



ADULT DAY PROGRAM AND COUNSELING CENTER | WINTER/SPRING 2016



A Story of Love and Resilience

Melissa and her Nana, Dottie, were always very close; Dottie was like a second mother to her.

The oldest of three siblings, it was understood that Melissa would be the one to take care of their grandmother as she got older, a challenge from the beginning illustrated by a story that Melissa recounts. When, in order to convince a very feisty Dottie at age 87 to stop driving, she needed to remove her Nana's car battery.

While Melissa's story might sound like the typical challenges you would

anticipate if you were needed to care for a loved one with dementia, what makes her story unique is that Melissa is only 33 years old. In addition to her age, Melissa's increased responsibilities weren't easy given her entire family (including Dottie) lived in Boston and she lived in Santa Monica.

When it became clear that Dottie could no longer live alone, Melissa and her fiancé (now her husband) Louis, moved Dottie to Los Angeles to share their one bedroom apartment.

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CELEBRATING OVER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

COMING SOON:
OPICA's 11th Annual
Forget-Me-Not Luncheon
Thursday, June 16, 2016

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of OPICA,

OPICA is thriving. In the current fiscal year we have received generous grants from the Archstone Foundation, the Mark Taper Foundation, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation. Our participation in seminars funded by the Annenberg and Gogian Foundations has strengthened our leadership. And thanks to you, we surpassed the goals of our 2015 year-end fundraising appeal.

Our success has been affirmed by requests from two distinguished health and social services organizations that we consider starting OPICA programs in their communities. "OPICA is the gold standard of adult day care," says the CEO of one of these organizations. We are honored by this recognition.

But nothing has honored us more than being named a beneficiary in the estate of one of our members. The knowledge that this member and her family so appreciate the care and support they receive at OPICA that they are putting OPICA in their will fills us with gratitude and makes us strive ever harder in the work we do.

As more OPICA families, friends, and Board Members choose to remember OPICA through a planned gift, it is fitting that OPICA create a Legacy Society. A Legacy Society, with special events and recognition in our publications, will allow us to honor now those who in a special way are guaranteeing our future. By their example, members of the Legacy Society will inspire others to consider bequests to OPICA, and so enhance the generosity of their gift.

In the days ahead, look for the creation of OPICA's Legacy Society. If you have already included OPICA in your estate planning, please let us know so that we can include you among our inaugural members. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Bomba".

Mary Bomba

COVER MASTHEAD is the tiled wall at the entrance of OPICA, designed by Abby Fels.

COVER PHOTO: OPICA member Dottie with her granddaughter Melissa.

IN MEMORY: One of the things that makes OPICA such a special place is the wonderful people who pass through its doors. Photos of members in these pages were selected to reflect the essence of their spirit and the joy they experience while here. We remember with love those who are no longer with us since their photo was taken.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Families & Friends:

In March OPICA Board Chair Mary Bomba and I will graduate from Alchemy+, the second phase of the Annenberg Alchemy Leadership Program. The Alchemy+ Leadership Seminar Series is designed for highly motivated organizations that want to enhance organizational skills and learn how to improve organizational management in order to be more effective in achieving growth and sustainability. The program requires the full participation of both the Executive Director and Board Chair in attendance and program assignments. Toolkits are included that provide activities to share with the entire board to inspire discussion, creative thinking and problem solving. The program is provided at no charge to participating organizations.



In this series, we have worked on the following:

1. Building Your Case for Support: Communicating Your Financial Story.

Liquid unrestricted net assets are essential for sustainability. Organizations should have liquid assets to cover 12 months of operations. OPICA currently has six months and is working toward building the assets to cover a full 12 months.

2. Board Recruitment and Development.

How does the composition and participation of the board impact the fundraising, both current and in the future, and its ability to overcome any financial challenges?

3. How to Implement a Legacy Program

4. Telling Your Story: Tell a personal story; provide data about the value of the program; provide a clear call to action.

