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INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

A NEW GENERATION OF MASONIC SCHOLARS



“ JUST AS THE PROGRAM HAS
INVESTED IN ME, I HAVE A

RESPONSIBILITY

NOT ONLY TO MYSELF, BUT TO MY

COMMUNITY &
SOCIETY as well.”

— WENWEN YU
INVESTMENT IN SUCCESS SCHOLAR

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

John R. Heisner, Junior Grand Warden



Masonic Philanthropy: Building Quality Lives

“What is Freemasonry?” asked the young woman standing opposite me at the hotel check-in desk. Her eyes had just settled on my officer’s badge and now she was curious.

“A fraternity that donates millions of dollars each and every day to its charities,” the Mason standing next to me answered, before I could conjure up some long-winded, hard-to-understand explanation.

My worthy brother was wiser than he may have realized at the time. The charities he cited profoundly improve the lives of children and older adults alike, advancing nearly 300 years of Masonic culture in real, tangible ways. They are the best evidence that California Masons make a difference in today’s world.

Children challenged by poverty, or otherwise hindered by their environments, are now climbing the ladder of literacy. Today, they have access to that which makes all men free – knowledge. Through contributions to our Raising A Reader partnership, California Masons are making it possible for these children to escape a downward spiral of crime and incarceration; to instead be enriched by an opportunity to read with their families. Because of us, nearly 50,000 children are being prepared to grasp and hold onto the precious freedom that only knowledge can guarantee.

Thanks to California Masons, high school seniors whose sole obstacle to a college education has been the absence of a helping hand are now realizing their dreams. Each year, we donate almost a million dollars through the Investment in Success scholarship program, extending a helping hand to the young men and women who will soon lead the world.

Older Masons and their families who have fallen on hard times, and those who grapple with ill health, have also discovered that their brothers will provide a high-quality life. Thanks to their dedicated brothers, Masons living as shut-ins receive assistance and are not forgotten. The Masonic Homes of California form the backbone of a safety net, drawn tighter by a mystic tie and the work of brothers who reach out to members in need, offering supportive services, restoring dignity, health, and happiness – and ensuring a better quality of life.

“How do Masons have so much money to give to those charities?” the young clerk asked. This time I had the answer.

“Our members have been giving money for nearly 200 years. It is a tradition others started and that we have promised to continue.”

Everywhere I travel, Masons ask how they can become involved in our fraternity’s charities – how they can build quality lives and become part of the philanthropy that makes a profound difference for those in need. The answer is simple: By keeping our tradition of relief alive – by opening up our hearts and giving what we can. Masons truly are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. I could not be prouder of my brethren and the staff of dedicated men and women who support them than I am today. You keep the flames of freedom burning brightly. ✧

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

EXPLORING THE MASONIC MEANING OF AN AGE-OLD QUESTION

by John L. Cooper III, Grand Master

One of the oldest questions in the world is “Am I my brother’s keeper?” The Bible’s Book of Genesis brings this question to our attention in the old story of Cain and Abel, handed down to us from the earliest of times. If you remember the story, these two sons of Adam and Eve got into a quarrel after God had apparently accepted the sacrifice of one of the brothers but not the other. The quarrel resulted in the murder of Abel by Cain, and when God asked Cain what happened to his brother, Cain replied with the snide comment, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

His retort to God has thus been handed down to us from antiquity, yet it has never been completely answered: How far am I to go in taking care of my brother? Are there any limits to my responsibilities to him? And if so, what are they?

This is an important question in Freemasonry today. Our Masonic tradition as well as our Masonic law make it clear that each Mason has an obligation to care for his brother Mason, an obligation that also extends to a Mason’s family. But what does this obligation entail?

The answer to this question might just be found in the “Old Tiler Talks” by Carl H. Claudy, written in 1925. Consider this dialogue between a young Mason and the old tiler of his lodge:

“I am inclined to think that Masons do too much for each other,” announced the New Brother.

“Who has been doing too much for you?” asked the Old Tiler.

“Why, no one, that I know of.”

“Well, who have you been doing too much for?”

“Well, er – I wouldn’t say I had been doing too much. But we all do too much. It gets to be a burden sometimes.”

“What do you mean, burden?” countered the Old Tiler.

“A burden is something heavy which you carry, isn’t it?” asked the New Brother.

“You think what we do for our brethren is a burden?”

“Sometimes it seems that way. Too many calls on our time. Too many calls on our sympathy. Too many calls on our charity. Yes, I think it’s a burden.”

“Last week I walked to work,” answered the Old Tiler. “I don’t usually because my rheumatism says walking is too hard a job. My legs,” his eyes twinkled, “are a burden to me! But that day it was so bright that the old legs forgot to growl, so I walked. I saw a little lad of about ten looking after a small child of about two, who toppled on his nose and yelled. The ten year old picked up the squalling baby and soothed him, then put him across his shoulder and staggered up the sidewalk with him. I asked him, ‘Sonny, isn’t that child too heavy for you?’ ‘Heavy?’ he answered me, ‘Heavy? Why, sir, he’s my brother.’”

“Little brother would have been too heavy for me – maybe because of my old legs and perhaps because he wasn’t my brother! The facts are that one weighed 60 pounds and the other 30 pounds. The stagger and the straining arms were facts. The cheek flushed with effort was a fact. But two years old was brother to ten, and that made him ‘not too heavy.’”

“A burden is, after all, what we think it. You would look desperately at the task of

Continued next page



***“How far am I to go in taking care of my brother?
Are there any limits to my responsibilities to him?”***

carrying a 200-pound sack on your back. But if it were 200 pounds of gold, and it was to be yours after a mile, you wouldn't find it 'too heavy.'

“Masonry, my son, is a state of mind. You can't put it on the scales or measure

it with a scoop. Because it has no material existence it cannot carry a child of two, or a sack of flour. Its burdens are burdens of the heart.”

