

January 2017  
Winter Issue



# The Guild Gab



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Edén Garcia-Balis, LMFT  
AMCS Executive Director

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## The Prez Sez

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**  
We have been busy at the Guild these past six months. In August, we took a bus trip to tour the Union Station in Los Angeles as well as the San Antonio Winery for lunch and a wine tasting. Learning the history of Union Station was fascinating and partaking in the wine tasting at the winery was, of course, very enjoyable!

September was a sad month as we closed the doors to The Guided Cage. After 41 years of business, we were able to raise almost half a million dollars for AMCS! The Cage

## Eden's Epistle

Happy New Year! For most of us, the New Year is a joyous time. Many think of it as a time for new beginnings and start off a new year with great excitement and a list of resolutions that we intend to pursue. For others, this is not the case. Some people dread this time of year. It is a time to reflect on last year's accomplishments, or lack thereof, and that coupled with other challenges can create feelings of depression or anxiety. If one is prone to either, the feelings may be heightened. For those who have the financial means, finding help can be

will be missed by all!  
In November, we held our 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Home Tour. The atmosphere at the homes and reception following was charged with positive feelings. Although ticket sales weren't what we hoped for, we were still able to raise \$35,000 for AMCS.

In 2017, we are looking forward to a Fashion Show at Talbots and California Pizza Kitchen on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and other fun(d)-raising events.

The New Year frequently causes us to think of how we can better ourselves and then make resolutions to do so. We hope that this

relatively easy. However, those who live on a fixed income or subsistence wages, usually have a tough time finding a place they can turn to. Our community is fortunate to have a clinic in its backyard where people can get quality mental health services at a cost they can afford. I am proud and grateful to be part of Airport Marina Counseling Service (AMCS), a clinic that provides individual, couples, family, group counseling and even medication management at reasonable rates. The Westchester Mental Health Guild (WMHG) understands the

year you will resolve to renew your membership in the Westchester Mental Health Guild and/or become a new member. Each membership helps to provide services, such as suicide prevention for students (or youth) in need and/or helping struggling families build on their strengths and create loving, nurturing relationships. Won't you join us in providing these crucial services to people in our community?

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

*Ylla De Leon and Mary Gluck  
Co-Presidents 2016-2017*

importance of high quality, low cost services and fundraises for AMCS to ensure that our services are easily accessible and affordable for all who need them.

On behalf of all of us at AMCS, a warm heartfelt "thank you" to Guild members and to all who support the Westchester Mental Health Guild! The support makes a huge difference in the lives of our clients.

Wishing you good health and happiness in 2017.



### Meet a Member - Jenika Kurtz Cuadra

One of our newest members to join the Guild Board is **Jenika Kurtz Cuadra**. Jenika is from Superior, Wisconsin and came out to California when she was only 5. Once her family got used to the California weather, there was no turning back. Jenika grew up in the Palm Desert area and attended

college in San Diego majoring in Interior Design. She and her husband, Robert moved to Westchester from Hollywood in 2007 and were married at the Custom Hotel in 2013. Jenika is thrilled to live in Westchester and loves the small-town feeling and its history. She said

Westchester is a gem. Their home was featured on our 33<sup>rd</sup> Holiday Home Tour. Jenika started her own interior design business last year. For relaxation, she and her husband love to travel abroad. Jenika brings lots of new ideas as our social media person.



### Meet a Member – Julia Varney

**Julia Varney** is a long-time member of the Guild and serves on the Board. She was born in La Cordillera, Panama. Her father was from Denmark and originally emigrated to Panama to work on the construction of the Panama Canal. Julia and her 6 siblings came to the United States to attend high school. She graduated from Manual Arts High School and later from Chaffey College. Julia met

her late husband, Arnold, when she was returning by boat to Panama for summer vacation. Yes, a true shipboard romance. After her college graduation, she worked at Bullock's and Caltech. Julia and Arnold were married in 1944 and moved to Westchester in 1947 where they raised their 3 children and she worked at the YMCA and at Western Airlines/Delta. They were very active in

the community – in Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, the PTA and the American Field Service. Through the AFS Julia met Mireya Wharton, who encouraged her to become involved in the WMHG for which she has served as Secretary and as a docent on the Home Tours. She enjoys gardening, travel, volunteering in her community and sharing her life with her family.



