

Mt. Helix Park's Magazine

# FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 18 FALL - WINTER 2021



MT. HELIX PARK  
FOUNDATION

*Dedicated to Preserving  
Mt. Helix Nature Theatre and Park*

**RESTORING  
Mt. Helix Park's  
Historic Memorial  
CROSS**

**14<sup>th</sup> Annual  
GALA'S  
Comeback**

**Meet the  
Adopt-A-Habitat  
Team**

**Park Loses Two  
Beloved Leaders**

**Road  
Improvements A  
Win for Community**

PARK HOURS

VISIT THE PARK WEBSITE FOR UPDATES REGARDING PARK HOURS

NATURE | EVENTS | LOCAL HISTORY | PEOPLE | PRESERVATION



# Team Helix

MT. HELIX PARK VOLUNTEERS  
HABITAT - EVENTS - LEADERSHIP



Join Us Today

## VOLUNTEER

- **Habitat Restoration**
- **Events**
- **Fundraising**
- **Membership Support**
- **Construction**
- **Community Relations**
- **Marketing**
- **AND MORE!**

[MtHelixPark.org/volunteer](http://MtHelixPark.org/volunteer)

## Memberships Start at Just \$35

- Event & Monthly Happenings Email
- Mt. Helix Park Swag at Events
- From the Top biannual magazine
- Invitations to all events plus "Members Only" exclusive events and discounts
- Special recognition opportunities for **Business Members** Email: [KPower@MtHelixPark.org](mailto:KPower@MtHelixPark.org)

[MtHelixPark.org/member](http://MtHelixPark.org/member)

## Come volunteer with our Habitat Restoration Team

The first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m.

RSVP to [pjunker@mthelixpark.org](mailto:pjunker@mthelixpark.org) or (619) 741-4363.



[SMILE.AMAZON.COM](http://SMILE.AMAZON.COM)

**Support Mt Helix Park Foundation by shopping at AmazonSmile.**

When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon will donate to Mt Helix Park Foundation. Support us every time you shop.

## MT. HELIX PARK

*From the Top* is a bi-annual publication of Mt. Helix Park.

To contact the Editor call 619-741-4363 or email [pjunker@mthelixpark.org](mailto:pjunker@mthelixpark.org). © Copyright 2021 Mt. Helix Park

### EDITOR

Peggy Junker

### COPY EDITORS

Alice Smith, Ammy Provancha

### WRITERS

Norm Hapke, Peggy Junker,  
Krista Powers

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Paris Jenske, Jason Kardos,  
Gary Severt

### COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Gary Severt

### GRAPHIC DESIGN / LAYOUT

Victoria Vinton, Coyote Press Graphics  
Krista Powers

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Krista Powers

### ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Peggy Junker

Bring in your used ink cartridges and we will recycle them with profits going directly to Mt. Helix Park. Drop them in our mail box (located behind the stage) anytime or stop by the under-stage office Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Norm Hapke, PRESIDENT  
Caroline Harrod, VP DEVELOPMENT  
Helgi Gudmundson, VP OPERATIONS  
Chris Kilrain, CFO  
Celina Laframboise, SECRETARY  
Robert Ball, PAST PRESIDENT

Steve Clay      Jeremiah Shultz  
Yvonne Goff      Alice Smith  
Jason Kardos      Don Teemsma  
Andy Phemister      Wes Troy

like us on facebook



[www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org)





*Krista Powers*

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

## From the Executive Director

One of my favorite things about working at the Park and serving the Foundation as executive director is the constant challenges. I am a problem solver and forward thinker by nature. The critical decisions are the ones that have a long-term impact, maximizing the Park's future potential. I truly enjoy developing relationships with those who make the Park viable, always keeping in mind the big-picture direction of the Foundation as guided by the founding family trust. Everyone's opinion should be heard and is valid.

It often falls on the executive director, as the person who spends the most time in the Park, to balance the needs of the Foundation, board, staff, community, county, partnerships, and Park goer stakeholders with the actions we take internally. I am always thinking, how will this decision help us better serve these constituents in 5 years, in 20 years, even long after I am gone?

It fills my heart to know my role in the decision-making process impacts the Park where I spent many happy hours as a child and now my two young boys get to do the same. It takes a village behind the scenes to honor the upkeep of this historic facility and nature preserve. I simply could not do this job without my assistant executive director, Peggy Junker, and our incredible board, committee members, volunteers, donors, and business partners who join me in these efforts. Many will never know their impact on me, but I assure you, it is often profound. They've encouraged me to explore new ways and ideas to make this great Park even better. I feel the weight and depth of what this means and I am thankful and blessed for those walking alongside me. I am grateful for our Mt. Helix Park family!

Please stop by the Park office, under the stage, the next time you visit! ■



*Norm Hapke*

PRESIDENT  
Mt. Helix Park  
Foundation

## From the Foundation President

As I write this, we are in the middle of fall and your Park has never been more beautiful.

Thankfully we have broken out of the long COVID winter, and we're able to open our gates again to everyone within our community as well as visitors from afar.

In September, we showcased the Park with a very successful "Evening Under the Stars." In addition to dining and dancing on a beautiful night, this was a chance for those who love this Park and want it to endure for generations to come to raise money for operating and programming expenses. On behalf of Krista and Peggy, our many volunteers, and our Board of Directors, I want to thank all of you who participated and donated.

Amidst the joy of our Park's rebirth, there is sadness. Recently we lost a beloved community leader, Ron Brady, who was a mainstay on our board, offering wise counsel, and a most generous donor.

