

# Healthy Giving

## El Camino Health Foundation Receives Gift to Endow Critical Care Unit

**Longtime El Camino Health Foundation board member Pauline Nist has made a gift to create the Pauline and Ken Nist Critical Care Endowment.** For Pauline, the donation was the most meaningful way to honor the memory of her beloved husband Ken, who passed away on December 3, 2023.

Pauline and Ken met at Carnegie Mellon University, married in 1970, and after several years in Pittsburgh moved to Harvard, Massachusetts to continue their careers in the computer industry. In 1997, shortly after relocating to Saratoga, California for new jobs, a blood vessel burst in Ken's stomach and he nearly bled to death. Pauline credits his survival to the outstanding care he received at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View, where he endured three surgeries and recuperated over four months, half of them in the critical care unit (CCU). The nursing care, she says, was simply "miraculous." "You could tell for the doctors, the work was a calling, not simply a job." The staff was supportive of her wellbeing during that worrisome time too and helped to educate her on Ken's medical needs.

Pauline made her first gift to El Camino Health Foundation when Ken was discharged, designating it for the CCU's nurses. In 2002, when his health recovered sufficiently, she joined the El Camino Health Foundation Board of Directors, over time serving as chair, treasurer, and on the finance



*Pauline and Ken Nist*

and allocations committees. She is most proud of helping to found Hope to Health, the women's giving circle, and the successful fundraising effort that enabled El Camino Health to purchase the first da Vinci Surgical robot. "Establishing Hope to Health was a big effort that required writing bylaws, recruiting members, and finding projects to fund," she recalls. "We were a unique committee of the Foundation because we had our own fundraising operation and the members direct where the money goes." She laughed as she recalled the hospital controller's

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## Mental Health Support for NICU Parents

**A new program to give mental health support to neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) parents onsite in the Orchard Pavilion launched in May.** The program is a collaboration between the Scrivner Center and the Center for Women & Newborns and is funded by donations to El Camino Health Foundation.

The birth of a premature or medically fragile infant often leads to significant emotional distress for parents, who face a myriad of emotional challenges as they navigate the uncertainty and often overwhelming journey of a NICU stay. From the shock and anxiety of unexpected medical complications to the rollercoaster of emotions as they witness their baby's delicate health, the experience can be emotionally draining and mentally taxing. Parents grapple with feelings of guilt, fear, and helplessness, compounded by the stress of managing their own well-being alongside the demands of advocating for their child's medical needs. Prolonged hospitalization and separation, dashed plans and expectations, uncertainty about the baby's health, financial

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## Message from the Foundation Board Chair

**My term as chair of the Foundation Board of Directors ends on June 30. It has been a privilege and joy to serve El Camino Health and our community in this capacity.** As I look back over the past two years, I marvel at what we are accomplishing together. The list is long, but here are a few highlights:

- As of this writing, we have contributed more than \$3 million to the renovation and expansion of the Orchard Pavilion, Center for Women & Newborns and maternal child health programs. The quiet, spacious, light-filled neonatal intensive care unit and third floor maternity unit are open for patient care, appreciated by grateful families and staff alike.
- The Scrivner Center for Mental Health & Addiction Services opened a beautiful new clinic for the ASPIRE (youth and young adult mental health) program in Los Gatos and celebrated the occasion at an open house for donors and community. The renovation was completely underwritten by philanthropy.
- El Camino Health is applying for a fifth consecutive Magnet designation for superlative nursing care. The health system's numerous nursing excellence initiatives are bolstered by consistent philanthropic support, including proceeds from last fall's El Camino Heritage Golf Tournament.
- A healthcare innovation fund announced in June 2023 is helping El Camino Health stay at the forefront of new healthcare technology and the adoption of the latest and best practices to improve patient care.
- Planning is underway for the 7th annual Maternal Mental Health Symposium, which is donor sponsored. The day-long educational event reaches more than 1,000 people, lay and professional, around the world and showcases El Camino Health's leadership in the field.
- The Scrivner Center hosted the first Parenting CURVE Collaborative symposium last spring to provide education and support to parents of

youth and young adults. This too is intended to be an annual event, part of a broader community outreach effort, launched by donor support.

