A publication of Palm Village Retirement Community

PALM VILLAGER





703 W. Herbert Avenue Reedley, CA 93654

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PALM VILLAGER

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Palm Village Chapel Services



Enjoy Chapel every Thursday night.

Service begins at 6:00 pm with Old-Fashioned Hymns with our speaker beginning at 6:35 pm.



Many of our residents outlive their resources. To prepare for the future of all residents, your donation to our Living Legacy Fund will be greatly appreciated.

Secure Online Donations

Visit our **DONATIONS** page on our website to setup your one time or better still, recurring donations. www.palmvillage.com

or Mail your check to:

Palm Village Retirement Community 703 West Herbert Avenue Reedley, CA 93654

A Letter from our President



Promise

As spring breathes new life into our community with blossoms on fruit trees, it also brings with it a sense of hope, renewal, and possibility. This season of growth offers us a moment to celebrate recent accomplishments at Palm Village.

We have been recently honored with the Large Business of the Year Award by the Reedley Chamber of Commerce. This prestigious recognition reflects the collective strength of our community and the partnerships that have helped us grow and thrive. It is also a testament to the collaborative spirit and unwavering dedication of our employees and residents.

On April 24th, Palm Village was nominated and awarded the 2025 Partnership Award through Fresno Compact. Fresno Compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thrive. Palm Village, compact annually honors up to ten businesses for exceptional school partnerships that help students thri

Additionally, our Annual Soup Supper Fundraiser was a tremendous success! The evening brought together friends, neighbors, and supporters for a cause that unites us all. The generosity and goodwill displayed at this event not only made a tangible impact but allow to carry forward with our commitment to provide care for residents who have outlived their resources.

This month, we will have the privilege of celebrating our incredible employees with Employee Service Awards, recognizing individuals who have dedicated five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and even thirty years of service. Their commitment and hard work form the foundation of our organization's success.

This issue features a special spotlight on Hans and Barbara Koop, whose story serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by many Mennonites as immigrants striving to reach America. Hans' and his family's journey, marked by the hardships of war and other daunting circumstances, is a testament to the resilience and courage that define the Mennonite heritage. I'm confident you'll find his remarkable story both inspiring and thought-provoking.

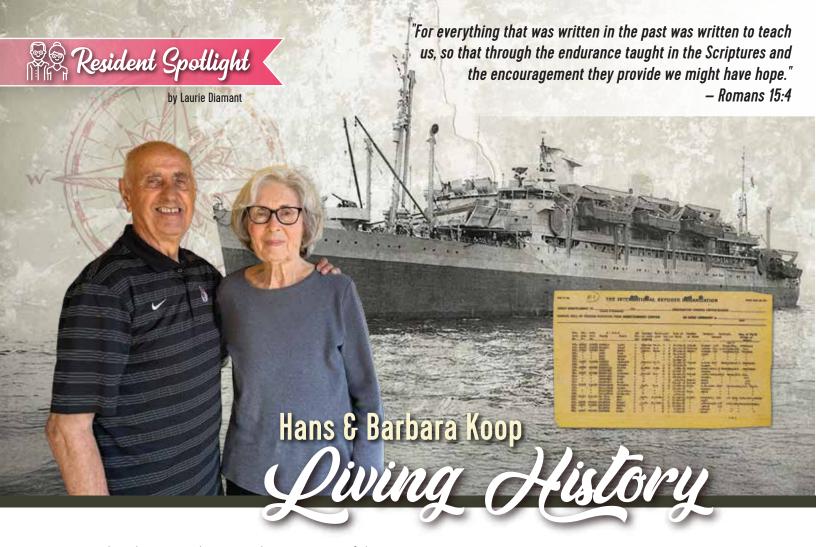
As we move forward into this vibrant season, let us carry the energy and inspiration of these achievements with us. Together, we have demonstrated that when we come together with shared purpose and determination, we can accomplish great things.

Thank you for your continued support and for being an integral part of our journey. Here's to a spring full of promise and a future brimming with opportunities.

Warm regards,

Jim Higbee

President & CEO



Hans and Barbara (Harder) Koop became part of the Palm Village community in December 2023. Their decision to settle here was a heartfelt one—choosing to embrace their retirement years surrounded by friends they've cherished since their youth. After 62 years of marriage, their partnership is a testament to love, perseverance, and faith. Together, they carry with them an extraordinary life story rooted in triumph over adversity and a steadfast commitment to family.

Hans' life journey begins in Sparrau, Ukraine, a Mennonite farming village near the Russian border. Born to Maria (Pauls) and Gerhart Koop, Hans was the eldest of three sons. His early years were marked by the upheaval of World War II. In 1941, the Russian Army invaded their village, conscripting every able-bodied man aged 16 to 60, including Hans' father, who was never seen again. With their town devastated and Russian troops threatening to return, Maria made the courageous decision to flee. Gathering her sons—Hans, age five; Edward, age three; and Heinz, a one-year-old boy, and her

younger sister embarked on a harrowing journey to safety with little more than a horse and wagon.

