent, optimistic, and semi-fearless," has learned some important lessons: "If you put good stuff out," he says, "good stuff comes back."

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David Mar

"Ship and House"

Laguna Honda Hospital

David Mar came to the United States from China as a child. Growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown, he attended local public schools. He worked as a dishwasher in various neighborhood restaurants as an adult.

The move to Laguna Honda eight years ago was a good one for David, and the Art With Elders classes have been especially helpful in giving him a social and artistic outlet. A shy, quiet person, David attends classes twice a week. He often works in intricate patterns, but he also paints buildings, flowers, houses, birds, and trees with elaborate root systems.

David's other passions include calligraphy and music. Completely, self-taught, he plays violin in the privacy of his room.

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Stephen Mays

"Army Plane"

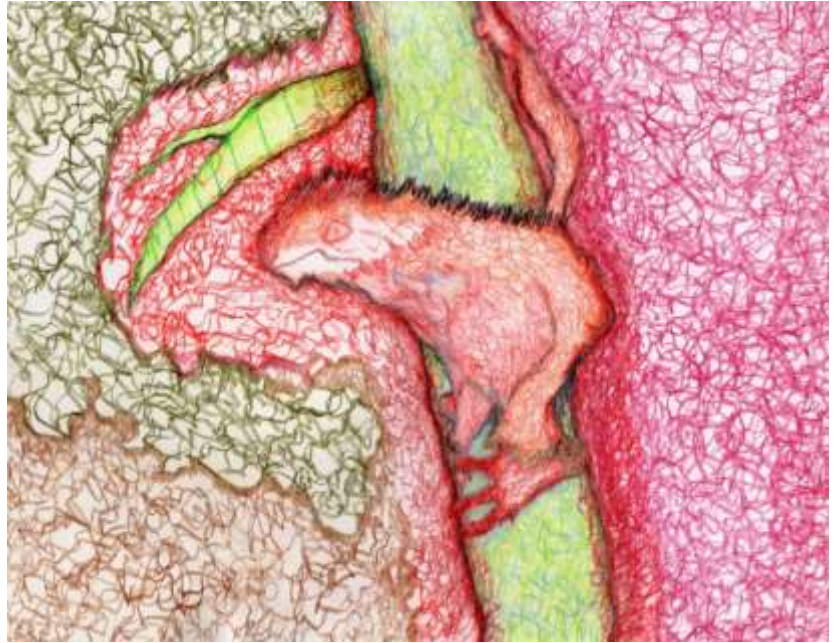
Laguna Honda Hospital

Stephen was born in Philadelphia but has lived in Berkeley, New York, Japan and Indonesia. His wife was Japanese. Tragically his only child, a daughter, died at age five. The memory of her death had haunted him for decades and still gives him nightmares.

He likes to draw cartoons and caricatures, perhaps to lighten his spirit. The concept of "djiwa," a word meaning "awareness of soul" in Indonesian, is very important to him. When asked about his career or working life, he responds simply, "spiritual exercise."

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Jeff McFarland

"Plant Creature"

Laguna Honda Hospital

It's difficult to catch up with this loving, big-hearted artist with an infectious childlike spirit. He might be painting in art class or down at the end of the hall playing a game with volunteers. And he'll definitely be greeting everyone with a smile and an "ah-oh-ah," and receiving a smile and a "hello" in return.

Jeff's vivid imagination comes out in his art and his language inventions. Over the years, he has developed his own distinct style, often reflecting a surreal and stylized interpretation.

Wherever he is, Jeff makes people happy, comfortable and inspired, just by being in their presence.

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Ida Marksman
"Ocean Bathers"
Laguna Honda Hospital

Ida's easygoing charm, sunny smile and vibrant spirit make clear why her nickname is "Beautiful," as she blushingly confides. Born in San Francisco in 1940, a stroke paralyzed her right side when she was two years old. However, Ida declares, "I don't feel like I missed out on anything. I did everything a normal person would do."

Her parents immigrated from Northern Italy, and she grew up in North Beach "when it was special." She cherishes memories of summer evenings when children would play kickball on Telegraph Hill as parents chatted on their front steps and of leisurely Sunday strolls with her family to Fisherman's Wharf and Union Square.

One of life's high points occurred when Ida was asked to sing for a benefit at the Fairmont Hotel. A fan of Doris Day and Al Martino, she still sings in the shows at Laguna Honda.

Ida always liked art and loves to color. Even her wheelchair is decorated with a pink butterfly and violet flowers. "I can stay here in the studio all day and draw," she laughs. "I always wanted to and never got the chance. Now I have that chance." Her advice: "Don't quit. I never quit when I felt I wanted something."



Arlisa Rayford
"Sandra Bland"
Laguna Honda Hospital

Arlisa has always wanted to paint. She remembers doing art in the first grade. "Art makes you feel happy," she says. She likes to have people see her art and is thrilled to have one of her paintings in this show.

Arlisa's family is from Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Although she moved to San Francisco at age five, she has joyful memories of visiting her cousins there every summer. Thinking of those good times makes her laugh. She loved being in the country, running through sunny fields and into the woods, finding mysterious bugs and other creatures. She also loved going back to school in the fall and using country words like "vitals" to make her friends giggle.

Arlisa loves San Francisco and raised her three sons here. Jesus is a "big part" of her life. She credits Him for saving the lives of her children during difficult times.

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Theresa Piccirillo
"Warrior Woman with Bear"
Laguna Honda Hospital

"Art makes the world pretty." Teresa has been doing art all her life. She studied print making and metal arts at UCSF, but long before that, as a child, she used food coloring to decorate the meals on her dinner plate. Born without a hip, Teresa has been disabled since birth. Her father died when she was quite young and she was sent to live with her grandmother. Her heart has already been broken she says and, so, it cannot be broken again. Her goal has always been to decorate everything. Make the world pretty!

She is a very prolific artist. Her drawings are very intricate, detailed and colorful. "Psychedelic!" one might think. In addition to selling her paintings, she supported herself making jewelry. Using metal scraps left over from her classes at UCSF, she made one of a kind pieces which she sold on Castro Street. Other street artists sold their work during the day. Wanting to have the street for herself, Teresa sold her jewelry at night.

Teresa's drawings always tell a story. The story she is telling these days is about women and how powerful they are. "Women can save the world," she says. "Eventually, women will save the world!"

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Geraldine McCowan

"Portrait"

Laguna Honda Hospital

"Mama G," as Geraldine is known around Laguna Honda Hospital, greets everyone with a wide smile and they all smile back. Born in Texas in 1942, she admits being spoiled by her brother and sister as the baby. Her father owned a large farm and she grew up feeding the fifty goats and caring for the vegetable garden and fruit trees. The family also raised chickens and hogs, sharing the "mess of meat" with their neighbors after butchering the hogs.

Mama G graduated from high school in 1959 and stayed on the farm plowing, hoeing, cutting trees and working on cars. In 1962, she came to California to visit her mother and ended up staying, supporting herself by babysitting and later cleaning the Officer's Quarters in The Presidio.

In later years, she studied at City College and became a library technician. During her eight years working at the San Francisco Main Library, Mama G loved meeting and helping out the patrons. She has a daughter and son, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She paints, sculpts and creates ceramics and has begun painting a series of Mexican masks.

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Tony Lai Yu

"Seascape"

Laguna Honda Hospital

Tony was born in southern China and lived in the Philippines and in Hong Kong before moving to San Francisco thirty years ago.

"There has been so much change in my life. I have seen so many things – war, peace, my family, moving here." Tony's thoughtful expression becomes amused and his eyes twinkle and he says "Well, I am 83 years old!"

Art, however, has been a constant. An only child who loved to draw, he went to art college in Shanghai before embarking on a long and fruitful career as an artist. He enjoys landscape and still life painting but prefers figure drawing "since it's the most demanding."

Tony is grateful for his two sons and daughter and he also greatly appreciates his health, which he attributes to swimming every week for thirty years. "All of it is good," he observes, reflecting on some of his happiest memories. He smiles serenely, "It's been a long, long life."

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Lisa Zhang
"Mona Lisa"
Lytton Gardens

Lisa was born in China. She moved to California 12 years ago to live with her daughter. She loves Palo Alto, particularly the weather.

Where she grew up, no one did art. She, herself, only began painting two years ago when she started going to an AWE class. She enjoys working in water colors.

Although Lisa is friendly and out-going, she is very shy about her art work. She doesn't think this piece is worthy of praise. Luckily, the judges do not agree with her!

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Louise Gibler
"Still Life"
Lytton Gardens

Louise has lived a life "centered in art." Born in New Jersey in 1937, she and her two sisters and a brother had a happy childhood. She attended Catherine Gibbs School, a secretarial college and finishing school, and became a legal secretary.

She and her husband Dick met when they were both working for a Superior Court judge. Dick was a landscape painter and she began painting with him, often taking their easels and oils outside to paint together.

While living in Morristown, New Jersey, they began attending classes at the well known Arts Students League in New York at the time when Jackson Pollock and Georgia O'Keeffe were there. The couple worked and painted together until Dick's death at the age of 75. She moved to Canada near Toronto where her son was living and joined an art community. "Art," she says, "saved my life."

Louise has lived for fifteen years in Palo Alto, where her son teaches at Stanford and she's able to enjoy her three grandchildren. Her philosophy of life is to "accept everyone, but take care of yourself by putting yourself first."

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Virginia Deeds
"Morning Mist"
Lytton Gardens

Virginia, known as Gini, has been painting since she was a child in St. Louis, Missouri, where she was born. She fondly remembers copying cartoons from the Sunday papers and Saturday morning visits to the city's Museum of Art, where children were given postcards of the museum's artworks and told to find them.

She lived in New York State for 28 years, where Gini combined raising five children with personnel work at both the University of Rochester and the Valley Manor retirement home. A special adventure in her life was driving cross country to Palo Alto.

Gini began her art education at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and has travelled in Europe and the U.S. to visit art museums. She has also had two retreat experiences in Martha's Vineyard, one of which included a show of her portraits and landscapes.

Since 1989 she has lived in Palo Alto, where she has studied art with a variety of local artists, including Grace Gibson, watercolorist Floy Zittin, Linda Logan, and now AWE instructor Sarah Dwyer. Her art has been exhibited at annual shows at the Menlo Park Art League and Lytton Gardens.

This watercolor, which Virginia says "painted itself," is based on one of her own photographs.

