

A publication of Palm Village Retirement Community

# PALM VILLAGER

June 2023 | [palmvillage.com](http://palmvillage.com)



**PALM VILLAGE**  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

## SPECIAL FEATURES

Resident Spotlight – Gary Gerbrandt  
The Benefits of Living at Palm Village

Nellie Molina  
Personal Care Supervisor  
47 Years of Service



## PALM VILLAGE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

703 W. Herbert Avenue  
Reedley, CA 93654

Please call for more information  
or to schedule a tour  
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# PALM VILLAGER

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## Palm Village Chapel Services



Enjoy Chapel every Thursday night.

Service begins at 6:30 pm with Old-Fashioned Hymns  
with our speaker beginning at 7:00 pm.

## Donations Living Legacy Fund



Many of our residents outlive their resources. To  
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# A Letter from our Interim President



**PALM VILLAGE**  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

## Abundance

Since our last magazine, California and specifically our area has been blessed with an abundance of water after many years of drought conditions. This has allowed for the re-fueling of precious reserves of groundwater and wells. As an agricultural area that is known to be feeding the world, this has been a blessing. Still to come is the run-off of the snow from the Sierra Mountain range which will surely keep water flowing most of the summer. Thankfully, Palm Village is not in the flood zone and we did not have any flooding on campus.

For many years Palm Village has been hosting a picnic at the Cricket Hollow picnic grounds across the street from us. This year the picnic area, bathrooms, and parking lots are still underwater and closed as you can see from our cover photo. But we adapt as a community!

We recently hosted the Pancake Breakfast on the Lawn for our residents. This is a special event where my wife Lorie comes with me to work, and along with other employees we help to serve the residents a hearty breakfast outside before it becomes too hot. The heat does bring about challenges for outdoor activities, but what the heat does help is the amazing fruit season that is coming quickly. Driving to work each day, I see the fruit setting on the trees. It's a wonderful drive and pass so many different types of fruit being cultivated in our areas rich soil.

Palm Village is looking for new residents to join our community. We currently have several rooms available in Assisted Living and some updated Patio Homes. Our mission is to serve seniors in their retirement in the many levels of care offered here. This is a great place to live! Would you help us in spreading the word?

I would be remiss if I did not mention the wonderful staff that we have at Palm Village. Their caring nature and love for the residents and community makes this a special place to work and live. In this issue, we celebrate Nellie Molina who has been so far, a 47-year employee. She brings a wealth of history and has a caring heart for the work that she does, and the friendships that she has amassed over the years. It's an amazing achievement!

Again, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as Interim President & CEO. Our Board is working hard to develop plans for the future, and I am excited to be on this journey with them.

Very truly yours,

Jim Higbee

Interim President & Chief Executive Officer



## Palm Village Living Legacy

Palm Village Retirement Community honors its commitment to care for seniors in their retirement and advancing age, even if they have lived beyond their assets. To assist in our mission, we receive tax-deductible donations through our Palm Village Living Legacy fund.

The Living Legacy fund helps residents continue to live in our community with all resources available to them. A promise that we made to never discharge any resident for a lack of funds. It is made good on the biblical commandment in James 1:27 ..."true and pure religion...is to

## Our Mission Promise

take care of widows in their affliction." The "widows" have been joined by plenty of people whose affliction is simply a lack of funds.

Would you please join us in helping to keep our promise to provide continuing care for our senior residents? Our Living Legacy donation envelope is enclosed with each magazine, or you can visit [www.palmvillage.com](http://www.palmvillage.com) and click on the secure DONATIONS button at the top of our website. Thank you to all who continue to donate towards our mission.



by Laurie Diamant

*"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1Thessalonians 5:18*

# Gary Gerbrandt

Courtwright Lake

After attending San Jose State University, Palm Village Assisted Living resident Gary Gerbrandt started his working career as a police officer in the city of Los Altos, California. He had only 24 units to complete his BA degree and since he knew it could be done in a year, he resigned from his job as a police officer. With the assistance of his parents, Gary graduated in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in a special major including social science and a minor in English, history, and science. He signed a teaching contract with Soledad Union Elementary School District. He spent summers working at the roulette tables in Lake Tahoe. Gary became a full-time teacher for the next 35 years.