For nearly two years, they traveled toward Holzhausen, Germany where Maria's older sister had made arrangements for housing if, they could get there. Nights were spent hiding along the roadsides, and days were consumed with the search for food and shelter. Despite the hardships, Maria and her sister persevered, caring for the boys and keeping hope alive. Their determination brought them to Warsaw, Poland, where their wagon and horse were commandeered by German soldiers. During the preparations to board the train to Germany, the family encountered scenes of unimaginable cruelty, with Jewish families marked by yellow stars being sent to Auschwitz. These experiences left an indelible mark on Hans, shaping his understanding of the world at a young age.

While his mother and aunt were working on the details to get passage on the train, Hans went to sit on the grass under a large tree. While running his

hands through the grass, he found a small green toy and put it in his pocket. As they were boarding the train, chaos erupted. As two P51 American bombers attacked, a nervous Hans fidgeted with a toy-like object he had found—which was a small grenade. He pulled the pin and dropped it on the floor. The accidental explosion blew a hole in the floor of the car but miraculously spared the lives of those around them. Reflecting on this moment, Hans says, "God is not finished with me."

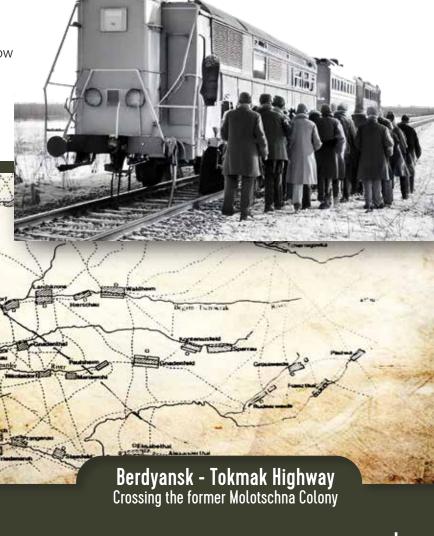
The family eventually reached Holzhausen, Germany, where they reunited with relatives and began rebuilding their lives. Government assistance provided some stability, but challenges persisted. Hans fell gravely ill with tuberculosis and was not expected to survive. Yet, in another twist of fate, he made a full recovery, declaring, "Our journey on earth is planned for us." Life took on a semblance of normalcy as Hans attended school and formed childhood memories, even as the shadow of war loomed large.

After WWII was over, Hans' mother Maria contacted the MCC Relief Agency which she knew about from her Mennonite heritage. She persuaded them to allow her to move with her sons to America where she wanted to allow these boys to make something of their lives.

Maria Koop - Han's Mother

They boarded a troop ship with cots in Bremerhaven, Germany. The family endured a long voyage across the Atlantic with adverse weather forcing their arrival in New Orleans rather than Ellis Island in New York City. Upon arrival, they faced indignities such as being sprayed with DDT—a stark reminder of their status as refugees. Despite these trials, they remained resolute. They were placed on a train to take them to Fresno, California where they would be greeted and given a ride to Reedley, California.

They were provided lodging in a trailer behind Henry Martens house. Maria was told she would need to have a job. Because of her cooking skills, she was given a job by Hazel Shamoon as a cook at Goody, Good Drive-in on "G" Street. Thereafter, she received an offer to build and run another restaurant where she was famous for her pies. Maria worked many years in restaurants to care for her family.



After graduating from Immanuel High School, Hans briefly attended Reedley College when he received his military draft notice. Since he had a low draft number, he knew his likelihood would be that he would be drafted. His friends Earl & Bob Enns all went to Sanger, California to sign up for the Army. All three were sent to San Antonio, Texas for Basic Training. Out of the 400 men in his platoon, 399 of them were sent to Korea, Hans was sent to Germany. Hans had trained to be a medic. He arrived in Germany and the commanding officer told him that they needed a translator more than they needed a medic. Hans explained that he was not trained to be a translator, nor did he have security clearance for the position, but the commanding officer assured him he was now a translator. Hans proudly served in General George Patton's 2nd Armored Division and was called upon to translate for General Dwight D. Eisenhower and British Army Commander-in-Chief Bernard "Monty" Montgomery. Nearing the end of his service in

Germany, he had heard that his commanding officer could help to fast-track his American Citizenship because of his service in the Army. Captain Dickey was shocked to learn that he did not have citizenship and told him point blank "Soldier, this conversation never happened." He said "I'm not going to get in trouble for this and neither are

you." Hans received his citizenship a few years after his service had ended.

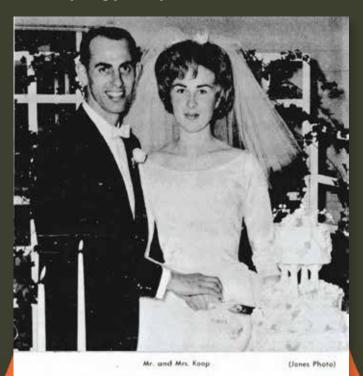
Upon returning home, Hans again attended Reedley College, where he met Barbara Harder. The two married in 1962, beginning a partnership that would span decades. Barbara's own journey to California mirrored the resilience of the Koop family. Born in Oklahoma to Helen (Traudt) and Gus Harder during the Dust Bowl, her family sought refuge in California, finding community within the Mennonite Brethren Church. Many of Barbara's extended family of aunt, uncles, and cousins also made the journey to California, giving her many fond memories of growing up surrounded by a large family.