And that just might be Freemasonry's answer to one of the world's oldest questions – “Am I my brother's keeper?” ♦

DEFINING PHILANTHROPY

WHAT PHILANTHROPY MEANS TO OUR MEMBERS

We asked more than 26,000 fans on the Masons of California Facebook page to describe what philanthropy means to them using one word. Here's a sample of what they said:



“Sharing”
– Michael Guiliano

“Fraternity”
– Nuno De Sa Alves

“Happiness”
– Buddy Gabriel

“Selfless”
– Kristian Loeza

“Virtue”
– Ron Martin

“Legacy”
– Rich Pannazzo

“Heritage”
– Wes Daniels

“Relief”
– Michael Boyd

“Obligation”
– Silver Jennifer Montero

“Beliefs”
– Avalon Varada

“MASONRY”
– Antonio Payton

“Able”
– Daryl Beale

“Humble”
– Karl Dittner

“Possibilities”
– Megan Brace

“Grace”
– Darcy Jorgensen Adams

“Philanthropos”
– Adam Kendall

“Purpose”
– Ali Sandalwood

“Altruism”
– Robert Puckett

“Privilege”
– Dick Kellogg

“Redemption”
– Buck Barnes

“Caring”
– Phyllis Morgan

“Humanity”
– Joel Gutierrez

“Intellect”
– Myer White

“Support”
– Rick Silva

“Selflessness”
– Josh Stark

“Balance”
– Santiago McCurdy Lopez

“Dedicated”
– Thomas Nizami

“Hope”
– Hector Medina

“Love”
– Guillermo Cortes

“Immortality”
– Whence Came You

“Benevolent”
– Jeanne A Jordan

“Charity”
– Willie Faraon Ticzon

“Helping”
– William Alminana

“Kindness”
– Hector A. Barraza

“Generosity”
– Roland Ros

“Service”
– Chris Buckius

“Giving”
– James van Epps

“Duty”
– Deborah Patton-Fogle

A LODGE IS NOT BUILT OF STONE, ALONE

NAPA VALLEY LODGE'S 100% OFFICER GIVING HONORS THE FOUNDATIONS OF FREEMASONRY

by Matt Markovich

It may well be said that philanthropy is the most tangible result of the practice of Freemasonry and the public manifestation of its philosophical underpinnings. The word 'philanthropy' itself has etymological roots in Latin and Greek with the literal meaning of "love of humanity." For Masons, direct and indirect civic participation in community and the activities of local schools, arts, and charities has long been a focus and a cornerstone of Masonic practice. Various sources cite that, beyond the thousands of volunteer hours Masons pledge to their communities every year, Masonic organizations donate anywhere between \$1.5-\$3.5 million per day to various charities, scholarships, and organizations.

While virtually every lodge encourages its members to donate time and money to a variety of causes, certain lodges take the tenet of giving even further and truly distinguish themselves by creating a culture of giving within their lodge. One such lodge is Napa Valley Lodge No. 93, whose officers have maintained a record of 100% officer giving to the Annual Fund since 2009.

Given the extent of the lodge's community involvement, it seems difficult to believe that there was once a time when its

philanthropic activities involved anything less than the full participation of its officers. Yet, according to current Senior Warden Michael McKeown, it was the initiative of the 2009 lodge master, Stanley D. Waggoner, Jr. that cemented this practice.

As McKeown recounts, reaching 100% participation was the result of making giving a priority and following up with members. "The master of the lodge at the time asked if all the officers wanted to participate, and if so, if they'd mind if he followed up and made sure they did. They did, he did, and the tradition has continued."

Past Master Ken Miller recalls that the path to unanimous officer participation in giving began even earlier. "2009 was just the first time we achieved 100% officer participation in giving," he explains. "[It] actually started four or five years before 2009, as the lodge was building a corps of officers from its newer members [and] was planning for our 150th anniversary celebration. Our district inspector was instrumental in helping us, as officers, to establish a culture of leading by example."

Established in 1855, Napa Valley Lodge is located in the heart of idyllic St. Helena. The lodge has deep roots in the community and continues to cultivate a new generation of leaders to practice and preserve Masonic traditions. This effort has infused the lodge with new vitality and a re-dedication to its philanthropic activities.

The lodge's culture of philanthropy has continued to thrive, and its members' commitment is not limited to simply writing a check. Their true generosity is reflected in the amount of time they have spent aiding local organizations. Inspired by their officers, members have devoted countless hours volunteering





ESTABLISHED IN 1855, NAPA VALLEY LODGE HAS A DEEP COMMITMENT TO PHILANTHROPY.

for a breadth of activities that support the community virtually from cradle to grave.

The lodge sponsors several education outreach initiatives within the community, including ecology, aquaculture, and fly fishing programs, as well as supporting the arts – such as the Napa Valley Symphony and local school dramatic arts programs. They support local athletic teams, including baseball, women's basketball, and football, and provide sponsorship for a diverse variety of other community-based programs, including a Relay

For Life cancer walk, academic scholarships, a senior activity center, a hospice, and the Yountville cemetery. Many members also give to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Washington, D.C.

A deep culture of giving is fostered by leadership, ensuring that community

Continued next page

LODGE SPOTLIGHT



SENIOR WARDEN MICHAEL MCKEOWN EXPLAINS THAT GIVING IS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF LEADERSHIP AT NAPA VALLEY LODGE.

engagement is integral to the mission of the lodge. As Past Master Sean Harris relates, supporting and engaging with local Masonic youth orders is one of members' most rewarding initiatives.

The lodge currently provides support and mentorship for the Napa chapters of

DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow for Girls. Harris says, "If I were to recommend one thing to any lodge on helping to establish a deeper culture of giving within their membership, I would probably start with encouraging more active involvement in our Masonic youth orders. [This commitment is] one of Napa Valley Lodge's great strengths."

"And," Harris adds, "virtually all of our current and active lodge officers are involved in, or have a history of being heavily involved with, one or more of our Masonic youth orders."

The lodge also provides financial support for statewide and regional Masonic initiatives, including the Masonic Homes, the Raising A Reader literacy partnership, and Masons4Mitts. Harris asserts that such direct community involvement fosters a culture of activity and ownership. He explains, "It is much easier to support and even advocate for groups, events, and programs that you are actively involved in, than when your only activity is attending the monthly meeting."

And to today's members of Napa Valley Lodge, participation is paramount. Regardless of the personal means of any particular member, giving at any level is encouraged. "We ask that officers donate something, no matter how small, so we can maintain our 100% giving," McKeown says. When asked what moved him to become involved in giving, he simply states: "It's what our lodge does."