Gary was born in San Jose, California. His parents were Bernhardt and Geraldine Gerbrant. His father Ben was the youngest of eight boys and four sisters who immigrated from Russia and Canada. Gary's grandparents Jacob and Justina (Brandt) Gerbrandt were Mennonites who lived in the Chortitza Colony in Russian-occupied Ukraine. This land was granted to

the Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites in 1789. The Mennonites of this area were mostly of Dutch descent who had immigrated from Germany and Poland after the decree of Catherine II of Russia included 70 ha (175 free acres) of agricultural lands, rights to self-govern, religious freedom, exemption from military service, exemption from swearing oaths in legal proceedings, the right to establish their own schools and teach their own language. These rights and privileges were beyond what Russian peasants achieved.

The Gerbrandt family immigrated in 1903 after Lenin's first attempt to control the area. They traveled from Ukraine to England to board a ship to America, only to be barred entry because of a measles outbreak on the ship. The ship took them to Newfoundland, Canada where they disembarked and moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan. It took two attempts to immigrate the family to the United States. They settled in Reedley, California when Gary's dad was seven years old.

After living in San Jose, California, Gary's father moved the family to Soledad, California and worked as a fuel delivery driver. Gary's mother Geraldine was a classically trained concert pianist who played in church. They did not have a Mennonite Church in the area and attended the First Presbyterian Church. In 1968, Gary married Joanne Luck, whom he met at church in Salinas, California. They moved to San Jose so Joanne could finish her college degree. Joanne was an award-winning elementary school teacher in Soledad, California. They were blessed with two daughters, Julie and Amy.

Gary taught at Oak Grove Elementary School District where he led the English Language Reading Program for the district. In the process of creating the curriculum, the district office was interested in helping him move into an administrative role. The district gave Gary a full-pay sabbatical to continue his master's degree in education. Gary taught classes at San Jose State University while completing his degree in Elementary Language Arts.

After his degree, he rose up the chain of command to vice-principal and principal. For the last 10 years of his working career, he was Superintendent of Schools for San Antonio Union Elementary School in southern Monterey County. A large geographical area was covered by the school district for Kindergarten through 8th grade. After 35 years of service in public schools, Gary decided to retire. Thereafter, Gary was encouraged to run for Soledad City Council and after two years was appointed Mayor. His close relationship with the Hispanic leaders in the community from his days as the Superintendent forged a partnership of friendship and working together for the people of the community.

In 1968, Gary and Joanne inherited a much-loved 2 ½ story modified A-frame cabin at Courtwright Lake. While his father Ben was employed by the Soledad Prison Authority supervising inmates on forest preservation, he learned that certain lots would be for sale on private property and purchased his lot and built the cabin with the help of family and friends. While Gary and Joanne inherited the cabin, it will be passed on to their children and grandsons for their future enjoyment.

Gary and Joanne's children include Julie, a Human Resources Manager for the San Joaquin Air Quality Control District. She is married to Steve and their two sons, (Gary's grandsons) Ben and Nate. Daughter Amy is retired after 10 years of teaching at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where her husband Keith is still teaching. Gary and Joanne knew of Palm Village Retirement Community since Gary's grandmother Justina lived here after the passing of her husband Jacob. They visited here often for family events. Gary was also a ten-year member of the Mennonite Men's Chorus in Reedley. He truly felt the Holy Spirit's work in helping them to make the decision and move. The move to Reedley made them closer to their families in Fresno and San Luis Obispo. A man who has worn many hats in life has found contentment in storytelling and the comradery of those who live, work, and serve here.



## Family



*Courtwright Lake Cabin / Gerbrandt Family*

# The Benefits of Living at Palm Village Retirement Community



**PALM VILLAGE**  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

by Laurie Diamant

There are many opportunities before retirement to get involved, socialize, and make friends. Participation with children, churches, work, volunteering, and neighbors allow you to build connections and form friendships. In later years, it seems as if there are fewer opportunities to engage with others. Being part of a senior community isn't just nice, it's a vital part of staying healthy and active.

