

A Humble Volunteer



Barbara Wolcott is a remarkable woman whose life journey embodies the spirit of community and service. Her dedication to caring for others began in her childhood in Bethesda, Maryland, where her passion for nursing was evident even in her playtime: dressing as a nurse and playing hospital with her friends.

Barbara’s move to Berkeley in the 1960s marked a significant chapter, leading her to join Steven Gaskin's intentional community, The Farm, in Tennessee in 1971. This experience profoundly shaped her understanding of collaboration and community, forging deep bonds that endure today. “Some of my best friends from The Farm live here in Sonoma County,” she shares. Life on The Farm, though challenging – lacking basic amenities and requiring ingenuity and teamwork – instilled in her many invaluable life lessons. “It was quite an experience living on The Farm. We had to learn how to really communicate to get things done.”

Returning to California in 1980 with her four children, Barbara settled in Sonoma County, where she continued to build community. After a successful career as an ophthalmic technician, she embarked on a new path, earning a nursing degree at 54 years old! “I was 10 years older than the other students in the program. I got a lot of help from my community.” Barbara’s dedication to patient care shone through her work at Sutter Hospital in the cardiac and medical surgery unit, gaining her certification in oncology just before retiring in 2020.

Retirement did not slow down Barbara; in 2023, she found a fulfilling role volunteering at the Sebastopol Area Senior Center (SASC) front desk. Barbara’s dedication is remarkable, say her co-workers. While still learning some of the technological aspects of her role, she consistently goes above and beyond, handling appointments, organization, cleaning, and supply management with a cheerful disposition. “Volunteering is an ongoing learning process for me. That’s another reason I like the job – it is good for my brain!” she chuckles.

Beyond her volunteer work, Barbara’s life is full, participating in weekly SASC Tai Chi classes and enjoying lunches at The Harvest Café. Continually seeking new learning opportunities, from attending the SASC classes on death and dying to painting (revealing a hidden artistic talent!), her energy and enthusiasm extend to jewelry making, square dancing, jitterbug lessons, Spanish studies, and daily walks – are all part of her commitment to staying active and engaged with her community. Barbara also finds fulfillment in singing groups, drumming circles, and hiking, always seeking connections with others, and it's hard to deny her playful side when seeing the outfit she wore to the SASC fundraiser. Barbara enjoys being a grandmother to Olivia and Nate sharing, “They are joys of my life.”



Barbara's volunteer work at SASC isn't just a job; it reflects her deep-seated values, inspired partly by her late mother’s kindness. “I sometimes think I didn’t thank my mom enough for all she did for me throughout my life. But then again, I don’t expect that for what I give to others either.”

While modest about her contributions, her actions speak volumes about her commitment to creating a positive environment for all around her.

We are truly fortunate to have such a kind and caring volunteer in the SASC community. Thank you, Barbara!



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