

April 1989

Dear Fern Lodge Friends,

*The quietly reasoned and
loving approach to those
from whom you seek
benevolence carries a special
sense of joy to the giver.*

*Your righteous work,
I know, is divinely blessed.*

*With best wishes.
Sincerely,*

A donor from Carmel, CA

Our February newsletter focused on Benevolence at Fern Lodge. A donation came in response to that *Focus* along with the note reprinted on this issue's cover. The "sense of joy to the giver" referred to is a part of all philanthropy. Joy completes what we see as the "circle of giving." This *Focus* gives samples of the many expressions of joy shared by those who give to Christian Science nursing at Fern Lodge. We'll start with ourselves.

Listen to four Board members tell of the blessings of serving at Fern Lodge.

"At retirement I accepted the opportunity to be a volunteer in Science and non-Science activities for young and old. At Fern Lodge I received the unexpected blessing of an improved concept of the *nothingness of age*, and the blessing of keeping fully employed."

"When I first joined, I felt I had more to learn than give. I think that is still true now. Certainly we give of our time, prayers, support—but we receive so much more. I have come to a much clearer, fuller understanding of Christian Science nursing, valuing it as truly Love's supportive outreach. I also value the opportunity to work with those ready to pray each step of the way through whatever activity or challenge is before them. And there is the joy of seeing progress come from that prayer."

"My financial resources appeared to be drying up. After I joined a wonderful, busy Board and shared my talents freely, my financial situation changed to unexpected bounty in surprising ways."

"The first impression I had of Fern Lodge was their willingness and promptness in admitting a guest I knew. She was accepted immediately, with no reservations about her ability to pay. I was impressed by the unstinting and thorough care by the nurses and by their encouragement of complete healing. The guest returned home in 3-1/2 months. I have come to see that I have a beautiful opportunity to join with selfless individuals in demonstrating Christian Science in love for our fellow man."

Board of Directors: Betty Ames, Piedmont; Ray Bishop, Walnut Creek;
Mary Farnum, Walnut Creek; Audrey Patterson, Oakland; Judyth Prono, Livermore;
Robert Williams, San Francisco; Hazel Wilson, Hayward; Wilbur Wood, Oakland
Administrator: George Strong Director of Nursing: Patricia Alvarez

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A Non-Profit Nursing Facility for Christian Scientists Accredited by The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts.

The Development Committee Learns From You

A part of all benevolence is the gratitude of the giver for God's grace and goodness. An essential part of our Development Committee work is deep gratitude for God's tender, mothering care as expressed by Christian Science nurses and by those who donate prayer, time and money in support of nursing. Listening to Fern Lodge donors, we are touched by their sense that giving comes back to them — that the circle of giving is always complete.

For instance, volunteers may think they are coming just to give — to give away their time and energy. But immediately they get into the real work, and what happens? Their giving comes back to them!

Fern Lodge is a demanding, challenging atmosphere, and just being around people who have chosen to work mentally and spiritually in such an atmosphere stimulates us to do the same to the best of our ability.

It's a circle of giving that is going on at Fern Lodge, it's not a human spending activity in which we are depleted because

we have given our love. The true spiritual giver walks away blessed, thus the circle continues. Being at Fern Lodge gives an opportunity to see Christian Scientists entering deeply into unselfed love. It is a serious business, and helps the worker or volunteer to feel more real, more substantial, more fulfilled. It's finding out what is at the center of your life, is it self or God? It's an eye-opener, an opportunity to live for things that really matter.

Do you believe in change of heart?

Mrs. Eddy answers,

The human affections need to be changed from self to benevolence and love for God and man; changed to having but one God and loving Him supremely, and helping our brother man. This change of heart is essential to Christianity, and will have its effect physically as well as spiritually, healing disease.

(Miscellaneous Writings p. 50-51)



Prayer Is Supported

Some time ago Evelyn Spelman, our Volunteer Coordinator, started a program for Metaphysical Volunteers. These generous individuals gave spiritual encouragement to us and our activities. We asked what they got from their involvement with Fern Lodge. Here are two replies.

“I was initially impressed that you would have Metaphysical Volunteers! That really includes a larger scope than just having people come in and physically do things. Not that this is not important, but I was impressed with the request for Metaphysical Volunteers as well.