Research shows that the key to a long, healthy life starts with engagement. And adults who belong to a community have stronger social connections and are more engaged, happier, and healthier. Sonja Duffy, Palm Village Retirement Community Activities Director for Independent and Assisted Living and her team strive to keep residents as active as they want to be with an abundance of organized crafts, day trips, movies, fitness work outs, games, and other fun and engaging activities. Palm Village also provides complimentary trips to local stores. "Our residents can be as busy and active as they want to be in retirement," says Sonja. Many seniors wait until retirement to start hobbies that they dreamed about after a busy career. Palm Village has surprising spots around campus with roses, trees, flowers, and a lovely garden cared for by some ambitious residents. Our community also has an exercise center with

equipment for those wanting to maintain good physical health. When you move to a senior living community, there are many different ways you can connect with people, build friendships, and continue learning and participating in the things that you enjoy.

Palm Village is licensed as a continuing care retirement community (CCRC). CCRC's have the benefit of offering a variety of housing options and providing for the continuum of care. Palm Village provides Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care, Skilled Nursing, and Rehabilitation. This allows for aging-in-place without the need to move to a different location away from friends as the need for additional care arises. Our Independent Living residents are cared for by Jeannie Wiest RN, who checks on residents to assist in any care needs that arise and help them remain as healthy and independent as they can be.

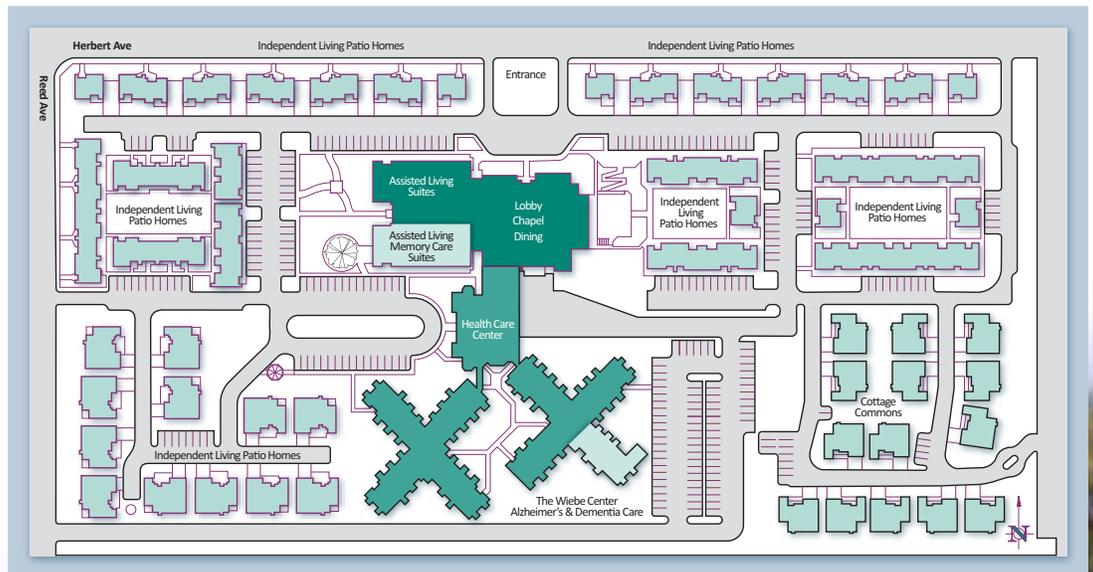
One benefit to living in a retirement community is that you are not financially obligated to finance unanticipated home maintenance costs. Our community has a maintenance department that cares for all of the needs of the patio homes, assisted living rooms, and buildings associated with the community. When a lightbulb needs replacing, all residents have to do is call for assistance. There are no additional charges to our residents for the care of the community.

“We hear over and over from our residents that they wished they’d have moved in sooner,” says Jim Dueck, Director of Marketing. When people start looking at the costs for maintaining a home, landscaping, groceries, and utilities that are ever-increasing matched against the costs of senior living, they soon see the benefits of knowing the costs won’t change each month and that they are writing one check a month for their living expenses. Jim’s own family members have and are currently living at Palm Village, including his sister in Independent Living and his mother-in-law in Skilled Nursing who loves having her clothes laid out for her, her hair and makeup done by staff and feels loved and pampered. She loves visiting with friends she has known over her lifetime and often says these are the best years of her life.

