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Charitable Giving and the Holiday Sharing Card



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The Medical Society and Alliance have joined in holiday charitable giving for 54 years.

As many of you are aware, the mission of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Alliance (SSVMSA) is to improve the health in our community by supporting medical and nursing education, the funding of health projects, and community education in collaboration with the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society (SSVMS). The annual Holiday Sharing Card has been a vehicle for the Alliance to solicit funds from the medical community in support of our mutual goals.

A spirit of charitable giving began when the AMA Foundation formed a partnership with the Alliance in 1955 to “raise money for the country’s struggling medical schools.” Post WWII medical schools faced “skyrocketing costs” to train new physicians.

The AMA Foundation established the Holiday Sharing Card in 1956. An attractive holiday greeting card was sent to all who contributed. Blank copies of the greeting card could be purchased and are still available for purchase on the web site www.amalliance.org.

Over the years, the SSVMSA has created our own unique Holiday Sharing Card to recognize and thank our individual donors, and to honor talented artists from the medical community, Alliance membership, or medical family members. All of the artists donate their artwork for the cover of the Holiday Sharing Card. A contribution to the AMA Foundation goes to worthy medical students attending a U.S. school. Since 2005, the Sacramento medical community has provided financial support for medical students in 33 medical schools across the country.

In 1962, the Sabin Oral Sunday program provided polio vaccines through donations collected by the SSVMSA. William Dochterman was the Medical Society’s Executive Director and served in that position for 27 years. The polio vaccine program was very successful and generated an excess of funds. The William E. Dochterman

Medical Student Scholarship Fund was established in 1966, using the excess proceeds to help area residents finance their medical education.

These scholarship funds continue to benefit high school graduates of El Dorado, Sacramento and Yolo Counties currently enrolled in accredited American medical schools. Since 2007, 104 students have received scholarship grant money totaling \$171,000. Of these recipients, 22 have returned to the Sacramento region to practice medicine.

Prior to 1983 the Alliance, then known as the Auxiliary, supported community charities with funds raised from Fashion Shows. Alliance members Carol Morris and Carol Doersch established the Alliance's Community Endowment Fund (CEF) in 1983 to increase funds to improve the community's health and support educational endeavors.

The foresight and hard work of these dedicated members allowed the Alliance to be granted a 501(c)(3) charitable tax status from the IRS, which we cherish today. The new tax status and the advent of the very successful fundraiser Sacramento Cooks! in 1983, provided the Alliance with more resources to expand into the community. The CEF now proudly supports nursing scholarships, community health grants, and community health programs.

The SSVMSA budget provides \$2,500 in yearly financial aid to nursing students in our region. This past year five scholarships were awarded to nursing students attending American River College, Sacramento City College, CSU Sacramento, and two students from UC Davis. Scholarship students are nominated by their nursing faculty and meet a set criteria established by the Alliance.

In 2009 the Alliance's CEF awarded \$26,100 in grants to Sacramento charities. The recipients were the Children's Receiving Home, UCD Medical Student Run Clinics, Sacramento City Unified School District F.A.C.E.S., Breathe California of Sacramento, Sacramento Hospice Consortium, Strategies for Change, SSVMS Community Service Education and Research Fund, Weave, Clean and Sober, and the Stanford Settlement.

The Alliance facilitates the collection and distribution of donations to the AMA Foundation, the Dochterman Fund, and the Community Endowment Fund, the Alliance's charitable fund, with a request for donations mailed exclusively to the medical community, not the general public, in October.

The Medical Society and Alliance have jointly participated in this spirit of holiday charitable giving for 54 years. We hope this historical review has sparked a renewed interest in these worthy causes, and will encourage you to join our efforts by adding your name to the list of donors on the 2009 Holiday Sharing Card.

For additional information, please contact the SSVMS Alliance office at 916-731-4315.

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