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Tomás Lopez

"Tombola Mundial"

Mission Neighborhood Center

Tomás Lopez was born in Jalisco, Mexico, where his family still lives. Tomás comes from a family of 11 children. His most joyous moments were when his children were born. He and his wife have 4 children, 2 sons and 2 daughters. He and his family share a love of food and cooking. Tomás has moved around, working at a variety of different jobs, but enjoyed most his work cooking Mexican specialties. He is very proud of his son who does cooking and baking professionally.

Tomás liked art even back when he was a little boy, when he got many first place awards for his artwork at school. He continues to express his energetic, upbeat personality through his colorful drawings of geometric patterns. The designs come to him as he works, he says.

Also a gifted singer, Tomás is very enthusiastic about his work with choir group, Coro Sotera. He not only sings primera voce in the choir, but also acts as its main promoter.

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Blanca L. Perez
"Conejos (Rabbits)"
Mission Neighborhood Center

Blanca L. Perez was born in Nicaragua and spent time in Costa Rica and Guatemala before arriving in the San Francisco Bay area, which she has called home for the last 29 years. Now retired, she previously worked delivering mail and packages along the coast, recalling some treacherous driving on the winding roads and steep hillsides as far North as Point Reyes. She and her husband raised five children. She encouraged them to work hard in school, and also to do what brings them joy.

A creative person by nature, Blanca enjoys needlepoint, crocheting, and painting designs on small stones. She is an avid reader of Latin American Literature. Some of her favorite authors include Isabelle Allende, Gioconda Belli, and Guadalupe Loese. Also a singer, she is a member of the San Francisco choral group, "Coro Sotera."

With no previous formal training in art, she has caught on quickly, creating fine drawings, learning to blend tones with colored pencils. Next, she plans to try watercolor painting, and wants to learn about landscape painting by studying the classic works of the masters.



Concepcion Ruiz

"En el Rancho (On the Ranch)"

Mission Neighborhood Center

Concepción was born and raised in Guanajuato, Mexico. After moving to the US she worked at Hotel California for 35 years.

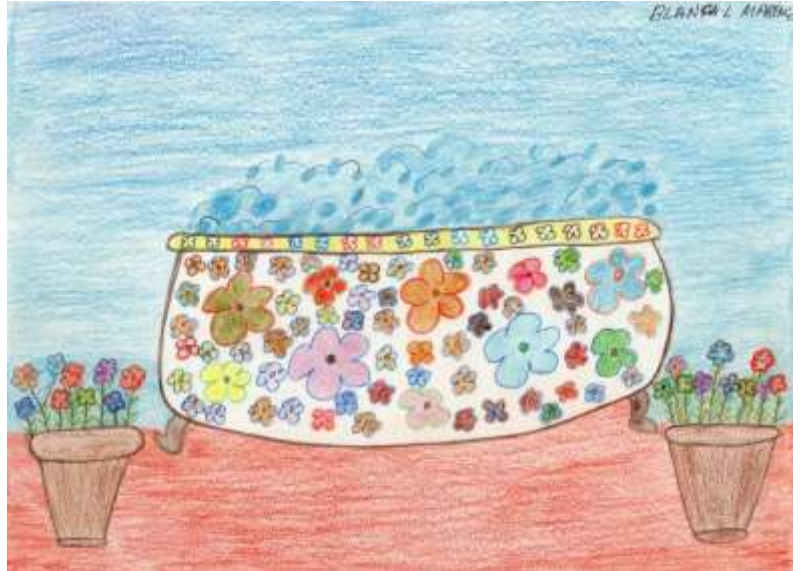
She has two daughters and two granddaughters, both of whom went to college, which makes her very proud. She is happiest when spending time with her daughters, "we do many things together, including cooking and going to the movies. I like to cook, my favorite dishes are enchiladas and chilaquiles."

Concepción had never done art before coming to the Art With Elders classes. She reports that she has learned about composition, background, foreground, color theory and mixing color, as well as learning to use pencils and water color.

"It is important to stay active as you get old, that is why this art class is so important to me."

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Blanca L. Marengo

"El Baño de Burbujas (Bubble Bath)"

Mission Neighborhood Center

Blanca L. Marengo, originally from Guatemala, has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for the past 50 years. Now retired, Blanca had a 28-year career with Pacific Bell Telephone Company. She and her husband raised a daughter and a son who have gone on to successful careers of their own. Blanca loves to spend time with her family including her five grandchildren, taking them all to see movies such as her favorite, the Toy Story series.

Though she hadn't tried fine art before, she says she is learning week by week and appreciates her art class because, "...it gets you out of the house, and it occupies your mind and frees it from worries." She is a naturally friendly person and enjoys the companionship of her classmates. In addition to art class, she attends the computer skills class at the Mission Neighborhood Center. At home, she crochets scarves and blankets for family and friends.

She is gaining confidence in her ability to create artwork, drawing with colored pencils, inspired by artists such as Cezanne. She and her family were excited to hear the news that she was selected to be in an art exhibit.

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Sandra Judith Flores Zelidon
"Fisherman's Wharf"
Mission Neighborhood Center

Sandra is enthusiastic about her art class and creates flyers to tell others about the class. At first, she didn't think she could do it, she says, but now she is making artwork which allows her to express her feelings, and work through difficult times. Art helps her take her mind off things, and she enjoys the company of her classmates and instructor. Sandra is a sincere and heartfelt person who has "been through suffering" and believes in the power of love and the guidance of angels.

Sandra grew up in El Salvador where she enjoyed one of the happiest times of her life, the celebration of her Quinceañera with her mother and father. Tragically, her father died soon after. Later, as an adult in the U.S., she was taking college classes until 2 car accidents hindered her studies. She, nonetheless, spent 17 years volunteering with a pharmacy and taught reading to adults.

In addition to enjoying time spent with her friends in art class at the Mission Neighborhood Center, Sandra loves her Catholic Church community. She says it feels like being part of a big family where everybody helps each other.



Pearl Pooner
"Two Spheres"
Mission Plaza

Pearl is a survivor. She is finally home again after five surgeries, five months in the hospital and one month in a coma. During her recovery, with two sheets of white paper and a pen, Pearl slowly tried to gain control of her fingers by drawing shapes. Circles at first, then triangles and finally her toy dog. The work she is creating now is inspired by the dreams she had while in the hospital.

Growing up in San Francisco as a mixed-race child, she suffered discrimination and "ugliness." Doing art was a way to bring something beautiful into her home. Her mother, who was raised with art in Mexico and an uncle who told her, "You have a creative mind," inspired Pearl to draw. Her father gave her a Playboy Magazine so she could study figure drawing. She kept the magazine under her bed so her brothers wouldn't find it.

Pearl took art classes at City College, but had to give up studying for many years while she worked and raised a family. She began painting again just a few years ago. Now, she carries with her the two white sheets of paper from her hospital days. Although she is in pain much of the time, the crude drawings remind her that she is a survivor and an artist.



Cunrong Lang

"Snow in December"

Oak Center Towers

Cunrong was born in Northeast China in 1935. When she was three years old she traveled with her family to Chung Qung in Sichuan Province, a safer place to live during the war years, where she remained until she was 18. Cunrong says she's grateful that when she was young she was able to attend good schools that instilled in her a love of learning and gave her a good education. She graduated from Sichuan Medical College when she was 24 and made her career as a Physiology professor at LuZhou Medical College where she taught for 50 years. She moved to Minnesota in 2006 and then to Oakland in 2012 so she could be close to her daughter.

Cunrong has two children, a son and daughter, and four grandchildren of whom she is very proud. She describes herself as a happy, spontaneous person with many interests and with a love of learning. She enjoys singing, drawing, crocheting, knitting and walking in nature. She joined the art class at Oak Center Towers last year. It was her first experience with creating art and she was curious to find out if she could draw. She comes from a talented family — both of her parents could draw very well and her daughter is a talented poet. She fell in love with drawing and has been creating art ever since. She likes to focus on flowers and landscapes in her art.

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Wan Shan Ning
"Master Tiger"
Oak Center Towers

Born in Beijing in 1935, Wan Shan has spent most of her life raising her family, and now that her three grandchildren are grown, she's making a life of her own at Oak Center Towers. Wan Shan and her husband, raised two daughters and a son in Canton, and she came to the U.S. in 2009 to assist her daughter during her pregnancy. She's happy that all of her family now lives in the Bay Area.

She believes "you don't need to be successful, but it's important to have a good heart." As Wan Shan ages, she wants to be of service. She picks up trash to keep the environment clean and helps take care of people in need. She also enjoys hanging out with her friends over coffee and listening to Chinese folk music.

Wan Shan's only memory of doing art in her past is having used crayons as a kid. But she has always enjoyed going to art exhibits. Now limited in her ability to travel, she says that her AWE class "keeps my brain working." Her teacher, Insio, describes her work--mainly landscapes and flower scenes--as "calm and delicate," done with small brush strokes, which fit her personality.



Yun Ke Liang
"Prosperous Fishes"
Oak Center Towers

Art is something to hold on to for Yun Ke Liang. After years of serious health issues and the death of her husband in 2006, she admits she doesn't know what she'd do without her art class, which helps relax and calm her. She now picks up her pen and brush for two hours on her own almost every Saturday.

Born in China in 1939, in her youth Yun loved singing, music, dance, reading and anything related to the arts. A heart problem limited her life to the responsibilities of being a housewife and caring for her son and daughter.

She came to the U.S. in 1997, where she was able to embark on a new life following heart surgery in 2005. She is now able to practice tai chi once a week.

Yun is happy with her children and grandchildren, one of whom was crowned KTSF's Miss Chinatown. When they visit they often even bring her art supplies. As she says, "Art makes me appreciate my life."

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Kekun Ouyang

"Tiger and Eagle's War"

Oak Center Towers

"Follow your heart and your passion," says this gentle and humble native of China with a captivating smile, "and keep doing what you want to do." And that's what he is doing today in his art class.

Born in Canton in 1945, KeKun was a farmer who picked up part-time jobs on the side. He came to the U.S., where he lives with his wife, in 2004 and has five children and eleven grandchildren. Except for one daughter in Arizona, the rest of his family still lives in China, which he manages to visit yearly.

KeKun loves to travel and even without a car he's managed to get himself to local beaches, the forest, and Yellowstone National park---all of which feed his love of nature. His other passions include playing pool and slow walking.

KeKun hadn't picked up a paint brush since his days in elementary school. Now he creates and composes his own art and especially likes to paint animals from pictures, which he then puts into different backgrounds that he creates. He has purchased his own set of watercolors and loves to do his art in his room also.

