

FERN LODGE FOCUS — JUNE 2016

A few days ago I walked down the Fern Lodge hall past the living room where we hold a variety of meetings and activities, and I was touched to see a group of patients talking with Maira Vasquez, who works in the Fern Lodge kitchen and assists with patient activities. Maira was conducting our weekly hymn sing, and she and the patients were sharing stories with each other. It was a scene overflowing with affection, joy, peace, and hope. I was touched deeply. Maira recently shared with me a testimony of healing (which you may read on page 7 of this *Focus*). Maira's mother and grandmother both worked at Fern Lodge in the past, so we've had a long and loving relationship with her family.

That group in the living room demonstrated the family feeling that characterizes Fern Lodge, and it's more than just a feeling: it is the palpable, living presence of divine Love that comes to the hearts of mankind bearing comfort and healing. Home and family, embraced in divine Love, might be another way to understand and express the mission of Fern Lodge: ***Our mission is to heal.***

You may already have heard of a change at Fern Lodge. Our much-loved Director of Christian Science Nursing, Heather Beck, is moving with her family to St. Louis, MO, where her two children will attend Principia Upper School. Gratefully, Lin Watts, a Christian Science nurse and long-time friend of Fern Lodge, was available at just the right time to step into the DCSN position. Lin and Heather had the opportunity to work closely together for two weeks, and the transition has been smooth, easy, and characterized by joyous expectation of continuing progress.

We will miss Heather. Her steadfast spiritual devotion, her calm and gentle presence, and her commitment to maintaining the highest standards of Christian Science nursing care have been a blessing to Fern Lodge. The atmosphere she helped to establish and maintain will continue through the coming years.

Lin is listed in *The Christian Science Journal* and has worked as a Christian Science nurse at Fern Lodge and in facilities all over the country, in the field as a visiting Christian Science Nurse. He served as Director of Christian Science Nursing at El Dorado Vista, in Phoenix, AZ, and as the Director of Twelveacres, a Christian Science facility in Silicon Valley, CA, that serves Christian Scientists overcoming developmental challenges. Before he was called to Christian Science nursing, Lin's devotion to Christian care and service led him to be a Special Education teacher and coach in public schools in the Seattle, WA, area.

We appreciate your interest in the good work being done at Fern Lodge. Together we can look forward to seeing Christian Science nursing leavening mankind's thought in regard to our care for one another. I welcome comments or questions from anyone, so please don't hesitate to be in touch with me any time.

Gratefully,

George Strong
Administrator



THE BLESSINGS OF PROGRESS — HEATHER BECK

*And the spirit of God moved upon the
face of the waters — Genesis 1:2*

This is one of my most cherished verses in Scripture and has been for a very long time. It holds a wonderful promise for all of us, the promise of freedom and progress.

Many years ago a patient and I were walking together. She was having a great deal of difficulty and was feeling discouraged about her lack of progress. As I turned to God, this line from the Bible came to me, and I shared it with her. Then I heard myself say, “Spirit moves, and *you* move!” She looked at me and smiled. Her face brightened, her step quickened, and she immediately walked with more strength, determination, and freedom. The light of Truth had dispelled discouragement, and the patient and I felt the effects of Truth.

It became clear to me in that moment that we move and progress, because God is the source of all movement. We reflect the natural, inherent motion that we see expressed in nature: flowers waving in the breeze, gazelles leaping on the plain, the earth moving forward in its orbit and spinning on its axis. He impels us forward, and the direction in which He leads us is always good. We progress faster if certain qualities of thought are present – humility, flexibility, willingness, expectation, fearlessness – and God gives us the ability to express these.

If we seem to be buffeted by fear, negativity—from within or without—discouragement, a lack of willingness to progress, then we can at once refute these impositions on thought and affirm diligently who we really are: God’s fearless, happy children, filled with grace and willing to move forward, expecting to see all of God’s goodness manifested. If we do this for ourselves, we will be more poised to help others. We will be alert to any suggestions that would hinder progress.

As Christian Science nurses we can’t really afford to accept any thought that limits the freedom and holiness of the dear ones we are helping, and it is our duty to express discernment and wise judgment when it comes to encouraging progressive steps. As we develop a listening ear through daily prayer for ourselves, we will be led to suggest just the right idea to awaken thought to progress. True progress is the unfolding of right ideas and can only bless.