The close of the program offers an opportunity for a capacity building grant. OPICA has requested funding to help start a part-time social media staff member who will assist in translating the story telling into a case for support on social media.

OPICA also received funding from the John Gogian Family Foundation for coaching and strategic planning as a capacity building opportunity.

The future holds promising opportunities for OPICA Adult Day Program & Counseling Center. We are grateful for your past and continued support as we strive to provide comprehensive supportive services to families struggling with dementia. Your support makes our work possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Michlovich".

Mary Michlovich

- OPICA's nurturing and caring environment provides respite and peace of mind for caregivers of adults with memory loss.
- OPICA helps guide families with a loved one challenged by memory loss along their unique journeys, reduces their stress and gives them hope.
- OPICA enables members to experience an overall improved quality of life and to maintain dignity, meaning, a sense of self-worth and to avoid isolation.

Support OPICA Today and Into the Future

There are many different ways to support OPICA, but a legacy gift will allow future generations of seniors to receive the same exceptional care provided to our members today. When you designate OPICA as a beneficiary of your estate, your enduring legacy honors yourself and your family. Your single action has the power to change lives.

For more information about Planned Giving, contact Stacey Barrett (310) 478-0226 or Stacey@opica.org.



SAVE THE DATE – Opica’s 11th Annual Forget-Me-Not Luncheon

Honoring Susan Disney Lord

OPICA is privileged to honor Susan Disney Lord, a leader in the fight against Alzheimer's. Personally touched by the disease as a caregiver for her mother, Patricia Disney, who died from Alzheimer's at the age of 77, Susan became an advocate for and an active member of Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles. In this role, she is helping patients and families cope with a disease that claims thousands of lives each year.

Susan was a vocal advocate for Senate Bill 613 which adopted physician guidelines for Alzheimer's disease management, improving services to the 590,000 Californians living with the disease today by offering effective chronic disease management. She and her family established the Disney Family Fund to provide support, education and connections for people impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia. As Executive Producer for the

acclaimed documentary *Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me*, Susan brought more awareness of a devastating disease for which there is no cure.



"From my own experience and during my time on the board of the Alzheimer's Association, I know that coping with the disease without an effective care management plan often means a life filled with crisis, stress, financial adversity and constant unknowns. It's a terrible disease to suffer, and an almost unbearable hardship on the caregivers, both emotionally and financially." – Susan Disney Lord

For more information and/or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Stacey Barrett at (310) 478-0226 or stacey@opica.org.

MEET STAFF MEMBER EMILY CARVILL



Emily Carvill came to OPICA as a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) trainee 10 years ago – fell in love and we are grateful that she's never left. Emily wears "two hats" at OPICA – as the Program Supervisor for the Adult Day Program, she creates a unique experience for each participant, assembling a menu of

activities that meet the needs of each member and the group as a whole. "I'm continually learning what people like to do so we can provide opportunities for each member to participate as much as possible. I want to give members a choice by offering activities they want to do while at the same time introducing them to new experiences they may benefit from." When asked what her greatest challenge is, she responds, "on any given day, participants represent many different levels of cognitive impairment. It's rewarding when we succeed in balancing activities to engage everyone."

As Assistant Director of Counseling, and now a licensed MFT, Emily is personally involved in every aspect of OPICA services. She welcomes new clients and assesses which service best suits their needs, whether it's individual counseling, joining a support group, participating in OPICA's Brain Train for early Memory loss, or attending the Adult Day program.

Emily sees every member of OPICA for whom they are today, maybe a different version of who they were, but

nothing missing, just different, and still valid. For Emily, "coming to work is my greatest satisfaction. I enjoy what I'm doing and grateful to be able to contribute in creating this sweet community, and at the end of the day knowing I did my part in improving their [OPICA members] quality of life and making their journey a little easier."

