



# Inside Friends House

*Everyday Life Inside the Friends House Neighborhood*



## Resident Profile: Frieda Tomlin

by George Sackman

Every Tuesday morning in the Friends House Library, Frieda Tomlin calls to order a meeting, "Community Conversation", in which campus items of current interest or concern by residents are introduced for discussion. She maintains her enthusiastic involvement with the life of apartment residents even though she has been living for more than a year in the Health Care Unit that provides her lodging, meals, and other necessities of daily living.

Frieda is a native of nearby Sebastopol, CA and attended local schools. Her father settled there after he immigrated from the Ukraine as a young man. Her mother was a member of a pioneer family from Europe that homesteaded in Washington State. Teenage Frieda had a summer job for eight years as a lifeguard and instructor at the public swimming pool. It was at the pool that she met her future husband, Kaye, whose

*continued on page 3...*

## Susan's Table: Friends House Mini Boutique

by Betsy Harrell

It was late afternoon and we were the only two in the Friends House lobby. I was checking my mailbox. She was wearing a lavender dress. She had parked her wheelchair nearby and was leaning intently toward a display on a cabinet top. We residents consider the display as our mini market, to which we occasionally donate for sale any nice possessions that we want to unload. Buyers can decide what they think the item is worth and drop money into a handy cashbox. Idly I wondered what held this woman's interest in that motley but carefully arranged collection.

Now, fingering some jewelry strands on the cabinet, she was so engrossed in pleasure that she jumped a bit when I spoke beside her. I began, "You do like that jewelry, don't you?" We learned each other's names and chatted. Carman Formway hadn't come to buy but to look, to pass the time agreeably. I told her we call this exhibit "Susan's Table." She confided she would be discharged from Skilled Nursing next week and finally be in her Santa Rosa home again. Then, "What time is it?" she asked and turned the wheelchair away. "I'd better go back; it's dinnertime. Bye."

The table's name is a measure of our respectful affection for Susan Beer. Like most of us at Friends House, Susan wasn't a Quaker (Friend), yet she embodied the values which Quakers try to live by. She'd been hired in 1984 by our first Director of Nursing as an LVN and relief P.M. charge nurse. In time, Susan became our second Director of Nursing. Years later she was directing the Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) program which operated on our premises. After awhile Susan put a table in the lobby that became the genesis of our present tiny store, then called "Susan's Boutique." The donations it sold provided funds for her program's activities. During the recession, ADHC's federal

funding shriveled, resulting in the program's disappearance.

But popular Susan's Table survives and makes money. At first, residents took responsibility and organized lists of one resident per week to run it. I remember offering to help for a February week. Eventually one volunteer, Vera Korkus, became the manager due to her consistent efforts, a keener interest than anyone else showed, and her background, a lifetime of experience in retail sales.



Vera firmly states that the clothes hanging above Susan's Table are the best-selling items; some residents, who don't easily get about the city anymore, outfit themselves completely here. Next most popular and profitable are jewelry items. And who're the customers? Vera replies, "Anybody!" They're residents of Friends House; visiting families; staff such as maintenance guys, CNAs, physical therapists; friends of friends; strangers. At least two staff members, on arrival at work, go first to the Table to check out what's new; one hopeful man always searches for any later Beethoven piano sonatas newly for sale.

*continued on page 3...*

## General Information

707-538-0152

Monday through Friday

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Darren Trisel  
Executive Director  
707-573-4501

Paddy Coreris  
Sales & Marketing  
707-573-4508

Jeff Sumabat  
Resident Services and  
Assisted Living  
707-573-4504

Isabel Alvares-Farias  
Skilled Nursing Facility  
Admissions  
707-573-4521

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**Friends Association of  
Services for the Elderly**  
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# "Change Agent" Darren Trisel, is officially named Executive Director

by Betsy Harrell



When Darren Trisel appeared as the Interim Executive Director of Friends House in December 2015, it seemed a fortunate day to us who live and work here. In April 2017, Darren was engaged by Pacific Retirement Services (PRS) to be our Executive Director (ED). We are celebrating and therefore want to introduce him to you, our wider circle of friends and acquaintances. The following account is an April interview with him by Betsy Harrell.

I was curious to know, of course, what had been Darren Trisel's first impressions of those early days in a new job at Friends House. His reply came easily: "Everyone was very warm and welcoming, and I felt comfortable here." He produced his second reply immediately, which was revealing. He spoke on the subject of change, as if he had been conscious from the beginning that it would be significant to his and our days ahead. "Change," he said, "is always a challenge. Change comes naturally to me, and I consider myself a 'change agent.'" I asked if on his arrival he had noticed many things that needed changing here. His answer was affirmative, as he did believe there were many challenges, many improvements to be made. At the same time, he felt that he had begun working collaboratively with the residents and had been a good listener.

