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## **The Santa Barbara Foundation Welcomes New Trustees**

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The Santa Barbara Foundation is pleased to welcome Donna France and Ernesto Paredes to its Board of Trustees. Selected for their exemplary, professional leadership and volunteer service in Santa Barbara County, the new Trustees begin their first three-year term in January 2019.

“With the addition of Ms. France and Mr. Paredes,” said President and CEO Ron Gallo, “the Foundation continues its commitment to ensuring that its senior governing body is a group of highly regarded individuals who are knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate about the people and communities of the region, and represent the diversity of our county. Together with their colleague trustees, the Foundation is in good hands as it pursues the goals of its new strategic plan.”

The Foundation also takes this opportunity to thank outgoing Trustees Gretchen Milligan and Robert Skinner for providing valuable insight and important leadership throughout their nine years of service on the Santa Barbara Foundation Board.



### **Donna France**

Donna France and her husband Greg own and operate a family farming operation in the Santa Maria Valley. The Frances moved to Santa Maria more than 20 years ago, and began their agricultural business in 2004, focusing on growing conventional strawberries. Today, they farm approximately 900 acres devoted to both conventional and organic strawberries.

Donna is committed to serving those in her community in a variety of ways. She was introduced to the nonprofit sector in 1998 and



began her role as a volunteer with the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Maria Valley (BGCSMV). Her passion for volunteering with BGCSMV remains strong after two decades of service in which she has served many roles, including Chief Volunteer Officer. Donna has served as a board member for several organizations including the Marian Medical Foundation, California Women for Agriculture, and AgSafe. Donna is a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program Class 38, and is a member of the inaugural class of the WomenAg Leadership Academy.

Donna has received several other awards and recognitions, including the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Maria Valley Business of the Year, 2017 Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce Large Employer of the Year, and the 2014 Santa Barbara County Farmer of the Year. Most recently, Donna and Greg received Santa Barbara Foundation's 2018 Celebrate Philanthropy Award. Donna enjoys traveling, gardening and participating in the Sisters of the Spoon cooking class.

### **Ernesto Paredes**

Ernesto Paredes is a seasoned Executive Director well-known for his educating, supporting and mentoring of individuals and agencies in the nonprofit sector. As a Santa Barbara County native, Ernesto's primary goal is to identify and address unmet needs in our community and organize collaborating partnerships to execute solutions.



Ernesto is currently the Executive Director of Easy Lift Transportation, where he is entering his twenty-fifth year. Majoring in Gerontology at the University of Southern California, he discovered his love for working with and serving those experiencing the aging process. Ernesto has served on numerous nonprofit boards and committees, including Hospice of Santa Barbara, Family Service Agency, Special Olympics of Santa Barbara and Hillside House. Currently, he serves on the Cottage Heath Board of Directors and holds volunteer roles with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Leadership Council, Future Leaders of America, Executive Director Roundtable, and the Sansum Diabetes Research Institute.

Ernesto has been personally recognized on the local, state and national levels. Such recognitions include: The Independent's "Local Hero," Court TV's "Everyday Hero," San Marcos



Royal Pride Foundation's Community Leader Award, "Distinguished Leader" by Leadership Santa Barbara County, and most recently the Santa Barbara Foundation's "Man of the Year" award. Ernesto is also an avid triathlete, currently training for his ninth Ironman triathlon.

**About Santa Barbara Foundation:**

Founded in 1928 and now the largest community foundation in the region, 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](http://SBFoundation.org).

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