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Zhi Ming Wu
"Ducks by the Lake"
Oak Center Towers

Zhi Ming Wu was born in 1937 in the Wu region of Central China, on the south bank of the Yangtze River. Because his family was poor, he raised birds as a child to earn money to go to school. Today, he smiles widely, saying he never imagined that one day he would live in the U.S. or have the experience of being picked up in a limousine at the airport when he visits his two daughters in Shanghai.

Prior to his AWE class, he had no formal experience in art, though he's always liked to paint flowers. As a teenager he taught himself how to draw faces, copying photos to make portraits.

Mr. Wu retired from his work in hydraulic engineering and came to the U.S. fourteen years ago to attend his son's graduation from college and help raise his grandchild. He now has six grandchildren.

He describes himself as a quiet man struggling to improve his English. His advice: "Pay attention to your health, be sure and eat breakfast, and take a bath before going to bed." And finally, don't interfere with the lives of your children or grandchildren.

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Hui Lan Li
"Grand Canyon"
Oak Center Towers

Born in the Canton province of China in 1940, Hui Lan has been passionate about physical exercise all her life. In her youth she played at least five sports, including volleyball, track, and basketball, and frequently won prizes for her athletic abilities. Even today she exercises two hours daily, and practices Qi Gong and Tai Chi.

Hui Lan, who came to the U.S. in 2000, worked as an elementary school teacher in China. She married in 1964 and has two daughters and two grandchildren.

She describes herself as a happy person who loves to be of service to others. In addition to caring for her husband and apartment, she helps out at the local farmers' market. AWE classes have been her first experience in art. Her favorite medium is acrylics.

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Yu Chen
"Spring Flowers"
Oak Center Towers

"I'm old, but it's OK. You enjoy yourself," says this energetic 79 year old. Born in Shanghai, she started learning English in third grade. She still puts her skills in service to others as the official translator at Oak Center Towers, where she also helps with the weekly market and monthly newsletter.

A chemical engineer, Ms. Chen spent 35 years working in China. Her only daughter, with her mother's English lessons and family's financial help, later earned a degree in Electrical Engineering in the U.S. Ms. Chen and her husband joined her in New Jersey, but a cousin and warm weather lured them to Oakland in 2001. She still enjoys travelling, taking regular trips with her daughter.

Ms. Chen, who learned just a little art in her childhood, insists she's not an artist. She advises, "Tell people even if you don't know how to do color, any person can do it. No matter whether you're an artist or not." She enjoys painting flowers and animals and her favorite medium is watercolor. And the important lesson she's learned in life: "If you want something, you can get it. Just try, even in the hardest times."

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Qi Zhen Duan
"Spring Blossom"
Oak Center Towers

This soft-spoken 83 year-old native of southern China feels free at last here in the U.S. And she is very determined to use that freedom well: learning English, becoming an American citizen and then doing her favorite thing – painting. After her retirement in China in 2003, the former hospital nurse studied painting for three years in adult school there. The mother of two children came to the Bay Area with her husband in 2007 to help care for her two grandchildren.

When she's not in class, Mrs. Qi Zhen draws scenes from the outings she goes on or just strolls out to the garden to make pencil drawings of the trees and plants. The binder where she stores her work, often done on the back of recycled paper, is filling up fast. She also copies images from the newspaper.

She's proudest of her daughter and son. "They're very good kids," she says. "They have good jobs and they are good people." And one of her happiest moments was when her grandson, Hairuo, went to Washington D.C., representing California, and won first prize in a national high school physics competition.



Sr. Lillian Conaghan

"Sign of Spring"

Oakwood Atherton

For Sister Lillian, who had never done art as an adult before her AWE experience, making art has become a way of expressing her love of nature. "It's a matter of color," she says. "That's my gift."

The oldest of five children, she was born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1923. She laughs thinking of her only attempt at doing art in her youth---at the insistence of her mother---when she added a bonnet and a long skirt to an image of an antebellum girl.

Sister Lillian graduated from Maryville College and entered the convent in St. Louis at the age of 23. Years later, she fell in love with California when she went to UC Berkeley to study chemistry. Much of her career was spent teaching chemistry to high school students.

She fondly recalls an important life lesson she learned on a European trip while eating breakfast on blue and white china at the home of an Austrian woman---one doesn't necessarily need to know a foreign language to communicate with foreigners.

Sr. Lillian describes herself as someone who likes to laugh and have fun with her friends. "I give joy to others," she says. At 97, she advises: "Continue to love others, which gives them life."

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Sr. Linda Hayward
"Desert Landscape"
Oakwood Atherton

Sister Linda has been around art all of her life. Her father designed homes and loved to paint with oils and watercolor. She remembers the day in an art workshop when she succeeded in painting a rose. "I cried," she admitted, "because it looked like a rose." Ever since then, she has loved painting in watercolor.

The oldest of ten children, Sister Linda was born in North Hollywood in 1939, where she remembers meeting Walt Disney at his home. She still fondly recalls her great love of body surfing on Moonlight Beach off of Encinitas. Her other passion was raising animals---anything from rabbits and chickens to goats and horses.

She entered the convent after two and half years of college. Though she thought she would teaching third grade, she came to love the high school juniors she was assigned to, teaching English and history in San Diego, El Cajon and Seattle. She also had the opportunity to teach summer school in Alaska.

Sister Linda attributes her long life to good genes, and advises "Live each day fully and receive each day as a gift. Life itself is a wonderful gift." It is her love of nature, as exhibited in her art, as well as her love of family--her own and the Sacred Heart community—that sustains her.

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Lan-Lai

"Reflections"

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Mr. Lan-Lai was born in Khan Hoa, Vietnam in 1939, where he worked for many years as a national nurse. He is still proud of the high scores he achieved in the nursing exams. He also worked as a Chinese-Vietnamese interpreter in a broadcast station there.

He has two children and four grandchildren, and especially enjoys taking nature walks and playing with radio-controlled airplanes. "Seniors like us need to exercise more to sustain our health," he asserts.

Despite some vision issues, he and his wife faithfully attend the weekly classes. His teacher Dmitry, who describes him as a "gentle, polite and respectful man" says that Mr. Lan-Lai's signature mark is his ability to create a soft pastel-like light tone in his images, using colored pencils.

With no previous art experience before taking AWE classes, he is very glad to have his artwork chosen for the exhibit.

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Yang Yuan Xiang

"Focus"

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Mr. Yang, originally from China, moved to California in 2006. He loves spending time with family. He is married, has two daughters, and currently resides with one of them. He used to be an engineer in China before he retired and moved to the U.S.

Although he had no previous art experience, he says he always enjoys doing something related to art, especially drawing or writing Chinese calligraphy.

"My hobbies are drawing, painting, playing table tennis, writing Chinese calligraphy and traveling," says Mr. Yang.

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Andy Banh

"Great Buddha"

On Lok Lifeways East San Jose

Andy was born in Vietnam in 1951 after his grandparents, who were Chinese, had emigrated from Fukien. His grandparents and parents escaped to Vietnam as political refugees. When the communists took over South Vietnam in 1975, an unsuccessful attempt by the family to escape from Vietnam led to their homelessness. Four years later, Andy's uncle sponsored the family, which eventually immigrated to U.S in 1987.

Andy never dreamed of painting until he joined an art class at On Lok. He's been painting for three years, and enjoys copying pictures from old calendars. He also enjoys fixing things that he finds on the street. He will take apart a broken chair and then use the parts to create a new one.

As a Buddhist, he believes in benevolent kindness. He is always happy to help people, particularly the homeless. His philosophy of life is: "No matter what religion you are, if you believe in kindness you will find happiness and peace."

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Sandy Fong
"Playful in Lotus Garden"
On Lok Lifeways Gee Center

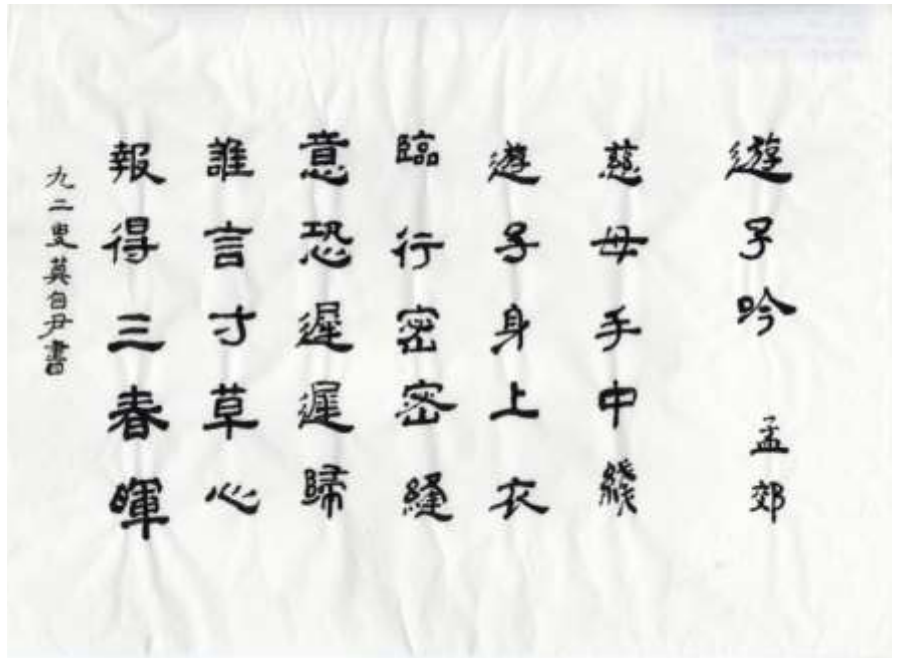
Born in 1946 in Canton province of China, Sandy was the oldest in a big family. When she was five, her family moved to Hong Kong, where she took care of her siblings while both of her parents worked. It left no time for relaxing or art. She later worked for a while making wigs, including one from her own hair.

Sandy came to the U.S. in 1969 and has three children--two daughters and a son--as well as a seven-year old granddaughter. Her happiest moment in life was the birth of her children and grandchild. She also was able in the late '80s to take her children back to Hong Kong and China, to experience the land of her ancestors. She's pleased that they came away with a real appreciation of the culture and speak fluent Chinese.

Her family, including her granddaughter, appreciates and encourages Sandy's new interest in art, something she never thought she would be doing. Her main medium is water color and this is her first time painting a lotus. Her teacher Insio points out that all Sandy's art has the feel of a Chinese brush painting, with its harmonizing colors. Her art, she says, reflects her calm personality.