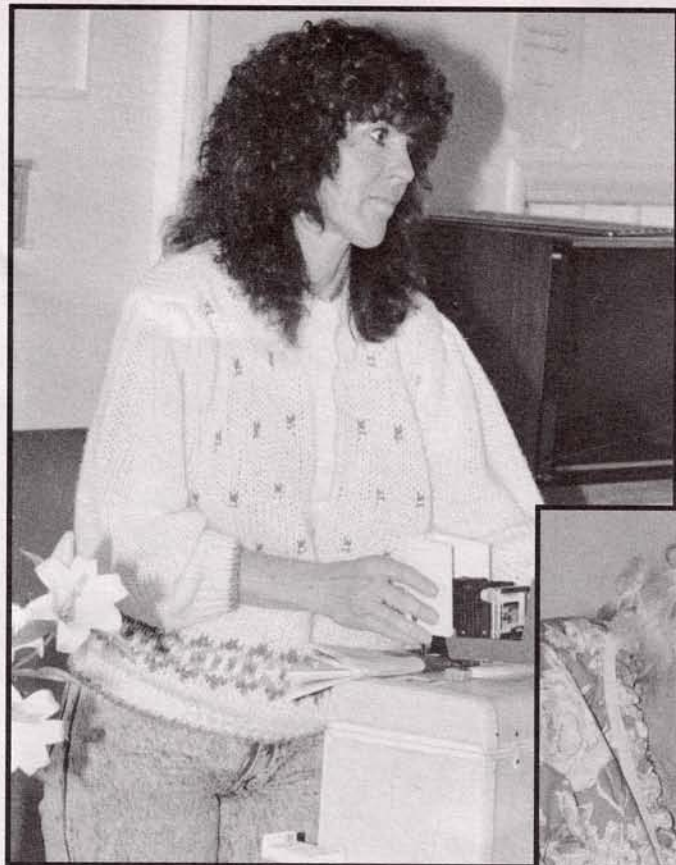
“In preparation I thought about Aaron’s rod, and how it swallowed up all the little rods of Pharaoh’s magicians. The little rods could be all the ‘isms,’ or the ‘ology’s,’ but the big rod that swallows them up is *spiritual healing*. I have been impressed with the priority and premium that Fern Lodge sets upon this one thing.

“One thing I’ve enjoyed and has kept me wanting to do things for Fern Lodge is that I am appreciated. It’s nice to do the work and feel a part of the team. Even though I have never been there, I don’t feel separated. I am a contributing part of the rod that swallows up everything else — *spiritual healing*.”

Another dedicated metaphysical volunteer began coming and giving her time at Fern Lodge. She lived in Africa for some time, and the Fern Lodge guests wanted to learn about the Christian Science churches there. She had served as Superintendent in a Sunday School of over 200 pupils. She told of her delight in getting to know these children well. And she said that the people are open and receptive, needing to use Christian Science for just every-

day living. So it’s not theory but practice. Some of the guests at Fern Lodge sent a letter to the church in Nairobi saying, “We are interested in knowing about the kinds of things you are doing. We’ll be happy to include you in our prayers.”

When asked her thoughts about volunteer work, this loving individual said, “We all think we



Sunday and Wednesday Readers Grow in Appreciation

A group of Christian Scientists comes to conduct Wednesday and Sunday services at Fern Lodge.



don't have enough time to give, but we never hear it said that we don't have enough time to receive."

Three of these readers shared their feelings with us.

"I have always had to battle self-consciousness. When I gave testimonies I sat in the back of the church. At first it seemed impossible to give a testimony at Fern Lodge. I found myself admiring the guests who testified and the love and gratitude they expressed. Recently, when I read at Fern Lodge I gave a testimony, and that evening, when I was reading at my church, I found I was able to step aside from the desk and testify there, too."

"For many years my wife and I have looked forward to our monthly sharing of a full Sunday morning service with the guests at Fern Lodge. The warmth of their appreciation and the loving care of the nurses have made us happy to be a part of the special place that is Fern Lodge."

A Fern Lodge Board member who also serves as a reader says, "I am deeply touched by the guests who testify. It is a very special privilege to be a part of a group that provides unconditionally for those individuals who are now in need and who have been committed to Christian Science during their lives."



a circle
Benevolence
of giving

Our Greater Community Responds

The Castro Valley Adult School has services available for nursing facilities in our area, and Fern Lodge has regular visits from some very loving teachers. They bring their blessing to us, and leave Fern Lodge touched and blessed, too. The following are excerpts from recent conversations with two such teachers.