This matter-of-fact approach has engendered a shared sense of obligation and responsibility that has clearly reaped dividends for the lodge and the community it supports. For Miller, fostering a culture of giving and community participation through local efforts, and contributing to statewide programs, such as the Annual Fund, are central to Masonic practice and rank as one of the greatest benefits of being a Mason. He says, "I would tell new and prospective Masons who are curious about our giving that the rewards we see are the individuals, groups, and programs that continue to grow and flourish." He adds, "Through our giving, not only have we touched the lives of those we support directly, but we have also helped to initiate and grow a ripple effect through our community and through society, in general." ♦

MASONRY'S GREAT AIM

PHILANTHROPY AND FRATERNITY IN THE GOLDEN STATE

by *Laura Normand*

Every Fellow Craft knows the passage: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

With this charge, taken from the First Corinthians, the Fellow Craft is inducted into the charitable teachings of Freemasonry. When he is raised to the third degree, it will take the form of a promise to his brothers and their wives, widows, and children. As he embarks on his Masonic journey, he will study the values of truth, relief, and brotherly love, and the spirit of charity that springs forth from living them.

“To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Freemasons,” writes William Preston in the 1772 book “Illustrations of Masonry.” “To soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore their troubled minds,” Preston declares, “is the great aim we have in view.”

When community calls

The history of California Masonry is a lesson in generosity. For as long as Masons have been in California, they have strived to make a difference.

Imagine the infant state of California. Wagon trails snaked westward to end here; weary families arrived with next to nothing. In the state’s formative days, Masonic lodges kept many of these families in bread. The lodges provided food, nursed the sick, and gave relief to those who had come West with dreams of gold, and found, instead, poverty and disease. When cholera swept through Sacramento in 1850, California Masons embarked on one of their first organized charitable

efforts: helping build and maintain a hospital at Sutter’s Fort. There were roughly 300 Masons in the State of California. They raised \$32,000 in 10 months.

Extra money was hard to come by, and one lodge was even bankrupted by the extent of its charitable giving. Yet California Masons, answering the call of truth, relief, and brotherly love, did not scale back their giving. To alleviate the burden on individual lodges, they simply adjusted their approach. In the mid-1850s, the fraternity created regional boards of relief – California Masonry’s first systematic approach to awarding relief, and a precursor to the Masonic Homes of California and our modern-day Annual Fund.

Truth, relief, and brotherly love leave little room for selfish regard, and generations of California Masons have acted accordingly. Take the Great Fire of Chicago in 1871. When news of the fire arrived in the Golden State, the Grand Lodge of California unanimously voted to send its entire relief fund to the Grand Lodge of Illinois. Or take the 1906 earthquake and fire of San Francisco, which decimated the city and left 400,000 homeless. Without hesitation, hundreds of California brothers rushed to the Bay Area to set up food banks, bandage the wounded, help families find each other, and staff round-the-clock shelters. Grand Master Motley Hewes Flint transferred \$3,000 of his personal funds to support the relief effort, then rushed from Los Angeles to San Francisco to help in the trenches.

Continued next page

HISTORY

He spent weeks loading and unloading wagons of supplies, then months volunteering at shelters and food lines. He and his fellow Masons served every man, woman, and child that they met, regardless of their Masonic affiliation.

“The fraternity and sister organizations issued orders that I should relieve the distressed,” reported Flint, “be they Masons or not.”

Awakening the charitable instinct

One of the defining characteristics of Masonic charity in this state has been its adaptability. As the needs of the fraternity and the community have evolved over the years, California Masonic charities have evolved with them.

In 1896, the Masons of California built the Masonic Home at Union City to shelter widows and orphans. In the century since, to meet the changing needs of fraternal families, California Masons have developed Masonic Family Outreach Services, Masonic Senior Outreach Services, and the Masonic Center for Youth and Families.

Our charitable work has often turned outward to the community. (Today, more than half of Masonic philanthropy is directly spent on the American public.) In 1920, when California’s public schools

were threatened by teacher shortages, the fraternity led the first Public Schools Week to find a solution. In the decades since, we have found new ways to champion public education, directly supporting teachers and delivering programs like Raising A Reader to improve literacy and family engagement. Through the Investment in Success scholarship, we recognize the potential of students who have succeeded at school despite immense financial and social challenges. These young men and women have fought tirelessly for the chance to attend college; our support makes it possible.

That’s just the beginning. Today, California Masons provide funding for hundreds of nurses to gain their oncology certification, helping them deliver comfort to thousands of individuals battling cancer. Every summer through Masons4Mitts, we give thousands of at-risk boys and girls their very own baseball glove, a gift that will help them build teamwork, confidence, and character through the Junior Giants baseball program.

In the words of Stephen Trachtenberg, a Mason and president emeritus of the George Washington University, “Freemasonry embodies the awareness that Americans share a profound obligation to each other and to their society.” Every day, whether at the lodge level or through generous donations to the Annual Fund, California Masons work to fulfill that obligation. It’s an individual responsibility. It’s a global legacy. It’s Masonry’s great aim, a call answered by every brother who truly commits himself to truth, relief, and brotherly love.

Perhaps Brother John Day said it best: “Freemasonry is not about charity. Freemasonry is about awakening the charitable instinct within us.”

This instinct has been carried on by every generation of California Masons. Charity is embedded in our values and history in this state; it is part of our very identity. And it must continue to be. It is up to each of us to carry it forward. ✧

CHARITY

IS EMBEDDED IN OUR

VALUES

AND

HISTORY

IN THIS STATE; IT IS PART OF OUR VERY

IDENTITY

AND IT MUST CONTINUE TO BE.

INVESTING





IN OUR

FUTURE

BY JAY KINNEY

**CALIFORNIA MASONS' LOCALLY
DRIVEN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IS
MAKING A PROFOUND DIFFERENCE
FOR THE STUDENTS WHO NEED
SUPPORT THE MOST**

A JOURNEY AND A DREAM

Wenwen Yu moved with her father from Guangdong Province in China to San Francisco six years ago, shortly after losing her mother to cancer. Her mother's death was a devastating loss that threw her family into crisis mode – both emotionally and financially. Her father eventually remarried and found a job as an auto repairman, but her stepmother remained unemployed. To help support her struggling family, Yu, an only child, had to take a part-time job in addition to her high school studies.