The Park family also lost Jeff Swiney, Facilities Manager and Board member of the Park for 15 years, who spent countless hours onsite, weekly, and sometimes daily, as he diligently worked to maintain the Park's physical operations and oversee Park improvements. He served in an advisory capacity following his retirement from the Board in 2020.

Looking ahead, we are excited about major improvements coming to the Park. In the past I've written about those people who feel truly blessed and want to extend that blessing to others. That this Park exists is because of the combined talents and resources of the Yawkey and Fletcher families. Although almost all of the succeeding fourth generation lives on the other side of the continental divide and beyond, they have once again generously donated to this effort—a testament to the memory of their ancestors and the beauty of this extraordinary place.

I leave you with my wish that each of you enjoy Mt. Helix Park and remember all those folks who have contributed time, talent, and treasure to its continuance and beautification. ■

# HABITAT HABITAT HABITAT

## Meet the Adopt-A-Habitat Team

Since its inception in 2015, The Adopt-A-Habitat Program at Mt. Helix Park has paired volunteers with an area of the Park for which they assume responsibility, planting and maintaining its native flora and contributing to the restoration of the 12-acre Nature Park's endemic species. Today more than 40 volunteers including individuals, families

and service organizations have adopted more than three quarters of the habitat areas available within the Park and coordinators are eager to see the remaining areas matched with volunteer caretakers. The only requirements for participation are a willingness to learn about native California plants and a love of gardening outdoors. The comradery

and satisfaction of working towards a common goal, helps drive volunteers to bring about the positive changes that have been recognized by local experts who have noticed a drastic improvement in the overall health of the Park's landscape as well as a reduction in invasive species since the group was formed. ■

### Ani Bello

adopted her habitat in 2020. Invited to join by Park staff, she came regularly during the COVID closures and found work at the Park therapeutic. "I decided to participate during the shut-down mainly as a way to enter my favorite place for peace of mind and to help preserve the habitat," said Bello. "My goal is to keep Mt. Helix in good shape for a long time."



### Charles Converse

adopted two sections in 2020 when the closures allowed for the restoration of areas previously receiving heavy foot-traffic. Despite adverse planting conditions, he was able to successfully nurture new plants and trees until they were established. He worked not only in his area but removed invasive weeds all over the mountain making significant strides in a short amount of time.



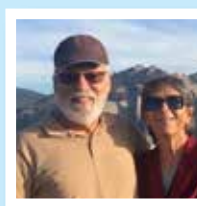
### Susan Cunningham

adopted her habitat in 2015. A retired school administrator, she brings extensive organizational skills to the committee and program for which she has been instrumental in developing. "I grew up with a view of the south side of the mountain, so it's always been a part of my visual landscape," describes Cunningham. "When family came to visit they would always drive up to Mt. Helix for the view of San Diego. I have many special memories of the mountain." She says her favorite part of volunteering is taking a quiet moment to just sit on the mountain and enjoy the view and watch for nature to show itself. "My goals for our habitat work is to maintain the natural beauty of the Park by supporting plant and animal survival so that future generations can enjoy the serenity that this landmark inspires."



### Bruce and Kim McIntyre

adopted their habitat in 2016. Bruce, a retired local environmental consultant, has worked consistently with wife Kim and often outside of organized workdays. The duo has been coming to the Park for over 40 years and love giving back to their community. They continue to be of service despite having moved further away from the Park. "Our goal is to get the mountain to be as natural as possible," states Bruce who says it is nice when visitors stop to thank them for their work. "We have already noticed that, through regular maintenance, our plot requires less and less weeding each year."

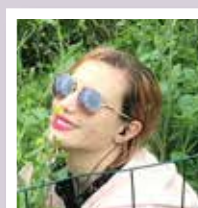


**David and Paula Block** adopted their habitat in 2015. Among the first volunteers to participate in the program, the Blocks say they were eager to learn about California native plants in order to gain the experience they needed to successfully plan, cultivate and grow them in their garden. Their pursuit was fruitful and in 2016, their yard was featured in the California Native Plant Society's Garden Tour. Paula said their favorite thing about volunteering in the habitat is "seeing nature evolve with just a little help from humans."



### Alexandria Junker

adopted her habitat in 2020. The daughter of the Park's Assistant Executive Director who also serves as one of the Park's habitat coordinators, Alexandria started volunteering in 2016 adding plants to the northwest end of the Yawkey Trail. "I decided to participate because it was a beautiful space on the side of the mountain and I wanted to help it thrive and spend some time in nature," she explains adding that she especially likes pulling weeds in early spring when it's cooler, rainy, and green.



**Terry Winegar** adopted his habitat in 2015. Hoping to thwart destructive foot-traffic, Winegar helped establish plants to keep visitors on the trail and out of the sensitive habitat. With most of the restoration complete, the area requires little effort to maintain.



### The Laframboise Family

adopted their habitat in 2019. A larger than average area on the Park's west side, they quickly removed most of the invasive plants giving the native buckwheat, artemisia and other pioneer species room to propagate. Celina Laframboise, has a master's degree in Sustainable Businesses and has been an asset to the Park, serving on both the Foundation Board and the Habitat Restoration Group Committee. Mom, Christine Laframboise, has been lending her hand to fellow Adopt-a-Plot volunteers, helping them remove weeds and water newly planted natives on one of the Park's most challenging east-facing slopes. Members of the Laframboise family can be found volunteering at or attending most Park events and workdays.



