



Celebrating February

**African American
History Month**

Groundhog Day
February 2

Thank a Mailman Day
February 4

Valentine's Day
February 14

Pancake Week
February 15–22

Mardi Gras
February 17

Chinese New Year
February 19

Linda Cho
Executive Director

Barbara Moore
Business Director

Annelie Damasco
Assisted Living Director

Susan O'Shaughnessy
Marketing Director

Rachel Robinson
Activities Director

Chris Cho
Building & Maintenance Director

Chris Moore
Culinary Services &
Laundry Director

“MY LIFE, AS I SEE IT” Michael Connolly

“I remember sitting in the kitchen with my wife, reading over a production I was working on, when I got a letter in the mail. I opened it up and there was my Screen Actor's Guild membership card. I looked at that card and broke down in tears. Because at that moment I knew I had become a professional actor.....”

Michael Connolly is one of the newest residents to join the Stellar Care community. His poise and diction not only bring a distinguished tone to the dining hall and common areas, but also carries with it a professional history that is as rich and deep as his natural speaking voice. It's a voice that has graced the stage and screen and has been heard in over 1000 different commercials during his professional career.

“Actors hardly make any money, so doing voice-overs for commercials here and there was a good way for us to survive financially. For two years I was the official voice for the Toyota car company.”

Mr. Connolly knew at a very early age that he was headed for a life in the theatre. After getting his first standing ovation in kindergarten for a solo performance of *Away In A Manger*, he knew there was something special about performing. From kindergarten to college he kept his feet 'on the boards' and went on to perform with several theatre companies in New York, New Orleans and California. His most memorable performance was that of *Cassius* in *Julius Caesar*, in which the L.A. Times said his performance was, “The best in the cast..” and went on to place his name alongside Laurence Olivier.

“I did a production of *Cyrano* that I was pretty proud of, but to see my name next to Olivier...that was special.”

His movie and television credits include *Apollo 13* starring Tom Hanks, *Silk Stalkings* and a reoccurring role on the t.v. series *Renegade* starring Lorenzo Lamas, where he played the 'No good' police Chief, Harlan Hanson. But work in the entertainment industry doesn't always happen on the stage.

“You can write down just about anyone's name in Hollywood and I've worked with them. I got to work with Sammy Davis Jr., Harry Belafonte, George Burns, John Wayne...the list goes on. I was the Production Manager for UCLA and all the big names came through our place. I was there for about 7 years when I started to feel the job was no longer challenging. My boss at the time sensed I was wanting a change and called me into his office to let me know of an opening in San Diego for the Convention Performing Arts Center. They were looking for a General Manager and an Assistant General Manager – two positions I felt I wasn't qualified for. My experience in these areas was minimal. I had done a little work for the opening of the LA Convention Center, a big Hollywood opening, but nothing like what they were looking for. So I went ahead and took the exams for both positions. I was up against 125 other applicants. Some time had passed and I get a card in the mail offering me the position of General Manger – asking if I could be in San Diego in 2 months. So we moved.”

Continued...

Miscellaneous Announcements

** Family Support Group meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of every month in the first floor Library. Families and friends are encouraged to attend on Feb. 17th for special guest speaker, Linda Thyberg, from Silverado Hospice.

** **NEW GARAGE ENTRY PROCEDURE:** Simply press the black button on the keypad at the top of the garage ramp. This will connect you to the front desk -- identify yourself to the receptionist to gain entry.

** Do you have a family member, friend, or neighbor who would like to receive this newsletter? Please leave a note or email Barbara (barbaram@collwoodterrace.com) with their name and address.



WE ARE GRATEFUL...

to Trish Miyahara for filling in for Susan as Family Support Group facilitator in January.

Thank you, Trish. Your gentle way with family members is always appreciated.

February Birthdays

If you were born between February 1–18, you are Aquarius, the Water Bearer. Witty, clever, and honest, Water Bearers desire independence above all and are not afraid to deviate from the crowd to pursue their own interests.

Those born between February 19–28 are Pisces, the Fish. Selfless, spiritual, and intuitive, Pisces swim on an inner journey. They are emotional, compassionate people who are always willing to help others.

Ray B.	Feb 1 st
Carmen T.	Feb 4 th
David M.	Feb 10 th
George K.	Feb. 10 th
Louie D.	Feb. 16 th
Jean W.	Feb. 17 th
Burke E.	Feb. 19 th
Hazel H.	Feb. 21 st
Bill B.	Feb. 24 th
Betsy M.	Feb. 25 th
Dave L.	Feb. 27 th
Lourdes S.	Feb. 29 th



"Baby, You Can Drive My Car"

On New Year's Eve, as I was leaving Stellar Care and on my way to meet friends, I had a car accident. Plain and simply, it was my fault. I hit the car in front of me and did some extensive damage to the back of it. In that moment, everything changed. I had been so much "in my head" revisiting past events and planning for what was coming, that I wasn't in the present. And then, suddenly, I was.