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WENWEN YU,
INVESTMENT IN SUCCESS SCHOLAR

Like many immigrants, Yu came to California with a determination to succeed in her new home, but the odds were stacked against her. As high school graduation approached, she faced increased family pressure to get a full-time job to help support her parents – a choice that would require her to give up her college hopes and long-term dream of eventually working for a Fortune 500 company.

Yu knew that in the long run, obtaining a professional career with an established company would help her to better provide for her family. But she was the only one to see things this way. If she pursued a college career, she would do so without her family’s support or approval.

It would not be an easy task for a young lady in a new land, but the light of hope began to shine when she learned about the Masons.

A TEAM PLAYER

A California native, Jamie Back grew up in San Jacinto, a small farming community in Riverside County, in Southern California. At San Jacinto High School, she was a varsity volleyball player for all four years. She was also a commissioner in her school’s Associated Student Body, helping organize pep rallies and lunchtime activities. But as school drew to a close, Back’s home life became chaotic.

Her parents were divorcing. To compound matters, her father’s automotive shop was going out of business and the family’s income decreased dramatically. There were health issues as well. “Cancer runs in my family,” Back says, “and my grandparents on both sides were fighting it.”

Back had worked for Stater Bros. supermarkets part time during high school, and when she graduated, she took a full-time position there to help support her family. Her dream of a higher education seemed further and further out of reach. But then, she learned about the fraternity and an opportunity to reignite her dream.

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

In 1969, the California Masonic Foundation was established to reinvigorate the connection between Freemasonry and public education through a variety of scholarships and other education-related initiatives.

For many years, the Foundation’s approach to scholarships was much like many other organizations’ throughout the country: It provided support for exemplary scholars who showed strong progress towards future leadership. These were model students with high grades, promising test scores, and impressive lists of extra-curricular activities. The scholarships were a reward for hard work – an extra push to help enable students’ pending success.

Then, in 2010, the fraternity launched its first member-driven strategic plan. As Masons statewide took a step back to deeply



consider their personal values and aspirations for Freemasonry, Foundation leaders did the same. They pored over the renewed Masons of California vision statement, in particular its inspiring assertion: *We make a profound difference in the lives of our members and in California communities.* California Masons were giving generously to support students in need, and scholarship recipients were certainly grateful. But were the scholarships being used in the most impactful way? When it came to scholarships, were California Masons really making a profound difference? Maybe not, Foundation leaders decided. It was time to take a new approach.

A year later, a new scholarship program, aptly named Investment in Success, was established. These innovative scholarships are designed for students who have demonstrated a passion for learning, but whose low-income backgrounds and/or social challenges raise serious obstacles to furthering their education. The Foundation's belief is that assisting such students can have a lasting impact – both in the students' lives and for society at large.

At the program's inception, Foundation President Art Weiss described the ideal Investment in Success recipient as, "the kid who needs someone out there to say, 'I believe in you.'" Weiss explained, "I want us to be that someone."

A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

Now in its third year, the Investment in Success scholarship program is flourishing. More than 80 students have received these scholarships to date, and the number of available awards

is expected to increase as scholarships under previous Foundation programs are fulfilled and phased out.

Since the beginning, Investment in Success has been guided and implemented by the fraternity's Public Schools Advisory Councils (PSACs). There are at present six councils throughout the state composed of Masonic volunteers who take responsibility for interviewing deserving students in each region and presenting the scholarships at the students' high school senior awards assemblies.

But in addition to leadership from within the fraternity, the scholarship program owes much of its success to the partnerships the Foundation and PSACs have nourished with community-based organizations – in particular, the GLOW Foundation, a San Francisco-based nonprofit dedicated to assisting deserving low-income students in attending college. In addition to its strong existing relationships with local school counselors and teachers, GLOW was chosen to partner with the Foundation because of its closely aligned values. GLOW's founding principles include the belief that all highly motivated students, including those from under-resourced communities, should have the chance to attend college and that students should become financially literate in order to successfully plan for a self-sustaining future.

GLOW's liaisons with schools, counselors, and other non-profit agencies – coupled with its banking and corporate community-support

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Raising A Reader: The Good We've Done So Far

Today, throughout California, families are having a new experience: They are sitting together with a book. If they can read, they are telling the story that is written on the page. If they can't, they "read" the photos and create their own stories. In both cases, these families are building literacy skills. And, they're strengthening family bonds.

These experiences are made possible by California Masons. In 2011, the fraternity entered into a groundbreaking partnership with award-winning literacy and family engagement leader Raising A Reader (RAR). RAR's unique program introduces books to children's homes and trains parents, teachers, and local librarians to help children benefit from the books. It also teaches parents to use reading as a bonding tool, strengthening family relationships.

In the first two years of the partnership, California Masons raised more than \$843,000 – enough money to bring RAR's program to more than 180 classrooms in low-performing public schools throughout the state. And, the program is working. In a survey of families who participated in RAR during the 2012-2013 school year, 83% reported increases in the number of times they checked out library materials, instances and duration of household book-sharing, and children reading aloud. Reading scores have also shown remarkable improvements.

But the fraternity's hard work isn't over yet. Our three-year goal is to raise \$1.2 million – enough to introduce RAR to 400 classrooms. And, it's a gift that will keep giving: Once purchased, book bags and books last about five years. This means that each classroom's supplies will reach approximately 125 children and their families.

Through our efforts, we are *strengthening families, one book at a time.*

In the words of Shari Fox, the former superintendent of San Jacinto Unified School District who helped introduce RAR in her schools, "Once kids become readers, the whole world is open to them."

programs – enable GLOW staff to identify underserved students, provide students with mentors and training in financial literacy, and assist students in navigating the often-intimidating application process for scholarships and colleges.

Once Investment in Success candidates are identified, members of the local PSAC interview each one. Typically, several teams of Masons, each composed of two to four members from local lodges, conduct the interviews at a daylong event. These interviews allow PSAC members to get an in-person impression of each student and to hear his or her story firsthand. After the interviews, council members pass their recommendations along to the California Masonic Foundation Board for final selection.