In Appreciation of Foundations and Organizations for their Support

With great appreciation, we thank the following Foundations for their recognition of and support for the valuable work that OPICA does, awarding the following grants*:

The Archstone Foundation	\$50,000
Lon V. Smith Foundation	\$15,000
May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust	\$50,000
Ralph M. Parsons Foundation	\$50,000
S. Mark Taper Foundation	\$50,000
UCLA's Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Program	\$30,000
Weingart Foundation	\$75,000

*Between July 1 – December 31, 2015

From Memory to Imagination

Storytelling is one of the most ancient forms of communication — it is how we learn about the world. It turns out that for people with dementia, storytelling can be therapeutic. It can give people who don't communicate well an alternative way to connect, using an activity that sparks memories, encourages verbalization and promotes self-esteem among those with cognitive impairment.

Based on the national TimeSlips program, Emily Carvill, Assistant Director of OPICA's Counseling Center uses the

art of storytelling to engage and build community through an activity that provides hope through meaningful communication and connection.

Emily begins with a photo and asks

participants to imagine what's going on — not to try to remember anything, but to make up a story, replacing the pressure to remember with the freedom to imagine. Open-ended questions are employed, such as: "What should we call the person?" "Where are they going?" "What could this

"It turns out that for people with dementia, storytelling can be therapeutic. It can give people who don't communicate well an alternative way to communicate."



Storytelling group, seated from left to right: Charles, Vicki and Saundra. Standing from left to right: Tom (intern), Lou, Mathilda, Ron, Morey and Leia (intern)

be?" "What is going on here?" At other times more direct questions are used to help members focus and crystallize their thoughts. Expanding the rules for storytelling makes more room for imagination. As you can see in our selected story below from a recent storytelling session, creative storytelling does not have to have a beginning, middle and end, nor does it have to make sense.

The Animals Can be Your Friend If You Wear a Zoot Suit

A recent creation from the storytelling group.

The lion's name is Cecil Lionel. The guy's name is Sam the Man. He is from San Juan. They are in Kenya, Africa. They met at the zoo. The man was in the cage and the lion came to visit him. The man got out of his cage by cutting all the bars on his cage with a saw and escaped in broad daylight. After Sam got out, he learned that Cecil Lionel had the key the whole time.

The zoo is a human zoo. Lions, zebras, giraffes and monkeys all take care of the humans in the cages. The lion is also a weather man, but he's lying about the weather. He does weather forecasts for all the animals. He also does weddings.

Cecil Lionel is married. His wife Gwendolyn is at home taking care of the cubs, Toby, Adolf and Benjamin. Currently, the lion is taking the person to meet his family. They also have a cousin named Fred who is half lion, half human. He goes to school in the human zoo and studies zoology.

Sam the Man is wearing a zoot-suit to look cute. He wore the suit today because he knew he would be meeting the lion's family. The lion has lots of friends. Sam

didn't used to have lots of friends but slowly he has made more friends. He currently has 3 1/2 friends. He only has 1/2 a friend because a lion ate the other half.

Up until this point only 3 humans have escaped the zoo.

They are all friends with each other. In fact, all of them are related. The zoo is less like a zoo and more like Cincinnati. They are very smart in Cincinnati and one big happy family.

There are still humans in the zoo but the animals are voting to release them all. Even though the humans were previously in cages, the humans take care of the animals once they are released. In fact, they all take care of each other.

And they all lived happily ever after....



Inspirational photo

Like Father, Like Son

In the early 1960's when upper middle class homeowners openly expressed concern about selling to black families, Dan Giesberg's parents, Dick and Middie, weren't afraid to speak out against this unacceptable intolerance. They fought back with the creation of the Westside Fair Housing Council, determined to make a difference in their community and neighborhood. Growing up, Dan absorbed the activism of his parents whether it was the civil rights movement, Soviet Jewry or the plight of Ethiopian Jews. So it was only natural that as an adult he would embrace the responsibility to speak out against injustice and advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable.