The driver signaled with his hand for us to pull over. I was shaken and nervous. I prepared myself for the man to be furious and defensive, demanding and wanting to call the police. Instead, a peaceful, calm and caring young person approached me and asked if I was hurt. Again, the scenario had changed.

The next day, having taken full responsibility for the accident, I was prepared to call in the claim, when I received a phone call from Albert, the other driver. He asked me if I would take time to listen to him, which I did. Then he thanked me for helping him make a decision. He said that he had been thinking of donating his car to Father Joe, and that because I had hit him, he knew now, that he was surely donating the vehicle. Again, he thanked me for hitting him! There would be no reason to call in a claim. Albert only asked that sometime in 2015, when I found it in my heart, if I would make a donation to a charitable organization.

This was a miraculous event for me and a month later I am still thinking of Albert every day. I realize that through this coming year, each of you will experience an uncomfortable moment. You may have to make a painful decision, you may be surprised by a life event, someone you care for may transition. It is how we respond to these events that allows us to experience the miracles and gives us the opportunities to carry on or pay it forward.

What did I learn from Albert? I am aware of being in the present moment. I carry my truth, I accept responsibility. I realize that worrying and assuming are a waste of my energy. I will open my heart to the strangers who enter my path. I will actively listen to another's journey. Every life event is an opportunity to make me a better, stronger and more caring person; this is my purpose.

At Stellar Care, we are given so many opportunities to grow, love, to care and to listen. What is your purpose? What is your miracle story? Who is your Albert?

Susan O'Shaughnessy

Every Day is FUN in Activities...



Japanese Tea Garden



"MY LIFE, AS I SEE IT"

...Concluded

Working in the entertainment world isn't for the faint-of-heart. The nature of the industry lends itself to constant moving and job changes, making particulars such as dates, timeframes and names of venues fade into the background of a much bigger story. Where the narrative struggles, the eyes always tell the truth. And Mr. Connolly's eyes don't lie when talking about the other love of his life, Pamela, his wife of 47 years and no stranger to the theatrical community herself.

"She is the best damn set designer..and you had better get that quote straight, *'the best damn set designer.'* She worked for the Old Town Opera House and was head of the Drama Department at UCSD. She can sing, act...and even has a cookbook published. One time shortly after we were first married I was working at UCLA and came home and found her crying. I said, 'Honey, what's wrong?' She went on to tell me that she was unhappy just being a housewife. She got to see me come and go from work and wanted to work outside the house. So I said to her, 'Get a job.' About a month later after looking for work, out of nowhere, an ex-drama teacher we both had in college called and offered her a job working as a technical director. She was thrilled. She's multi-talented and a tremendous support to me. She gets it. We support each other."

While the money was constantly tight in the Connolly household, he and Pamela relied (and continue to rely) on each other's unyielding support. Through great breakthroughs, sour business deals and while watching the landscape of the entertainment industry slowly shift to a new generation, they stood by each other's side for 47 years.

"The industry eventually changed into something I didn't recognize. It folded. But I've had a very fulfilling career."

Pamela and Mr. Connolly can frequently be seen together, having coffee during one of her many visits to Stellar Care. Continuing a bond tempered by time and that has transcended any turbulence their respective careers may have endured. They now sit and chat several days a week, outlining the second act of their partnership.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Alicia Talamantez

The middle child of six other brothers and sisters, Alicia grew up learning how to make sure her voice was heard. She always stayed active, and was involved in multiple sports and extracurricular activities during high school. Immediately after graduating, she worked full time.

Originally from San Pedro, many in Alicia's family now live in San Diego, and she moved down a year ago to be closer to them, and promptly joined our Stellar Care team in April of last year. With a father in law enforcement, it is no surprise that Alicia chose to work in a field that closely connects her to the community. With her one year anniversary of Stellar employment coming up, she continues to run activities with the mindset of "If my parents were here, what would I want them to be doing, seeing, and experiencing?" She has certainly been a great fit in activities, making use of her outgoing nature and vivacity to keep residents engaged and entertained throughout the day.

In her free time, Alicia enjoys spending time with her daughter, playing sports, or going on food adventures (especially ones involving new textures of bread and flavors of cheeses!) Down the road, she plans on going back to school to get a degree in respiratory therapy, where she can continue to work with the senior population and help rehabilitate people with a beaming smile. We are thrilled to have her in our community!

Support Group Guest Speaker

"Everything You Want to Know About Hospice."

Presented by Linda Thyberg
Silverado Hospice, Social Worker

Tues., Feb. 17th at 6:30p.m.

She will help you understand what to expect, dispel myths, address when hospice is appropriate, how it works and who is on the team.

Everyone is welcome to attend this special event.