CONNECTING OPPORTUNITY AND NEED

Back and Yu are two proud Investment in Success scholars. Back learned about Investment in Success from a high school counselor. She researched the program online and filled out an application, which she emailed to a counselor at the GLOW Foundation who, in turn, helped her submit it to the Foundation. Although she was identified as a good candidate, Back struggled with feelings of insecurity.

"I was nervous at first about my interview," she says. "I didn't know who all would be interviewed and I worried that the other students would be better than I was." Her older sister drove her to the interview to provide moral support. But ultimately it was worth all the anxiety.

In addition to winning the scholarship, she's become familiar with the Foundation and the fraternity. "I learned a lot about Masonry after I applied," she says. She is particularly enthusiastic about California Masons' Raising A Reader literacy partnership (see sidebar, at left), which has helped some of her nieces and nephews gain reading skills.

Yu came to Investment in Success through a collaboration between the GLOW Foundation, Mission Graduates – a local charity sharing similar goals – and her high school. Established



only five years ago, San Francisco International High School, located in the city's Mission District, specializes in assisting recent-immigrant students in mastering English, achieving academic excellence, and preparing for college enrollment. Yu's dilemma as an under-resourced and over-extended (yet highly motivated) young immigrant was one that counselors had seen before. As she searched for a way to help fund her higher education, one of Yu's advisors told her about Investment in Success.

She confesses that she was nervous about her scholarship interview, but was encouraged by her counselor and her boyfriend to relax and just be herself. Their advice worked; once the interview began, her nervousness vanished.

"Talking to the two gentlemen was like talking to friends," Yu says. "The time went by very fast."

Today, Yu is on the road to fulfilling her dream. Inspired by her father's position as a manager in an auto repair factory in China, Yu says, "I want to be a successful businesswoman."

"My Investment in Success scholarship saved my college career, encouraged me to be a success in college, and really helped me a lot," she says with palpable enthusiasm. "I know that just as the program has invested in me, I have a responsibility not only to myself, but to my community and society as well."

A TWO-WAY STREET

If the scholarship program has had a positive impact on students, it has been equally beneficial to the brothers implementing it.

Bro. Mark McNee, 34, is junior warden of Phoenix Lodge No. 144 and the newly appointed chair of the PSAC serving San Francisco and Daly City. He participated in the panel of members who interviewed Yu during the Investment in Success application process and says, "Each of these students' stories was more compelling than the last. You know firsthand that, without some help, these kids won't be able to go to college."

Dennis Brandt is chair of the Inland Empire PSAC, which serves Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Brandt knows education: He taught high school for 40 years – a job that



**DENNIS BRANDT, CHAIR OF THE INLAND EMPIRE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

included counseling students about their post-graduation futures. Now retired and treasurer of Temescal Palms Lodge No. 314 in Corona, he remains active in helping students, particularly those with financial and social challenges, make their dreams come true.

Brandt describes the brothers in his and nearby lodges who are involved with the program as "excited by it and chomping at the bit to meet a new crop of kids and conduct interviews." He recalls touching scenes at school awards ceremonies when brethren presented the scholarships to students and had a chance to congratulate them and their families in person – all the tears and cheers and flashing cameras. "This is definitely a major event in these kids' lives," he says. "Nearly all of them would not be able to go on to college without the support from our fraternity."

Continued next page



**MARK MCNEE, JUNIOR WARDEN,
PHOENIX LODGE NO. 144, AND WENWEN YU**

Due to budgetary limitations, not every scholarship applicant receives an award; however, Brandt notes that the interviewing teams “were very impressed with the students that GLOW sent to be interviewed. GLOW really goes after the high-needs kids – which is good. Those are the ones who need assistance most.”

According to McNee, a similar excitement was at play with the committee members from the eight lodges participating in his council. “They’d tell me, ‘Hey I heard through the grapevine that the kids from the high school in my district are very excited by the program,’” McNee says. He and Brandt hope to expand lodge participation throughout their regions with the goal of increasing both the number of students and Masons involved.

INVESTMENT IN SUCCESS AT WORK

An Investment in Success scholarship typically provides \$1,000 for each of the first

two years at a California community college. If academic goals continue to be met, students transferring to a public university within California will receive \$2,500 each for their third and fourth years – a total gift of \$7,000.

For Back and Yu, it’s a gift that has truly made a profound difference.

Following her graduation, Yu successfully applied to the City College of San Francisco, where she is now a sophomore. If all goes as planned, she hopes to transfer to the University of California at Berkeley to major in engineering and international business. She developed the personal motto: “Build my self confidence, challenge myself, and always fight for what I believe in.”

Back decided that she wanted to help children, and identified a career as a pediatrics nurse or doctor as her goal. In addition to her Investment in Success scholarship, she received an award from the Hemet Valley Hospital Auxiliary in support of her goal. She is now attending California State University, Fullerton and plans to graduate in 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in nursing.

Brandt considers Back’s choice of a nursing career to be an especially wise one, as there is always a demand for nurses. He was impressed with her enthusiasm and noted that the scholarship program “had a phenomenal impact on her and her family. It enabled her to go directly to a four-year school, to live on her own, and to have those life-changing experiences that such an opportunity provides. She still works full-time while going to school full-time, but that just shows her determination. She continues to succeed.”

Brandt’s experience is reminiscent of Weiss’ words at the program’s initiation: “The litmus test for everything we do in this plan is, ‘Will this make a profound difference in the lives of kids?’”

From the responses the Foundation has received from the more than 80 families who have benefitted from this program – combined with the pride felt by PSAC members and their fellow Masons statewide – it seems clear that this initiative has truly been, and will continue to be, a wise investment. ♦

A LIFELINE, A FRIENDSHIP

OUTREACH CARE MANAGERS EMBODY FRATERNAL RELIEF, BRIDGING DISTANCE WITH FELLOWSHIP AND SUPPORT

By Michelle Simone

An agile hand of relief

Masonic Senior Outreach Services (MSOS) Care Manager Esperanza Esparza describes her typical day as “not typical at all.” She says, “It’s one of the reasons I love my job.”

Esparza deftly shifts from fieldwork with clients and family members to completing complex government forms and negotiating with vendors. On any one day, she might call clients in other states and make house calls throughout the California countryside.

In her two years with MSOS, Esparza has helped Masonic seniors navigate many tough situations. From removing vulnerable members from unsafe environments or connecting them with community resources, to helping homeless seniors find shelter, she has been a conduit of Masonic relief, providing critical services.