At Fern Lodge we see progress and growth every day. It’s so inspiring! In the past few months, we have witnessed healings of broken bones, and individuals who have gained rapidly in their ability to move freely with strength and balance. We’ve seen and continue to see the graceful flow of communication and teamwork. We see flexibility, spontaneity, and loving willingness in our dedicated staff. These are all proofs that Spirit moves and we move, and that God is with us, present, and expressing Himself in all of us.



Heather receiving a book of memories—photos and messages from the Fern Lodge patients and staff, prepared and given to her by Robin Barben, Activities Director.

LIN WATTS — DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING

“Friends, our progress may be fast or it may be slow, but one thing is certain, it will be sure, if we are obedient to the loving counsel of our ever faithful Leader” (Willis Gross, President of The Mother Church, 1906, *My* 44:7). In the time I have been here, I have seen how all patients and staff members have been greatly blessed by the obedience, grace and goodness Heather Beck brought to her work as the Director of Christian Science Nursing. I am very grateful for all that Heather has done to support Christian Science healing at Fern Lodge.

Mary Baker Eddy, the Founder of Christian Science, wrote, “In Christian Science there is never a retrograde step, never a return to positions outgrown,” (*SH* 74:29). In my work as a Christian Science nurse, I have seen many examples of progress and healing at Fern Lodge. God knows each of His children as whole, complete, perfect, and a realization of this fact heals. As Christian Scientists we expect, and have witnessed, immediate healings of disease, illness, effects of accidents, and mental disorders. But sometimes patience and ongoing trust in God’s guidance seem needed during what appears as healing progress. One experience in particular reminded me that the loving care of our staff is effective and appreciated in such cases.

Some time ago, a patient at another facility came to Fern Lodge after injuring her hip. It appeared that the patient was so eager to return home that she kept getting up and aggravating the injury. So we helped to arrange for the patient to get an x-ray. In doing this, it became clear that the patient was afraid of going to a doctor. She asked for help from a Christian Science practitioner, and she was reassured that no harm could come to her for taking any temporary steps that would support her. As Mrs. Eddy wrote in *Miscellany*, “Remember, thou canst be brought into no condition, be it ever so severe, where Love has not been before thee and where its tender lesson is not awaiting thee” (*My* 149:31).

Throughout the experience, it was apparent that Love prepared the way. The nurse who greeted her said, “Christian Science, that’s why I’m a nurse! My grandmother healed me through Christian Science and ever since then I wanted to be a nurse.” When the doctor examined the patient, he said that her hip was healing. He told her that she needed to listen to the Christian Science nurses and that they would help her to get up when she was ready. In a few days she was able to start walking, and within a short time, she was healed.

The Christian Science nurses at Fern Lodge are supportive, thoughtful, and loving aids to the patients’ progress. In this case, they helped to alleviate her fear, showed her practical steps she needed to walk, and supported her in being wise about how to progress as quickly as possible, all while praying to see the patient whole—healed—every day. In short, they lovingly fulfilled the requirements of Christian Science nursing.

In thinking about progress in our healing work, I find this statement from our Leader to be helpful:

“If we work to become Christians as honestly and as directly upon a divine Principle, and adhere to the rule of this Principle as directly as we do to the rule of mathematics, we shall be Christian Scientists, and do more than we are now doing, and progress faster than we are now progressing,” (*Hea* 8:24).

Thank you for your loving support of Fern Lodge.

Lin Watts



"PHILANTHROPY IS LOVING"...AND SO MUCH MORE

When we hear the word philanthropy, what comes to mind? Do we immediately think of charitable monetary gifts? Probably we do, because financial charity is the most common current use of the word. And Fern Lodge is deeply grateful every day for those of you who are moved by philanthropy to donate the funds that enable us to give benevolence.

But philanthropy is so much more than financial generosity. The term is derived from two Greek words, one meaning "kindliness, humanity, benevolence, love to mankind," and the other meaning, "loving mankind, useful to man."

Mary Baker Eddy recognized the broad scope and range of possibilities that are open to mankind when motivated by philanthropy, a kindliness that is loving and useful. She writes (*Miscellany* p. 287):

PHILANTHROPY IS REVOLUTIONARY, BECAUSE IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF DIVINE LOVE...MEETING EVERY NEED.

