

# the OAK COTTAGE *of santa barbara* NEWS

April 2015

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*there is  
no greater  
love.*



## In the News...

### SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

When I started my trek from New Jersey to California in January to join Oak Cottage, the temperatures were in the low twenties. The trees were bare, and snow had appeared about a half dozen times, only to disappear either by rain and rising temps. The East, unlike California, does not have a year-round real estate market. We pray, pray, pray for sunny weather in Spring to begin enjoying the outside again, to revive our gardens, start Spring sports, and in my case, put our house on the market.

As I settled into the position here at The Oak Cottage of Santa Barbara, my dear (ever suffering) wife Kimberlee was left to empty our family home of a 60 year accumulation of "Stuff". I think you know what I mean. All the stuff we acquire while raising kids (eventually left to molder in archaeological strata in the basement or the garage.) Well at my place, it was not only our kids' stuff... it was also my brothers and sisters stuff, and deep underneath, my parents stuff. We are one of those rare families who had the great good luck of passing the family home from one generation to another (and another).

I can report at this time some of the warm weather of Spring (temps in the 50's) has arrived, and **our house is officially on The Market!!** We are happy, but it is a bittersweet

experience also. This house built by my father, valiantly standing the test of time, additions and remodels over its **60-year history** - will now leave my family's estate. Originally part of a larger

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## In the News... (Cont. from front cover)

family farm, my father bought two acres from his father's original farm, christening the parcel "Charlie's Area". It served as a playground for myself and 5 other siblings, later accommodating annual Church picnics, Carpenters' Union picnics, bowling League picnics and birthday parties. You name it, we hosted it. An annual Pig Roast at Charlie's continued on for 24 years with crowds of 300 in attendance until my Dad decided to call it quits in 2004.

My Dad built this house with his own two hands over many years, sometime laying down a course of cement block as he could afford it. His talent and attention to quality details still remain engrained in every piece of finish carpentry and tile surround. It was a labor of love, moving from the much smaller house next door which he built when he married my Mom. Mom considered it quite an improvement over the original 2 Bedroom 1 Bath 800 sq. foot home. She now was the chatelaine of a 5 Bedroom, 3 Bath 3,000 sq ft. mansion, or was so it was considered back in the day. Who would have guessed that the home that Dad built would house a family of seven, and would serve as our home based for over sixty years.

Digging through the layers of accumulated history as we prepared the home for a new family, has been thought provoking in the extreme. Not only do I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my wife who has agreed to spearhead much of the effort while I while away in beautiful Santa Barbara, it also brings to mind the similarity of experiences many families go through when preparing their parents for a move to residential care, dismantling the home base, and distributing those bits of uncovered history and treasures amongst the remaining children. It is a life-changing milestone. In the last months before I came here, spending nights and weekends packing, selling and giving away much of our accumulation of family detritus, I have had the great privilege of revisiting well-

worn stories and accomplishments, as well as the ups and downs of our family's history. I have also learned that it is never too late to distribute and share the wealth of that past with my siblings, wife and children, and to create new memories that will sustain us in years to come. **I hope to make many more memories in Santa Barbara, and in my work at Oak Cottage.** I know that my Dad would be proud of the fact that we lived in the house Charlie built for over half a century. He would also like to know that once it had served its use for us, it would be passed on to another family to become their safe haven.

We hope to be that safe haven for your family as you plan your parent's next steps in residential care. **I can promise that we will make every effort to get to know you as people, learn those stories you would share, and weave them into the fabric of our community.** We know those next steps will be very thought-provoking, sometimes hard, and always profound. We count ourselves honored to share some part of that journey with you.

Happy Spring,

**Joe Franken**  
*Executive Director*





In the News...

**OAK COTTAGE GRAND OPENING!**

## *Grand Opening*

Oak Cottage held its **Grand Opening on March 28!** We had a chance to welcome interested families, colleagues from the local senior community, and friends who have supported us on the path to realizing our new project. We were lucky for a temperate breezy Santa Barbara afternoon that allowed the event to stretch into the early evening hours.



The Maldonado's commissioned three live musical performances for the event, including a bagpiper, a harpist and a sitar trio. There was also a roaming magician to catch guests off guard with a card trick, disappearing coins, and other feats of the unimaginable.