### Kathy Deane

adopted two habitat areas including the garden in front of the Park office in 2019. Initially coming aboard with the volunteer group, Just Serve, she adopted two areas and began coming both on her own and with the group regularly. Lending her hand to several events throughout the year, she has become one of the Park's most diverse volunteers and always adds an element of fun to every project. "Anyone who volunteers here will see how beautiful it is and want to help keep it that way," points out Deane. "It's a magical place and I will always do what I can to keep it special for all to enjoy."



### Charles and Patti

**Turkle** adopted their habitat in 2021 restoring a large, sloped area just over the wall from the Park office. With characteristic determination, they cultivated roughly two dozen plants and removed invasive species and trees from their area. Now serving on the Habitat Restoration Group Committee, the two have also helped install newly created plant i.d. signs throughout the Park. Charles, a retired bio-medical technician and Patti, a biologist, draw on their expertise and contribute both knowledge and passion to their work. "We love walking through the Park and helping create native habitat," says Patti of their volunteer experience adding that she enjoys it when conversations with onlookers result in new volunteers. Their goal, they agree is to "eradicate the aggressive, non-native plants and inspire interest in planting native species." Patti points out, "They provide so many benefits."



### Caroline Harrod

adopted a habitat with Executive Director, Krista Powers in 2019. A founding member of the Park's habitat program in 2013, she is also a director for the Foundation and helped formalize the Habitat Restoration Group (HRG) as an official committee. Harrod, has been a tireless advocate for the Park's California native landscape policy and along with Ed Piffard, is responsible for the management of its transformation, for which she says the Adopt a Habitat program has been critical. The success of the creation of the committee's adoption program, along with the extraordinary volunteers tending the Park has been exponential in restoring the Park's flora and fauna.



### Ed Piffard

joined the habitat team in 2014. Helping create the Adopt-a-Habitat program, his knowledge and passion for California native plants and desire to see the Park's landscape restored established him as the Park's primary plant consultant and lead to his service on the Foundation board and the HRG. He says the concept for the Park's program originated from an article he read about the Indian government which enlisted the help of citizens to help protect wildlife near their villages. "The program was very successful because it gave them an ownership in the outcome," he explains. He says he has enjoyed seeing the successful return of species of plants and wildlife despite the drought. His goal is to see the return of a healthy habitat that is resistant to foot traffic and erosion.



**La Mesa Lions** and lead volunteer, **Dave Shaw** joined the program in 2015 and in 2016 began maintaining one of the Park's "showcase" areas next to the picnic tables and kiosk. Bringing crews of as many as 10 people, they can be seen regularly, outside of scheduled workdays keeping their section clean, trimmed, and beautiful. "I read about the program in your newsletter," recalls Shaw who says their board of directors liked the idea a lot. "We are a service club and that is exactly what we do for our communities," explained Shaw adding he especially enjoys it when families engage their kids. "Our goal is to help keep the area looking very presentable to the public when they come visit our beautiful Park."





*Mt. Helix Cross photo courtesy of La Mesa Historical Society*

## Cross Restoration Project

by Peggy Junker

Withstanding almost 100 years of time and adversity, the story of Mt. Helix Park's 35-foot memorial Cross is one of heritage, historic significance, legal battles and hope. Towering 1,365 feet above sea level, it is visible for miles in all directions and a source of comfort for all those who look forward to seeing it lit up each night.

Built in 1925 by Col. Ed Fletcher's concrete foreman J.W. Wilson, the Cross stands sentry over Mt. Helix Park, designed by the famed architect Richard Requa and built by Mary Yawkey White and Cyrus Carpenter Yawkey to honor the memory of their mother, Mary Carpenter Yawkey.

On September 28th, under the direction of Mt. Helix Park Foundation founding board member Robert Ball, restoration crews broke ground on a project expected to ensure the integrity of the Cross and foundation so that it lasts well into the next century and beyond.

Selected to do the work was Expericon Construction Company of San Diego, whose crews restored some of Balboa Park's most historic buildings, as well as Christian Wheeler, a local well known geo-technical engineering firm that previously worked on Mt Helix Park's historic amphitheater step restoration project in 2016.

Visual evidence of rust, confirmed by ground penetrating radar ("GPR"), indicative of potential spalling and voids within the Cross itself, was the catalyst for a collective board effort that commenced several years ago to determine the scope, cost, and funding for the project. For four weeks, crews dug down to expose the original foundation of the Cross to determine its size. They performed additional GPR to look for the existence, location, and size of steel rebars and

for any additional spalling and voids within the base of the Cross and in the foundation itself. Next, they drilled a 2-inch core hole into the footing of the Cross to measure its depth to allow structural engineers to calculate the weight of the footing as well as to determine its adequacy in the event of seismic activity. Further, the team wanted to assess the overall present condition and structural integrity enabling them to accurately determine what, if any, additional work will be needed to the foundation and to the base of the Cross.

Funding for the Cross restoration project was provided by the great-grandson of Cyrus Yawkey, Stephen C. Spire and his wife Marti Albrecht of Mosinee, Wisconsin. It is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of 2021.

Ball notes, "This Cross restoration is part of a broader restoration project at the top of Mt. Helix, which will ultimately include upgrades to the stone enclosure and fencing around the cross, landscape and electrical renovations around the Cross, repairs to the roadway and historic rock walls leading to the Cross, restoration of the original drainage pipes to better direct water run-off and the installation of a new pedestrian entry gate to the Cross."