“Most clients come to us during a crisis. Moving quickly and efficiently is critical,” she explains. “We are dealing with peoples’ lives and their health or safety may be compromised.”

The unexpected happens

Michael DeGinto’s crisis moment came swiftly and with heavy consequences. A member of both Santa Monica-Palisades Lodge No. 307 and Charity Lodge No. 190 in Jeffersonville, Pennsylvania, DeGinto, sought thyroid treatment for years. Though ill health loomed, he was able to cope, living a normal, productive life.

Then in 2009, doctors diagnosed DeGinto with nonalcoholic steatohepatitis – also known as NASH disease – a hereditary ailment that causes cirrhosis of the liver, without drinking. His health declined dramatically. A common symptom of NASH is swift drops in blood sugar. He began

to suddenly, unexpectedly fall asleep and had to give up driving – it was no longer safe. He couldn’t work and was laid off from his job of 15 years at an electric supply company. Unemployment would take six weeks to begin, and he had no savings.

DeGinto, who still lives in Pennsylvania, reached out to Charity Lodge for relief. They covered his rent and the local veterans’ hospital assumed his health care. Three years later, he recovered his strength. But despite his diverse skill set, finding a job proved to be impossible. He was 59 years old and needed ongoing care – in addition to NASH, he’d developed degenerative osteoarthritis. No one would hire him.

“When I applied for permanent disability, I had 96 pages of medical records,” DeGinto says. It took a full month for disability to be approved and another few months for payments to begin. With bills mounting, it wasn’t enough.

And, DeGinto didn’t just have his own well-being to consider. During the three years he received intensive treatment at the VA hospital, his primary caregiver was his son. Marcus, 24, put his life on hold to care for his father. He was a dedicated volunteer firefighter, but couldn’t commit to a full-time job while his father needed help.

A light in the darkness

A California Freemason magazine ad for Masonic Outreach Services was their lifeline.

Continued next page



Help came swiftly after a call to Masonic Assistance. Care Manager David Blood flew to Pennsylvania for an in-person assessment. DeGinto's age group is typically served by Masonic Family Outreach Services, but it became clear that his case required senior resources. And that's when DeGinto met Esparza.

"We clicked from the beginning," Esparza explains. During their first call, when she learned DeGinto was a veteran, she joked, "I'm a general; you're a soldier." What she meant was: 'Let me guide you.'

Over the next two years, Esparza partnered closely with DeGinto, helping meet his day-to-day needs while exploring options to improve his and Marcus' quality of life. This summer, the DeGintos will relocate to California. Pennsylvania winters are causing DeGinto's joints to worsen, and he misses the fellowship of his brothers at Santa

Monica-Palisades Lodge. Because his father will have more support, Marcus will be able to focus more on his life, too – he plans to look for work as a paid, full-time firefighter.

For DeGinto, the fact that MSOS has helped keep him and his son together is the most important thing. "When Esperanza said, 'You can bring your son and we'll work things out,' it was the biggest relief I'd had," he says.

"The devotion Michael and Marcus have for each other – their strong bond and the respect I sense is undeniable," says Esparza. "The fact that his son assists with his father's care speaks to his character."

The admiration is mutual. "Nothing in the world could compare to what MSOS has done for us," DeGinto says. "And I can't even tell you how helpful Esperanza has been. I would give her top honors. She really is a fantastic person."

Marcus is now a Master Mason, too. It means a great deal to DeGinto, who attended every degree ceremony. "Marcus will always have a family," he says. "As a volunteer firefighter, he's the kind of person who doesn't think twice about risking his life to help people. And now I know he'll always have people who will help him, too." ♦

FACES OF MASONRY

MEET ROGER GURLEY: MASONIC HOMES RESIDENT, MASON FOR 48 YEARS

by Michelle Simone

Roger Gurley, a member of Siminoff Daylight Lodge No. 850 and resident of the Masonic Home at Union City, has enjoyed a life brimming with adventure. He was raised on a hunting and fishing resort in northern Minnesota. He helped the Coast Guard clear the Mississippi River of an abandoned luxury yacht. He led an Episcopal congregation for five years, without any formal seminary training.

Gurley's days of travel and adventure began coming to a close as he dealt with a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) – an autoimmune disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. Originally raised as a Master Mason in Texas, he became eligible for Masonic Assistance in his adopted state of California and was welcomed into the Masonic Homes.

He has now enjoyed the rare experience of living at the Masonic Home at Covina, the Masonic Home at Union City, and Acacia Creek. And at each location, he's found that the support provided by his brothers and Masonic Homes' staff has been game-changing, helping him meet challenges head on to get the most out of life.

"The Masonic way of life is important to me," he says. "It's gotten me through all of these years. Whatever comes up, comes up. If you've got the right kind of background in Masonry, your life is going to come through, regardless."

In his own words

HOW THE MASONIC HOMES HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE
[Masonic Homes' staff] have been a kind of a wall around me whenever I needed them. They were a foundation upon which



I could build. They knew what was going on and bent over backwards to help out. They've been marvelous.

HOW HIS FELLOW MASONS HAVE PROVIDED RELIEF

I was oftentimes in a bewildered state with the different things going on in my life. My brothers were able to stabilize me; they were a rock that I could count on. With 48 years in Masonry, they've helped me see my way through every kind of battle. They've given me something to lean on – the support I've needed.

THE BEST PART ABOUT LIVING AMONG BROTHERS

I can discuss everything that happens in life, on the level, with the Masons around me. They help me, and I give them some strength, too. We become bonded. ♦

A LEGACY OF GIVING

MEASURING THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF OUR STATEWIDE ANNUAL FUND

by Candler Gibson

In early lodges, relief was more than a moral ideal; it was a need. On massive cathedral and castle construction sites, operative stonemasons risked serious injury or death each day. If the worst should happen, they trusted the fraternity to shelter their families. Relief was an “insurance plan,” ensuring loved ones would always be protected.

Modern Masons’ jobs are often devoid of physical dangers. Our lives are padded with more comforts than our early brothers could have imagined; many of us have health insurance and life insurance. But relief is still more than a symbolic concept. When misfortune strikes, Freemasonry remains a lifeline. And in California, our lifeline is attached to the charitable programs of the Annual Fund, which are in turn linked to a legacy of giving that spans generations.

