



Contact: Jordan Killebrew

Communications Manager, Santa Barbara Foundation

Jkillebrew@sbfoundation.org; 805-963-1873

2018 Celebrate Philanthropy Recipients Honored for Voluntarism

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SANTA MARIA, CA – The Santa Barbara Foundation and The Santa Maria Times hosted the 2018 Celebrate Philanthropy luncheon on November 1 at the Santa Maria Country Club honoring Amy Curti, Greg and Donna France, and Marylinn Green for their voluntarism, which President and CEO Ron Gallo highlighted in his opening remarks.

“Voluntarism is so much more than giving back,” Gallo said. “It’s about getting out and about. It’s about engagement with one’s community; with one’s neighbors, with those who look like us and those who don’t, with those who are like minded and far more importantly, with those who hold a different point of view.”

These qualities are practiced by each of this year’s honorees in his or her own unique way. The first honoree recognized was Amy Curti, a Santa Ynez Valley native who gracefully balances the roles of wife, mother, church elder, singer, pianist, and active community leader. She served as President of the Orcutt Children’s Art Foundation and the Santa Maria Women’s Network, sat as Chair of the Women’s Fund of Northern Santa Barbara County, and is on the Board of Directors for CALM. Curti is also an Elder at the Orcutt Presbyterian Church, which she describes as one of her most rewarding roles to date. She credits her dedication to community service to her own experience as the mother of a son with autism.

“My son’s diagnosis was both the hardest and greatest thing,” Curti said. “There was no better way to learn patience, kindness, and unconditional love. The services we received for my son made me realize that it really does take a village. I then started to look at life as a service to others.”

Next, Greg and Donna France, a couple known for their long-time work with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Maria Valley (BGCSMV), were honored. Aside from being the first couple to serve as Board Chair of the BGCSMV, Greg and Donna have several individual achievements between them. Greg sat as

Chairman of the Ventura County Agricultural Association in 2013, and has been on the Board of Directors of the California Strawberry Commission for 20 years. Donna participated in the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation program, and has served as a Board member with the Marian Regional Medical Center Foundation and California Women for Agriculture.

“After moving here in 1996, we didn’t know where our lives would lead,” Greg said. “But it became easy to be part of this community.”

Donna later added, “The core values of our company are philanthropy, sustainability and respect. We hold true to those values and will, well into the future.”

Lastly, Marylinn Green was recognized. For more than 25 years, Green has given her time to several organizations in Santa Maria Valley, including the Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA), Marian Regional Medical Center and the Santa Barbara Foundation. She served as a Board Director at the Santa Maria Valley YMCA and volunteered as an usher at the Cal Poly Performing Arts Center. Green is known for her humble demeanor and volunteer work with no desire to gain public recognition. Above all else, she simply enjoys giving her time and the connection it brings.

“It’s because of the people whom I love that I love being in this community,” Green said, “and I feel so blessed.”

To learn more about past honorees or the 2018 Celebrate Philanthropy luncheon, please contact Lynette Dunn at (805) 880-9394 or lynette@sbfoundation.org, or visit our website.

About Santa Barbara Foundation:

Founded in 1928 and now the largest grant-maker in the county, the Santa Barbara Foundation’s mission is to mobilize collective wisdom and philanthropic capital to build empathetic, inclusive and resilient communities. Over the decades, nearly every Santa Barbara County nonprofit organization and essential community project has benefited from the work of the foundation. From the funding of rest camps for undernourished children in 1934 to today’s groundbreaking work to support family caregivers, the foundation has grown and learned with the communities it serves. To learn more, please visit: SBFoundation.org.

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