



**PASADENA RPEA CHAPTER 007
NEWSLETTER**

Retired Public Employees Association of California
Published bi-monthly November 2019



**“Our Annual Christmas Party”
Charismatics – Dickenson Costumed Choral Group**

Thursday, December 12 at 12:00 Noon

Villa Gardens Retirement Community

842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

5th Floor Villa Vista Assembly Room

Cost: Free to RPEA members & one guest - Others \$5

Early Reservations are Necessary

Even though the meal is free to most attendees, we still need reservations. Because the meal is banquet style, we need to have a good head count the Friday before the meeting. (If you are a procrastinator and can't meet the reservation deadline, we still might fit you in, so try calling us anyway.) We're moving upstairs to the Villa Vista Room for our Christmas meeting. Take the elevator to the 5th floor; go west.

If you attended our Christmas party the last few years, you know that this choral group from Crescenta Valley High is one of the most talented groups that has entertained us in the past.

The January newsletter will be sent out via email only. If you have not been receiving email reminders, please send an email to the chapter president, and you will be added to the distribution list.

Reservations Required!

Please call our reservation coordinator by
Friday, December 6

Kay Ferraro (626) 825-2585
Larry Harsha (626) 351-0183

Or e-mail to LandCharsha@yahoo.com your reservation with “RPEA” in the subject line.

Menu: Turkey and All the Trimmings

Street Parking or
Free Valet Parking Only
Enter Villa driveway near main entrance
(The church parking lot is off-limits!)

Public Transportation:
MTA Bus Routes 180 & 485
Pasadena Transit Routes 20 & 40
Metro Gold Line - Lake Station

2018-2019 Officers/Chairmen

President	Larry Harsha	(626) 351-0183
Vice-President	(position vacant)	
Secretary	(position vacant)	
Treasurer	Diane Johnson	(626) 862-1050
Reservations	Kay Ferraro	(626) 825-2585
Newsletter	Walter White	(626) 359-5805
Membership	(position vacant)	
Legislation	(position vacant)	
Sunshine Coord.	(position vacant)	
Members at large	(8 positions vacant)	
Area V Director	Ellie Knapp	(661) 297-6348

Want to contact your officers by email?

Pres. Larry Harsha.....LandCharsha@Yahoo.com
Treas. Diane Johnson.....dianebjohnson@Yahoo.com
Newsletter Ed. Walter White wsquared@GTE.net
Area V Director. Ellie Knapp eknapp@roadrunner.com

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held at Walter White's condominium in Monrovia on January 9th at 2 p.m. Any or all chapter members may attend. Call (626) 359-5805 to confirm date and time or to get directions.

Chapter Elections at December Meeting

According to our bylaws, we need 13 volunteers to fill the vacant positions listed above, plus a treasurer volunteer. Only two people have attended the last few board meetings: your current and past chapter presidents. That doesn't even make a quorum. We also need a volunteer to review and recommend changes to our chapter bylaws (e.g. we don't need 8 members-at-large on the board, and we don't need a Telephone Tree Committee). Someone please raise their hand.

If you are a new RPEA member or haven't been to one of our local chapter luncheons, please come. This lunch is free for members (or anyone signing up to be a member). (Don't forget to make a reservation).

October Meeting Notes

by Walter White

Our speaker was Frances Hardy, the Director of Resource Development for the San Gabriel Valley (SGV) chapter of Habitat for Humanity (HH). She has been with the SGV Habitat for over two years, and is responsible for fundraising, marketing and volunteer recruitment. She transferred from the New York City location where she had a role in housing policy priorities.

Their SGV headquarters is located in Azusa. They used to have a "ReStore" in Pasadena, but no longer. More on that later. Everyone in our group had heard of Habitat for Humanity (and Jimmy Carter's role as a volunteer), but were a little fuzzy on how they operated, what their goals were and their local outreach. Many people believe that HH simply gives away homes for free. Not the case. HH is a partnership program – with cities, communities, public workers and families in need. So families or individuals, who need an affordable place to call home, partner with HH to repair or build their very own home.

Pasadena was the first location in Los Angeles County to have HH homes. Two homes are located near the corner of Fair Oaks and Maple. Both families in those homes have been there for years, are thriving and have paid off their mortgages, which they obtained through HH. One family lost the apartment they occupied in Northridge, which became unlivable after the earthquake. The other family was a single mom. There are now three HH locations in Pasadena.