- Chinese Health Initiative has added emotional health literacy to its portfolio of education and outreach activities that are boosting the health and wellbeing of Silicon Valley's Chinese community.
- The South Asian Heart Center published a research paper in the prestigious *Journal of the American Heart Association* linking insulin resistance to the high coronary risk in South Asians, with implications for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease for this population.

Thank you for attending Foundation events, responding to appeals, staying in touch and informed — for making accomplishments like these possible. In an era when many hospitals are struggling, your support is ensuring El Camino Health can continue to serve our community with excellence and compassion, meet emerging needs, and invest in the future. I am excited to continue serving on El Camino Health Foundation's Executive Committee in the capacity of immediate past chair and can't wait to see what philanthropy enables El Camino Health to accomplish next.

Have a healthy, happy summer.



Romina Ahuja, Chair  
 El Camino Health Foundation  
 Board of Directors



## El Camino Health Foundation Receives Gift to Endow Critical Care Unit

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worry that El Camino Health would never recoup the investment in the surgical robot, noting that within a year the operating room was fully booked and the hospital needed another one.

Over the years, Ken returned to the critical care unit for various health crises. Despite numerous health challenges, he and Pauline enjoyed traveling and advanced their careers, he as an electrical and software engineer and she as an engineering executive at a variety of computer companies. In his obituary, Pauline described him as a “Renaissance man who never met an engineering challenge he couldn’t tackle. He loved travel, playing piano, Ham Radio, home projects, teasing his pair of Abyssinian cats, playing with his nieces and nephews, and watching Steelers football.”

After he died, she says, “I knew I wanted to do something for Ken’s memory and it had to be for CCU. While Ken didn’t make it this time, El Camino Health gave us 26 years together we shouldn’t have had.”

The Pauline and Ken Nist Critical Care Endowment will ensure the unit has extra resources each year beyond the hospital operating budget to invest in evidence-based nursing initiatives; education training, and staff development; staff recognition; staff wellbeing and respite from the stresses of the care environment; the purchase of new equipment and technologies; enhancements to the patient experience for both patients and family members; and support for the Beacon Award for Excellence application, the highest honor a critical care unit can achieve.



*Ken and Pauline Nist*

*“I knew I wanted to do something for Ken’s memory and it had to be for CCU. While Ken didn’t make it this time, El Camino Health gave us 26 years together we shouldn’t have had.” - Pauline Nist*

## Donations Sustain El Camino Health’s Free Mammogram Program

**Representatives from Santa Clara Sporting Club visited the Lurie Women’s Imaging Center on May 16, 2024.** The youth soccer organization has been coordinating a Goals for a Cure fundraiser and donating the proceeds to El Camino Health’s Free Mammogram Program every year since 2009. To date the young players have raised and contributed \$615,237.45.

El Camino Health Foundation was also honored to be the beneficiary of Los Altos Golf & Country Club’s women’s charity event this year, which raised funds for the Free Mammogram Program. Aletha Fulgham, El Camino Health’s director of diagnostic imaging services, told club members that

the Lurie Women’s Imaging Center provided 150 breast imaging exams and 20 imaging-guided breast biopsies to uninsured or under-insured patients last year. Breast cancer was identified in six of those patients, including a 28-year-old woman and a 45-year-old single mother. “Because of your continuous support and donations, these individuals could access the care they need promptly, ultimately improving their chances of successful treatment



*Representatives from Santa Clara Sporting Club with El Camino Health Foundation President Andrew Cope and Lurie Women’s Imaging Center staff.*

and recovery. Your contributions are truly making a tangible and life-changing impact on the lives of these patients and their families.”

## Author Maggie Shipstead Talks About Travel and Writing at Norma's Literary Luncheon

Although writing novels is an act of imagination, author Maggie Shipstead always felt she should see the places where she set her stories. For the self-styled "gregarious introvert," writing and traveling are solitary endeavors. "Experiencing a place shows you which details matter," she said. The author regaled the Norma's Literary Luncheon audience with stories of trips to Nantucket, the setting for *Seating Arrangements*, Paris, where the seeds were planted for *Astonish Me*, and Montana, New Zealand, and Antarctica, locations in *Great Circle*, as well as other travels, many on her own and to remote places. Shipstead graciously stepped in for Kelly Corrigan, whose mother passed away the previous week.