"Philanthropy is loving, ameliorative, revolutionary;

- it wakens lofty desires, new possibilities, achievements, and energies;
- it lays the axe at the root of the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit;
- it touches thought to spiritual issues, systematizes action, and insures success;
- it starts the wheels of right reason, revelation, justice, and mercy;
- it unselfs men and pushes on the ages."

Think about these fruits of philanthropy as they are expressed in Christian Science nursing and the healing mission of Fern Lodge. "Philanthropy is loving, ameliorative, revolutionary." It's clear that being kind to others, giving to those in need, is loving. And I think we generally understand that such demonstrated humanity is ameliorative; it improves another's life, makes their circumstances better, more bearable. But why does Mrs. Eddy say "revolutionary"? What is it about philanthropy that

is revolutionary? We recognize that philanthropy is a powerful force for good that contributes directly to mankind's efforts to overthrow the false government of a limited, mortal sense of life in matter.

Philanthropy is revolutionary because it is an expression of divine Love; it leads us to understand and live wholly under the law of Love that meets every human need. "The Holy Spirit takes of the things of God and showeth them unto the creature; and these things being spiritual, they disturb the carnal and destroy it; they are revolutionary, reformatory, and—now, as aforetime—they cast out evils and heal the sick" ('01 9:22-26). And "Science is absolute and final. It is revolutionary in its very nature; for it upsets all that is not upright" (*Miscellaneous Writings* 99:1-2).

Let's touch on some of the other influences and effects Mrs. Eddy ascribes to philanthropy. At the 2016 conference of Christian

Science nursing organizations, we learned that a national benevolence fund for Christian Science nursing is being organized under the auspices of The Principle Foundation. Such a fund is a new possibility, with the promise of great achievements, needing the focus of fresh energies, and it surely is the result of awakened lofty desires. A national benevolence fund for Christian Science nursing has the potential for extending to others across the country, even in more remote areas, the kind of benevolent financial assistance that always has been given by Fern Lodge.

Philanthropy "lays the axe at the root of the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit." Christian Science nursing is philanthropic. It offers clear, prayerful, healing assistance for those who are struggling with claims of sickness, disease, accident, mental imbalance—all fruits of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a Scriptural symbol of the belief that man is separated from God, Life, Mind, and subject to sin and death.

When it is rightly understood and practiced, and when it is motivated by philanthropy—by love for God and man—Christian Science nursing is a systematic, spiritual activity, and its success in healing is assured.

The board, staff, students, patients and volunteers at Fern Lodge are moved by philanthropy. And as we continue to pray, consider deeply, and put into daily practice the benevolent love for mankind that springs from God's love for each of His children,

we will see the fruits of philanthropy abundantly meeting the daily needs of everyone—meeting the needs of patients for care and financial assistance, meeting the needs of Christian Science nurses for spiritual insight and inspiration, and bringing strength and endurance coupled with joy and unending hope.

Thank you for all your support for Fern Lodge. "The good done and the good to do are his ever-present reward" (*Miscellany*, 288:6).

THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING — SHARON STRONG

Education in the Christian Science nursing ministry is a vital component of the healing mission of Fern Lodge. The goals and the curriculum of the Fern Lodge Christian Science Nursing Education Program are closely related to philanthropy. Among the results of philanthropy listed by Mrs. Eddy, we see that "it starts the wheels of right reason, revelation, justice, and mercy" (*My* 288:1-2).

Right reason and revelation are essential to the ministry of Christian Science nursing. Christian Science nurses learn to judge righteous judgment, based on spiritual evidences. They seek to understand and follow, with justice and mercy, Mrs. Eddy's counsel: "Wisdom in human action begins with what is nearest right under the circumstances, and thence achieves the absolute" (*Mis* 288:13).

I love that the By-Law, "Christian Science Nurse," is in the chapter titled Discipline of Members, and serves as a bookend for the first By-Law in that chapter, "A Rule for Motives and Acts." In it Mrs. Eddy writes, "...a Christian Scientist reflects the sweet amenities of Love, in rebuking sin, in true brotherliness, charitableness, and forgiveness." These terms all are synonyms of pilanthropy.