### Meet a Member – Stephanie Younger

**Stephanie Younger** is a Los Angeles native, an alumna of Loyola Marymount University, and long-time Westchester resident. She lives in the neighborhood with her husband and their two children. As a family, the Youngers love to travel, taking ski trips or visiting friends in Ireland and while at home, they love playing board games and watching baseball. In her work, Stephanie has always kept her loyalty to and

focus on the Westchester, Playa del Rey and Playa Vista areas that she loves, and demonstrates that with a commitment to serving the people in her community. Through her team's Give Together program, where a portion of their net proceeds is donated on the client's behalf, Stephanie has donated more than \$150,000 to local schools, charities and organizations. Stephanie says, "On our team, we believe that being

good is admirable, but *doing* good is transformational. The work the WMHG does to provide access to affordable mental health care is absolutely important to our community, and we are honored to be able to support the Guild in their transformational work." We are very grateful for Stephanie's sponsorship of the Home Tour every year.



### 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Home Tour

Our 34<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Home Tour, held this past November, was once again a terrific success as our largest fundraiser of the year. This year's Tour not only brought in more dollars than last year's Tour, it introduced new people to our organization.

We were happy to feature five special houses in the community, each decorated for a particular holiday, but all differing in size, architecture and features. A lovely renovated beach house in Playa del Rey was decorated for "A Coastal Christmas" in colors that evoked the sea, while another Playa house, filled with art and antiques, was more traditionally decorated for "A Holly Jolly Christmas." A one-story Westchester bungalow featured "A Halloween Surprise," with extensive decorations inside and out, while another home evoked the 60's with its "Mid-century Modern Thanksgiving." A totally remodeled two-story American farmhouse rang in "New Year's in a New Home." In each home, arrangements from Flowers by Felicia enhanced the holiday theme. Pictures from our 34th Annual Tour are available on our website, at [www.westchestermhg.org](http://www.westchestermhg.org).

One new feature this year was a Holiday Marketplace, which featured nine different vendors, including our own Guild crafters. The vendors sold an amazing variety of things, including handbags, jewelry, children's books, holiday decorations, and chocolate.

This included a table of Guild volunteers whose popular handcrafted products formerly were sold at The Guilded Cage. Having shopping as an important part of the reception added an exciting new energy. Our prize drawing, featuring 29 gift baskets, also was a tremendous success.

Our Holiday Home Tour does not happen without the dedicated participation of a large number of people. We are very appreciative of the homeowners, the realtor sponsors, and the local businesses and individuals who have purchased advertising in our Home Tour Program or provided in-kind support for our prize drawing or the flowers to adorn the houses. Please support these companies by using the Home Tour Program as a local business directory throughout the year. All of these entities recognize the importance of community, and that alone is a good reason to patronize their businesses. We also were delighted to have more than 100 community members volunteer as docents at the five houses, as well as many other volunteers who worked at the reception.

You should mark your calendar for next year's Tour, which will be **Sunday, November 5**. If you have a home you think should be included in the Tour, please let the Tour committee know as soon as possible, by contacting Linda Peterson at 310-822-0435 or [lpeterson7053@ca.rr.com](mailto:lpeterson7053@ca.rr.com).



2016 Home Tour Co-Chairs  
Judy Dews & Linda Peterson



### Final Tweet from the Cage

We were all saddened by the decision to close **The Guilded Cage**, Westchester's only non-profit gift shop, last September, 2016, and we were particularly gratified by the expressions of appreciation for the shop we heard from many former customers. Closing was inevitable, however, due to changing American shopping habits, and the increasing use of electronic communications in lieu of greeting cards, as well as a decline in the numbers of our volunteers.

Volunteers operated The Guilded Cage for 41 years since September, 1975, as a way to raise funds to assist the Airport Marina Counseling Service. During its 41 years, The Guilded Cage was popular for its greeting cards, jewelry, gifts, and home décor, as well as handcrafted items made by its volunteers, such as afghans, hats, scarves and dishtowels.

We are very proud that, in the course of those 41 years, **the volunteers raised more than one-half million dollars for AMCS.**



Fortunately, the volunteers who enjoyed making items for The Guilded Cage have continued to make some of these popular items, and recently sold them very successfully at tables at the Holiday Home Tour's new Marketplace. So, although we have said "good-bye" to the shop, we still have been able to enjoy some of its most popular handmade products.



Amazon has offered us a simple and automatic way to support the **Westchester Mental Health Guild** when we shop on its website, at no cost to us. Many Guild members already have signed up for this and we hope you will, too.