Our brothers’ keepers

The building of the Masonic Widows’ and Orphans’ Home in Union City in 1898 institutionalized relief, spreading the cement of brotherly love to those in distress. To help care for residents and maintain the facility, all applicants were asked to contribute to the Masonic Homes. With this gift, applicants



performed their first charitable act in the name of brotherly love and relief – even before joining Freemasonry.

This contribution was \$25 in 1927 – equivalent to \$694 today. It was a hefty sum; yet applicants were eager to demonstrate their commitment to the fraternity, some even assuming personal loans as a result. Today’s applicants continue to make a \$25 contribution. Compared to the sacrifice of our early brethren, this donation may seem symbolic, yet it is an important initiation into our fraternal culture of charity.

Beginning in 1915, after federal income tax was established, charitable gifts and bequests became a growing revenue source for the Masonic Homes. The Masonic Homes Endowment Board was formally created in 1932. In 1970, Chairman Morris Guss reported that members and lodges had contributed \$919,392 to the Annual Fund – the largest amount since the fund was established. In praising members’ generosity, Guss wrote, “The fraternal philosophy of our Masonic Homes exemplifies Masonry’s greatest tenet – Charity. This belief gives to every Mason the honor and opportunity to be his brother’s keeper.”

LEFT: DONATIONS TO THE ANNUAL FUND HAVE ENABLED THE MASONIC HOMES TO SHELTER VULNERABLE MASONIC SENIORS FOR GENERATIONS. CENTER: CALIFORNIA MASONS' PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES HAVE TRANSFORMED THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS' LIVES. RIGHT: INITIATES' FIRST GIFT TO THE MASONIC HOMES REMAINS A MEANINGFUL EXPRESSION OF FRATERNAL LOVE AND RELIEF.



The Homes' fraternal philosophy, and its driving charitable spirit, has remained a constant – though programming has evolved. In the early 2000s, the fraternity identified an emerging area of need and created Masonic Outreach Services. In addition to caring for Masonic Homes residents, members' Annual Fund gifts now reach communities statewide, supporting vulnerable Masonic families and allowing senior Masons and widows to age safely at home. Brothers have been supported through illness and job loss, tragedy and tough times with grace, dignity, and the help of their fraternity.

Fraternity, family, and causes we hold dear

Throughout California's history, Masonry has also repeatedly stepped forward to support a vulnerable group outside the fraternity: public school students. Another Annual Fund program, the California Masonic Foundation, champions every child's equal opportunity to learn and succeed.

Continued next page

Relief at Your Fingertips

Helping a brother in need is as close as your smart-phone, thanks to the fraternity's first-ever mobile giving website. Visit freemason.org/contribute to make a gift wherever you are – in just a few clicks.

Small monthly installments make giving convenient. Choose from our most popular donation levels: \$9, \$14, or \$27 per month. Your gift will be billed directly to the credit card you provide – no need to fill out a monthly donation slip or buy a stamp.

Why wait? Pick up your phone now and start making a profound difference. Give today at freemason.org/contribute.

IN CALIFORNIA



LEFT: THROUGH OUR RAISING A READER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM, 400 OF THE LOWEST PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN THE STATE WILL RECEIVE RED BAGS FILLED WITH BOOKS. RIGHT: THE MASONIC HOMES EXEMPLIFIES MASONRY'S GREATEST TENET - CHARITY.

Created in 1969, the Foundation promotes educational access by providing college scholarships and supporting literacy, education, and historical causes. Today, we reach some of the most underprivileged children in the state, through programs like our Raising A Reader literacy partnership and Investment in Success scholarship program.

Our Raising A Reader partnership is striving to raise \$1.2 million over three years from members and lodges – a grassroots effort that will be leveraged into statewide change. Because of California Masons, Raising A Reader will be implemented in 400 of the lowest-performing public elementary schools in the state. Because of us, more parents will sit down to read with their children every night in California; more students will graduate from high school; more will pursue college; and more will go on to lead healthy, productive lives. It's yet another example of what our donations add up to – and our fraternity's commitment to creating strategic, relevant charitable programs.

“Our members give their time and treasure to make sure we make the greatest impact,” says Grand Secretary Allan Casalou. “We always need to respond in better, more creative ways so that we can do the most good.”

As the Annual Fund's programs expand and evolve, each Mason's contribution will make an even greater difference. Every gift also honors a legacy that's generations old.

“When I joined my lodge, several mentors told me why charitable giving was so important to the fraternity,” says Mark McNee, junior warden of Phoenix Lodge No. 144. “Now that I am a lodge officer, I recognize that our younger brothers look to me for guidance about their obligation to provide relief. I want to set an example for them that says: ‘Charity is important to our lodge.’ That's why I make my gift to the Annual Fund.”

Relief has always been one of the most important bonds between Masons. More than a century ago, California Masons established their first institutional charity to fulfill that bond. And the Annual Fund that evolved because of those dedicated first brothers now touches thousands of lives each year through life-saving outreach, public school programs, and other vital services. This good work is their legacy – a legacy that will one day be ours.

Here in California, supporting the Annual Fund is more than an obligation. It's a tradition and a tangible demonstration of our enduring brotherly love. ♦

BUILDING THE OUTREACH NETWORK

THE LODGE OUTREACH INITIATIVE IS SPREADING ACROSS THE STATE

by *Laura Normand*

At his lodge's February stated meeting, Charles "Kemp" Letts looked into the faces around the room and asked for help.

"Help me check in on our older brothers and their widows," he said. "Reach out and contact people who haven't been to lodge in awhile. Help me break the ice, so I can get people the help that they need."

When Letts arrived home that night, the light was blinking on his answering machine. The first outreach call had come in. The lodge outreach initiative was taking hold.

Securing the safety net

The lodge outreach initiative is a partnership among California lodges and Masonic Outreach Services (MOS). Four times a year, MOS staff gather volunteer Masons for regional training days. The brothers leave these sessions loaded with information and resources about implementing outreach tactics and accessing support needed from MOS and the Masonic Homes. They are tasked with spreading this knowledge to the lodges in their area, which they do by giving presentations on outreach, distributing resources like Trestleboard articles, and establishing themselves as a local point of contact. When outreach questions arise, these members know who to call and what to expect. Thanks to the lodge outreach initiative, these brothers are plugged into a network of not only Masons who have gone through the same training, but MOS staff, who provide professional assistance.