Selflessness is essential for the demonstration of Christian Science nursing. Learning that care for others is the instant, constant reflection of Love, demonstrating the daily care of divine Love, helps students learn better the truth of our Leader's promise: "By purifying human thought, this state of mind permeates with increased harmony all the minutiae of human affairs. It brings with it wonderful foresight, wisdom, and power; it unselfs the mortal purpose, gives steadiness to resolve, and success to endeavor" (*Mis* 204:23-27). And, "Intrepid, self-oblivious love fulfills the law and is self-sustaining and eternal." (*My* 275:25)

The Fern Lodge program is thorough, flexible and adaptable; it is especially beneficial to individuals who wish to "shine from their home summits" (*Mis* 302:32). Classes are held for four weeks at times convenient for the learners, and followed by side-by-side mentoring for an appropriate time period—a minimum of six weeks. The Fern Lodge curriculum and mentoring programs are accredited by The Commission. For more information on dates, costs, and other details, please see our website, or call Sharon Strong at 510-886-2448, Ext 222.

FERN LODGE BIDS HEATHER A FOND FAREWELL



OUR MISSION IS TO HEAL — A TESTIMONY FROM A STAFF MEMBER

I witnessed my first healing after prayers when my son and I did not feel well. We both did not feel well to the point that we did not want to eat or drink. My son looked real skinny, and he is only a year and 6 months old. All he wanted was his momma. I even had to take a day off of work to comfort him and give him the attention he needed. He would cry and cry with tears of pain. Although both of us were not feeling well, I still tried to do my best for my son.

It was a Wednesday when I came back to work, and I still did not have the energy to work all morning. I was just really down. Then a little before 1:30, while changing the audio program in the iPod closet, my supervisor asked me if she could pray for my son and me. I said “please do!” She began to pray, and I also began to pray myself. While we continued to pray all of a sudden, I felt a feeling unexplainable: I felt God taking over. I cried while we prayed with tears of pure happiness. A few minutes later, as I was walking in the hall to go print out some papers in the office, my supervisor told me, “you look better.” When she told me that, it put a real big smile on my face. By the time I came back from the office I went to my supervisor, and I told her, “Robin, I feel well.” I felt great, honestly!

Then suddenly the time was 3:30. I felt like the time actually began to go quicker. When I left work, excited that I felt better, my mom and my son were in the parking lot waiting for me, and when I opened the door to get in the car, my son shouted out “Momma,” with a huge smile on his face. I looked at him and said “Jacob,” and then I looked at my mom and asked her “Mom has he been feeling good all day?” My mom told me, “No, just now he is better.” At that moment I honestly just wanted to get my son out of his car seat and hug him. I also wanted to take him to my supervisor to show her because honestly, he looked GREAT!! And at that moment I realized that my prayer was answered, and both my son and I were healed.



Maira Vasquez with her son, Jacob

I began to pray more after this healing. The next week after my healing, my friend was at my house and told me that she had been having a headache all day, and she asked me if I had some Advil. I talked to her and asked, “Can I pray for you instead of you turning to the medicine?” She said sure, so I told her to pray for herself as well. I began to pray for her, and in a short time I asked her how she was feeling. She told me that she didn’t have a headache anymore.

My whole life I never had really prayed before. I would only turn to God and pray when something was wrong, so every time I would pray, I felt like God was not listening, because I would only pray when I needed Him. Now I catch my self waking up in the morning and thanking God for another day. I thank Him for having a roof over my head, food, a job, a healthy family, and I tell God how important He is to me!

Maira Vasquez

Fern Lodge Focus — June 2016

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



REPAIRS NEEDED — WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

We are deeply grateful for the generous metaphysical and financial support Fern Lodge receives from the Christian Science community. These gifts enable us to provide excellent Christian Science nursing care for many individuals who need financial assistance to pay for the care they receive while they pray for healing in Christian Science.

In addition, the donations we receive are essential for us to maintain the Fern Lodge facility in good repair. There are two major projects that we will need to complete sometime this year or next. The welcome rains last winter had one adverse effect; the private road leading about 600 feet from the city street has several potholes and places where the surface is breaking down. It will cost a bit more than \$6,000 to repair and resurface the road, and we would like to complete the work before next winter's rain.

Thanks to donations and grants over the past few years, we have been able to repair and replace most of the aging roofing at Fern Lodge. We would like to finish this project soon, and we plan to complete the work in two phases. First, and most urgent, to avoid damage from leaks during next winter's rainy season, the roofing on one of the nursing wings should be replaced soon, at a cost of about \$10,000.

Please write or call George Strong, Administrator, if you have any comments or questions:

Email: george.strong@fernlobby.org

Phone: 510-886-2448, ext 214