Funding for those aspects of the restoration and improvements have been provided by current Foundation board member and Yawkey great-granddaughter Alice Smith and her husband Joseph F. Smith, Jr, along with other Yawkey family members Gale Woodson Fisher and her husband David R. Wenninger, Nancy-Leigh Fisher, Abigail L. Spire, Bertram J. Tuckey, III and his wife Leigh H. Tuckey, Robert S. Hagge, Jr and his wife Elke Hagge and by current Foundation board member, Don Teemsma, and former Foundation board member, Keith Meeker. ■



# County Research to Benefit Future Rock Wall Maintenance

by Peggy Junker

The beloved rock wall that lines Mt. Helix Drive is getting some special attention as a team of experts assembled by the County of San Diego delve into the story of its construction and history. According to Donna Durckel, Group Communications Officer, Land Use & Environment for the City of San Diego, this team of researchers, including Architectural Historian Alison Garcia Keller along with an environmental specialist, engineer, and county project managers, recently examined the Mt. Helix Park archives. Their goal is to incorporate all the information they gather to develop a future preservation plan.

The wall, which has become one of the most notable features of Mt. Helix, was constructed by the Civil Works Administration as part of the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal program in the 1930's. Portions within the public right of way are maintained by the Department of Public Works. Durckel relates that in 1989 the Board of Supervisors rezoned Mount Helix Drive as an Historic Landmark to protect the historic integrity of these same rock walls.

"We recognize the significance of these walls to the Mt. Helix community and look forward to hearing from and working



with residents and organizations like the Park Foundation as the project progresses," explains Durckel. She states they are currently gathering data from available documents, historical photos, and interviews with individuals familiar with the history of the rock walls. They then intend to compile and analyze the data to determine what characteristics and features contribute to the historic significance of the walls.

"Right now, we are in the early planning stages of developing the maintenance plan for the rock wall," Durckel remarks, noting that any future work to strengthen or repair the wall will continue to be led by their engineers, and guided by its historical significance. The entire process is expected to take about six months.

Any questions or comments about the rock wall project should be directed to [mohsen.maali@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:mohsen.maali@sdcounty.ca.gov). ■

## Welcome New Board Members

by Peggy Junker

The Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board of Directors welcomed two new members in November.

**JEREMIAH SHULTZ**, General Manager for Solar Turbines and Caterpillar and retired medical doctor, **YVONNE GOFF** added their names to the list of dynamic volunteers who dedicate themselves to the management and preservation of a nature Park that has played an important role in the community of Mt. Helix and the history of East County.

Shultz began volunteering with the Park in 2021 quickly taking on responsibilities for both the Habitat Restoration Committee and the annual Gala/Fundraiser. Inspired to get involved early in the stages of the pandemic while exercising in the amphitheater and taking nature walks along the Yawkey Trail with his children, he says his goal is to help preserve the beauty of the Park for future generations. "Mt. Helix Park is an incredible resource in our community that has quiet spots for contemplation, great exercise options for people of all fitness levels, and a wonderful collection of volunteers that I am proud to call my friends. As a result, I want to continue to drive interest and involvement with a strong focus on the next generation as more families with young



children move into the area." Of particular importance to Shultz is to foster an interest in local plant and animal species to ensure that we are promoting a conservation mindset while simultaneously developing, engaging and inspiring the future keepers of the Park."

Yvonne Goff describes herself as having "a volunteering spirit." A supporter of the Park since the Foundation was established more than 20 years ago, she is also a regular attendee at the annual gala/fundraiser and a long-time Friend of the Park member who can be seen daily picking up litter on her walks to the top.

Retiring in 2021 after 33 years of what Goff describes as "a time intensive, very demanding career," the former Obstetrician/Gynecologist, said she now has the time to dedicate to the Park and looks forward to contributing as a board member.

Goff and Shultz have lived in and around Mt. Helix for 25 and 30 years, respectively and both have served on boards previously, bringing valuable professional and organizational experience as well as a commitment to their community. ■



by Peggy Junker

Blueprints for Mt. Helix Park's 14th annual gala fundraiser were slow to materialize as event planners grappled with how to proceed with the largest event of the year at the Park after eighteen months of COVID restrictions and gathering limitations.

But even with all the uncertainty and a slew of last-minute decisions, volunteers led the charge and helped Executive Director, Krista Powers, deliver an evening that was both fun and profitable for the Park.

This year's team of 40-plus volunteers were the nuts and bolts of the evening, handling everything from running the silent auction, auction software and VIP experience, to setting up, decorating, serving dinner and drinks, and hosting activities. Their efforts and those of the Park staff and the Mt. Helix Park Foundation's Board of Directors raised approximately \$75,000 ---critical, annual income used to maintain and preserve our non-profit Park. Proceeds raised from this event typically provide half of the operating budget.

This year's theme "An Evening Under the Stars" required a new format following a decision to pare the typical 500-person event down to 200 people. Instead of the event's traditional res-



taurant and beverage samplings, this year's guests enjoyed a seated dinner service. Likewise, this year's live auction was a pared down, but highly entertaining segment, as volunteer and Master of Ceremonies, Steve Rotsart, walked guests through bidding for the live auction items and a paddle raise. The result was a smaller, more intimate evening.

One thing that did not change was dancing under the stars as Good Mojo band played classic rock n' roll favorites into the night.

The fun continued until October 4th when a new, exclusively online portion of the auction featuring Park experiences, was posted. The online auction ran for one week and allowed guests and those unable to attend the event to bid for exclusive events at the Park.