Hans began his working career early in life, but many remember him as the Service Manager at Martens Chevrolet. Through a long-time customer Herb Kaprelian, he went to work for Sun-Maid where he spent 25 years building relationships with growers and running the Sun-Maid Prune business.

Meanwhile, Barbara devoted herself to nurturing their family, raising their two successful sons, Patrick Koop of Clovis and Darren Koop of Fresno, and delighting in their five wonderful grandchildren. Together, Hans and Barbara built a life rooted in faith, family, and hard work.

While Hans treasures his family above all else, he also holds his nearly two decades of coaching the Immanuel Track Team, from 1977 to 1996, as one of the most rewarding and fulfilling chapters of his life. During these years, he not only guided young athletes toward success on the track but also fostered a sense of discipline, camaraderie, and personal growth among his team members, leaving a lasting impact on countless lives.

With decades-long friendships woven into the fabric of their lives, Hans and Barbara continue to share in the Palm Village community with their inspiring journey.



Barbara Ann Harder Becomes Mrs. Hans Koop

Recognizing Our Employees

Each May, Palm Village Retirement Community proudly honors our Employee Service Award Winners—individuals who have dedicated years of service to our community. As a service-driven organization, our success depends on the dedication and unwavering support of our employees. Their long-term commitment to the care of our residents and the mission of Palm Village strengthens the foundation of our community.

Guided by Christian convictions, we strive to create a positive and productive environment rooted in honesty, courage, helpfulness, and respect. It is through these shared values that we celebrate the extraordinary contributions of our team, ensuring the continued care and support that our residents deserve.



30 Years - Josie Estrada - LVN

25 Years - Catalina Gutierrez - IVN

20 Years - Leo Gomez - Dietary Manager

20 Years - Jeanette Tena - Administration

15 Years - Angelica Hernandez - LVN Mickie Balderas - Reautician Clarissa Yanez - Billing

10 Years - Carmen Monroy -Dietary supervisor **Connie Espindula** - Medical Records

5 Years -Daniela Abundiz - PCG **David Nesper** - Dietary

Breanna Perez - Dietary Yolanda Vargas - CNA

Palm Village Living Legacy

Our Mission Promise

Palm Village Retirement Community honors it's 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

take care of orphans and 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 and click on the secure DONATIONS button at the top of our website. Thank you to all who continue to donate towards our mission.



When we talk about the many benefits of life at Palm Village Retirement Community, one stands out as a cornerstone of care and comfort: our 120-bed Health Care Center. This bustling facility offers skilled nursing care, rehabilitation services, and specialized memory care. Whether recovering from a hospital stay or requiring long-term support, our residents have access to exceptional care without leaving the community they call home.

"It's the service you hope to never need, but when the need arises, it's invaluable to have it close by," says Evelyn Schlesselman, Skilled Nursing Administrator. "Palm Village residents and referrals from our staff families are given priority in our Health Care Center." This means our residents get priority placement when available and can receive care while remaining connected to their loved ones and familiar surroundings.

Evelyn emphasizes the collaborative efforts of Palm Village managers across Independent Living, Assisted Living, and the Health Care Center. Together, they assess residents' needs and proactively plan for appropriate levels of care. This thoughtful approach ensures residents, and their families feel supported, and that resources are allocated effectively to meet future demands.

1) OS PD Long-Term Care Utilization Data (2014). Authors' calculations based on California Department of Finance data.

The importance of having skilled nursing services within a senior community cannot be overstated—especially in a region like the San Joaquin Valley. As California faces a growing skilled nursing shortage, particularly in Fresno and Tulare counties, the challenge of finding care falls heavily on hospital social workers and families. According to KFF Health News, California's nursing homes play a critical role in caring for elderly and disabled residents. By 2030, the state's 65-and-over population is expected to grow by 87 percent, with a projected 60 percent increase in skilled nursing demand in the San Joaquin Valley alone.

For Palm Village residents, the convenience of on-campus care brings peace of mind. Staying close to a spouse and friends makes all the difference during times of need. It's a sense of community that extends beyond facilities—rooted in genuine relationships between residents and staff.

Evelyn takes special pride in the dedication of the Health Care Center staff, particularly the Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) pursuing advanced degrees to become Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) and Registered Nurses (RNs). Their commitment to growth reflects the character of excellence that defines Palm Village. Moreover, the Center's activities add vibrancy and joy to each day, enriching the lives of those in their care.

Residents & Staff

What's Happening





















November 1, 2024 through April 15, 2025

Palm Village Donors

Living Legacy Fund Donors

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Mennonite Brethren Church Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church

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Living Legacy - Soup Supper

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