



A monthly newsletter for residents, family, and friends of Valley Heights.



# Valley Voice

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## Getting to Know You: Alpha Gardner

I was born and raised in Tampa with my parents, brother, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. My father enjoyed fishing so on many Saturdays we spent time in beautiful, rural settings at a river or spring. Dad would fish, my brother and I would explore, while Mom would read and prepare a picnic.

I graduated high school and moved to New Orleans for nursing school. Once I finished and graduated with my degree, I worked in an operating room for 2 years. A nurse acquaintance told me she was moving to San Francisco and spontaneously I said I would join her. We drove my '65 VW Bug, stuffed to the top with our belongings, westward. When we arrived, I felt like it was home.

I began to work at SF's Children's Hospital. It was a small community hospital when I started. It was unique because it was established by women doctors, and continued to operate with

a majority of women doctors, which was rare for that time.

The hippie movement was also happening in the city. Although I always worked, I had many hippie friends in the counter culture.

A jeweler friend and I decided to open a craft store on Clement Street. As the business grew, I stepped away from nursing. We then moved the store downtown to Maiden Lane, and re-opened as a jewelry store (since we made most of the jewelry we sold). We once won a Small Business Award for 5 western states! I enjoyed the challenges and success of being in business. We moved the store again into the Crocker Galleria before deciding it was time to close the business.

Life changed perfectly at this point. In 1982 I resumed my nursing career and met Latif Harris.

Latif was my special someone. We

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## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY MAY 13, 2018

*We would like to wish all the wonderful women who have provided love and care to others a terrific Mother's Day.*

## VALLEY HEIGHTS FUN FACTS



Residents enjoy less stress in their lives thanks to our weekly housekeeping service, free scheduled transportation to local doctors during the week, and our spacious apartment accommodations.



Enjoy our terrific landscaping and safe walking paths. Valley Heights is a wonderful place to take a leisurely nature walk any day of the week!



Residents at Valley Heights have many opportunities to be active and involved. There are a variety of activities, events, games, classes, and outings available to be involved with.



were together from the beginning to the end. We were better together than we were as individuals. He was a poet of note in North Beach and taught me a whole new language (poetry). He published at least 10 books of poetry.

We loved traveling together. We explored California from Yosemite to the deserts. We visited hot springs, Eagle Lake, and Baja (where we touched a baby whale). We got to travel with the Tamalpais High School basketball team when Raphael (Latif's son) and his teammates played in Arcata, and then Sacramento for State playoffs.

Latif and I were fortunate to visit France (to visit my brother and family), Barcelona, Spain, Mallorca, Nepal, Bhutan, and Israel. We also went to Florida (visiting other family), Washington DC, a quilt show in Houston, and Vera Cruz Mexico.

A nurse friend had turned to real estate. She told us of a terrific deal on a Victorian duplex in the low Haight. With her support, we came up with the down payment and became first time homeowners in 1991 when we were in our 40's.

In 2016, Latif had not been well for a long time. He was diagnosed with a terminal illness. We agreed I would care for him until the end, if possible. We couldn't do this in our 2nd floor duplex. We moved to Valley Heights in 2017.

I am grateful I was capable to care for him until he passed in October. I joined a grief group at the Watsonville Hospital and have benefited from it. I am beginning to let go of the sadness and remember all of our good times.

My California family is small: Latif's son, his wife, and his son's mother. We are bit spread out but talk regularly. We get together for celebrations and holidays, too!

Being at Valley Heights has been a gift. I love to walk around town. It's nice to be in a small community where you can get to know neighbors. I am making a point to connect with people who live at Valley Heights. These people make my day; especially the visits during meals. I feel as if I am creating an extended family at Valley Heights. I greatly appreciate the friendly and dedicated staff—you make a difference!

### Remember

*Someone's child, left long ago,  
A strange land,  
Someone's foe.*

*An unmarked grave, fields of green,  
Resting quiet,  
Just eighteen.*

*Winds of freedom, wash us now,  
Remember him,  
This I vow.*



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Courtesy of [com/poem/remember-24](http://com/poem/remember-24)

# Weekly Entertainment

Valley Heights offers a wide range of musical performances in our main Living Room each week for residents and friends to enjoy.

Whether it's a school group, song and dance performers, piano and singers players, each Social Hour is unique and enjoyable.

Here is a list of performers scheduled for May:

Bob Hughes- 5/1

Richard Stauff- 5/4

Young At Heart- 5/8

David Field- 5/11

Danceland- 5/15

Mike Noonan- 5/18

Chris Ring- 5/22

Banjoes By The Bay- 5/26

Danceland- 5/29

## OUR SERVICES

Valley Heights has been an active community for many independent seniors since 1991.

It is owned and managed by two generations of a family who have dedicated their work to helping the needs of others.

Our Valley Heights staff and management seek

to serve our senior residents with care, compassion and kindness that one would want; treating people like they are your own family.

Call (831) 722-4884 to speak with our Marketing Department to learn more about services offered at Valley Heights.



## UPCOMING EVENT SPOTLIGHT

As the weather warms up as we approach summer, our residents will enjoy many outside activities. On the weekends, our Valley Heights transportation will take groups to local restaurants for lunch, a leisurely drive, a picnic, or a special event. View our Activities Calendar each month for the scheduled outings each month.

Welcome to  
Valley Heights

**MARJORIE WOLFE**  
**JOHN IRELAND**



## Senior Network Services

Senior Network Services is a Santa Cruz County community resource agency serving older adults and persons with disabilities with support services essential to their physical and mental well-being. Their focus is on helping people continue to live independent, fulfilling lives by giving them access to necessary information and resources. Visit their website (<http://www.seniornetworkservices.org>) or call them at (831) 462-1433.



## Make *Your* Time Count

Schedule a friendly tour of Valley Heights today. Call Georgeann Menasco, our Marketing Director, at **(831) 722-4884.**