"My heart was full as support from our community poured in this year for our annual fundraiser," described Powers. "I have the pleasure of witnessing each day what this Park means to our community and the lives it touches. We are a free space where community members make memories, exercise, learn about nature, play, and find an escape from the hustle and bustle. I feel extremely blessed to be a member of the team that shares their time and resources to make it all possible." ■



## PADDLE RAISE, IN-KIND, AND SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS

### Paddle Raise Donations

#### \$100 +

Pamela Starmack

#### \$250 +

Bruce & Shary Folkmann  
Uli Heine  
Robert & Monica Powell

#### \$500 +

Jim & Andie Kidrick  
Alex & Jodi Mincks  
Kathleen Roberson  
Dean West

#### \$1,000 +

Frank Bongiovanni  
Vickie Cady  
Scott & Jamie French  
Kevin McCarthy

#### \$2,000 +

Larry Fletcher  
Dr. Yvonne Goff  
Gary Saterbak

#### \$5,000 +

Mary Alice Brady  
Andy & Emily Weld

### Silent Auction Donations

Annie's Nails  
Anthony's  
Mike Atkinson  
Balli Hai  
Bank of So Cal  
Baskin Robbins 31 Flavors  
Best Donuts La Mesa  
Paula & David Block  
Camp Bow Wow  
City Tacos  
Renee Ciufo  
Cori Trattoria Pastificio  
Costco  
Susan Cunningham  
CycleVision  
D'Amatos  
Enhancery Jewelers  
Todd Fisher  
Ann Funk  
John Grasberger  
Guitar Center  
Helix Soap Company  
Helix Yoga  
Hookey's  
Hydrobike San Diego  
IB Pet  
Ideal Plumbing  
Jamul Casino  
Peggy Junker

Jason & Raquela Kardos  
Tom & Julie Karlo  
Larry Kennard  
La Jolla Stone Etching  
La Mesa Floral Design Shoppe  
Roberta Labastida  
Diane Langworthy  
Lunch Box  
Maritime Museum  
Dianne McCann  
Lester McCurtis  
Kim & Bruce McIntyre  
Menchie's  
Linda Morton  
Muddy Lotus Jewelry  
Native West Nursey  
Nickel Beer Company  
Laurie Orange  
Pierce & Company  
Mike & Mary Qualls  
San Diego Zoo  
Jeremiah Shultz  
Gwen Small  
Joe & Alice Smith  
Terra American Bistro  
Trader Joe's  
Charles & Patti Turkle  
Unplugged Village  
Ursula Roberson Massage  
USS Midway

### Beverage Donors

San Pasqual Winery  
St. Petersburg Vodka  
Trevi Hills Winery

### Wine Wall Donors

Foundation Board

### Whiskey Toss

Liberty Call Distributing  
Sin Lee Foods  
Skrewball Peanut Butter  
Whiskey

### Dessert & Coffee Donors

Brew Spot Coffee  
D'Amatos Tiramisu  
Frazier Farms Fruit Platters  
Lunch Box Cookies  
Mary's Donuts

### Photographers

Paris Jeske  
Gary Severt



## THANK YOU 2021 MAJOR SUPPORTERS

### An Evening Under the Stars

### 2021 UNDERWRITERS

#### Platinum Level \$10,000

Norm & Valerie Hapke  
Joe & Alice Smith

#### Gold Level \$5,000

Cliff Clifford  
Eric Fletcher  
Jennifer & Alan  
Westermeyer

#### Silver Level \$2,500

Stephen & Sheryl Castro  
Lauren & Todd Lehman

#### Honorary Committee VIP ticket holders \$500 & Above

Bob & Debbie Ball  
John Grasberger & Eva B. Goode  
Guy and Laurie Hलगren  
Joris Hitt  
Pamela Radar  
Helgi Gudmundson  
Gary & Laura Saterbak  
Richard Vattuone



### 2021 BUSINESS SPONSORS

#### Gold Level \$5,000



#### Silver Level \$2,500



#### Honorary Committee VIP ticket holders



Thank You



## Thank You Volunteers!

### COMMITTEE

Steve Clay	Chris Kilrain	Susan Schalin
Jamie French	Chris Naire	Jeremiah Shultz
Valerie Hapke	Andy Phemister	Don Teemsma
Caroline Harrod	Anice Plikaytis	Holly Willbanks
Jason Kardos	Staci Plikaytis	

### EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Danielle Austin	Diane Langworthy
Alejandra Baez	Carole Lasky
Marcia Baltgalvis	Denis LeClair
Sue Broyer	Cindy Lococo
JoAnn Cando	Mona McKee
Kathy Dean	Marcy Montag
Krista Dunerman	Ammy Provancha
East County Transitional Living Center	Randy Rhodes
Leif Erikson	Jane Richards
Toni Henrickson	Cindy Ringoot
Tiffany & Corey Hazelwood	Steve & Larisa Rotsart
Dustin & Kelly Jenks	Khalada Salaam-Alaji
Just Serve	Scout Troop 319
Brees & Robin Kanzius	SPRITES
Nicki Karlo	Jay Steiger
Gina Kepler	Kayla Wetterlind
La Mesa Shrub Club	Kelli Yale



# Always in Our Hearts

by Peggy Junker

The Park lost two beloved friends this fall when Ron Brady, a current board member, and Jeff Swiney, a 12-year veteran board member and facilities manager, passed from this life. The two left behind not only their loving families, but a legacy of leadership and love for the Park that permeated their work for the

Foundation and touched the lives of the staff and volunteers who worked alongside them. The presence of these two is deeply missed, but those who worked closely with them find comfort knowing they are watching over the entire Park from above.