As for Darren's background in caregiving for the aged, our ED relates that "in reflection," he began caring for seniors as a teenager, which is a rather unusual interest for a youth. He took jobs helping elderly neighbors by attending to their yards or pet-sitting or merely being a companion. Looking backwards, Darren feels that possibly those teenage experiences with his old neighbors had had an effect on his future career. "There in my Ohio neighborhood, that's really where my affinity for the elderly began."

Darren spent seven years in the Air Force and was trained to be a medical laboratory technologist. So that was his introduction to the health-care environment. Subsequently he continued his education, earning a Bachelor's degree in Health Care Management and a Master's in Health Care Administration.

As for professional experience, Darren worked 15 years in the hospital environment as a lab technologist and lab manager. Further broadening opportunities followed. In Las Vegas, Nevada, the training he received in the profession of long-term care took him to California. In our state, he has gained over 25 years of experience with eldercare, a field consisting of Independent Living, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, Memory Care and Alzheimer's Care. Additional training included over 15 years of person-centered care.

During the period when Darren was president of the California Culture Change Coalition, its focus was to be a thinktank of Skilled Nursing's best practices and benchmarks for the State of California. A recent success story was training and educating Skilled Nursing leaders about lowering the usage of unnecessary anti-psychotics. Darren cannot help but be pleased that these efforts resulted in our state becoming the nation's leader in such reductions.

More recently, Darren joined the PRS team at Moldaw Residence in Palo Alto to secure financial operations; he was assisting them with a \$72 million refinancing package. Working there was the PRS bridge in transitioning to Friends House, which PRS is under contract to manage.

Our ED's blended family consists of Angela, his wife of 23 years, five children and three grandchildren. When asked, he reels off non-work interests which include spending time with family, landscaping the yard, occasional casino trips, and traveling.

You noticed that Darren Trisel had commenced our interview by mentioning how he had quickly developed ideas about possible beneficial changes here. Now, at the end of our interview, he returned to this topic. Indeed, the already-effected number of improvements—as he would label them—is large. They have significantly impacted the following departments: Independent Living and Assisted Living, Health Care Unit (Skilled Nursing), Marketing, Facility Services, and Human Resources. So, says Darren, "After working here during the past one and a half years, I'm feeling positive about our accomplishments and am looking forward to those that come."

*“Susan’s Table” continued...*

A sign amid the display explains that proceeds go to help residents. The Residents’ Association spends the funds on dinners and receptions for guest speakers and musicians, for updating audio-visual equipment, and for other projects.

Yes, Susan’s Boutique survived into our era—but not without contention. Just as in Susan’s day, the modern displays have their critics. Not everybody feels it’s an appropriate sight for the most public arena of Friends House. In truth, the Table sometimes appeared disorderly, as did unsightly boxes and wares stuffed below. What would prospective residents or donors think of us? Some administrators called this second-hand sales outlet “tacky” and preferred it be abolished or else located out of sight.

The Residents’ Association’s reaction was strenuous efforts both to improve the Table’s appearance and maintain it where it would be very visible. With management’s acquiescence, of course, the Association contracted with Bruce Johnson to build a handsome cabinet with drawers and lockable doors. (The brother of a former resident, Bruce is also the renowned sculptor of huge redwood trunks that get lifted into exhibition spots by derricks and cranes.)



Susan’s Table provides more than just a convenient place to shop for a gift or whatever. Nor has it ever been just about the money. Apparently we mostly felt, and feel, it represents qualities about who we at Friends House are, to wit: Although we don’t care to appear scruffy, neither would we wish our home to appear pretentiously elegant. We prize simplicity and dislike wasting things. We like being able to recycle unwanted objects into hands that do want them. If we spy our donated shirt being worn by a friend, there’s no embarrassment to either party. We embrace a culture of sharing, and we like this way of sharing. As always, our thoughts culminate in the word Community.

*“Resident Profile” continued...*

great-grandfather had bought the property on the Pacific coast, now Fort Ross State Historic Park, settled by Russian fur traders in the early 1800s.

When Frieda graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Kaye from San Jose State with a commission in the army, she joined him in Nuremberg, Germany and they were married there in 1956. After military service and graduate school he joined the staff of Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in Palo Alto, and they settled in San Mateo. In 1964, while rearing three children, she went with him on a temporary assignment to Paris for 18 months. In San Mateo Frieda taught part-time for a co-op nursery school for 20 years, was Religious Education Director at the Unitarian Church, and was active in PTA. During the summer, she and Kaye were counselors at “Plantation Farm Camp” near Fort Ross while their children participated in the cultivation and conservation activities.

For 25 years they were active in the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, and Kaye was influential in securing an additional 3000 acres. Frieda also served on the Fort Ross Advisory Committee. Avid “primitive” campers, the family back-packed into the woods of Fort Ross. After their children were on their own, she and Kaye traveled over the world. They also opened their home to students from Mexico, Germany, France, and Japan.