All you have to do is go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, before you begin shopping, you must type in "Westchester Mental Health Guild" in the box below Amazon's suggested national charities, where it tells you to "pick your own charitable organization." WMHG is an approved charity on their list, so it will then show up as the charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to WHMG of 0.5% of the purchase price. You continue to use the same account on AmazonSmile as you always have on Amazon.com, and your shopping cart, wish list, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings stay the same.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same selection and convenient shopping experience as you have had at Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization, WMHG. Thank you!

## 2016 Bus Adventure



Guild members enjoyed a tour of Union Station followed by lunch and wine tasting at San Antonio Winery



## 2017 Fundraisers



### CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN Thursday, March 2

The Guild will also host a California Pizza Kitchen Fundraiser on **March 2, 2017 from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.** Come enjoy a meal at CPK, 3280 North Sepulveda Boulevard, Manhattan Beach. The restaurant will give back 20% of the bill excluding tax and tip to WMHG. Be sure to tell the waiter you are supporting the WMHG Fundraiser today. This is a great way to raise money for AMCS and have delicious food at the same time. Double fun...Enjoy our Fashion Show, then walk across the parking lot for a CPK lunch.  
[www.cpk.com](http://www.cpk.com)

**Gather friends and friends.**  
Bring your coupon. Enjoy.  
March 2, 2017  
11am – 10pm



Additional coupons available on our website  
[www.westchestermhg.org](http://www.westchestermhg.org)

### TALBOTS FASHION SHOW Thursday, March 2

The Guild will host a Fashion Show Fundraiser at Talbots Store located at 3200 North Sepulveda Boulevard, Manhattan Beach on **March 2, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.** Come see the latest Spring fashions and also have a chance to win Talbots gift cards. Light refreshments will be served. The price is **\$15.00** and checks should be made to the Westchester Mental Health Guild. Proceeds from this event will be given to AMCS. Please invite your friends. Seating is limited. Contact Marlene Obrietan at (310) 645-9698 for reservations.

[www.talbots.com](http://www.talbots.com)

## Join What? Are You Kidding?

No, we are not kidding! We strongly encourage you to join the Westchester Mental Health Guild. Why? Because it helps provide community support to the important work of the Airport Marina Counseling Service. The annual dues of \$25 for an individual member go toward our fundraising efforts on behalf of AMCS.

There is no obligation to attend meetings or other functions or to volunteer for various activities. But you will learn about special events like trips to local places of interest, fashion shows, fundraising activities, community resources, and service opportunities. Making new friends as you become involved is invaluable.

The opportunity to serve on the Board of WMHG and help provide direction to our activities is open to those interested members of the Guild.

Please use the enclosed envelope to return your dues for 2017. **Thank you for your generous support.**



## Tour and Reception Memories...



# CALENDAR

## 2017 Events at a Glance

**Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
California Pizza Kitchen

**Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Talbots Fashion Show

**Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
AMCS *Spring into Well*  
*Being* Celebration

**Wednesday, April 5**  
Annual Meeting  
Covenant Presbyterian  
Church

**Sunday, November 5**  
35<sup>th</sup> Annual WMHG  
Holiday Home Tour



Thank you Guided Cage volunteers

**check [www.westchestermhg.org](http://www.westchestermhg.org) for updates**



Westchester  
Mental Health Guild

c/o Airport Marina  
Counseling Service  
7891 La Tijera Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

\* \* \*

**Westchester  
Mental Health Guild**  
and Airport Marina  
Counseling Service



Visit our website  
[www.westchestermhg.org](http://www.westchestermhg.org)

Contact Us  
[info@westchestermhg.org](mailto:info@westchestermhg.org)

## Tributes

**Remember to purchase Tribute Cards** to honor family and friends, acknowledge birthdays, anniversaries, special occasions, accomplishments, or in memory of someone dear. **Tribute Forms** are available on our website.

## Thank You

WMHG wishes its members, families, friends, supporters, sponsors, volunteers, and benefactors a most blessed and Happy New Year 2017. We look forward to our 55th year of working together in support of AMCS.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017

❄️ **Join Us** ❄️

“The best way  
to find yourself  
is to lose yourself  
in the service  
of others.”

Mahatma Gandhi

## Recruit a Friend



<https://www.facebook.com/westchestermentalhealthguild>

Westchester Mental Health Guild  
c/o AMCS  
7891 La Tijera Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90045