In the late 70's Dick was instrumental in the development of OPICA, initially established to provide information and referrals to help older adults access the limited resources that were available at that time. OPICA grew to be a renowned adult day program, providing structure, stimulating activities and opportunities for

engagement for adults coping with memory loss. Dan always knew how important OPICA was to his dad but it was only later when his mom, Middie was diagnosed with dementia that he would truly appreciate and take comfort in the support that OPICA brought to his entire family.

Over the years, Dan and his wife, Carol Lifland, have been loyal supporters of OPICA, and today, OPICA couldn't be more proud that Dan has joined our Board of Directors.

Dan recalls, "When [board member] Joyce Leanse asked me to join the board and continue my dad's legacy, I couldn't say no!"



Dan Giesberg with his dad, Dick, recipient of OPICA's 2014 Founders' award

You're Never Too Old to Be an Artist

Students attending a small school in Scotland that had no budget for art established their own art studio. Known as Room 13, the concept has been adapted to a wide variety of educational environments around the world, based on

the basic premise that an artist is someone who creates something that is an expression of oneself. OPICA art therapist and registered Marriage and Family Therapy intern, Jessica Edelstein,



initiated an adapted version of Room 13 for OPICA – known by members as the "Art Lounge".

Open every Thursday afternoon, OPICA's Art Lounge emphasizes the freedom to be creative and welcoming to everyone. The camaraderie gives everyone the opportunity to learn from each other and much needed socialization. Jessica describes the Art Lounge as a special place that's, "less about the art product and more about stimulating the creative process." The act of "creating" reduces the stress to find the right words and provides an avenue for non-verbal communication. For some who join the Art Lounge, watching and seeing is also a form of participation.

As of now, OPICA has the only "Room 13" that is for

older adults, and even more uniquely, adults with dementia. What was started by a small group of students denied an art program who asked an important question, how old do you have to be to be an artist? – Jessica posed the question, how young do you have to be to be an artist? – And put OPICA on the map.

A Story of Love and Resilience

continued from page 1

Eventually Melissa would return to Boston to pack up and sell her Nana's house while Louis packed up their apartment and found a two bedroom home for the three of them. As Dottie's dementia progressed and her needs increased, Melissa could no longer work. Bringing her Nana to OPICA two days a week became her lifeboat. While attending OPICA presents financial challenges, it's become essential; Dottie looks forward to coming to OPICA and Melissa enjoys having time for herself.

At an age when most young women would be building a career or starting a family, Melissa is Dottie's world. And yet when talking to her, there is no resentment or regrets. She is grateful that she can be here for her Nana and grateful for OPICA to help them on their journey.

TRIBUTES AND MEMORIALS

OPICA Tribute Cards honor, commemorate, and recognize life's most important events with a unique message of care and compassion. We express appreciation to the individuals listed below who contributed to OPICA in the form of a tribute between July 1-December 31, 2015.

IN CELEBRATION OF

Rafa Araut's 60th Birthday
Jennifer Loew & Andy Davis

Bea's Birthday
Marilyn Athey

Sandy & Grace Blavin's Birthday
Sam & Dorothy Essick

Bill Davidson's Birthday
Ursula Levi
Nancy Levinson

Bill Ison's 90th Birthday
Benjamin & Roberta Allen
Phyllis Bellano

Tim Leanse's Birthday
Joyce Leanse

Alan & Barbara Levy's Wedding Anniversary
Alan & Barbara Levy

Sue Pomerantz's Birthday
Ishara Bailis
Robert & Mary Baker
Mary Bomba
Bunni Dybnis
Barbara Hament &
Sheila Moore
Marty Stevens-Heebner
Jae Wu

IN HONOR OF

Mary Baker
Mary Ruth Brown
Dan & Teresa Murphy

Phyllis Bellano
Dori Katz & Andy Gold
Ann Weinman

Marilyn Brown
Joyce Leanse

Bill Davidson
Irene Weinrot

Tom Dunsmuir
Marjorie Cole

Bunni Dybnis

Luis & Lee Lainer
Tobyann Mandel

Dan Giesberg

Marty & Susi Goldberg

Shirley Kleiman

Kenneth & Wendy Ruby

Joyce Leanse

Alvin & Gloria Lanfeld
Tom & Barbara Leanse

Sandy Savett

Judge Thomas &

Jessica Sipkins
Bert Woodruff
& Barbara Bilson

Marilyn Levin

Gail Natzler

Barbara Levy

Martha Felton

Georgi Marshall

Christina Davidson
Mimi Kaufman

Betty Matsumoto

David & JoAnn Fellner

Keith McCoy

Jean Loew

Michlovich Thespians:

