

ECS Newsletter

Fall 2026

Why Our Nonprofit Status Matters: Building Community Through Philanthropy

At Episcopal Communities & Services for Seniors (ECS), we believe that a life well lived is inseparable from the people and communities that surround us. Connection, purpose, and mutual support are at the heart of what it means to age well. This is why our nonprofit status matters.

Unlike organizations whose primary obligation is to generate returns for shareholders, ECS exists to serve a mission: creating exceptional communities and services for seniors. As a nonprofit organization, every dollar generated and every gift received is reinvested into our communities, our residents, and the dedicated team members who care for them.

Our nonprofit status also provides an opportunity for others to express their own values and aspirations through philanthropy. Donors, residents, families, board members, and community partners can make a meaningful difference by supporting ECS and its communities, ensuring that future generations of older adults continue to benefit from exceptional care, vibrant community life, and compassionate service.

This tradition of philanthropy has been part of ECS since its beginning more than a century ago. Today, charitable contributions support a wide range of initiatives that enrich the lives of residents and team members alike, including:

- Enhancements to buildings, grounds, and community spaces;
- Resident programs, activities, and wellness initiatives;
- Financial assistance through resident support and assurance funds;
- Employee recognition, education, and wellness programs;
- Spiritual life and mission integration activities;
- Capital improvements and strategic investments that strengthen our communities for future generations.

These gifts represent more than financial contributions. They are expressions of gratitude, compassion, stewardship, and hope. They reflect a shared belief that every older adult deserves to live in a community where they are valued, supported, and connected.

As we look to the future, philanthropy will continue to play an essential role in helping ECS fulfill its mission. The growing population of older adults presents both challenges and opportunities, and charitable support allows us to respond creatively and compassionately to emerging needs while preserving the values that have guided us for more than a century.

We are deeply grateful to the many residents, family members, team members, board members, congregations, foundations, and friends whose generosity sustains our mission. Their support ensures that ECS remains a community where lives are enriched, relationships flourish, and every person has the opportunity to live well.

Together, we continue a tradition of giving that began more than 100 years ago, and that will continue to strengthen our communities for generations to come.

James Rothrock, President and CEO



Highlights

The Canterbury

The impact of financial support

The Covington

Helping a team member complete her nursing degree

MonteCedro

The reach of creative pursuits

Community

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The Canterbury

Lifting a burden with financial support

Carolyn has called The Canterbury home for 27 years. Growing up in New Hampshire, her family instilled in her a love of learning. She attended teachers college and had a long career as both a teacher and a librarian. Her strong belief in the benefits of higher learning was part of her motivation to make a donation to the Employee Education Fund (EEF). The fund has been set up specifically to help team members pursue their ambitions. "Education is so important, and now it's so expensive," Carolyn says. "Helping young people reach their goals is important to me."

One team member who has recently benefited from Carolyn's and other residents' generosity is Arianna Lomeli, a Charge Nurse at The Canterbury. Arianna studied to become an LVN (Licensed Vocational Nurse) and received support from the EEF in 2025. "The fund went toward my student loan from nursing school," she says.

For Arianna, the financial support has meant a world of difference. "It is a huge burden lifted off my shoulders," she says. Reducing

the financial stress has helped her in all aspects of her life. "I feel like I shine brighter. I can focus better at work. And when I'm at home, I'm more present with my children and my family. It's been great."

Arianna has been in healthcare for more than 10 years. "I started as a medical assistant and I've been through many companies," but for her, The Canterbury is different. She says that based on her experience working in healthcare, these kinds of employee support programs are the exception rather than the rule. "The Canterbury wasn't my first nursing job but it is definitely my favorite," Arianna says. "Here, you really connect with both your co-workers and with the residents. It feels like a true community."

For her part, Carolyn says the experience has been very rewarding and encourages others at The Canterbury to consider supporting the Employee Education Fund, and other programs. "It's important that we help young people get an education and give them as much help as possible," Carolyn says.