Another standout for our community is that we minister to our resident’s spiritual needs with our in-house chapel services and Chaplain, Dennis Fast who regularly meets with residents and provides a Thursday evening service each week for residents and community members.

Palm Village provides a peace of mind for residents and their families in that we provide a secure environment where residents feel safe, cared for, fun activities, and social opportunities. Overall, living at Palm Village is a great option for seniors looking for a more carefree lifestyle and the convenience of having maintenance and other services readily available. Perhaps the most important, we are a friendly community of people who look out for each other.

If you are considering senior living and want to learn more about the ways our community can help you reach the retirement you dreamed of, please contact **Jim Dueck** by phone 559-638-6933 or **email** – [jimdueck@palmvillage.com](mailto:jimdueck@palmvillage.com)



*Palm Village Campus Map*

“We hear over and over from our residents that they wished they’d have moved in sooner.”  
-Jim Dueck





# Nellie Molina, Assisted Living Personal Care Supervisor 47 Years of Service

by Laurie Diamant



In January 2022, the National Bureau of Labor Statistics found that the median number of years for wage and salary workers that have been with their current employer is 4.1 years. Nellie Molina shatters those statistics and breaks any known employment record for MB Homes, Inc. as a 47-year employee of Palm Village Retirement Community.

On September 1, 1975, Nellie began her employment for MB Homes, Inc. at Pleasant View Manor as a nursing assistant. At that time, nursing assistants were not licensed by the State. In 1981, Nellie was grandfathered in for her license because of her years of service and training others in the field. During her time there, she began leading the post-hospital rehabilitation care for patients who required additional care and recovery. After 17 years of employment at Pleasant View she transferred to the Palm Village campus to care for residents in Assisted Living.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Nellie is also a cosmetologist after completing night classes to obtain her licensing. In addition to her full-time employment as a caregiver, she also cut and styled hair for the residents at Pleasant View and Palm Village. In 1995, Nellie became a supervisor of Assisted Living resident care where she remains today.

Nellie's commitment and loyalty to Palm Village continues to be a remarkable achievement. Working for the same employer provides benefits not only for herself, but for those of the entire organization which include job security, stability of the company, and a deep understanding of operations, residents, colleagues, and culture. Palm Village employees are treated like family, and this is home! She gives tribute to the management of Palm Village and the mission statement that Palm Village cares for residents, even if they've run out of assets.

Some of Nellie's best traits are her kind-heartedness, caring, and she stays engaged and open to new ideas in the care of residents while providing stability to her department. Karely Alcantar, Assisted and Independent Living Administrator recalls that during the early days of the pandemic she and Nellie were caring for assisted living residents that in normal times would have been transferred to Skilled Nursing or the hospital. Karely recalls the conversation with Nellie and as they discussed what was the best for the care of the residents, Nellie stated "We will do what we need to do to take care of our residents." Karely relies on Nellie's history with Palm Village as they traverse the changing needs of residents and how they come together with their plans for care.

Human Resource Manager, Judy Guerra, herself a 35-year employee of Palm Village and great friend of Nellie's, says that there are many long-term employees at Palm Village and believes it's because of the comradery of the employees and leadership that keeps employees motivated. Judy shared that Nellie never misses work unless absolutely necessary and will stay long after her day has ended if there is a need to help care for residents. "Nellie truly cares for the residents and the employees and always tries to accommodate her staff as much as possible for the days off that they need. Nellie also makes sure to acknowledge the birthdays of her staff in a special way," says Judy.

Nellie's family remains her badge of honor, a proud Mother of her two boys, Robert "Bobbie" and Michael who sadly passed away from Covid. Palm Village allowed her extended time to grieve her loss. She has also been blessed with six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

We thank you Nellie for your tireless efforts and faithful commitment to Palm Village.

Residents & Staff

# What's Happening



Employees Celebrate  
MLB Opening Day!



St. Patrick's Day



Bonnie Nachtigall in her  
beautiful hat at the  
Mother's Day Lunch



Independent Living George & Amy Tsuji



Pancake Breakfast 2023  
with fun sunglasses and smiles!



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**PALM VILLAGE**  
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Palm Village Retirement Community is designed to allow each resident the opportunity to enjoy their retirement living. Enjoy all of the comforts of home with the peace of mind that you are part of a multi-level care community.

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