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Zi Yin Mo

"Poem of Mother's Love"

On Lok Lifeways Gee

Zi Yin Mo taught Chinese literature and calligraphy classes in high school for over 30 years in China before he immigrated to U.S with his family in 1980. Born in Guangzhou, Canton province in 1926, Mr. Mo came from a traditional Chinese family that emphasized the importance of family values. He had four sons and seven grandchildren. Besides working and practicing calligraphy, Mr. Mo has always enjoyed spending time with family.

Mr. Mo continued to teach and help others as a volunteer after his retirement. He was the president of "Chinese Culture and the Arts center" in S.F. Chinatown where he taught calligraphy, poetry and Chinese literature to other teachers and young students until recent years. Recognized as an excellent calligrapher and teacher, Mr. Mo also gave various seminars in Bay Area including Daly City, San Jose and Senior Centers. He is a humble, quiet, hard working, warm-hearted person who practices calligraphy daily at home and during Art with Elders class.

Mr. Mo loves nature and he exercises regularly at 6:00 a.m., "Practice calligraphy can calm me down and that is the secret for a long life beside living happily, eat healthy and exercise!" He also added: "You need to be patience, focus, persistent to practice calligraphy. More importantly, love what you are doing."

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Irene (IrishH) Higgins

"The Artist's Mind!"

On Lok Lifeways Gee

All her friends call her IrishH and she's led an interesting life. A multi-talented performer, she led a blues band (Spoonful of Blues) in San Francisco, composing some of the songs, playing bass and singing lead. She has worked with a small local theater group (Ninjaz of Drama) behind the scenes and in performance. With a Mission district crew (A Waking Dream), she constructed fantastical costuming and participated in the local Carnival and Pride parades, as well as Unity celebrations.

Always a bit of a nerd growing up, IrishH studied Spanish in high school, adding German studies and some French courses in college. After being a dropout for some years she returned to school and earned a bachelor's degree, cum laud, in Russian from SF State University after using scholarship funds to spend a summer semester studying in the Soviet Union. While back in school and afterward IrishH used her academic skills to empower learners in Academic Support programs at City College of San Francisco and After School Programs at Visitacion Valley Middle School.

She came to On Lok through a CCSF Older Adult Program art class and continues along the creative path here experimenting with watercolors, acrylics and gouache paints as well as at the San Francisco Senior Center working with oil paints and ceramics.

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Tunde Zwerencz

"Merry Christmas"

On Lok Lifeways Gee

Tunde was born in 1959 in Budapest, Hungary. She had one son and one daughter; she is divorced and immigrated to U.S with her daughter in 1992. Tunde was a social worker in Hungary for 17 years, she loves to help people and loves to learn. Tunde is now enjoying her life with her daughter and loves attending Art with Elders class.

Tunde's major influence is her father who was a famous Fine Artist and a botanic Illustrator in Hungary. Tunde recalled her childhood memory and said: "My father was a hard-working person who would painted over 16 hours daily. I remembered he painted a mural, it seemed so easy to him but it wasn't when I tried to do my art. My father would encourage me to just keep practice, it will make better and easier!" Tunde then added: "My father is a humble, generous, warm-hearted and a wise person. I enjoy creating art because I can remember my father who passed away many years ago."

"Creating arts can calm me down, help me to focus, forget and ease my physical pains. Attending Art with Elders class helped me a lot. I am living very happily now!" Tunde's also advises: "Making art is not easy but don't give up, take step by step and be persistent to practice."

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Joanna Mewhirter
"Beautiful Plant"
On Lok Lifeways San Jose

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Theresa Vargas

"Serenity"

On Lok Lifeways San Jose

Theresa, known as Teres and Terri by her friends, has always loved art and has taken many art and art history classes over the years. Her AWE class, she says, has taught her to relax and enjoy doing art, despite her belief that she lacks artistic talent. "It's a calming and restful experience," she says. And her teacher, Dmitry, admires her ability to find something unusual in every scene.

She was born in San Francisco in 1945 and spent 33 years working in retail as well as several years in the library of the University of Santa Clara. Though she has no children, she treasures her sister and her family as well as the memory of her brother and husband, who passed away in 2016. Her marriage was the happiest moment in her life, and she fondly remembers a wonderful trip to Hawaii. Her passions have been writing and learning.

Theresa, who is always surrounded by friends and much loved by the staff and residents, describes herself as good natured and kind and declares: "I celebrate all people. It is my deep belief that love is the answer."

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Usha Bhatnagar
"Home Away from Home"
On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Ms. Bhatnagar was born and raised in New Delhi, India, where she later became a Trained Graduate Teacher and taught middle school children for 26 years. Usha found teaching to be a very rewarding career, and art was always one of her favorite subjects to teach.

Usha and her husband moved the family to the US in 1999 with one goal: to help ensure their children achieve their higher education goals. Usha has taken great pride in supporting her family, and says that the happiest moments of her life have been to bear witness to her children's success – her son earned his PhD in Mathematics and her daughter received Master's degrees in both Economics and Education.

Now a grandmother of three, Usha is thrilled to participate in the weekly Art with Elders at On Lok in Fremont. Her advice to the world is, "Look after your health, because health is your real wealth! Eat right and exercise every day!"

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Sr. Andrea Rangel

"Delightful"

On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Sister Andrea Rangel was born and raised in Tracy, California, where her family settled after emigrating from Mexico. She has five siblings and entered the convent at the age of 25. Over nearly 20 years, Sister Andrea's ministry took her to Texas, Utah and Nevada before she returned to her native California.

Sister Andrea has always felt most enriched when surrounded by people from diverse cultures, and has had a lifelong appreciation for art. She took up embroidery in her youth, but it wasn't until 1994, during a sabbatical at Mt. Angel, a Benedictine Sister's Retreat Center in Oregon, where she was introduced to watercolor and pastels and was able to immerse herself in making art for three months. While Sister Andrea did not actively continue making art in the years that followed, she was thrilled at the opportunity to join the Art With Elders class at On Lok Peralta in 2018, where she resumed learning to draw and paint. When asked how she feels about her return to artistic endeavors, she commented with a smile, "Every painting is a surprise. Sometimes I'll make a mistake and think that the piece isn't going to work, but then I'll look at the completed work and say to myself "not bad" and feel proud that I created it."

Sister Andrea is deeply honored to be part of the 2019 Art With Elders exhibit, and has gifted the selected work to her family. When asked for her words of wisdom, Sister Andrea had this to say, "Acquire a hobby early in life. Stay active and creative." We couldn't agree more!

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Philip Ojeda

"Light House"

On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Mr. Ojeda is a Bay Area native, born in the small quiet town of Alameda in 1948 to his mother (a nurse's assistant and wonderful cook) and his father, who was a superintendent at US Steel. Philip has three brothers, with whom he is very close and feels incredibly grateful for their support.

Philip worked as an electrologist professionally, but always made time for hobbies including skiing and music. A guitar player, Philip was part of a rock band for a number of years and still enjoys playing on occasion. Philip remembers the first painting he made at the age of 25 as a gift for his niece who sadly passed away at a young age from leukemia. While he did not paint again until joining the weekly AWE classes at On Lok in Fremont, he is quick to say what a positive impact making art has had on him, "...art class made me more positive. It taught me about painting, which, over time became easier to do. Now I am able to complete a painting almost by the end of each 2-hour class. I enjoy class so much, and look forward to it every week."

When asked what his advice he would like to share with others, he responded, "Don't be afraid to follow your dreams, and always do your best." Words to live by!

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Nordmann Fernandez
"Adriana"
On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Born in San Salvador in 1939, Nordmann likes to explain that his father, a primary school teacher, studied a lot of classical European literature and gave all his eleven children unusual names. Like his father, he too has a passion for reading.

Nordmann has university degrees in law and business administration and worked in law offices and government for many years. He proudly explains that it was his historical research on Luis Vergara Ahumada that helped put an image the Chilean artist's "Primer Grito de Independencia" on Salvadoran currency. The father of six, he came to the U.S. eleven years ago to join his daughter in Redwood City and now lives with his son in Fremont. He has eight grandchildren.

"I haven't been a saint, nor a wise man," says this elder artist with a great sense of humor, "but I respect God and His creation." He likes to serve others and enjoys dancing.

Nordmann's AWE classes are his first exposure to making art himself but he's patient with it. Like Confucius advised, he said, I'm trying to "discover beauty in everything."



Hamida Asif

"Blue Cliffs"

On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Hamida describes herself as a happy person. "I have everything I desire and I thank God for my health and my children," she says.

She was born in 1939 in Karachi, Pakistan, where she grew up with her six sisters and two brothers, many of whom are now scattered around the world. She and her husband, an engineer, had five children. Upon her husband's retirement, her children called and begged them to live with them in Fremont. They immigrated to the U.S. about 15 years ago and now have 13 grandchildren.

Hamida likes to watch television and enjoys doing needlework. She used to do a lot of the cooking, but now she says that's limited mainly to holidays. Her family still loves her delicious biryani, a mixed rice dish.

Her AWE classes are her first experience with art. She is open to any medium and has recently discovered acrylic on canvas. Landscapes are her favorite subject.

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Yuzhen Lu
"North Arctic Firefox"
On Lok Lifeways Peralta

Yuzhen has been an artist all his life, with a few detours along the way. Born in China in 1944, he started learning techniques in elementary school when he was seven years old. But there were no art classes in high school and he trained to be a teacher. When he graduated he was drafted by the army and learned to send messages in Morse Code.

After five years in the army, he began a 40-year career as a high-school Physics teacher. He would have loved to become an art teacher and to continue painting, but stopped painting since he was so busy. During the Cultural Revolution artists were only allowed to do portraits of Chairman Mao and Karl Marx.

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John Conger
"Lunch Counter"
Raksha Care Home

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Lilja Rizzo
"Landscape I"
Raksha Care Home

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Gretchen Klug

"Pink Panther"

Raksha Care Home

Gretchen was born in Alliance, Nebraska, and lived in several Midwestern cities in her youth before the family moved to San Diego. Her German-born father, an osteopath, and her mother believed in the importance of healthy living and Gretchen was raised in a nudist camp from the age of 10-18.

After coming to Berkeley, she worked as a secretary, taking dictation for Chancellors Robert Gordon Sproul and Clark Kerr. She remembers fondly the sense of community in Berkeley at the time—the wine and spaghetti parties, poetry, meditation groups, and folk music. For years Gretchen helped raise her sister's children and she and her mother rented rooms to students who weren't welcome in other places. She has also worked for the California State Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation, Workmen's Comp and an alcoholism clinic, her favorite job.