We had a chance to showcase our dining team's talents, including a hand-tossed paella station on the front veranda, platters of Spanish tapas in the living room, and glasses of aguas frescas handmade in our kitchen. Our staff was also

present and available to meet with folks and share a little bit about our long-term vision for Oak Cottage.

We receive many good wishes and some wonderful suggestions for collaborative programming opportunities with other organizations in the community. We plan to share these programs with our families and neighbors in the coming months as we set the tone for what we hope is a very special type of home. We seek to be a safe haven for our residents, an empowering and kinetic laboratory for living life to its fullest, and a resource our family members can count on as they navigate the caregiver path.

Count on this being the first of many celebrations we plan on hosting. We will have **monthly barbecues, smoothie "lunch" bars** using



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## In the News... (Cont. from page 3)

produce from our weekly Farmer's Market trip with residents, and opportunities to experience musical and artistic performances.

### Cloud 9



Our thanks for all the support we have received to date. Please stop by and grab a bag of our signature dark chocolate and coconut cookies, aptly named the **Cloud 9**.

**Julie McGeever**  
*Manager*



## Oak Cottage Blessings...

Recently, The Oak Cottage of Santa Barbara Memory Care Community **welcomed religious leaders** from the Santa Barbara area to **cast a blessing** on our new community, our staff and our future residents.

Key to our philosophy of care is an intentional focus on being open and supportive of every denomination and spiritual approach to life. In that we want our residents, families and our neighborhood to feel that inclusiveness, we felt that a blessing would start our work off on the right note.



Claire O'Dell, our Activities Director extended an invitation to religious leaders

from a variety of faiths to join our blessing. Even in the midst of the busy Easter and Passover season, a number of them graciously agreed to come and participate. Among those present were **Pastor Jim Schmidt (Ret.) from Emanuel Lutheran Church, Deacon David Munoz from Our Lady of Sorrows, Reverend Julia Hamilton from the Unitarian Church of Santa Barbara and Reverend Mark Richardson from First United Methodist Church.** All shared their supportive intentions and kind words with our facility. As you can

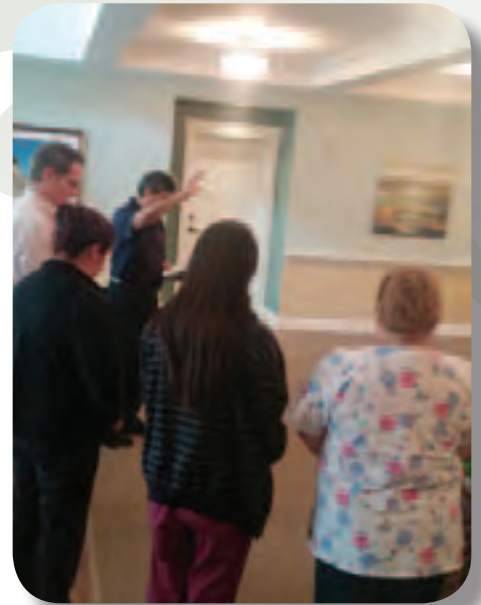
see from the snapshots included with this article, it was a wonderful visit, filled with anecdotes, blessings of holy water upon our facility and staff, and heartfelt prayers that our work going forward would be meaningful and help fill the growing need for more empowering memory care programs.



Understanding that we are facing an epidemic of over 5 million persons in the United States struggling with Alzheimer's and other dementias, Oak Cottage has embraced a Dementia Capable Care plan which focuses on those activities and skills our residents can accomplish, rather than those tasks they cannot no longer perform by themselves. We are also a Certified Music and Memory Community, engaging in an interactive program with residents and their families that uses music as a transformative therapy to improve awareness, instill peace, and spur memories.

We greatly appreciate the guidance of our neighbors Pastor Schmidt, Deacon Munoz, Reverend Hamilton and Reverend Richardson as we take our first steps in providing Santa Barbara with the most personalized attention in memory care and hospice services that we possibly can.

**Claire O'Dell**  
**Activities Director**





## Kitchen Corner...

### Greetings!

In honor of Earth Day we invite you to join us for healthy green smoothies and freshly extracted organic juices emphasizing ingredients that can improve mental clarity, brain function, promote wellness and memory. **Please join us on, Wed., April 29th from 2pm to 3pm to try our afternoon smoothie bar!**



The combinations of brain-boosting foods that can be combined into a delicious smoothie are endless!