Honorary Chairs Betsy Dawes and Judie Wolken, Maggie Shipstead, Co-chairs Lane and Lindsey Melchor

The luncheon, which benefited the Cancer Center's Survivorship Program, was held in the beautiful garden of the Historic Marini House in Los Altos on May 29. "My family is grateful to all of you for joining us today to pay tribute to my grandmother Norma, share in her love of books and reading, and continue her legacy of generosity and service to El Camino Health," Lane Melchor, who chaired the event with his wife Lindsey, said in welcoming remarks. One hundred seventy people attended, many who have returned every year since the event's inception in 2013.

Following questions and answers with the author, Cancer Center Medical Director Shyamali Singhal, MD, PhD presented the proposal for an exercise program for cancer survivors that will "help patients live the life they want to live." She noted that although remarkable progress has been made in cancer treatment, the physical and emotional side effects can linger into survivorship. "Exercise is an unrecognized medicine," she said citing research that it decreases recurrence, improves response to treatment, and improves physical strength, flexibility, and health. "It can be tailored to a

patient to build an internal environment where cancer doesn't flourish." The Cancer Center will use the proceeds from the luncheon to begin giving each patient a prescription for a program of customized exercise and education provided by trained professionals, and help patients find a supportive community.

Norma's Literary Luncheon was generously sponsored by the Melchor Family. One hundred percent of all other contributions to the event will benefit the cancer survivorship program.



Deedee McMurtry, Janet Moody, Joan Parker, Dana Moe Halley, Mickie Anderson

"My family is grateful to all of you for joining us today to pay tribute to my grandmother Norma, share in her love of books and reading, and continue her legacy of generosity and service to El Camino Health," Lane Melchor, who chaired the event with his wife Lindsey, said in welcoming remarks.



Maggie Shipstead and Maja Nelson  
at the book signing table.



Coni Oakson, Becky Bull, Tawny Sterios, Patti Anderson, Amanda Oakson,  
Lanette Anderson



Charlene Borneo, Karen Cottle, Mary Scrivner, Carrie Anderson, Laurie Panfil, Zaza Wu,  
Lori Stroud, Lani Ciotek, Nancy Bremeau



Jessie Geiger, Tina Bird, Kay Melchor,  
Martha Bacon



Stephanie Oshman, Gabriella Shultz, Barbara Oshman,  
Natalie Braker, Michal Braker, Dorothea Gordon,  
Michele Sharkey, Barbara Olsen



Cancer Center Medical Director Shyamali Singhal, MD, PhD

# ASPIRE Los Gatos Open House

El Camino Health Foundation and the Scrivner Center for Mental Health & Addiction Services celebrated the opening of ASPIRE's new clinic space in Los Gatos at an open house for donors and community members on Saturday, April 27.

ASPIRE (After-School Program Interventions and Resiliency Education®) is the Scrivner Center's intensive outpatient program for middle school students, high school students, and transition age youth who are experiencing anxiety, depression, or other symptoms related to a mental health condition, and high school students with identified substance use disorders or other habitual behaviors. The program serves 150 to 200 families each year. Renovation of the space was completely underwritten by donations to El Camino Health Foundation.

Foundation Board Chair Romina Ahuja welcomed the guests, who assembled in the sunlit office complex courtyard, and El Camino Health Associate Chief Medical Officer Dr. Shreyas Mallur expressed gratitude for the philanthropy that helps El Camino Health build and support critical programs like ASPIRE to meet emerging community health needs.

Los Gatos Mayor Mary Badame noted the adolescent mental health crisis and dearth of clinical care options that ASPIRE is helping to address in her community, while Dr. Jennifer Zumarraga, medical director of adolescent and child

*Dr. Jennifer Zumarraga expressed gratitude for the bright, light-filled new space, which she said provides a more conducive therapeutic environment for adolescents experiencing anxiety and depression, and helps staff run the program more efficiently.*



*Dr. Jennifer Zumarraga, Hon. Julia Miller, Dr. Shreyas Mallur, Mayor Mary Badame, Romina Ahuja, Mental Health & Addictions Services Service Line Director Joe Sandoval*

psychiatry at the Scrivner Center, explained ASPIRE's history and therapeutic approach, community outreach, and impact beyond the Bay Area through the ASPIRE Consortium of hospitals. She expressed gratitude for the bright, light-filled new space, which she said provides a more conducive therapeutic environment for adolescents experiencing anxiety and depression, and helps staff run the program more efficiently.