Gretchen has been interested in art since her childhood when she made art with the children she babysat, and despite serious vision issues continues to this day. What she describes as her best painting was a huge tiger, which she had to stop painting because it kept getting "bigger and bigger." She's a fan of Frida Kahlo and her AWE art teacher describes her work as "having a shamanic, Native American feel."



Jean Rankin
"Traffic Lights"
Raksha Care Home

Jean was born in Scotland in 1928, the fifth child in a family of four boys and two girls. At the age of eighteen, she came to the United States and worked as a nanny for many years. The remainder of her career was as a waitress, proud of being a fast worker who was rewarded with lots of tips.

With a sly gleam in her eye and the remnants of a Scottish burr, Jean explains that she met her husband Craig in a pub. They settled in Santa Monica, where he worked as an electrician, and they had a son. She's now the proud grandmother of a boy and a girl.

Jean began drawing when she was young. She specializes in pencil and ink and likes drawing geometric shapes such as buildings. She's also a puzzle addict, challenging herself with 1,000-piece puzzles.

This outgoing elder artist, who says she "loves fun," embraces life. When she was younger, she'd sing and dance in the streets during Scottish New Year and go to a friend's house with a bottle of beer.



Troy Robinson
"Paris is Burning"
Redwood Healthcare

Troy was born in San Francisco and later moved to Oakland. After graduating from St. Mary's High School in Oakland he attended San Francisco State University where he says jokingly, "I majored in partying." Troy worked for many years and his last job was at Data Broadcasting Corporation in San Mateo.

An avid sports fan, Troy enjoys watching Warriors and Oakland A's games. Troy also enjoys traveling and particularly enjoyed a trip to Colombia he took with a girl-friend in his younger years.

Troy describes himself as a carefree, easygoing, free spirit. He has been creating art throughout his life. "Making art me feel great," he says. He paints whatever inspires him in the moment.

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Corean Che Johnson
"Water Reflection"
Redwood Healthcare

Corean was born in Louisiana and grew up in Texas. She's the youngest in a large family with four brothers and six sisters. At the age of 40 she boarded a bus with her sister and moved to Oakland, CA. where she's made her home ever since. She and her sister bought a house on 64th Avenue where she raised her four children. She studied Dietetics at California State University and worked at UC Hospital.

Corean recently started painting and paints whatever inspires her at the moment. When she first starts a new piece she says, "I always think, what am I doing? But then, I usually feel good about what I've painted."

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Celina Bauer

"Flower Festival"

Redwood Healthcare

Celina spent most of her life in El Salvador where she was born. She grew up in a close family with two brothers and a sister and says she was a studious child. She attended a girl's school where her athletic abilities were nurtured. She played on softball and basketball teams and developed a love of drawing in her early years. She later studied to be a secretary and joined both her parents in the profession working for the government.

She moved to the United States fifteen years ago, living first with friends in Washington D.C. and eventually joined her brother in California. She worked as a housekeeper for several years while attending school to learn English. She never forgot her native country and used to return when she was able for visits. Today she enjoys art classes at Oakhill Springs and visiting with her youngest brother.

" I didn't have any past experience with art", Celina says. "I paint from what I feel. It just comes naturally."

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Audine Wilson

"Ships by the Bay"

Redwood Healthcare

Audine was born in Northern California where she spent her youth and much of her adulthood. After raising her two sons, she traveled to India and eventually moved there, living for many years in an ashram. That period of her life was one of spiritual and creative richness and growth. "I liked the freedom that I had in India," she says. She made many friends and spent her time at the ashram pursuing her spiritual practice and creating art. She was deeply inspired by her surroundings in India, which in turn influenced her paintings and drawings.

Audine likes to paint flowers, among other things, and prefers painting on a small scale. "When I'm in a good mood," she says, "I like to spend time making art." Audine also takes great pride and delight in her young grandchildren and looks forward to the time she shares with them.

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Joan Gill

"Circles of Color"

The Reutlinger Community

Thanks to AWE, "Joan started becoming an artist at the age of 91," says her son Tom. She's living proof that it's never too late.

Joan worked in New York, where she was born in 1926, as an interior decorator for one of the nation's first big department stores, Lloyd and Taylor, but she devoted most of her life to care giving. She raised four children, cared for her mother and later for her husband in memory care. But she always made time to care for others too. When living in North Carolina, she delivered puzzles to people in nursing homes. As Tom points out, "She did things throughout her life that the world doesn't celebrate."

Joan and her husband, an IBM executive who travelled extensively, lived in Europe for a number of years and enjoyed golfing together. But her passion throughout her life was always flowers. She cared for a large rose garden, where she would sometimes appear in white heels, one of the many pairs of shoes she loved. Long-stemmed roses were her favorite, which became the subject of some of her earlier paintings.

You can find her three times a week in Reutlinger's art room, expressing in her art what she may not be able to say in words. She likes it when "all the shapes are getting along."

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Maher Salama

"Paradise"

The Reutlinger Community

"God bless America, the land that I love" says this 86-year-old Egyptian, who came to the U.S. in 1970. Maher studied English in high school and graduated in business management from the American University, where his father was a professor. Before coming to the U.S., he worked in an accounting company, and was an avid swimmer and member of the Greek rowing club.

With a kind smile, his gentle blue eyes light up when he describes the months of dancing and dining that led to marrying his wife of 55 years, Therese. Maher found a job (and a passion for chess) at Bank of America two days after his arrival here, where he worked until his early retirement. He still feels most "accomplished" when helping the needy. The couple has a son and daughter and three grandchildren.

A lover of classical music, especially the work of Chopin and Tchaikovsky, Maher enjoyed playing the piano. "As I love music, I love paint," he says now, after his introduction at Reutlinger to making art. And despite vision and shoulder problems, he revels in learning "how to paint beauty and how to expose it to other people—especially so the blind can see."

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Lucy Danzig (and Ofelia Gow)

"It Looks Like Rain"

The Reutlinger Community

Lucy, who had never done art before coming to Reutlinger three years ago, is proud of the partnership she and her friend and caregiver Ofelia Gow have formed to create her art. "In our process," she says, "we discuss design and draw the images and then with Ofelia guiding my hand, together we paint."

Born in 1937 in Brooklyn, New York, Lucy moved to Los Angeles at the age of nine, where she later met her husband Bill in junior college. She supported him through dental school at NYU, working as an executive secretary, but made him promise to return to California to raise their children. They had three girls--- Dana, Susan, and Wendy—and now three grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Lucy cherishes her memory of taking the family on a Caribbean cruise on their 50th anniversary.

Lucy describes herself as an "up" person, with a lot of patience, a quality which proved invaluable through many years of helping her husband recover from a serious biking accident in 1999.

Now, besides stealing away to the art room, even when her teacher Betty Rothaus isn't there, Lucy enjoys playing poker, bingo and pokino.

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Sidney Glickfield

"Winds of Change"

The Reutlinger Community

Ninety-three-year-old Sid Glickfeld was born in San Francisco. He and his British-born wife, Helen, met at a dance here, and have been married for 62 years. They had two daughters and one son, and now include their "grandcat," Bagel, in their family. After retirement they enjoyed cruising and travelling together.

Sid, an avid stamp collector with an inquiring mind, taught math and history in high school and has a great passion for geology---all of which are reflected in his art. He started out painting geometric circles and rectangles and moved on to another fascination of his--the way rocks are structured. "I love to capture the intensity of colors in the mineral world," he says, and enjoys trying different backgrounds in his paintings.

His passion extends to the sky and the forces of nature also—to the power of thunder and lightning. "I wonder," he asks, "what the ancients thought of it," and hypothesizes, "Maybe someday we'll use the power of it for our own electricity."

Helen describes Sid as a "very kind and lovable person" with a great sense of humor, who is always helpful to other people.

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Rita R. Goldman

"Courage"

The Reutlinger Community

It's easy to spot Rita in the halls of Reutlinger. Known as the "Flower Girl," she'll be wearing a colorful flower in her hair that matches her clothes and her personality. But her life hasn't been as bright as she is.

Eighty-five-year-old Rita grew up in Washington D.C. in a family permeated by her Polish mother's losses during the Holocaust. Her early hopes to become a counterculture artist were quickly dashed by a Corcoran Gallery art teacher, who told her she'd never be an artist. But she managed to write poems for the local Jewish paper, and eventually became a school psychologist, married and had four children.

At the age of 49, Rita suffered a devastating stroke that left her wheelchair-bound, paralyzed on her right side and blind in one eye. Even after her stroke she finished a Ph.D., did volunteer work, including counseling and tutoring in the temple, and endured the tragic loss of her 33-year-old son, Shalom.

Now, painting with her left hand, the art program is "a shining light" for her. "I feel like my disability was an opportunity to do good deeds and learn," she says.

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Bess Meek

"Excaliber"

The Reutlinger Community

"The colors are ecstatic," Bess giggles, as she describes one of her colorful paintings that hangs above her bed. "That's my little lavender person – it's me. I call it 'Voilà!' When I paint, the colors have fragrance, a memory, a temperature and a feeling."

Bess is infectious, just like her art. "I've been happy since the day I was born," she says with a smile. She grew up in a family full of Pekinese and Pomeranian dogs, raised by her father, and reports proudly that she was frequently called on in class to read for the other immigrant students in the lower East Side of New York City, where she was born in 1932. Later she worked as an assistant bookkeeper for a giftware company, raised three children, and became intrigued with pharmacology.

Bess has read everything from Erma Bombeck to Lobsang Rampa and boasts, "I've learned how not to be a stick in the mud." She's a Gemini, loves German milk chocolate, and her favorite season is fall because "when you look outside, it makes you shiver inside."

Her wise advice: "If you don't laugh, you get in a rut. Life is here for the living."

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Evelyne Ostreicher
"Life Flourishing in Alaskan Waters"
The Reutlinger Community

Evelyn's room is full of memories—family photos, a certificate honoring her volunteer services from the Ohio House of Representatives and another from Ronald Reagan, and even the wooden cane of her mother, who died in her arms years ago. Her memories and her art seem to sustain her. And despite living over 50 years with multiple sclerosis, she says, "I'm grateful I still have my mind."

Born in Canada in 1930, Evelyn grew up with her brother in Loraine, Ohio. She met her husband, Ernie, there thanks to the efforts of her matchmaker father and his aunt, and three or four dates later, they got engaged over the phone.