## Ron Brady | 1937-2021

Ron Brady was a leader in the construction industry and a devoted philanthropist. He brought his extensive knowledge of both to the table when he joined the Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board of Directors in 2016. A forward thinker, he was

admired for his vision, but he also earned a reputation among fellow board members and Park staff as a positive force. Endowed with a fun-loving nature, he always took the time to connect with those around him. Even before joining the board, Ron and his wife, MaryAlice, were long-time members of the Park and helped the Foundation complete the gate project in 2002.

"What made him such a wonderful board member and such a great contributor is that he came in with such a business acumen and a level headedness that he often helped bring the board together on difficult issues," explained former Executive Director Tracey Stotz.

Norm Hapke, current Foundation Board president, remembers Ron as a mentor who taught him about leadership. He also recalls what a gracious and kind person he was and how he made life a little brighter for all who encountered him. "He was always quick with a joke or a witticism, had a twinkle in his eye, and kept people smiling," remembers Stotz.

## Jeff Swiney | 1949 - 2021

Jeff, a retired executive for the County Public Works Department, joined the Board of Directors in 2007. Brought on board by his brother-in-law, David Beck Brown, Jeff drew on his expertise, serving

as both Facilities Manager and Vice President of Facilities. He oversaw more than a dozen Park improvement projects, including the restoration of the amphitheater steps, the additions of the Park's front gates and security cameras, as well as the expansion of the Park's irrigation system. Jeff spent countless hours onsite, weekly, and sometimes daily, maintaining the Park's physical operations. On leaving the board, he continued to serve in an advisory capacity on the Park's Facilities Committee and remained available to Park staff who relied on his extensive knowledge of the Park's infrastructure.

He believed that the entrance to the Park should always be green and inviting and could often be seen watering at the front gates.

Hapke, remembers the incredible dedication Jeff felt for the Park and his tireless work to keep it beautiful. "It was obvious to all of us that Jeff had made the Park his post-retirement life's work. How fortunate it has been for the Park to have folks like Jeff with that kind of dedication."



## HABITAT HABITAT HABITAT

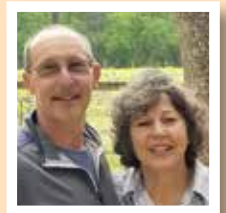
### Bonnie and Kati Stinchcomb

adopted their habitat in 2016 while participating in the Sprites philanthropic program. The mother-daughter duo took the opportunity to work together through Kati's high school years and beyond. Photos of Kati happily working in the habitat can be found on the Park's promotional materials.



### Rob and Roxanne Epstein

adopted their habitat in 2017. Adopting a section adjacent to close friend, Susan Cunningham's, was a good way to be involved their community, says Roxanne who now sits on the Habitat Restoration Group Committee. "Living close by we enjoy the Park and liked the idea of bringing back the native plants." While she says they have enjoyed learning about the plants in the Park, their goal now is to help educate others about their value to us and to the surrounding wildlife.







Charles & Patti Turkle



Jeremiah Shultz

## New Plant Identification Signs Boost Park Experience

Ever wonder what plants line the Yawkey Trail at Mt. Helix Park? Visitors curious about the natural landscape will be getting some help from 16 new plant signs recently added

throughout the Park's habitat and along the Yawkey Trail. They serve to enhance the Park-goer experience by connecting the curious to webpages containing detailed information about some of the Park's featured California Native plants.

The Habitat Restoration Group conceived the idea collectively and board member, Celina Laframboise, initially developed it. After laying the groundwork, she subsequently turned it over to Assistant Executive Director, Peggy Junker.

Working with Eagle Scout candidate, Chris Woods and then newly recruited habitat volunteer, Jeremiah Schultz, Junker coordinated the completion of webpages which included detailed plant descriptions, photos and QR codes. All were finalized by Schultz, and the signs were installed in early summer by a team of volunteers including Vice President of Facilities, Helgi Gudmundson, who constructed the posts.

Volunteer and biologist, Patti Turkle and her husband, Charles Turkle, provided quality control to assure the signs were properly placed next to the species they identified.

Six additional signs will be added during the 2021-2022 planting season to identify several of the Park's featured cactus and seasonal species.

To check out the plant identification webpages next time you are in the Park, use your cell phone to read the QR codes on each sign. They will direct you to the page for that plant. Interested in a sneak preview? Visit the Park's website's "Flora and Fauna" page at [Flora | mt-helix-park \(mthelixpark.org\)](https://mt-helix-park.org). ■



Assistant Executive Director, Peggy Junker



Helgi Gudmundson and Reva

## The Road to the Top

**M**t. Helix is a buzz with a long-awaited safety improvement for our community!

Growing up on Mt. Helix and now raising two little boys here, I have watched how the gentle “hippies” and those who wanted to “neck”, would park illegally on Mount Helix Drive. Sadly, they have been replaced by a new generation of speeding and destructive individuals who have taken over the road and frequently park illegally.

Many of you are not aware of the stories of walkers and bikers being run off the road and of the illegal activity, trash, and vandalism which residents have been picking up and fixing every morning. It is not uncommon for community members to frequently find broken bottles in their own yards as they try to save their dogs and children's feet from the shards. We are forever grateful to these angels for helping to keep the mountain safe and beautiful.