The Covington

Generosity of residents helps a team member complete her studies

Karen and her late husband moved into The Covington in 2017. He practiced medicine and they traveled extensively. Karen says that when you travel, you see how much need there is in the world. "I was raised to believe that to

whom much is given, much is expected," she says.

This belief in giving back is one of the many reasons Karen is a consistent donor to funds that assist team members at The Covington. "They are an incredible group of people who do so much for us residents, every day." She's given regularly to the Employee Education Fund (EEF) and the Staff Assistance Fund for Emergencies (SAFE).

One of the many team members whom the funds have supported is Linda Mandizha-Johnson. She has worked at The Covington since 2014. "I started here as a Care-giver while I was still in school to become an LVN (Licensed Vocational Nurse)," Linda says. "I paid my own way, working and going to school full time."

Linda wanted to continue her studies to pursue her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She spent more than two years working and going to school full time, but tuition is expensive. Half-way through the course, Linda realized she would need to take out another student loan to be able to complete her studies. "It was an additional financial burden that I was just not in the position to take on," she says.



That's when the generosity of residents of The Covington was able to help bridge the gap. Linda mentioned her situation to her supervisor who suggested she speak with a team member in Human Resources. They listened to Linda's situation and came back with an answer: the Employee Education Fund would be able to help.

The support allowed Linda the confidence and peace of mind to concentrate on her studies, and she earned a scholarship from the school that helped offset some of her additional tuition expenses. Today, Linda is the Care Coordinator Manager, overseeing the Care Suite program that provides respite for Independent Living residents. "I love my job here," Linda says, "and I am so thankful for the opportunity."

Karen is also thankful for the opportunity to give. "Education is priceless," she says.

MonteCedro

Resident support helps team members grow in meaningful ways

The Employee Education Fund is about more than career advancement. It's about investing in people, encouraging lifelong learning, and supporting the passions that help employees thrive both inside and outside the workplace.

In the past five years, MonteCedro residents have donated more than \$36,000 to the Employee Education Fund and the NextGen Education

Fund, demonstrating their support of educational opportunities that enrich lives and strengthen skills.

One recent recipient is Juan Torres, MonteCedro's House-keeping Supervisor, who joined the community about a year ago. Juan received reimbursement through the Employee Education Fund to continue his acting studies at the Beverly Hills Playhouse.

While acting may not seem like an obvious fit for a housekeeping supervisor, Juan believes the lessons he learns in the classroom directly benefit his work. "Through acting, I'm able to listen to what people are really saying," he says. "When you're studying a craft, it helps you connect and be able to listen better."

Juan attends classes twice a week, viewing them as both a creative outlet and an opportunity for personal growth. Character studies challenge him to understand different perspectives, motivations, and emotions, which are skills that help him communicate more effectively with residents, colleagues, and the team members he supervises.

"I feel like it's really beneficial to look not only from your own perspective but from the perspective of someone else," he says.



Juan first learned about the Employee Education Fund from his supervisor, Belinda Martinez, who encouraged him to apply. He was pleasantly surprised to discover the fund supports educational pursuits beyond those directly tied to an employee's current role. That philosophy reflects MonteCedro's belief that investing in personal interests ultimately benefits the entire community. "I'm a firm believer that we never stop learning," he says. "Medicine can heal the body, but the arts heal the soul."

For colleagues considering applying for the Employee Education Fund, Juan has simple advice: "Just do it. If there's an educational pursuit you want to follow and money is the only thing stopping you, apply."

Thanks to the generosity of MonteCedro residents and donors, employees like Juan are discovering that learning, creativity, and compassionate service truly go hand in hand.

Support ECS Programs

As a nonprofit organization, giving back to the community is a cornerstone of our Mission and Values, and has been part of our work in Southern California since 1923. If you would like to contribute to any of our programs, please visit our website at ecsforseiors.org, or contact Cassie Carpenter at ccarpenter@ecsforseiors.org.