Evelyn and Ernie worked together in Ernie's jewelry business and raised three daughters, Helen, Isabelle, and Sharon. In her free time, she loved volunteering, and has fond memories of the kosher cookies she took for "cookie time" at a home for the aged.

Evelyn never thought she could do art until she met Betty Rothaus, who has now become her favorite teacher of all time. She especially enjoys making interesting visual combinations of different nature scenes, like the winter clouds in Hawaii with the summer trees of Yosemite. "I look forward to coming to art class to explore myself and continue learning," she says.



Doris Langer

"How Wondrous is a Butterfly Wing"

The Reutlinger Community

The daughter of Russian immigrants, 90-year old Doris Langer was born in Brooklyn on Christmas Day. She still has fond memories of walking to the top of the Statue of Liberty with her father.

She and her future husband Irwin met at a high school party. After he returned from the war, they lived in Virginia while he attended college and eventually settled in Los Angeles. There they raised their two daughters and Doris worked in furniture design centers and showrooms.

Doris, who now has 3 grandsons, believes "education is the key." She's proud that her daughters completed their studies at UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara to become a school principal and a nurse.

The key to a long life, says Doris, is "good living, exercise, and eating right," though she confesses, with a mischievous smile, that she periodically enjoys a salami sandwich. "I'm a hat person," declares this elder with a definite eye for fashion and color, and "I believe in doing."

Doris only began doing her own art after the death of her husband. Her art today reflects colors, shapes and designs that form a relationship with an interior space. She began her butterfly series after seeing photographs of butterfly wings under a microscope. It "inspired me to fly," she says.

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Kioku Kay Matsuda

"Mermaid's Domain"

The Sequoias

Born in the northern rural area of the Big Island of Hawaii, Kay grew up on a sugar cane plantation. A trained nurse, she came to San Francisco in 1949--the only one of her six siblings who emigrated to the mainland--and worked for many years at St. Francis Hospital.

After over sixty years of marriage, Kay asserts, "The three things I live by are trust, respect, and responsibility." She believes deeply in keeping life simple. At the Sequoias, this articulate and independent 89-year old goes up to the roof at dawn to view "nature's gallery" and works out at the gym. She also draws, paints or thinks about her art daily.

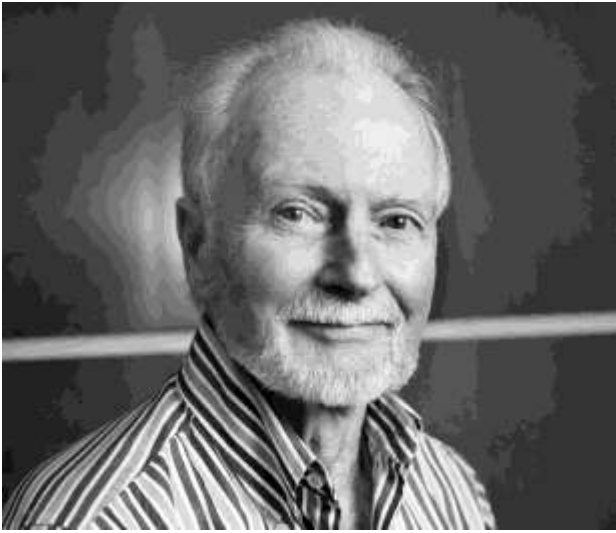
May drew nothing other than stick figures before she took art lessons from a resident artist at the Sequoias and then joined the AWE class. Now, she says, "When I finish my drawing or painting, I look at it and say, 'Now, did I do this?' It's something I created and it's a moment I treasure."

One of Kay's art projects has included a series of drawings depicting her family history, accompanied by stories to pass on to her nieces, nephews and grand-nephews.

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Richard Williams

"Sunset II"

The Sequoias

Born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, Richard grew up in Wisconsin, went to Northwestern University, and performed in live theatre, mostly comedies and musicals, for twenty years. His favorite character was playing King Arthur in Camelot.

But his true passion is ceramics. Richard returned to school for an MFA in ceramics and came to California planning to become a potter. He has worked in San Francisco's Castro district for thirty years as one of the managers of a non-profit studio for ceramic artists – Ruby's Clay Studio – where he has his studio.

Richard has been an avid participant in Art With Elders for many years, painting stunning landscapes of some of his favorite spots. Richard exhibits with us frequently, often choosing to donate his work. Richard has been in the "Artist Spotlight" of our newsletter and his recently sold work, Stony Cliff, was on the cover of our 24th Annual Show Program.

Richard, who describes himself as a generally positive person and a peacemaker, is excited about painting. "You're never too old to discover new things," he says and quips, "I doubt I'll develop into Grandpa Moses, but I'm having a great time in my AWE class."

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Yolande Raes
"Frida"
SF Senior Center

Yolande was born and raised in Belgium. She came to the US in 1980 after falling in love with a young American man she met in Brussels. She moved to the States and became a citizen. Yolande lived in Hawaii for a few years where she worked as a floral designer, a career she continued in San Francisco, until she had to give it up for health reasons.

Despite her chronic lower back pain, Yolande learned the art of making paper flowers in the Mexican tradition. Her work was recognized by the curators of the Day of The Dead festivals at SOMArts Cultural Center. Between 2004 and 2008 she created five Rooms for the annual exhibits. She still makes paper roses as gifts for friends on special occasions.

Although Yolande's parents painted as a hobby, after a disappointing experience in an art class at CCSF, she didn't paint for several years. She did, however, always watch Bob Ross on TV. Now she is taking an AWE class and enjoying it as much as her back pain permits. "That is why I like Frida Kahlo so much," she says, "I relate to her!"



Susan Torrey
"Untitled"
SF Senior Center

Susan believes in "putting positive energy out there" in the world and in promoting positive energy in oneself. Born in Berkeley, Susan never studied art. Then in 2013, she decided to begin a "new phase" in her life and she set new goals for herself. She started by taking a collage class taught by a therapist she knew. Although it was only a four hour class, it inspired her to do more art. She wanted to paint and taught herself how to use watercolors.

Susan says she created this piece very quickly, in less than 15 minutes actually. She told her AWE teacher she wanted to do a collage. The teacher, Veronicas Rojas, pulled various, miscellaneous items out of a closet and soon Susan had created this piece. Until someone pointed it out to her, she didn't realize that the central figure appears to be two people about to embrace.

Susan intends to go on painting also. She wants to do renderings of nature, flowers, and plants, even vases, with or without flowers.

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Patricia Wait
"Tiny Bubbles"
SF Senior Center

Trish was born in Southern California and raised in Fresno. After her mom passed away when she was 13, her father and three brothers depended on her to manage the household. For that reason, she believes she was never taught that it was okay to have fun. Feeling "burned out" from the experience, she moved to San Francisco as a young adult but found The City overwhelming. She relocated to Hawaii where she worked as a massage therapist and in Lake Tahoe as a card dealer in the casinos.

In third grade she was required to participate in art classes and to produce three drawings per week. She drew her pieces during lunch in the cafeteria. She didn't feel that she got the right feedback and support for her efforts and after third grade did not try to do art again for 60 years. Then she found AWE!

She believes it is important to be independent and figure things out for oneself. Her advice: "Come to events, observe what's happening, check your comfort level, then try it! Have fun and make it fun for other people, too." Laughter, she says, changes the energy and breaks down up-tightness. She also says, "Women need to understand their own truth, speak it and believe it."

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Thomas Seton McKay

"Clipper Ship"

SF Senior Center

Thomas was born in Connecticut in a summer resort area on Long Island Sound. Growing up, he was engaged in all sorts of sailing related activities. He loved square-rigger sail boats and always wanted to paint them. Although his mother paints and he was around art a lot as a child, he never felt he had any talent.

As an older adult he took a few art classes at San Francisco City College, but the commute was too difficult for him to maintain. Instead, he began to read books designed to teach art to children. He did this for about a year and a half, making good progress. He began coming to AWE classes at the SF Senior Center as soon they started. He really enjoys his class. He gets encouragement, help and correction delivered in a very sensitive manner.

His skill has developed very quickly since he started at AWE. Now, he feels ready to branch out to other subjects such as the Statue of Liberty... or anything with water and beaches. "I failed at everything in life until I found art," he says. Art gives him a great sense of accomplishment. "My 60 year dream has finally been achieved."

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Jason Liu
"Quiet Time"
SF Senior Center

Jason was born in China and came to the United States when he was 8 in 1984. He arrived with his mother when she came to be with her sister, Jason's aunt, who was already living in San Francisco. After college he worked as a computer programmer. Later he implemented system upgrades and trained staff, working in the same company for many years.

Jason has only been painting for a few months. Although he had an uncle in China who was an artist and he always loved art, Jason never painted before coming to his first Art With Elders class. He is working with acrylics now, but is looking forward to getting experience in other mediums as well.

Art solved a problem for Jason: the need to concentrate, a skill he learned working with computers. Art is an opportunity to both concentrate and express his feelings at the same time. Jason believes there is conflict in everyone's life. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes we are sad. His advice: find the thing that appeals to you, find what makes you happy.

Jason is grateful for the opportunity to express his feelings. "Art makes people relax and think at the same time," he says.



S. Renee Jones
"Black is Beautiful"
SF Senior Center

Renee was raised by a single-parent father in the Mission District of San Francisco. She had nine sisters and brothers. Her father also helped raise other children as well. She says at one point there were 18 children living under one roof. Her father was named "Father of the Year" three times by the SF Examiner. He taught her to be the person she is today: responsible, caring and hard working.

There was always art in her house growing up. One day her father brought home a large white rug from a home he was helping to tear down. He spread the rug out on the sidewalk and gave all the kids colored markers and allowed them to draw whatever they wanted on the rug. That made the kids feel special!

He also brought home old cameras, which started Renee's interest in photography. Today she runs an art gallery (6th on 7th Gallery), and teaches photo workshops for "adults living in poverty" and military veterans.

"There are not enough positive images of people of color," she says, "And my goal is to put those images out in every medium."

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EDDE

"Year of the Rabbit"
SF Senior Center

Eddie is his real name. As he will let you know immediately when you meet him, it's not Edward or Edgar. Simply Eddie. He has spent a lifetime answering people who are sure "Eddie" must be a nickname. On top of this, he was a red-headed child...a "ginger" he says. He hated being called "Red-headed Eddie." Recently he has begun to sign his name EDDE. All caps. Now his name is a palindrome, which pleases him.