The initiative began in Southern California two years ago, when San Diego-area Masons approached MOS Director

Sabrina Montes and asked for more outreach resources.

Division IX Masons and MOS staff worked together to develop the training program. And in the months since, the initiative has saved vulnerable members who might otherwise have fallen through the cracks. Working together, lodges and MOS rescued an elderly brother who had been

Continued next page



TIMOTHY GREEN LEADS THE MASONIC OUTREACH INITIATIVE AT LA MESA LODGE NO. 407.



TIMOTHY GREEN FINDS HELPING PEOPLE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF FREEMASONRY.

secretly living in his car for years. They secured a safe living situation for a Mason who could no longer care for his ailing wife. They have reconnected numerous brothers and widows with our fraternal family.

Timothy Green, the brother who leads the initiative at La Mesa Lodge No. 407, explains that sometimes outreach is just a matter of knowing who to call when a member has a small need, such as a wheelchair. Other times, outreach requires help from MOS. In a recent case, the elderly wife of a

lodge brother needed help from both the lodge and MOS. Her husband was already living in a care facility. She had run out of savings and was about to be evicted from her apartment; moreover, she could no longer safely live by herself. While MOS located a care facility and worked out a budget, Green rallied a crew of lodge members to move her belongings.

“The brother had not been at the lodge for a long time; most of us had never met him. But the guy was a brother and that’s what we do – we help our fraternal family,” Green says. “I think people join Masonry for different reasons. I like helping folks. You can look at yourself in the mirror and say, ‘Today; I helped somebody who didn’t have anywhere else to turn.’”

I like helping folks. You can look at yourself in the mirror and say, 'Today; I helped somebody who didn't have anywhere else to turn.'

TIMOTHY GREEN

Because the lodge and MOS intervened, the brother and his wife were reunited: They now live in the same care facility. And their story has become one Green shares when he trains other lodges in outreach, encouraging members to get involved.

The lodge outreach initiative is effective because it gives California lodges consistency, Green explains. "Since the participants all have the same training, we know we can reach out to one another," he says. "It gives structure to a lodge's outreach program."

Expanding the initiative

The initiative has had such success in Southern California that the fraternity has decided to expand it statewide, beginning with Division II in the north. MOS held the first Division II training this February at the Masonic Home at Union City.

Letts was among the 30-some Masons who attended that training. He went on behalf of Reading Lodge No. 254 in Redding, and was so inspired by what he learned that he issued his outreach call to action at Reading Lodge's very next stated meeting. Afterwards, he returned home to the blinking light on his answering machine. It was his first outreach request: A past master asked him to check on an older brother and his wife. The brother, a World War II veteran in his 90s, had not been to lodge in a decade.

Letts telephoned the brother and asked if he could come by to visit him and his wife in their care facility. He stayed with them three hours that day, talking about their Masonic history. The brother was nearing his 50-year mark. Recently, he had become confined to a wheelchair and he was also losing his eyesight. Now nearly blind, he had been feeling too

self-conscious and nervous to attend lodge. He had fallen out of touch.

Then and there, Letts asked if he could give the elder brother a ride to the next stated meeting. It would mean a lot to the lodge, he explained, if the elder Mason would reunite with his fraternal family. The brother was moved by the offer. He accepted.



WEB EXTRA

Read more about the lodge outreach initiative in the April/May 2013 issue of *California Freemason*, online at freemason.org.

"It means a lot to him and his wife," Letts says. "Our senior members have devoted so many of their years to Masonry. We can't forget about these guys. And it'll mean a lot to the younger members to meet him."

"I learn more about Masonry almost every day," Letts adds. He has been a Mason just two and a half years. "Brotherly love, relief, and truth – the three principle tenets of the fraternity – that's what this is all about. That's what MOS is all about."

"The lodge outreach initiative has already achieved great success in the San Diego area," he says. "I want to see if we can't match that success in NorCal." ♦

CALIFORNIA MASONIC ASSISTANCE

We support and serve the whole family

The Masons of California have protected and nurtured the most vulnerable members of our fraternal family since 1898. Today, California Masonic Assistance continues to offer compassionate, values-based care, helping members age successfully at all stages of life.

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MASONIC OUTREACH

Masonic Senior Outreach Services connects eligible senior members of our California fraternal family with the services and resources they need to stay healthy and safe in their homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities.

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For more information about Masonic Outreach Services, contact 888/466-3642 or MasonicAssistance@mhcuc.org.

RESIDENTIAL SENIOR COMMUNITIES

Our senior communities offer a vibrant lifestyle with varying levels of care. To arrange a private or group tour, or for more information, contact the Union City Home at 510/471-3434, the Covina Home at 626/251-2232, or email MasonicAssistance@mhcuc.org.

MASONIC CENTER FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES (MCYAF)

MCYAF provides integrated psychological care for youth who struggle with behavioral, academic, emotional, or social difficulties. Services are available for Masonic families statewide. To learn more, visit mcyaf.org, call 877/488-6293, or email information@mcyaf.org.

**Making a
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Difference,
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For generations, the Masonic Homes of California has protected our fraternal family. It still does today, touching thousands of lives each year through outreach, senior care, and youth and family services. California Masons make it possible. When we give to the Homes, we fulfill a promise to our brothers, and to our loved ones: **We will keep you safe.**

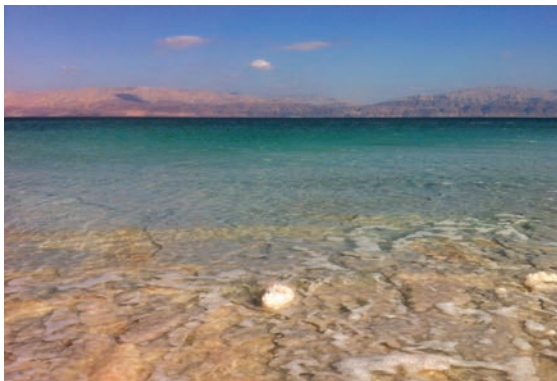
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