It Started With a Microwave

How Ken and Terry Yagura Built A Legacy of Giving

The Yaguras have given a great deal — hundreds of thousands of dollars in fundraising efforts, countless volunteer hours, even their family home. But their story began with a microwave.

After moving to North Lake Tahoe, Terry saw the teachers at her son's school had no way to warm their lunches, so she and Ken hauled in their brand new microwave.

"The microwaves back then were so heavy. Ken had to help me carry it," Terry remembers.

She kept spotting needs and filling them: art lessons taught classroom to classroom, a walk-a-thon that raised \$30,000 a year for playground equipment.

"One kid ran the entire ten miles," Terry remembers fondly.

Ken's giving reaches back to his childhood in Boyle Heights, where a Boys Club had been his refuge.

Decades later, he'd build one of his own. Invited to a talk about a new Boys & Girls Club, he figured he'd have a donut and leave. Instead, somewhere between the coffee and the door, he wrote a check for \$5,000 and folded it in half.

"I didn't want them to know it was me," he says.

That "\$5,000 donut fiasco" pulled him in as the club's fourth co-founder. He went on to chair the committee which raised

\$10M to build the club, determined to fill it with real role models.

"They weren't just random people brought off the street," he says. *"They were sheriffs, firefighters, and pillars of the community."*

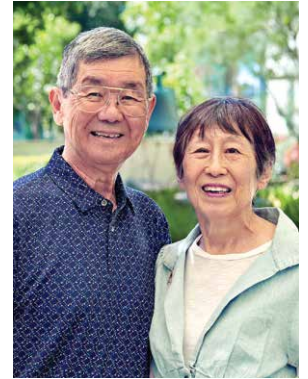
When the campaign needed proof its founders believed in it, the Yaguras sold their home and donated half the proceeds.

"We were always on the same page," they say.

What stays with them is the ripples. When a young musician needed a saxophone for college, they handed over a \$2,000 instrument for \$15. She became an accomplished orchestra conductor. Years after they helped build the youth club, a girl from the once-feared Kings Beach neighborhood won a full scholarship to Pomona College.

Ken and Terry rarely set out to change a single life. They just kept seeing needs and filling them, one microwave, one saxophone, and one folded check at a time.

The Yaguras continue to enrich lives here at MonteCedro — they were among the top donors to the MonteCedro SAFE Fire Relief Fund to support team members who lost their homes in the Eaton Fire in March 2025.



By Your Side

Life is a journey best experienced with others and at no time is this more important than at the end of life. By Your Side: an ECS Compassion Program (BYS) has been created to meet the specific needs of those who are at the end of life or experiencing life-altering changes. Trained volunteers and professional caregivers serve as a compassionate presence, providing companionship and ensuring dignity during a time when it is most needed.

BYS is a five-module training program for residents who wish to volunteer in their community, and for team members at ECS. Susan Brown, By Your Side Administrator, manages the program. "Together, we change the lives of those around us by practicing the simple and powerful art of possibility, presence, and meaningful connection," she says.

Since 2013, BYS has trained team members, residents, and neighbors of ECS senior living communities, as well as members of the greater Southern California community

to be even more present with one another. Residents have companioned their peers through life changes, challenging diagnoses, and increasing frailty. Through the program, BYS volunteers gain practical tools for self-care, strengthening their ability to be there for others.

By Your Side is made possible by the contributions of many, including major support from donors like The Halcyon Club. For more information on By Your Side, please visit:

ecsforseniors/by-your-side,

or contact Susan Brown at

sbrown@ecsforseniors.org.

byYourSide
An ECS Compassion Program

ECS is proudly founded
on four commitments

Choice. Your life, your way.

Creativity. Live beyond your daily needs.

Connection. Community is at the heart of all we do.

Confidence. A century's worth of senior living expertise.