EDDE has multiple degrees: BA in Liberal Arts, MS in social work, a BS in Biology. He has studied French literature and drama. In his college drama classes he designed and made costumes for school performances.

EDDE produces a lot of art work. He likes to work with mixed media. He is partial to photography and his piece, *Year of the Rabbit*, is a photo of himself which he has embellished.

EDDE is grateful to Art With Elders which he believes is "better than the SF Art Institute." He believes that art can't be taught, but with help – such as the kind he gets from his AWE teacher – people can get appreciate their natural talent. He says he is ..."Forever grateful. AWE is the best!"

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Jeremy Schutt
"Untitled"
SF Senior Center

Jeremy grew up in Levittown, the famous planned community on Long Island, in the 1950s. He learned to play the piano at age 4 and still plays today. He also plays bass guitar daily. He took art classes in school and was a film major in college. He studied photography and printmaking as well.

He moved to the Bay Area to attend the California Culinary Academy in 1991, after receiving a small inheritance. Working mostly in French restaurants, he was a chef for five years. At that point Acme Bread (a local favorite) was just getting started and he decided to become a baker.

Jeremy started coming to AWE art classes 10 years ago. He likes to work mostly in acrylics. He considers himself a gentle person and he says "Friendship and good health are the most important" things to him now. He walks two miles every day, rain or shine.

These days Jeremy can use some extra financial help and so he panhandles in West Portal one day a week. He enjoys talking to the people he meets, especially the people who he engages with on a regular basis.



Jun Ming Wong

"Bamboo"

SF Senior Center

I was born in China, Taishan and grew up in Guanzhou. Because my daughter's family is in California, I immigrated here in order to reunite with my daughter. I love the United States.

I have never been exposed to art at home. I love art when I grow up but there is no condition for learning. I am very lucky to have the opportunity to attend the art class. The teacher's sincere guidance has increased my confidence and interest in learning. I will continue to study art, thank you.

I am just beginning to learn now, and I hope to study hard. In the future, when others see my works, they will feel that art is beautiful. World peace is happiness.

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Phil Melnick
"Green Hair Girl"
SF Senior Center

Phil was born in New Jersey and came to California 30 years ago. His mother came here first, but when she needed help he came out west to care for her. He found work as a bellman at the St. Francis Hotel. Phil loved working at the St. Francis, and he met several famous people there including Bob Hope and Margaret Hamilton, the Wicked Witch of the West in "Wizard of Oz".

Phil spent time drawing and painting as a kid. He is self-taught and he believes that every artist is. He enjoys working in acrylics and wants to continue doing portraits.

Working at the St. Francis, Phil made good tips and not just in cash. He was able to make some good investments based on "tips" from guests he served. As a result, he is able to spend leisure time pursuing another favorite activity: reading about inventors. Among his heroes is Charles Babbage (1791 – 1871), who originated the concept of a digital, programmable computer. Think zeros and ones. Another hero: Alexander Bain (1810 – 1871) who is credited with inventing the first technology to send an image over a wire. A precursor to the fax machine, and Phil will tell you, to the television as well. He believes, "The world comes from inventors."



Yue Situ
"The Beauty View"
SF Senior Center

My name is Yue Situ. I was born in 1931, grew up in a warm family. I studied in a boarding school for 12 years. Japan invaded China in 1937. Being refugees for 8 years, I learned how to swim which improved my juvenile physical. During the high school, I won five track and field championships twice. My school was spectacular and had plenty of good teachers. I had the honor to be taught by a famous painter. Under the teacher's patient guidance, I fell in love with Chinese painting. My work was selected in the school exhibition, which gave me great encouragement.

I graduated from Zhongshan medical university in 1955, When I was busy with my homework, I would draw some pictures in my notebook. I like to take pictures of the beautiful scenery, flowers and trees in the park as my materials. After retiring, I immigrated to the United State for more than 30 years, I continue loving Chinese painting. I have participated in two painting classes and two exhibitions for the elderly. Unfortunately, the painting class has been cancelled for several years. I am lucky enough to participate in a perfect painting class in the SF Senior Center and have the patient teachers to teach. I hope to study hard together with other classmates.

I have participated in the SF Senior Center for more than 15 years. My spouse was my classmate in the medical school before. He was a professor of surgery and graduate tutor. The family will continue into the fifth generation of medical families, which are painters and calligraphers too.

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Eunice Childs

"Bunnies"

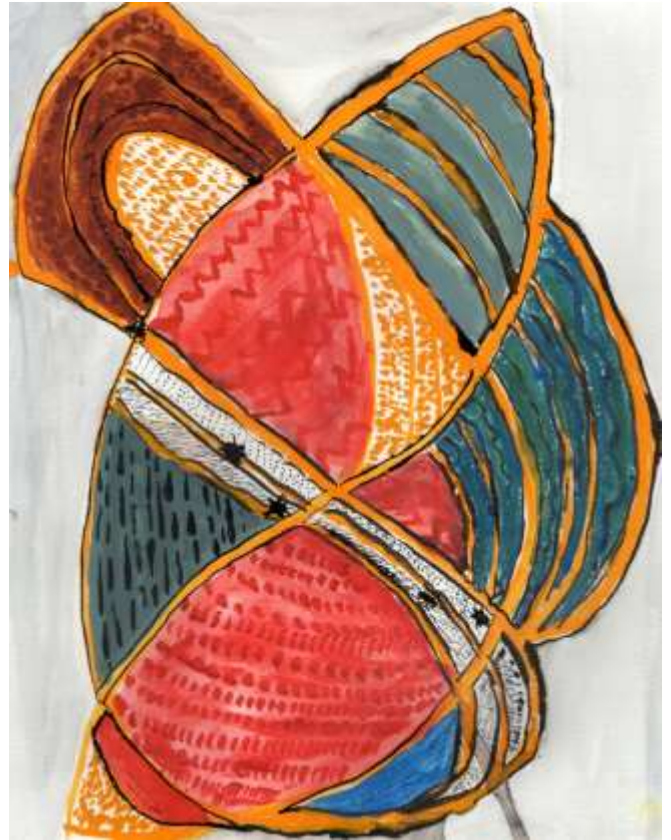
San Francisco Towers

Eunice was born in 1929, one week after the stock market crashed, in Syracuse, New York. "It affected our family," she recalls. "We were poor and anxious." She and her younger sister Lois both studied art at Washington University in St. Louis. "Our parents encouraged art, and we were lucky that art was part of the school curriculum when we were growing up."

After a short stint working in St. Louis, Eunice moved to New York, where she enjoyed working in the Little Golden Books division of Simon & Schuster, doing layout for children's books and nature guides. She fell in love with San Francisco while visiting a college friend and moved here in 1959. She met her husband Alfred on a Sierra Club hiking trip.

She hated her job in a big corporation in SF and moved to Berkeley on a friend's suggestion. Berkeley's diversity suited her, compared to conservative St. Louis with its segregated housing. "I have a live-and-let-live attitude," she states. She became an Administrative Analyst in records management in the Office of the President of the UC system for 27 years, retiring in 1987.

Now 90, Eunice describes her younger self as shy, up into her 30s. "That's the blessing of getting older...I'm not self-conscious anymore." She doesn't mind being alone, likes the other students in art class, and has served on the Resident Council. She enjoys making necklaces in beading class, and reading books on American history.



Nancy Stohn
"Metamorphosis"
San Francisco Towers

Nancy grew up on Long Island, New York, the youngest of three sisters. Nancy's father was a clothing manufacturer New York City. Being around models and designers, and a mother who loved flower arranging, pointed her in a creative direction. She studied at the New York School of International Design, and since 1956 has had a wide-ranging career as an interior designer, including private homes, doctors' offices, a cancer hospital in El Paso, and a penitentiary in New Mexico. She's also a feng shui specialist; in 2005, she studied it in China for a month with a group of designers. "I love how the client feels when the energy is right, and I love the creativity," she says.

A born leader, Nancy was president of the Girl Scouts in El Paso and Boston; led the teenage group of the National Council of Jewish Women; and was vice president of student government in college. At the Towers, she has just organized a presentation on trekking poles vs. walkers and canes to a roomful of 30 residents. "That's who I am," she comments.

Nancy, 83, and ex-husband Bob Hirsch have two daughters and a son and several granddaughters, all in California. Reflecting on her life, she says, "I'm filled with gratitude at how lucky I've been, how extensive my life has been...this art class allows me the freedom to relax in the afternoon and create something I've never done before. I don't know where it's coming from, but it's coming!"



Curtiss Taylor
"Southern Comfort"
San Francisco Towers

Curtiss, known as Curt by his friends, has learned some important lessons in his 86 years. "As people get older," he says, "they get less flexible and it's easy to get into a rut. You need to keep trying to improve and do new things." His AWE class has provided him with that opportunity.

Born in Buffalo, New York, Curt followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, working his whole life in the printing business. He had always been interested in art, especially in drawing realistic portraits using graphite pencil. "Longing" was inspired by the film *Testament of Youth*, starring the Swedish actress Alicia Vikander in a story about young love and the futility of war. He copied the image from a magazine and his teacher Rafael showed him how to add the clouds and mountains and use a blender.

Curt describes himself as "laid back" He and his wife T.J. Thelma-Jean, who have been married for twenty years, re-connected later in life after having been fourth grade classmates. They have a blended family of four children. Two of his favorite projects were drawing portraits of his wife and 90-year-old brother. He still hopes to draw the face on the statue of Greek goddess Hebe in the entry way to SF Towers. If he doesn't do a good job, he jokes, "she'll come back to haunt me."



Ione Kuhner
"Butterflies"
UCSF Memory and Aging Center

Ione participates in a clinical study at UCSF's Memory and Alzheimer's Clinic. She only began painting when she joined the study five years ago. One goal of the study is to see how persons with neurological problems can be helped to bring out and appreciate their "artistic side". Now, Ione is busy creating paintings for friends and strangers. She was even interviewed by a crew from CBS. She laughs as she remembers how they followed her around with a camera for a day.

Ione is a San Francisco native who has also spent time in San Diego. She was a dental assistant before she became ill and unable to work. Her illness was first noticed by her husband and children. Eventually bouts of confusion forced her to quit working. Anxiety is one of the key symptoms of her illness. "Art helps me to relax and I love painting." And she says art helps her to think positively. She loves being creative and making beautiful paintings.

