

## A Message from the Desk of Anita Csukardi, BSW Executive Director



Greetings to all,  
and happy month  
of December,

The festive month  
of December is  
upon us!

Personally, I love  
the month of December because  
Christmas is one of my favorite  
holidays of the year. Christmas  
traditions encourage us all to  
decorate, exchange gifts, bake, spend  
time together, and reminisce as the  
year comes to an end. Enjoying the  
smell of sugar cookies, decorating a  
tree, and a cup of hot chocolate are  
just a few of my favorite things to  
enjoy in the month of December.

December celebrates holidays such as  
the continuation of Hanukkah  
through the 6th, Christmas Eve,  
Christmas Day, Kwanza, Boxing Day,  
and New Year's Eve. We certainly can  
look forward to taking in the fun,  
festivities, and cultures with fun  
celebration and exploration.  
Essentially, whether you enjoy the  
smell of freshly baked sugar cookies  
or decorating a tree with your favorite  
ornaments, we all look forward to  
sharing each other's stories and  
viewpoints together as a community.

I wish everyone a safe, happy, and  
healthy December! Happy Hanukkah,  
Merry Christmas, and a Happy New  
Year to all!



December 2021

melrosegardens.com

MAKE A WISH



### Resident Birthdays

Lily S.	12/04
Gerrie R.	12/08
Judy B.	12/14
Donald W.	12/19
Diana L.	12/25

### Holiday Celebrations

11/28-12/06	Hanukkah
12/21	Winter Solstice
12/25	Christmas Day
12/31	New Year's Eve

### Religious Services and Study

Shabbat Services ~ Fridays at 11:00 a.m.

Saddleback Church Services ~ Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.



## Decorating for a Season of Festive Holidays!



## The Spirit of Holiday Gift-Giving



The holiday season brings with it many rituals, and one of those includes the giving and receiving of gifts. And for some, we can feel pressured to prove our love or caring for others in a strictly material way. But gift-giving can mean much more than just spending money. When done thoughtfully, it can have a wonderful, even profound, emotional, social, and spiritual effect on you and your loved ones.

The definition of a gift is the transfer of something without any expectation of payment. While gift-giving may involve the expectation of reciprocity, the gift is meant to be free. The term gift can be applied to anything that makes the receiver feel happier, less sad, especially as a favor, and can include forgiveness and kindness. Gift-giving (while keeping within your values and budget) represents an opportunity to make a meaningful connection to someone who matters.

The rewards of gift-giving are plentiful. The giving of gifts can have a positive psychological and emotional effect on us. It reinforces our feelings for another person, and allows us the opportunity to communicate that we care about them. The act of giving can also deliver a host of benefits to the giver, too! The giving of actual material gifts, time or money can also serve to lower one's blood pressure, lower stress levels, result in experiencing less anxiety or depression, and increase one's self-esteem.

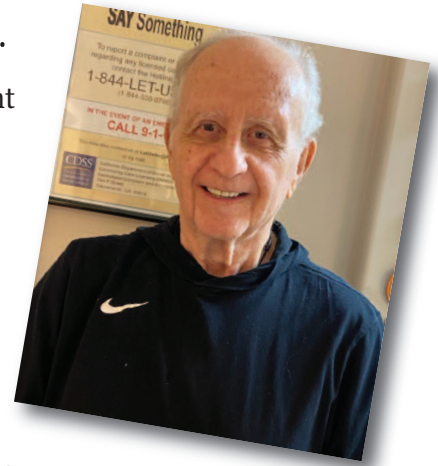
Anne Morrow Lindberg, an American author, aviator and the wife of pioneer aviator Charles Lindberg once wrote, "To give without any reward, or notice, has a special quality of its own." In support of this sentiment, research has shown that the joy of giving often lasts longer than the joy of getting. In fact, a 2018 study presented in *Psychological Science* by researchers Ed O'Brien and Samantha Kassierer found that the study participants' happiness did not decline, or declined much slower, if they repeatedly bestowed gifts on others versus repeatedly receiving those same gifts themselves. Perhaps the "quality" Lindberg refers to is the value of "connection" and the happiness that comes with it. Increased happiness comes from connecting with others we care about or love, and the act of giving is usually returned with the invaluable gift of human connection.

December 2021

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR RESIDENT

Warren S.

This month's spotlight shines on one of our newer residents, Warren. Warren was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Leona and Ed. The oldest of the three, he was the only boy in the family, which he loved because he never had to wash dishes! Warren attended Temple University in Philadelphia, where he played football. He spent 5 years in the Army (1 year active and 4 years reserve) as a medical orderly. From there he went into a career as a sales rep for a major insurance company. After 25 years, he retired in 2000.



Warren is the proud father of three, and grandfather of 4. His interests include golf, tennis and walking. In fact, until recently, he regularly walked 2 miles 3 times a week!

Warren believes in enjoying life as much as possible, and remembering that in order to live a long life one must take excellent care of themselves and try to stay in good health. Welcome to Melrose Gardens, Warren!

Join us for our  
**Hanukkah  
Luncheon**

**Sunday,  
December 5th  
12:00 p.m.**

**HAPPY  
Hanukkah**

**Please R.S.V.P. with the concierge.**

A graphic for a Hanukkah luncheon. It features a row of lit Hanukkah candles (menorah) against a dark background with bokeh light effects. The text is in white and gold.