HH is more than just building homes; it is a life-changing experience for those in the program. Frances said that three things change in participating families. 1) Children who grow in an HH home are twice as likely to go to college. 2) Health issues such as asthma or other medical challenges in children decrease as people move out of substandard housing and into a home that they own. Emergency hospital visits also decrease for HH families. 3) Families' disposable incomes tend to increase.

Frances used one Pasadena family as a real-life example of the positive changes that can occur. This family was paying 75% of their income for housing. They have five children, one wheelchair bound. With so much being paid to housing, difficult decisions had to be made regarding the remaining income. Should it be spent for healthy food? For medical care? For future college expenses? They will be moving into their new home soon, and their percentage for housing will drop from 75% to 30%. Plus, with their affordable mortgage, they

own their home, rather than paying rent. This family will now have some disposable income, will be able to save for unseen emergencies, and won't have the monthly anxiety of how to parcel out the few remaining dollars after rent.

The housing crisis is a major concern for cities, and Frances expected that most of us who worked in the public sector probably were involved either directly or indirectly. California, with its high cost of living, is one of the states most affected. In L.A. County alone, 60% of renters can't really afford where they live. And the state has a deficit of 3 million homes. That leads to higher rents and increased homelessness. In the San Gabriel Valley, homelessness increased by 26% during the past year. Half of that was economic homelessness, similar to the situation that the family Frances described was heading toward. There is a solution to this potential doom and gloom, but it is complicated and multi-faceted. Habitat for Humanity's focus is to concentrate on families who might lose their current home, and thus reduce the number of families entering homelessness.

HH is part of the solution in two categories. The first is direct service – providing housing for those in need. The initial focus was on single-family housing – your typical home with four walls and nice back yard. Now they have expanded to multi-family housing in order to accommodate more than just one family at a time. It can be several homes on one lot or an apartment/condo type construction for better usage of the land available. Styles include “Granny Flats” or back-yard cottages. That requires working with local zoning ordinances and agencies to maximize the number of families on a given lot.

Another example of direct service is partnering with for-profit developers. Many local codes require developers to include a certain number of affordable units as part of their development. But these developers need help in finding and determining which buyers meet all the laws and regulations for these affordable units. HH can help with marketing the opportunities and recruiting and qualifying the families. HH also provides these families with 100 hours of training including financial literacy and life-skills help prior to their moving in. They may even get some construction experience which helps in maintaining their new home. Finally, HH provides the permanent financing and mortgage for the family.

The second category of HH involvement is advocacy and policy. Are there laws in place that allow everyone the opportunity to find housing in California? So HH works with the state Assembly and Senate as well as local county and city governments to help them come up with

solutions for the housing crisis. There were a number of items in the recently completed legislative session that had HH participation.

Frances then told the group how they could get involved. One is the ReStore, which is run by local HH chapters throughout the U.S. and Canada. The SGV chapter has two brick-and-mortar stores, plus an on-line store. They accept donations, such as appliances, materials, building supplies, home goods and furniture. Frances called it a cross between a Lowe's (or Home Depot) and Goodwill. HH will pick up your donations. If you are downsizing or have leftover materials from a construction project, the pickup is easily scheduled through their website. Small items can be dropped off at their Azusa ReStore or the one in Atwater Village (in L.A. near Glendale).

You can also buy from the ReStores. Prices are never more than 50% of the original retail prices. All of the proceeds go back to Habitat for Humanity. They have a senior discount and a military discount. Frances gave a personal example: when she left the New York HH, she donated her furniture and household goods to the N.Y. ReStore, and then bought new furniture, etc. from the Azusa ReStore when arriving here. You can also get involved by actually volunteering at the ReStore.

HH has a home-repair program. They will assemble volunteers to help homeowners who can't afford to get their homes fixed up.

For those who don't want to get physically involved, there's the “Carpenter's Club” where the public can donate funds through monthly deductions on their credit card.

For those familiar with the Pasadena area, there is a 9-home complex that can be seen from the Colorado Street Bridge that was built through HH funds. The land had been owned by the army, and the City of Pasadena helped in making the land available. Three of those homes were funded by one veteran who sold his Arcadia home. The funds from that one home enabled three veteran families to obtain permanent housing.

Frances gave an invitation to our members to attend the October ceremony that celebrated the completion of the latest 2-home Pasadena project [your chapter president attended].

For more information, please check out their website at www.habitat.org/us-ca/azusa/san-gabriel-valley-hfh which has the address of their two ReStores.



Pasadena R.P.E.A. Chapter 7
c/o Larry Harsha
1070 Pine Bluff Dr.
Pasadena,, CA 91107-1750

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pasadena, CA
Permit #331



From
Glendale/
Burbank

From
Arcadia/
Monrovia