**Blueberries:** Blueberries are bursting with antioxidants that neutralize free radicals that can damage brain cells. Blueberries also have flavonoids that improve learning and memory and can even improve communication.

**Bananas:** In addition to making our smoothie creamy, bananas are also high in antioxidants. They also contain serotonin which improves memory and learning. Bananas also contain a high amount of dopamine which can boost attention and memory.



**Hemp Seeds:** Hemp seeds contain essential fatty acids which are vital for brain health. Other compounds in this super seed promote memory and learning.

**Apples:** Apple juice provides the loss of acetylcholine which helps improve memory and brain health.

**Cocoa:** Cocoa is one of the richest sources antioxidants on the planet and have been shown to increase blood flow to the brain.

**Leafy Greens:** Kale and Spinach provide plenty of B6 and B12 vitamins which help fight Alzheimer's.

### Featured Smoothie

Island Breeze: Spinach, Blueberries, Banana, Coconut Water and Hemp Seeds

**Juicing:** Juicing proponents say that juicing can maximize nutrient intake, fight disease, strengthen cellular defense against free radicals, alleviate pain, encourage weight-loss and decrease the need for medications.

**The Green Beauty:** Spinach, Romaine, Celery, Kale, Cucumber, Apple & Ginger

I'd like to introduce our **breakfast and lunch cook, Luis Ramirez**. Luis has worked in a facility similar to our for many years. He felt it was time for a change and Oak Cottage was his first stop. Luis creates beautiful omelets, stunning salads and delicious Mexican dishes, all with a warm smile and friendly greeting.



### Chef Nicole Dining Services Manager



**Resident, Richard Knaub**, and two of our caregivers **Deyzshunal Blair** on the left and **Gabriela Reyna** on the right at the Farmer's Market on Tuesday, April 14th. Richard loved all of the colors and scents and ended up purchasing strawberries, blackberries and blueberries for himself!

## Health News...

We will be going down to the ocean these coming weeks to attempt to **catch some Grunions!** Vivian and I were watching a food show and they showed these large sardine shaped fish that come out of the ocean and onto the shore on high tide to mate and lay their eggs around the full or new moon cycles.



Grunion are known for their unusual mating ritual wherein at very high tides, the females come up on to sandy beaches where they dig their tails into the sand to lay their

eggs. The male then wraps himself around the female to deposit his sperm and for the next 10 days the grunion eggs remain hidden in the sand. At the next set of high tides, the eggs hatch and the young grunion are washed out to sea. We have calculated it and compared moon cycles and this weekend we plan on going out to look at them and hopefully catch some.

On the cooking show they showed the Grunions fried and the television host said they were delicious. I would be willing to try it. I have attached pictures I found online of the Grunions, but I will update you guys on it when we actually get out there and get some. I am hoping hopeful thinking will help us catch them. As some people have said it is difficult to catch them because they don't like noise or light.

**Matei Geanta**  
*Wellness Director*

## Facility News...

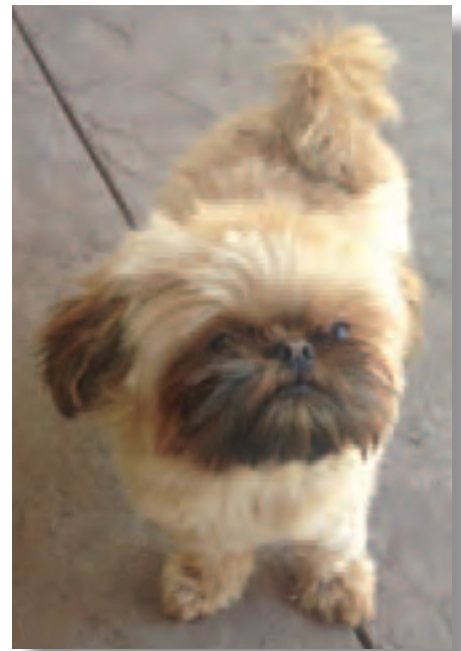
### **Stanley the Imperial Shih Tzu!**

The look on people's faces when a dog comes running up to greet them is priceless. Feelings of compassion and happiness are palpable when a dog rubs his face on you looking to be picked up and loved. Young and old, many people are



enthralled with the mere presence of animals, and especially in assisted living settings. They can bring back childhood memories of their own pets, or just help put a smile in their face. Periodically there will be a few regular pups that

will come to Oak Cottage and make an appearance, one of which is Stanley- the Imperial Shih Tzu. He is on permanent loan from my roommate as needed. He weighs less than 10 pounds (depending on his haircut) and loves to snuggle up in your lap. He is a very curious little guy and loves play with his Santa Clause doll. Unlike some dogs, his brown and black coat is unique in that it is hypoallergenic and soft as can velvet. He is the gentlest dog who only wants to do is be loved and love others. **So when you see him, please come and say hi.**