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Maria Trujillo

"See Food"

UCSF Memory and Aging Center

Maria Gladys comes from a large family in El Salvador. The eldest of 7, she helped raise her siblings. She and her sister immigrated to the United States in 1972 and she has lived in San Francisco for the majority of her life. On arriving in the United States, she and her sister started working immediately to help their family. She took classes to learn English and manufacturing, and worked producing school uniforms for children. Maria Gladys was happy to meet her husband after being in the U.S. for about 4 years, and they have two daughters together. She is excited to have grandchildren one day.

Maria Gladys loves all of the feedback she has received from the AWE class instructors. She feels that her drawing skills keep improving and that motivates her to continue attending class. Aside from drawing, she enjoys gardening and taking long walks. She has also been enjoying spending time with her daughter, who recently moved back to San Francisco from the east coast. Her other daughter has been living in France for about 10 years.

Maria Gladys says she has seen a lot of changes in San Francisco over the years and she is proud of her hard work and her family.

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Susan McCown

*"Portrait of a Woman
(after Modigliani)"*

Vallejo Hills Retirement Community

The appreciation and expression of beauty has always been at the heart of Susan McCown's life. She was drawn to ceramics in high school, while growing up with her sister in Vallejo. After starting a family at age nineteen, raising two daughters with Paul W., she enrolled at Long Beach State College as a ceramics major. She recalls early jobs waitressing at the "Beatnik clubs" in Hollywood.

Susan later remarried to Lee Medeiros, her partner for 41 years, until his passing in 2016. The couple lived in Vallejo, before retiring to a small town near Hilo, Hawaii, where Susan enjoyed and nurtured the beauty of nature on their remote property. As a member of the group, Wise Old Women (WOW), she painted, created pottery, arranged flowers, and learned the art of "Healing Touch," which she practiced for over twenty years.

Susan, born in Oakland in 1936, has returned to Vallejo to be near her sister Mary Ann, two daughters, Lisa and Carla, and four grandchildren. Now a resident of Brookdale Vallejo Hills, she enjoys the sense of community there. She has become a dedicated member of the AWE class, celebrating natural beauty with seascapes in oil pastels, and recently, with acrylic paint and palette knives. Fellow classmate and now partner, Larry M., says of his new love, Susan, "She's an artful soul!"

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Larry McCown

"Green of Spades"

Vallejo Hills Retirement Community

Larry, from Vallejo, California where his family has lived since his grandfather's days. He met and married his first wife, Gail, while living in Portland, Oregon, but they soon moved back to Vallejo where Larry began his 30-year career working on Mare Island in the ship-building and nuclear submarine industries, specializing in semi-conductor work for 12 years.

On retiring, Larry moved into the community now known as Brookdale Vallejo Hills, where he has been not only a resident, but also an actively engaged community member since 2006. Larry manages The Country Store at Brookdale, and is also involved in the Senior Coalition of Solano County.

He met his partner, fellow AWE student, Susan M., in 2016. Susan encouraged Larry to join her in art class. He started by coloring geometric designs in a coloring book and soon he was creating his own designs using a straight-edge and French Curve, experimenting with color arrangements using his preferred medium, glitter gels pens. Larry takes his work through another step by scanning his images to computer and using digital media techniques for his final output. In class with Susan and friends, he jokes, "It's all her fault, and I love it...I really do enjoy this, what I am doing!"

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Rose London

"Spring Flower Bouquet"

Vallejo Hills Retirement Community

If you want to catch up with ninety-year-old Rose London, you may find her playing violin with the Solano County Symphony. A talented musician and music lover, Rose took after her mother, who graduated from The Julliard School of Music. "Rose," short for "Rosa May", was named after her parents' mothers.

Born in Spokane, Washington, Rose was raised in Alameda, California with her two brothers. She has happy college memories at the University of the Pacific (UOP), where she studied education and music when the school became co-ed to accommodate the returning GIs. It was there that she met another musician, Willard, who became her husband. The couple was married for 45 years and had two children, Jay and Dana, who now live in Texas.

After Willard's sudden passing, Rose remarried in 1996, welcoming Ted's three children--Claire, John, and Charles--to her own family. Fifteen years later, Ted died from complications of Alzheimer's.

Despite her losses, Rose continues on with remarkable energy and resilience. In addition to her busy musical life of practice, rehearsals, and performances, Rose is expanding her creativity with her recently-acquired drawing skills in her AWE class, where she's learning and improving quickly. After class and a round of hugs, off darts Rose, with the energy of a teenager.

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Chieko Lafferty
"DeKooning Woman"
Western Park Apartments

The ebullient Chieko Lafferty, born in Kyoto, Japan, worked as an accountant. However, here dreams always led to art. After an apprenticeship, she began designing Western-style fabric patterns. Ten years later, she decided to visit the United States before settling down, but in San Francisco she met Jack, a dashing Scot, to whom she has now been married 36 years.

Chieko takes fine arts classes while continuing to work as a bookkeeper. She loves to draw, and enjoys painting still lifes, but her favorite is figure drawing. She regularly returns to the classics to check her technique. "If you can draw a circle, cylinder, box, you can draw," Chieko explains. "The basics are so important. Sometimes it's boring – another white bowl! But then you can go anywhere."

Chieko enjoys reading in Japanese and murder mysteries in English, cooking all cuisines, listening to classical music, and taking walks. More than anything else, she is constantly exploring, seeking to develop her style. "There are rules, but rules are for breaking," she laughs. "I love that!" For example, she will refigure classical compositions with a cubist technique and use origami paper for collage. "If I paint something and everyone says, 'That's Chieko', that is what I want."



Pearl Yue

"Old Woman"

Western Park Apartments

"I have loved art since I was seven years old," Pearl Yue will tell you. "I spent a lot of time in my bedroom painting." Her sisters and brother also showed decided artistic talents early in life but their father warned them, "Artists only become famous when they're dead. Get work that will support you!" Pearl found a career as a microbiologist for China's Academy of Science.

Born and raised in Tianjin, in Northern China, Pearl's family owned an herb factory over a 300-year period that produced such high-quality products that the Emperor made it the royal pharmacy. Her father was the last of the family to manage it when the communist regime put an end to private property ownership.

Pearl and her husband moved to San Francisco in 1990 with their son and daughter and she quickly found work at U.C.S.F. Even then, though, she continued to make art – taking charge of holiday decorations at work and painting in the evenings and weekends at a gallery on Sutter Street. She retired in 2002 and moved into Western Park Apartments almost six years ago. She was delighted to find a thriving Art With Elders program there and takes advantage of the art studio as often as possible.

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Francis Li

"Red Vase"

Western Park Apartments

This 81-year-old Shanghai native, whose work is frequently honored in the AWE celebrations, arrived in the U.S. in 1991 with his family, anxious for his two children to get a good education. He's proud that they did just that.

Francis smiles when recalling his younger days in San Francisco when, after working all day at the post office, he would hop on the bus to the local park to umpire for the city's slow-pitch softball games. He's been an avid baseball fan his whole life, as a coach in Shanghai, when he rooted for the Yankees and Red Sox, and now for the Chicago Cubs and the Giants.

Art, he says, has given him a new appreciation of nature. "Before, when I went to the park I would see only trees and a river. Now, after painting I see the green in the sky in the early morning and at sunset."

Francis uses his left hand to hold his impaired right hand to paint and he still insists on setting up his own work station in the art room. He says painting helps him forget his pain. And he has this wise advice: "Don't give up. Enjoy life every day. Pray; thank God and everybody for what you have."

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Yelena Khristich
"Open Mind"
Western Park Apartments

If you're lucky, Yelena might sing you a Ukrainian folk song that she learned from her grandmother who lived in the central Ukrainian town of Poltova where Yelena spent summers as a youngster. Born in Kiev in 1948, she lost her father at the age of thirteen, but went on to study in the Polytechnic University, where she met her husband. The couple raised a daughter, who inherited Yelena's love of singing, and the family came to the U.S. in 1998.

Yelena began doing art with AWE five years ago, but a broken wrist interrupted her art-making. Her teacher Rafael gave her a series of exercises to help her brain recover from the trauma and on that same day, she was able to write her name for the first time with her non-dominant hand.

She likes to paint in what she calls "Ukrainian style," once adapting the work of a Mexican artist that inspired her into her own native style. A creative person, she also enjoys sewing, embroidery, and knitting--a skill she uses to make blankets for babies in the neo-natal unit.

As for the lessons she's learned: "Immigration is very hard, but if you like music and art it always helps you to recover and adjust. The deeper you go into a new culture, the better."



Yu Mei Lu

"Flamingo's"

Western Park Apartments

Born in mainland China, Yu Mei Lu grew up in a large family in rural Taiwan, where survival meant a lot of hard work. Her first visit to the U.S. was with her husband, a pastor, to Amherst, Massachusetts, where she studied English and art--useful skills for a kindergarten teacher. The two devout Christians returned to Taiwan, where she taught and did church work in a hospital.

Mei came to live in San Francisco in 2007 to be near her adopted daughter. She also has a son in Boston and three grandchildren, and enjoys playing piano, cross-stitching, and knitting.

The fall colors of the maple trees in Amherst still influence Yu Mei's work. "I appreciate those natural things," she says. The 76-year old loves the feeling of freedom that painting gives her, especially with acrylics. It took her awhile to learn that in art, "You don't follow. You just do what you want-- not like in China."

Art, she feels, increases your self-confidence, and "makes your life happy and peaceful." Her advice: "Art is from the inside--it's your idea. Don't let outside things cover your inside things."

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Alice Gibbons

"Looking Upwards"

Western Park Apartments

"In the legendary neighborhood of Montparnasse, the most celebrated painters and the most secretive amateurs come to the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere to practice the timeless art of painting" – *taken from the Academy's historical sketch*. After four years of study at the San Francisco Art Institute, majoring in printmaking, Alice Gibbons recalls fondly the spring of 1967 when she went to Paris to study at the Academy to improve her painting and drawing techniques.

Artistic inclinations surfaced early in Alice's life in her native San Francisco. And she has worked devotedly to achieve a high degree of competence – a devotion that has paid off handsomely in local, national and international exhibits of her prints, drawings and etchings. She is represented by galleries through the U.S. and abroad and her prints especially are in many private collections.

Alice loves entertaining a concept, image or idea and then grappling with just how to communicate this idea through art. When she gets stuck doing this, that's when she'll return to the classroom to perfect her techniques. She's determined to find a way to express herself. "I find I become quite peaceful in this process," she notes, "it's nutrition for the soul. I feel better physically, too."

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