After Kaye died in 1992, Frieda was employed for 17 years at SRI in the department that provided a variety of employee services. Retiring from SRI she moved to Friends House in 2006, having known about it much earlier from someone in the Unitarian Church who retired here. At Friends House she was Clerk of the Buildings and Grounds Committee for seven years, and a member of the Film Committee and Peace & Justice Committee.

**Save the Date**

# JAZZ IN JULY

**Friday, July 21**

Guests and residents are welcome but reservations are required as seating is limited.

Call 707-573-4508 for details.



**Donate Your Books to the Friends House Library**



Friends House Library needs used books.

Contact  
Kaye Kerriden at  
707-576-6691 or  
frybooks2@gmail.com

## Did You Know?

Friends House has two guest rooms for residents' family members and friends when they visit. The rooms have recently been given a face lift: **Commons B Guest Room** has new bedroom furniture; the remodeled **Wells Guest Room** also has new furniture, a TV and Internet connection.



Friends Association of  
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## FRIENDS HOUSE

[www.friendshouse.org](http://www.friendshouse.org)

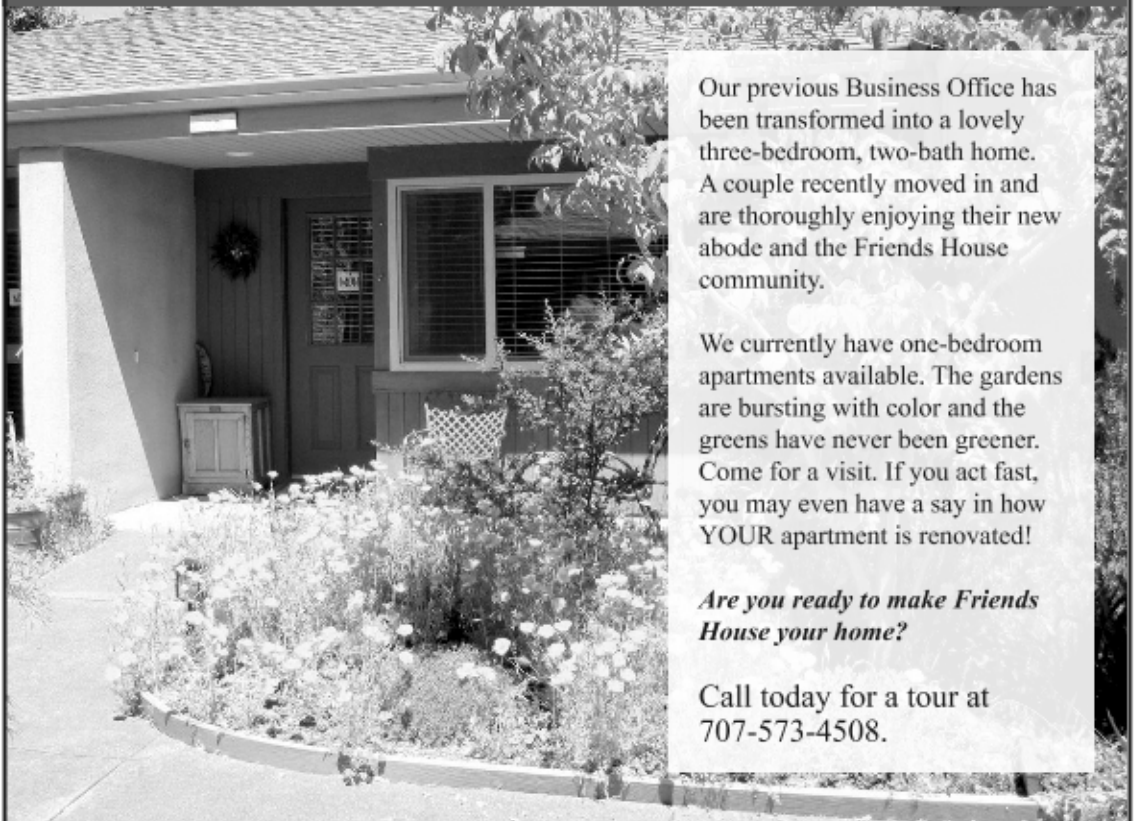
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Need tips on downsizing and/or decluttering? Come meet residents who have been there/done that. They'll clue you in.

Stay tuned for a downsizing presentation coming soon.

## Welcome Home — A New House for Independent Living! *Are you ready to make Friends House **your home**?*



Our previous Business Office has been transformed into a lovely three-bedroom, two-bath home. A couple recently moved in and are thoroughly enjoying their new abode and the Friends House community.

We currently have one-bedroom apartments available. The gardens are bursting with color and the greens have never been greener. Come for a visit. If you act fast, you may even have a say in how YOUR apartment is renovated!

*Are you ready to make Friends House your home?*

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