*Foundation Chair Romina Ahuja*

The audience was inspired by grateful ASPIRE parent Lisa Peevers, who described her daughter's journey from severe anxiety, depression, and self-harm through the ASPIRE program last year. "Today we are much closer as a family. She has some bad days but she has the tools she needs to get through them and we have the tools to be there to listen... And she is crushing it in school."

Dr. Zumarraga, Mayor Badame, Dr. Mallur, Hon. Julia Miller, Romina Ahuja, and Scrivner Center Service Line Director Joe Sandoval then cut the green ribbon to officially inaugurate the clinic. Romina invited everyone to enjoy refreshments, tour the clinic space, view the teens' expressive artwork, and meet members of the ASPIRE staff.



*ASPIRE Los Gatos clinic lobby*



*During occupational therapy, ASPIRE students create meaningful works of art, which were on display at the open house.*

# Scrivner Center Screens “Fentanyl High”

One hundred fifty concerned parents, teens, and community members attended a screening of the movie *Fentanyl High* at Fremont High School on March 26. The program was organized by the Scrivner Center’s ASPIRE staff as part of the Parenting CURVE Collaborative, which is supported by a gift from the Thomas and Donna Whitney Education Foundation.

*Fentanyl High*, a documentary directed and produced by Los Gatos High School student Kyle Santoro, examines the fentanyl epidemic from teenagers’ perspectives and presents the experiences of paramedics, government officials, doctors, and parents whose children died from fentanyl poisoning. Santoro dug “behind the social media facades to reveal what high school teens honestly think deep down about the fentanyl epidemic, how teens today are dealing with their emotional pain in school and at home, why they are self-medicating, and what can be done to prevent these tragedies.” It highlighted the need for increased mental health support and better communication in families.

Dr. Bradley Zicherman, medical director of the ASPIRE Quest Program, the Scrivner Center’s intensive outpatient therapy program for students with



Tom Whitney, Donna Whitney, Kyle Santoro, and Suzanne Smedt

identified substance use disorders or other habitual behaviors, introduced the film before the lights dimmed. Some of the high school students and one of the parents featured in the documentary participated in a panel discussion afterwards. The Scrivner Center staffed an information table in the lobby and the Santa Clara County Opioid Overdose Prevention Project handed out Narcan, the overdose reversal drug, for attendees to take home. The ASPIRE team is exploring the possibility of licensing the film and integrating the accompanying study guide curriculum into the ASPIRE programs.



ASPIRE Consortium Coordinator Nahal Zakerani, PhD and Mental Health Resource Coordinator Sam Kotmel

For information about future screenings in the Bay Area, visit <https://www.fentanylhigh.com/screening-calendar>.

## Orchard Pavilion Apricot Blossom Donor Wall

**Apricot orchards once blossomed where the Orchard Pavilion, Center for Women & Newborns now stands.** A beautiful, back-lit mosaic outside the building will evoke this past and acknowledge the donors who contribute to the high quality of care provided inside.

Donate to support El Camino Health’s new vision for mother, baby, and family care by personalizing your tile on the Apricot Blossom Donor Wall. Two sizes of tile are available: 4”x8” (\$2,500 donation) or 8”x8” (\$5,000 donation).

Scan the QR code or contact Foundation Annual Giving Officer Katie Kehriotis to learn more.



*In honor of  
our children*

**Betsy, Sarah,  
John and James  
Lynn & Dave Jones**



*For the doctors & nurses  
The Smith Family*

# Orchard Pavilion, Center for Women & Newborns Renovation and Expansion Update

“Our mission is to ensure the highest quality, most personalized care for every step of our patients’ journeys,” Heather Freeman, RN, El Camino Health’s executive director of women’s and newborn services, told Taking Wing guests on March 2. “The Orchard Pavilion renovation design supports this aim: to build a center of excellence in a welcoming environment that promotes healing and wellness.”