Mary, Carmen, Katherine & Mary Ann

Robert & Mary Baker
Dr. Gail Greendale
& Dr. David Reuben

Beverly & Al Mutchnick's 60th Anniversary

Lucille Polachek

OPICA

Connie Martinson

Tom Sandersier

Cindy Tress

Estelle Schneiderman

Paul Lapidus
& Linda Sue Marshall

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Marilyn Athey

June Hillman
Shirley A. Levine

Beth Benson

Rita Loew

Maynard Center

Ruth Center

Jack Elinson

Estelle Elinson

Mili Fels

Abby & Sarah Fels

William Fenning

Rita Loew

Michael Garris

Joanne Garris
Shirley Matilla

Richard Giesberg

Lanie Bernhard
Larry & Mary Michlovich

Tom & Karen Wagener

Richard & Middie

Giesberg
Janet Halbert
Al Harutunian

Aron Goldberg

Marlene Rotblatt

Georgine Hyde

Leonard & Gail Kaplan

Mary Jordon

Frances Goodman

Eve, Ray & Mariane

Karov's Mother

Marilyn Levin

Jay & David Leanse

Judge Thomas
& Jessica Sipkins

Mary Lyday

Robin Clooney

Ester Mazewski

Gail Holtzman

Beloved Mother of the Mousavi Family

Willard & Deloris Horwich

Dr. J.A. Nessim

Steven & Veronica Nessim

Barry Norton

Rosalie Gotz

Lou Reisman

Larry & Mary Michlovich

Joanie Reisman

Nancy Ross

Susan Gonsalves

Dr. Paul Rudnick

Howard & Matilda Rubin

Fay Schweibish

Karen Schweibish

Evelyn Shipp

Brenda Weinstock

Lee Miller & Jimmy Simon

Janet Miller

Lorraine Stein

Sr. Kathy Stein, CSJ

A complete list of donors for the fiscal year 2015/2016 will be included in the Summer/Fall newsletter.



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OPICA

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AND COUNSELING CENTER
310-478-0226
www.opica.org

Adult Day Program Hours:

9:00a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Monday – Friday

Counseling Center Hours:

8:30a.m. – 7:00p.m.
Monday – Friday

OPTIMISTIC PEOPLE IN A CARING ATMOSPHERE

You Can Judge *This Book* by its Cover

Book clubs have been a popular activity for some time now, but how many of us can boast that we've been in a book club with consistent membership for sixteen years? The Ladies of the Sacred Page (LOTSP) founded by OPICA's board member Teresa Riddle began meeting in June 2000 and today, ten of the thirteen members are from the original group.

In addition to Teresa and her sister Alice, whose mother lived with Alzheimer's for fourteen years, three other book club members had dementia in their family – a husband, father and grandmother. Personally moved by the stories of OPICA members and their families, LOTSP were inspired to donate their special "Let's do Something Fun" fund to OPICA in honor of their good friend Teresa. With over \$3,000

collected, the LOTSP were proud to present a new Sonos audio system to OPICA.

A special thank you to Lana Brody, Beverly Clarkson, Kathy Gaydowski, Sharon Giglio, Karen Gonzalez, Alice Parrish, Teresa Riddle, Francis Saito, Charlotte Schwartz, Phyllis Siegel, Gail Spear, Brenda Winter and Fari Yashar. Every day OPICA staff is discovering new ways to enhance experiences for Members with the new audio system, from early morning warm-up to the end of the day sing-a-long session.



Teresa Riddle