## December Featured Activities & Events



11/28-12/06

### Hanukkah

The Festival of Lights has both historical and spiritual meaning in the Jewish religion, and is celebrated by discussing the meaning of the holiday, lighting the menorah, eating fried foods, and playing dreidel. Rabbi Minnen shares that Hanukkah “symbolizes the creation of light in the darkest times, which will be

especially true this year”, as our nation works to heal and recover from the pandemic. We are so fortunate to continue to celebrate throughout the beginning of December, sharing traditions and blessings, progressively lighting the candles of the Hanukkiah, giving gifts, and eating lots of latkes and jelly donuts. We have many wonderful activities planned for Hanukkah this December, including a special Hanukkah poetry hour and cocktail hour, culminating in a delicious Hanukkah luncheon followed by a Hanukkah celebration led by Ter Lieberstein on Sunday, December 5th. Chag Sameach!

Saturday, December 25

### Christmas Day

Every year on December 25, we celebrate Christmas, a day for spending time with family, observing an important Christian holiday, partaking in lighthearted traditions, or just spreading some holiday cheer! Our community will celebrate this holiday throughout the month of December by decorating our community, creating handmade gifts, cookie decorating, enjoying hot cocoa hours and carolers, and more as we spread joy this season. We will also celebrate the 12 Days of Christmas with special themed days, such as Silver Bells Day, Polar Express Day, Ugly Sweater Day, and more, leading up to our Candy Cane Lane Holiday Celebration on Christmas Eve followed by a wonderful Christmas Eve dinner. On Christmas Day we will test our Holiday knowledge with some Christmas trivia and enjoy crafting under the mistletoe. Merry Christmas!



Friday, December 31

### New Year's Eve

On New Year's Eve, you either breathe a sigh of relief that the year is over or marvel at how it went by in a flash. There are some annual traditions that we are especially enthusiastic about observing, such as toasting a glass of champagne as

we watch the grand celebration and Ball Drop at Times Square in New York. We will take the opportunity to reflect on the past year with all its highs and lows, and remember some of the events that made the year memorable. We will then look forward to 2022 with our Annual Vision Board session! Following our last dinner of the year, we will have a New Year's Dessert Party and Champagne Toast, where we plan to party our way into the New Year. Here's to a new day, new year, and new beginnings! Welcome 2022!

## 'Tis the Season to Put Some Extra Cheer in Your Holiday Drinks



It is probably not surprising that eggnog remains our most popular holiday elixir. This creamy, silky milk-based libation has been around since at least the 1700s, and was originally used as a kind of medicine for a range of ailments including even malaria. A taste for eggnog, however, is not a universal phenomenon. The number of people with a penchant for the drink is probably matched by an almost equal number of those who dislike it! For those of us who love it, National Eggnog Day is celebrated every Christmas Eve. So be certain to indulge on December 24th and tilt a glass to your favorite seasonal beverage!

Eggnog, however, isn't the only popular holiday tippie. Seasonal punches come in a wide variety of tastes and colors, although the carmine cranberry-based juice punches are perennial favorites. Splash in some pineapple juice, ginger ale, almond extract, fresh fruits such as cranberries and sliced lemons and limes, and you've got yourself a holiday drink with some real punch to it!

For those who look forward to sipping on something warm during the holidays, Mulled Cider is certainly a leading contender. Apple cider mulled with cinnamon sticks, cloves, allspice berries, orange and lemon peel (and a splash of rum for the adults!) is a wonderful way to savor the warm glow of the holidays!

And if hot drinks are more to your liking, another yuletide favorite remains the popular and delicious cup of piping hot cocoa. However, a tasty holiday version isn't just any hot cocoa... try your cocoa infused with peppermint and topped off with crushed candy cane and marshmallows!

So whatever your holiday beverage cravings may be, there's always a cup of liquid cheer to satisfy your holiday cravings!

MERRY  
*Christmas*



Please join us for a  
*Special*  
**Christmas Luncheon**  
**Saturday, December 25th**  
**at 12:00 p.m.**

Please R.S.V.P. with the concierge.

**Employee  
OF THE MONTH**

*Lorena*  
Chef

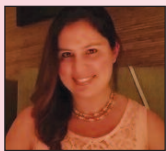


This month our Employee Spotlight shines on Lorena Linares. Lorena is one of our amazing cooks. She hails from Guatemala, and is the proud mother of Oscar, Jade, and fur baby, Coco. Lorena has been working in the Senior Living industry for an astounding 20 years! Here at Melrose Gardens, her love of cooking comes through in the delicious meals she prepares for us. She loves helping others and seeing the smiles on the faces of our residents as they enjoy her meals.

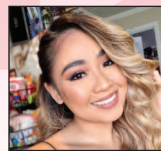
In her free time, Lorena enjoys spending time with and cooking pasta for her daughter, taking long drives with her son, and watching television with Coco. She also likes to listen to music and go hiking. Lorena dreams of one day opening her own bakery.

We are lucky to have Lorena as one of the many wonderful members of our Melrose Gardens and the Cottages family!

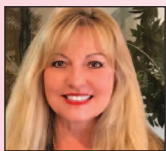
*Community Leadership Team*



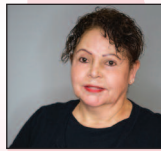
**Anita Csukardi, BSW**  
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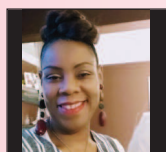
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