“Supporting the care of our patients, including the smallest and most vulnerable in the hospital, has required very complex construction methods in our occupied building, all executed safely,” Freeman noted. This is particularly difficult in the current phase of construction, which is taking place on the first floor where patients are receiving care in a greatly altered environment. Nevertheless, Freeman reports, patient outcomes and patient experience scores continue to improve and rank in the top quartile for many measures.

The current phase of construction, the second of three, is focused on the first-floor space the neonatal intensive care unit vacated, part of labor and delivery, half of the first-floor maternity unit, and the much-anticipated bistro in the renovated entry. Eight new labor and

delivery rooms are being built, five of which will be part of a new antepartum unit for women with high-risk pregnancies. The maternity rooms are being enlarged and updated into an all-private room environment. This construction phase is anticipated to be completed in December 2024.

The third and final phase will focus on the remaining first floor maternity rooms and the rest of the labor and delivery unit. The full project is targeted for completion in early 2026.

The pavilion’s gracious, light-filled main entrance lobby opened last May. Visitors check in at the security desk before taking the elevator to the patient care floors above, which ensures the safety of patients and staff.

The neonatal intensive care unit, which now encompasses the entire second floor, opened for patient care at the end of October. It has 19 spacious private patient rooms that have the latest technologies so more procedures can be done in place, and a five-bed pod for babies who stay for a short time. Patients and families will soon have access to comfortable facilities with showers, a lounge, and respite areas so they can rest and take breaks during the long hours they spend with their



Executive Director of Women’s and Newborn Services Heather Freeman, RN, gave an update on the Orchard Pavilion renovation and expansion at Taking Wing.

newborns. A professionally staffed milk prep room is another new enhancement. The unit was designed with significant input from patient families and clinical staff.

The new third floor maternity unit also opened in October. It has 26 private mother-baby rooms large enough for a partner to stay overnight. A beautiful second floor lobby and third floor mezzanine create welcoming spaces for families and other visitors.



“Supporting the care of our patients, including the smallest and most vulnerable in the hospital, has required very complex construction methods in our occupied building, all executed safely.”  
- Heather Freeman, RN,  
Executive Director of Women’s  
and Newborn Services

El Camino Health Foundation celebrated Katherine Kim for her donation to the Orchard Pavilion renovation and expansion, which is recognized in the lobby. Posing in front of the plaque are Samantha Kim, Doug Kim, Shelly Kim, Katherine Kim, Justine Partti, Walter Kim, Michael Eugeni



## R.O.A.R. Celebrates 4th Anniversary



*Judie Wolken with neonatal intensive care unit staff, who wore their R.O.A.R. t-shirts for the anniversary celebration.*

**El Camino Health Foundation and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) staff celebrated the Reach Out And Read (R.O.A.R.) program's 4th anniversary on Valentine's Day.** They were joined by Judie Wolken, who with her husband Peter made a gift to support the program for the next decade. CEO Dan Woods, CNO Cheryl Reinking, and Heather Freeman, Executive Director of Women's and Newborn Services, stopped by to join the festivities.

The R.O.A.R. program encourages parents to read to their baby at least 10 minutes, three times a day while in the NICU. Each family receives a logoed book bag with two books and there is a well-stocked library on the unit. The reading program supports the babies' physiologic stability and neurologic development and helps parents interact and bond with their infants. NICU staff members regularly read to the infants too and consider it a vital part of the care plan.

The team showed Judie around the new unit, with stops at the two R.O.A.R. library closets and everyone enjoyed a special snack of R.O.A.R. themed cookies.

The Wolken's gift also underwrites bringing a children's author to the NICU Reunion. Cindy Derby will be the featured guest this year. The reunion will take place on August 24.



*Judy Wolken and NICU Clinical Manager Jody Charles, RN by a R.O.A.R. library closet.*

*Each family receives a logoed book bag with two books and there is a well-stocked library on the unit. The reading program supports the babies' physiologic stability and neurologic development and helps parents interact and bond with their infants.*

## Mental Health Support for NICU Parents

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burdens, and disrupted family dynamics exacerbate the stress and anxiety levels. Research indicates the toll puts these parents at increased risk of developing mental health issues such as postpartum depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can have consequences for the entire family.