When I began my job here almost three years ago, I became increasingly aware of how severe the problem had become. I knew the Foundation could take the lead in addressing this issue. Having served on the board at GMIA in the past, I approached them. They were eager to help. I then reached out to the list of residents



who had called our office and also wanted to be involved. Together, we had countless meetings with Supervisor Jacob, CHP, San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Fire Fighters, and Public Works employees, and, indeed, anyone who would listen. We especially thank Karen Pearlman from the U-T for helping to spread the word. Crucial to finding a solution to this issue was the fact that in an emergency, First Responders could not get through the illegally

parked vehicles.

Working together, we came up with a safety berm to protect walkers, bikers, children, and dogs as they hike the mountain, as well as a way to calm traffic and prevent illegal parking. With the Foundation funding the security patrol and guard at the top, along with the CHP getting serious about issuing tickets and towing illegally parked cars, we expect the neighborhood will be safer for everyone to enjoy.

Personally, our family is walking to the top a lot more now that we feel safe with our two little ones and my hope is that more people will be able to do the same. It is a beautiful walk from the Foundation's Fire Station lots on Vivera to the top for members of our community as well as visitors.

**PLEASE remember the county is still fixing a few pain points and please call CHP at 858.637.3800 if you see illegal parking.** ■

## HABITAT HABITAT HABITAT

**The Powers Family** adopted their area in 2019. The same year Mom, Krista Powers stepped in as the Park's Executive Director. Jumping in with both feet, Krista has become a strong advocate for pollinator pathways and California native plant restoration. “I can't believe I have gone this long in my life without knowing the importance of what we plant in our own yards for our pollinators,” confesses Powers. “Adopting a habitat and being educated by the incredible native plant expert volunteers at the Park is an absolute gift!” She said this new passion has formed the basis for new friendships with Park volunteers, many of whom also came to the program with little to no native plant knowledge. “Now that I understand the importance, I hope that we at Mt. Helix Park can help our community establish their own native gardens and pollinator pathways.”



**Sebastian Revels** adopted a habitat in 2020. Recognized by Park plant expert, Ed Piffard, for his extensive knowledge of California native plants, he was recruited as a volunteer initially in 2017. After earning his degree in Ecology from Santa Clara College, Revels returned to East County, where he grew up and worked in the horticulture industry until starting a landscaping business specializing in California native plants. “I decided to participate because I enjoy restoring habitat, especially with other people,” explained Revels of his decision to join the Mt. Helix Park Habitat Restoration efforts. “My favorite part is caring for the land! My goal for these habitats is to cultivate a positive relationship between people and nature; we are cut from the same cloth.”





## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEMBERS

**\$5000 & ABOVE**



**\$1925 - FOUNDERS SOCIETY**



**\$500 - Gold Business**



**Bob Blessing Realtor**



**HELIX YOGA**



**\$250 - Silver Business**

Ann Marie Provancha – Berkshire  
Hathaway  
Ellen Beshears  
Heritage of the Americas  
Museum  
Himalayan Cuisine  
Living Well...Essentially Nutrition  
Mt. Helix Lifestyles  
St. Madeline Sophie's Center  
Tracey Stotz – Broker

**\$100 - Bronze Business**

Dream Life Total Wellness  
Frosio Plumbing  
San Diego Children's Choir  
Unplugged Village

**In-Kind**

East County Transitional  
Living  
EDCO  
Ed Suhay Electrical  
Mt. Helix Bees  
Native Plant West  
SPRITES

**THANK  
YOU**

### **\$5,000 Preservation Society & Above**

Mary Alice Brady  
Cliff & Susan Clifford  
Christian Brothers  
Gale Fisher  
Eric & Babs Fletcher  
Robert & Elke Hagge  
Norm & Valerie Hapke  
Joe & Alice Smith  
Don & Melissa Teemsma  
Bert & Leigh Tuckey  
Andy & Emily Weld  
Alan & Jennifer Westermeyer

**\$2,000 +**

Larry Fletcher  
Dr. Yvonne Goff  
Gary Saterbak

### **\$500 & Above Annual Supporters**

#### **\$1925 Founders Society**

Bob & Kimberly Bardin  
Ross Bond, Jr  
Bank of So Cal  
Stephen & Sheryl Castro  
David and Yvonne Goff, M.D.  
Gale Fisher  
Larry Fletcher  
Gary Saterbek

**\$1,000 +**

Marty Fess Anderson  
Frank Bongiovanni  
Vickie Cady  
Scott & Jamie French  
Joris Hitt  
Mark & Christine Lewis  
Kevin McCarthy  
Joseph & Aura O'Keefe  
Pamela Rader

#### **\$500 Park Visionary**

**Art Smarts**  
Ryan & Karibia Baillargeon  
Bob Blessing  
Amalia Bruning  
Steve & Janelle Clay  
Kevin Drennen  
Nancy-Leigh Fisher  
Eric & Babs Fletcher  
Rita & John Folsom  
Nidhal Garmo  
Eva B. Goode & John Grasburger  
Helgi Gudmundson  
Guy & Laurie Hलगren  
John & Vicki Harris  
Scott & Deanna Herrod  
Jason Kardos – Mt. Helix Lifestyles  
David Latham  
Vincent & Kay McGrath  
Alvin & Rose Marie Rosa  
Herman Snodgrass  
Van & Susan Schalin  
Pamela Wagner  
Michael Bishop & Laurie Orange

# Mt. Helix Park Bingo

Walk around the Park and look for pollinators, birds, reptiles, native plants, and other living things that make the Park so special.

Learn about the different native plants to plant in your own yard and do your part to save the native pollinators and wildlife.

