



The LITA Letter

Winter 2019

LITA currently visits older people in 25 long-term care facilities in Marin County through 6 distinct programs:

- One-to-One Friends
- Pet Connection
- Family Connections
- Bridging Generations
- Bridging Thru Music
- Holiday Gifts

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2018 — By the Numbers

As we welcome the new year, we at LITA would like to take a moment to let you know that 2018 was a banner year for both the organization and the many lonely older adults we serve! Throughout last year, LITA's volunteers touched lives, warmed hearts and created beautiful new friendships with those who otherwise might be alone. Here are some of the years' highlights:

300 gifts were collected, wrapped and distributed to low-income residents who were likely to get very little.

120 older adults had the chance to spend time with students from **9** Marin elementary schools through our Bridging Generations program.

33 active music volunteers and **4** music classes brought joyful sounds to residents through our Bridging Thru Music program.

45 percent increase in the number of LITA volunteers in 2018. More volunteers allow us to better match people for fulfilling friendships.



102 active volunteers visited residents in Marin's facilities, while **12** volunteers worked behind the scenes, including in our office and on LITA's board.

18 4-legged volunteers (aka dogs!) joined their 2-legged owners on pet visits to residents at **14** facilities.

Lastly, **84** percent of LITA's budget came from people like you. LITA would not be ready to start its **44th** year without the commitment and financial support of our generous community.

Thank you for standing with and supporting LITA as we continue to bring joy, connection and community to older adults.

From the Executive Director, Jessica Williams

Dear LITA Friend,

On December 11th The Wall Street Journal published an article with a headline that is all too familiar to LITA staff and volunteers, *The Loneliest Generation: Americans, More Than Ever, Are Aging Alone. Loneliness undermines health and is linked to early mortality.* Mae Wygant was ahead of her time when she saw the need for more love and connection for Marin's aging population. That need has increased and thanks to the steadfast support of people like you, LITA continues to pair compassionate volunteers with people who need a friend, while expanding our programming to serve even more older adults.



In this issue, you will see a call for more music volunteers as our new Bridging Thru Music program takes off. We get many requests for music in facilities but need more volunteers. Please share our call if you know musicians who are looking for fulfilling ways to bring their musical talents to an appreciative audience.

You will also read about our new Memory Care Buddies program, launching in response to the growing number of older adults with memory loss issues. Visit our website for photos and updates on this program and others all year long.

On behalf of everyone at LITA, I wish you a healthy, happy and active 2019. We are grateful for your support and enthusiasm for LITA and look forward to continuing to serve the Marin elder community together!

LITA Set to Launch Innovative Memory Care Buddies Program

In 2019 LITA will launch a pilot for a Memory Care Buddies program, in response to the growing population of older adults with memory losses. The program will train a small group of volunteers to effectively and compassionately connect with residents whose memories are failing.

Following best practices, LITA will utilize meaningful person-centered strategies

specific to the volunteer's resident buddy per their interest(s) and capabilities. LITA staff will help the volunteer to adjust activities as the resident's dementia progresses.

The program will also include ongoing support and training for the cohort of volunteers. The training will provide the volunteers with a sense of community and collaboration along with the

experience and knowledge necessary to engage in successful relationships at the residents' levels.

We have not fully funded this pilot, so if you know a person or organization who would like to ensure this happens please connect us.



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Support LITA While You Shop



When shopping on Amazon, start from smile.amazon.com and select LITA. LITA will receive .5% of your sales total.

Bridging Generations Program Mitigates Social Isolation in Older Adults

The Bridging Generations program has been connecting youth and older adults for 10 years. By all accounts participants have greatly enjoyed it.

However in 2018 LITA was able to put some numbers to this success by compiling four years of survey data.

Besides providing an engaging and different sort of social opportunity for the residents, the program dramatically

changes how the students view older adults.

There was a 69% increase in the number of students who only use positive words to describe older adults (as opposed to neutral or negative words). These words included:

Nice, Wise Fun, Sweet, Kind, Happy, Cool & Funny.

Your ongoing support has enabled LITA to commit to this program year after year. Thank you!

Read the full study at litamarin.org/bridginggenerations



“There is so much love from the children—what a joy it is for me!”

Thank you to the LITA a la Heart Sponsors!

Thank you to all the wonderful supporters who attended, and to those of you who could not but sent well wishes and support! There were fun, local business items auctioned and we were entertained by the mellifluous voice of Noah Griffin sharing Cole Porter classics. Check out party photos on the website.

Join the 2019 partaaaay!
Mark your calendar for September 14th

It would not have been nearly as successful without the support of our Sponsors:

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Do You Know Someone Who Plays Music And Wants To Help?



LITA's Bridging Thru Music program is looking for musicians to help spread the joy of music by performing for appreciative audiences in facilities around the County.

You can be a solo musician or singer, a duo, or bring in a band or small ensemble. It's a great opportunity to share your talents, and have some fun. We will provide all support and coordination.

Email Rob at Rthomure@litamarin.org for more information.



**Taking the lonely
out of aging
since 1975**

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for residents in long-term care facilities.

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