"A co-worker told me what a wonderful place Fern Lodge was. I came with him just to play music, because it seemed like a pleasant thing to do. I came for the fun of it. And it was great fun. There is a beautiful feeling here. We played some violin duets that I had been working on. This was a chance for me to perform. I was amazed at how well the patients were treated, with respect, just like staff. When I had a chance to come and play I felt good. You people are happy here, and happy people are nice to be around. I have the idea that the staff is happy too."

This musician also played piano for Wednesday afternoon

testimony meetings at Fern Lodge and said afterwards, "I have a young, adult daughter who is emotionally and intellectually handicapped, and she came along one time. She found this a very peaceful thing to do. She even asked that I volunteer again so she could come back, and she still corresponds with the Activities Director. She loved what she was feeling and was really proud of herself when she was helping."

Another Adult School teacher said, "I teach at seven facilities. I have dropped all in Castro Valley except Fern Lodge. I am most impressed with the overall caring and warmth from the staff. Nurses stop and take time with the patients, instead of saying, "I can't right now," which I hear at other facilities. Also, at other places I can come and go without being noticed. Here I receive recognition and thanks from everyone."



Benevolence is the reason I'm at Fern Lodge.

God's benevolence for me and mine. — Sharon Maxwell, Head of Housekeeping

This past year had many severe challenges for me and my family. As a result of great financial need, I was back in the job market. This time I wanted to be in a job centered around the demonstration of Christian Science. I found out about an opening at Fern Lodge by a letter they sent to branch churches. All I really knew about Fern Lodge was that it was a Christian Science nursing facility near Hayward.

After the interview I felt I really wanted to be a part of this activity, but arguments kept running through my mind:

- It's 55.5 miles from home.
- You have to earn much more than they can afford to pay you.
- You will end up paying to work.

By the time I reached home, I decided to take the job. The thought of being at Fern Lodge made me feel happy and at peace. I knew anything God directs includes a sense of peace. This may sound like no big deal, except I worked in a Christian Science facility in the past and developed a negative attitude regarding facilities and Christian Science nursing in particular. The fact that I was willing to pursue the idea of working at Fern Lodge was remarkable.

I realized if God put me in this job, the supply my family needed would come in the way God designated. I didn't need to be concerned. The same day my husband told me about this job, work started pouring in for him. Mrs. Eddy states, "God does not reward benevolence and love with penalties..." (Misc. 199:1 - 2). This confirmed my decision to accept the position at Fern Lodge.

Since coming I've completely changed my misconceptions about nurses and nursing. I also have an opportunity to share Christian Science. Although the housekeepers are not Christian Scientists, several are interested. Three are reading *Science & Health* in their native languages.

The benefits of Fern Lodge are too numerous to recount in detail—here are a few. The arguments against coming have been refuted. The commute provides a quiet time to pray and set priorities. I've had physical challenges, but the love and understanding I've felt from the staff has always helped and often healed. The love I'm learning is too deep for words. I'm grateful for this opportunity to grow in grace.



Why Nurse?

There was a lively discussion at a recent nurse's staff meeting. Here are some of the ideas shared.

Christian Science nursing is evidence of an individual's deep love for God and man. Our Lord said to his disciples after he had washed their feet, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:15-17) Happy are ye if ye do these things! Many who are called to nurse do not at first understand what they are getting into, but as they learn what nursing is, they make the commitment that ensures their spiritual growth and their joy.

Christian Science nursing is an expression of gratitude. When nurses work with gratitude in their hearts, the work is joyous and harmonious, even when it seems difficult. The power behind nursing is Love itself. With Love as its source, nursing work is accompanied by an outpouring of love both from and to the nurse.

What about the "shortage of nurses?" We hear the question, "How can we attract more Christian Scientists to nursing?" Why don't we hear, "How can we attract more Christian Scientists to the practice?" The healing mission of Christian Science includes the call to serve mankind. Peter said, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10) What is the gift? It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that he, in demonstration of his great love for us, suffered and died and raised himself from death to ascend to heaven. This gospel gift includes the promise that we can follow Jesus, thanks to the grace of God that allows us to serve and to heal.

To provide enough nurses to meet the world's hunger for Christian Science nursing, each individual who has received the gift of the gospel needs to minister "as of the ability which God giveth." We strive to nurse using the ability God gives us each moment, and we accept each other's inspiration, and consecration. Rather than standardizing the activities that accompany nursing, we embrace, encourage and learn from every Soul-inspired expression of love that reaches out to comfort, help and heal.