Finish the Bingo card, then stop by the office for a special gift from the Mt. Helix Park Foundation.



Spiny Lilac



Toyon



Native Cucumber



Sugar Bush



Swallowtail



Western Fence



Buckwheat



Dudleya



Monkey Flower



Coastal Sage



Black Sage



Caterpillar Phacelia



Free Space



Whiptail



Matilija Poppy



Prickly Pear



Painted Lady



Lakeside Lilac



California Sunflower



Red-Tailed Hawk



Miner's Lettuce



Orange Mallow



Hummingbird



California Poppy



Coastal Oak



**Deborah Austin** adopted her habitat in 2021. A professional landscape designer specializing in sustainable design and regenerative agriculture, she removed weeds and replanted her area using 94 pollinator plants donated by the Xerces Society, an international nonprofit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Determined to see the plants succeed, she felt adopting the section was the logical solution. Taking her responsibilities very seriously, Austin says she is paying special attention to details such as color palette and preservation of the view. "My goal is to create a spectacular viewing experience for all who come to the top and to demonstrate that you don't have to sacrifice beauty while being responsible and sustainable with our environment." In "awe" of its view and history, Austin says she has been coming to the Park regularly for the past 30 years.



**Jeremiah Shultz** joined as a habitat volunteer in January of 2021. After his first workday, a few wildlife experiences and meeting "some great people" Shultz was committed and in May he joined the Habitat Restoration Group Committee. Hoping to inspire the next generation of conservationists, he believes technology is key to engagement. In that vein, Shultz volunteered to help complete QR codes and webpages for recently installed plant identification signs. "When I think about the hundreds of people that have volunteered and left their mark at the Park over the last century, I am humbled to have the opportunity to carry on the legacy of these incredible men and women," shares Shultz who likes the idea of having his descendants visit a tree he was able to cultivate.



**The Kepler Family** adopted their habitat in 2020. Exemplifying parents who teach their kids not only about community involvement, but also the importance of taking care of the natural environment, families like theirs are an important part of the Park's volunteer base.

**The Lucey Family** adopted their habitat in 2020. Working together they helped to clear the area of weeds while teaching their kids about community service and the Park's natural habitat.



**Sprites of East County** adopted a habitat in 2020. Longtime Park supporters, they contribute both through philanthropic sponsorship and as committed volunteers. Sprites are always willing to lend a hand for workdays, planting days and for many of the Park's events.



**Whitney Duenez** adopted her habitat in 2015. Since signing on she has transformed her section adding native plants and removing invasive species. Motivated by the proliferation of weeds, she recalls what she describes as a crisis. Having lived in the back country for many years, she believed she had the expertise necessary to help. She says the perks of being part of the program are seeing "little victories." Her hope for these habitats is that the restoration is viable for the long term (in spite of drought) and increasingly self-sufficient. Duenez, a certified Master Composter and Habitat Restoration Committee member says she enjoys creating a habitat for the butterflies, lizards, rabbits, and hummingbirds and admits it's nice when Park visitors take notice.



**Gary Severt** adopted a habitat in 2014. Choosing a large swath running below the road on the west end, he has worked tirelessly to remove weeds and invasive feather grass, to deter off-trail foot traffic and to add native plants and seed. Having a deep affinity for the Park, he has visited it throughout his life and began to volunteer officially after the Park office opened in 2010. His dedication coupled with extensive construction and project management experience have made him invaluable to the Park.





## MT. HELIX PARK FOUNDATION

4901 Mt. Helix Drive  
La Mesa, CA 91941

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
San Diego  
Permit 906

Please visit [www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org) and from the home page select "Contact Us" to send your email to be included in the electronic magazine distribution. Park members will continue to receive a mailed hardcopy of the magazine.

**like us on facebook**



## Make a Gift: Become a Friend of the Park!

### Become a Park Member

Please consider becoming a "Friend of the Park" member by making a tax deductible donation in the enclosed envelope. Your donation helps ensure Mt. Helix Park remains an oasis of beauty in our community by supporting on-going operations and free public programs.



## Our Event, Marketing, and Volunteer Committees NEED YOU!

**D**o you like throwing parties? Putting together a Family Movie Night? Music in the Park? Wine Tasting? Or maybe you are passionate about the Pollinators and want to get the word out? As the county reopens, the Park is almost back to its full hustle and bustle. We are all thrilled to

see so many returning faces from our community, but what this also means is that we need volunteers to help with programming! Our "committees" meet once a month for some cheer and planning. Give Krista a call or text if you are interested. We would love to have you! 619.985.1445. ■

### *In Most Years -* **ANNUAL EVENTS**

#### **FALL**

HALLOWEEN HARVEST FESTIVAL

NATURE LECTURE

#### **WINTER**

CHRISTMAS ON MT. HELIX

PRAYER & WORSHIP GATHERING

GMIA NEIGHBORHOOD WALK UP

#### **SPRING**

SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE SINCE 1917

CHRISTIAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

#### **SUMMER**

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENTS

ASTRONOMY NIGHT

FOOD, WINE, & ART FESTIVAL

### **DO YOU LIKE EVENTS?**

**Mt. Helix Park  
needs YOU!**

**HELP DEVELOP COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMMING AT MT. HELIX PARK  
JOIN OUR FUN EVENT, MARKETING,  
& VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES**

**Call 619.741.4363 or  
Email: [KPowers@MtHelixPark.org](mailto:KPowers@MtHelixPark.org)**