## Facility News... (Cont. from page 7)

Please join me in **welcoming Juanita Gonzales to the Oak Cottage team as our housekeeper.**

Juanita was born and raised in Mexico and moved to California 29 years ago. Her 5 children; Mari, Frank, Rodolfo, Ernesto and Jesus live here in Santa

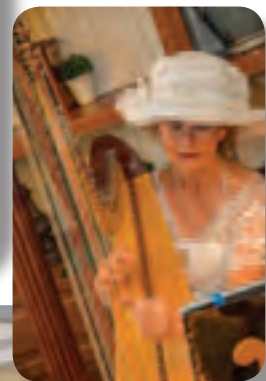
Barbara, as well as her 5 grandchildren.

On her free time Juanita likes to dance to Mexican music. Her favorite holiday is Christmas because she gets to see most of her family. When she goes out she likes to go to Los Agaves and eat fish which is her favorite food. She speaks both English

and Spanish, and likes the color blue. Juanita is exceptionally proficient at crossword puzzles and is very friendly, **so if you see her please take a minute to stop and say hi.**

**Philippe de L'Arbre**  
*Facilities Manager*

## MORE OAK COTTAGE GRAND OPENING!!





## Contact

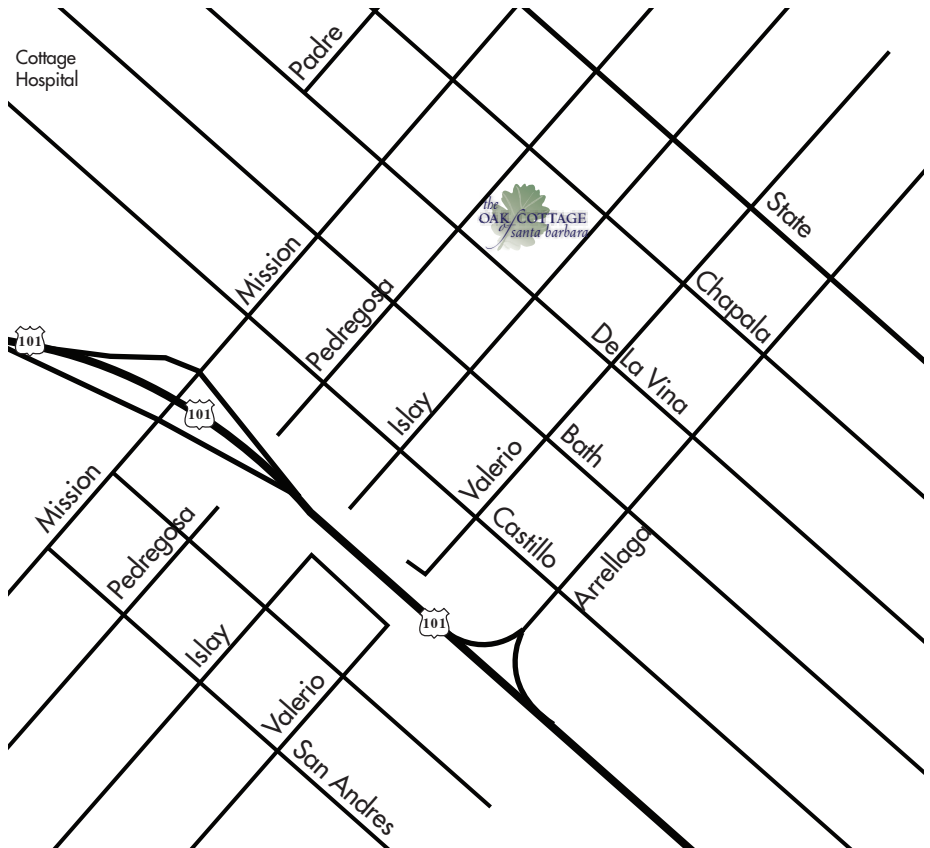


*the*  
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*of santa barbara*

**Joe Franken**  
Executive Director

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