The new program consists of biweekly group therapy sessions facilitated by licensed mental health professionals, triage and referral for participants who may benefit from more individualized support, and periodic workshops on neonatal care, developmental milestones, and available resources. Locating it within the NICU setting facilitates convenient access and allows NICU staff to rally participation. In addition to reducing stress, anxiety and depression levels, the program will foster a supportive peer community of parents facing similar challenges and equip parents with coping strategies and resilience-building techniques to help them navigate the NICU journey and transition home.

The Foundation seeks additional donations to fund the program for the next few years and build an endowment that will sustain it in perpetuity. Contact Foundation Associate Vice President Lindsay Ehrman or Annual Giving Officer Katie Kehriotis to learn more.

# Taking Wing Raises Funds for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Friends and supporters of El Camino Health and the Foundation gathered at Palo Alto Hills Golf & Country Club on March 2 for Taking Wing, a benefit celebration for the Orchard Pavilion, Center for Women & Newborns. The outside weather was stormy but the energy and enthusiasm inside during the cocktail hour were electric as guests mingled, took chances in the casino, or posed in the 360 photobooth.

CEO Dan Woods welcomed everyone as he opened the formal program. “This night we celebrate El Camino Health and all that we are doing to create easy access to healthcare for all the residents we serve, and to help the people in our communities live their best lives.” He pointed out that hospitals across the country, including 11 in California, are closing their labor and delivery departments while El Camino Health is investing to create a best-in-class center of excellence for women and newborns. He credited community support — philanthropy — for making El Camino Health a great hospital.

Following a gourmet dinner of roasted kale salad and chardonnay poached halibut, Taking Wing Chairs Stephanie Cash and Ashley Omwando talked about their families’ months-long experiences in the El Camino Health neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). “Today our



Victor Omwando, Taking Wing Chairs Ashley Omwando and Stephanie Cash, Ryan Cash

house is filled with the laughter and screaming of two toddler boys... Words can’t express how eternally grateful we are to the doctors, nurses, and staff at El Camino Health, whose dedication and compassion know no bounds. They are the unsung heroes who make miracles possible,” Stephanie told the rapt, misty-eyed audience. “Thanks to the Orchard Pavilion renovations, the new NICU and maternity facilities are now world class facilities, but the people at El Camino have always been. The gift my family received of bringing our babies home cannot be replaced; but it can be shared. With your help tonight, we can share this incredible gift with others,” Ashley declared.

Her remarks teed up the fund-in-need appeal, which was conducted by Foundation President Andrew Cope. The inspired audience contributed \$96,000 with an exciting last-minute assist from a gleeful donor who raised his paddle for the final \$5,600. These donations will be used to purchase three Giraffe Omnibed Carestations, which create a seamless healing microenvironment for the baby and represent the state of the art for NICU care.

Following the excitement of the fund-in-need appeal and dessert of three-chocolate mousse, guests returned to the casino and enjoyed dancing to the high-energy music of The Cheeseballs.



Shaun and Lauren McAlpine

*“Thanks to the Orchard Pavilion renovations, the new NICU and maternity facilities are now world class facilities, but the people at El Camino have always been. The gift my family received of bringing our babies home cannot be replaced; but it can be shared. With your help tonight, we can share this incredible gift with others.” - Ashley Omwando*



*Romina and Kelly Ahuja*



*John and Linda Conover*



*Guests enjoyed dancing to the high-energy music of The Cheeseballs.*



*CEO Dan Woods*



*Laura and Jake Keller*



*Guests of The Forum, a Taking Wing sponsor, enjoyed trying their luck in the casino.*



**El Camino Health  
Foundation**

2500 Grant Road  
Park Pavilion, Mailstop PAR116  
Mountain View, CA 94040

*Save the Date!*

**28<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
EL CAMINO HERITAGE  
GOLF TOURNAMENT**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024  
PALO ALTO HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

*Watch for more information soon!*

