

# community connection

A periodic update for Mercy General Hospital's neighbors  
in the East Sacramento community

April 2005

## Dear Neighbor,

This year is special for Mercy General Hospital. This year marks 80 years of serving the community at 40th and J Streets. On Feb. 11, 1925 the Sisters of Mercy opened what was then called Mater Misericordiae. The Latin term, meaning "Mother of Mercy," was hard for people to pronounce, so it was later changed to Mercy General Hospital.

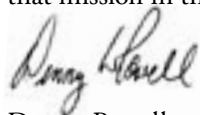


We at Mercy are dedicated to making a difference in our community and saving lives every day. Mercy General is now regarded as one of California's most comprehensive and high quality medical centers. In addition to being one of the nation's leaders in heart surgery and the treatment of heart attack, Mercy General is one of a few hospitals in the state designated as a Primary Stroke Center. We have one of the highest volume eye surgery programs in the state with more than 3,600 procedures performed last year. Mercy is a recognized leader in clinical outcomes for spine surgery and peripheral bypass surgery. In addition, we are one of the only local hospitals providing intensive inpatient therapy services.

To celebrate our anniversary, Mercy General will host a community celebration and health fair on Saturday, Sept. 10. We expect it to be a fun event that will include helpful health screenings and education. Watch for more details about the event in the months ahead.

80  
years of tradition,  
*one mission*  
Mercy General Hospital \* Since 1925

The staff and physicians at Mercy General are devoted to our mission and values, and we look forward to furthering that mission in the years to come.



Denny Powell  
President, Mercy General Hospital

## Fiction vs. Fact

**Fiction:** Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) is directing Mercy General to build the Heart Center.

**Fact:** The leadership at Mercy General Hospital defined this project. While the hospital is a part of a larger system known as Catholic Healthcare West, it is the hospital, not the corporation, which develops long-term plans for the facility. As in any large organization, corporate resources help us to achieve the hospital's objectives, but the larger system does not define local strategy.

The new Heart Center will meet two significant challenges that Mercy General currently faces. First, it will allow the hospital to operate continuously in light of California's required seismic upgrade requirements. Second, it will help ease the strain on Mercy General's current cardiac operating and procedure rooms.

California law requires Mercy General to upgrade its acute care inpatient hospital buildings or take them out of service by 2013. Upgrading some of the existing buildings is not feasible due to the high cost and significant disruption to our patients. Building a new facility will allow us to create enough capacity to take our older buildings out of service in 2013, and thus cost-effectively address California's seismic requirements, along with providing us an opportunity to create a modern facility in which to serve our patients.

This project will allow Mercy General to continue to meet the community's healthcare needs for years to come.

**Fiction:** Mercy should acknowledge that there would be an increased use of the hospital, which will impact traffic and safety in the neighborhood.

**Fact:** In 2013, Mercy General Hospital will have fewer acute care hospital beds than it does today. After the Heart Center is built and the minimal retrofits and internal remodeling are done to the existing buildings, the South and East wings of the hospital will be taken out of service as acute care hospital buildings. By 2013, the hospital's bed capacity will shrink to 259 beds from its current total of 343 beds. This is because our 128 new beds in the Heart Center will not fully replace the more than 200 beds that will be taken out of service in the South and East Wings. We do not anticipate that the Heart Center will increase traffic in the neighborhood because we will not be increasing patient services or the number of employees.

Mercy General Hospital

CHW

Continued on page 2

## City of Sacramento Scoping Meetings and Comment Period

There are two issues related the City's Public Scoping Meeting and "Notice of Preparation" (NOP) comment period that require clarification. Both issues relate to this time of public comment to the City, but are unique and separate.

### *City Plans a Second Meeting*

At the April 6 Public Scoping Meeting participants told City representatives they felt the City had not sent its notices far enough in advance of the meeting. Attendees from two neighborhood associations asked for more lead time so they could inform their membership. The City representatives conducting the meeting agreed to do three things:

- Conduct a second Public Scoping Meeting,
- Extend the NOP comment period, and
- Send notices out to the City's mailing list 30 days in advance of the next meeting.

At the time this newsletter was produced, a second scoping meeting had been scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on May 19 in the Planning Commission Hearing Room #100 at 1231 I Street. If you want to be included in the City's mailings regarding the Mercy General project, please contact:

Jeanne Corcoran  
City of Sacramento Planning Division  
1231 I Street, Ste. 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
E-mail: jcorcoran@cityofsacramento.org  
Phone: 916.808.5317  
Fax: 916.264.7185

### *Hospital Mailing Delayed by Mailhouse Closure*

The City of Sacramento mailed the NOP to addresses within 1,000 feet of the hospital and individuals who had requested to be on the City's mailing list. Mercy General made plans to send the notice to the rest of the addresses on our *Community Connection* newsletter mailing list. That mailing list reaches addresses within one-mile of the hospital and includes more than 12,000 addresses. Once the City's documents were finalized, MGH sent the materials to a local mailhouse for processing. The mailhouse experienced facility issues that caused it to temporarily close down while Mercy's mailing was being processed. The closure delayed Mercy's mailing and resulted in many residents receiving the meeting notice after the scoping meeting had taken place. The hospital's intent was to inform our neighbors about the meeting and the public comment period. Unfortunately, that did not occur due to circumstances beyond our control.

*Continued from page 1*

**Fiction:** I hear the traffic study will be done from April to September. Why over the summer months when Sacred Heart Parish School is out of session?

**Fact:** The traffic study actually began in March with traffic counts being taken at a variety of neighborhood locations before Sacred Heart Parish School or other local public schools went out on spring break. Mercy General worked with the City to conduct the traffic counts at a time when schools were in session and the hospital was still experiencing high winter patient activity. It will take a few months for the traffic consultant to analyze all the information and draft a report.

**Fiction:** The hospital must have "master" plans beyond the Heart Center project. What are those plans?

**Fact:** The plans for the Heart Center, the North wing retrofits and remodeling of some of the interior areas of the South and East wings for office use are the master plan for the campus. The additional parking capacity that is proposed should meet the current and future needs of the campus.

## A Patient's Perspective

A few years ago Rob Penn was a hard working fireman with a passion for life and his job. Then he learned that a heart ailment could derail his career, and, potentially, his life.



Rob Penn

"I was devastated. I thought my career was over," says Rob. "I'd been a fireman all my life. I didn't know how to do anything else. I just wanted to get back to work."

He came to Mercy General to treat the malfunction in his heart's electrical activity. After one procedure in Mercy General's electrophysiology (EP) lab, Rob's heart was beating strong. He was treated with an ablation procedure that essentially "turned off" the part of his heart that was causing the malfunction. That one procedure eliminated the electrical problems in his heart, putting Rob on the road to a full recovery.

"It's amazing that I am where I am. I'm very lucky. Mercy gave me my life and my career back."

## Note from the Contractor

Dear Hospital Neighbors,

I am proud to be a part of the development of the Alex G. Spanos Heart Center at Mercy General Hospital. The Heart Center is in perfect alignment with my company's purpose statement: *DPR exists to build great things*. Mercy General currently has a truly exceptional heart program. Mercy saves hundreds of lives every year and the new Heart Center will provide a modern facility in which they can continue to provide that outstanding care.



Pete Kreuser

In my years as a contractor and a father, I have seen how construction has benefited both business and communities, especially children who are the future of our communities.

In fact, a DPR project in Southern California serves as a recent example of how children and construction can mix in a positive way.

One of DPR's projects in San Diego was to construct a 28-story building on a site located next to Harborside Elementary School. Taking every precaution to create a safe and unobtrusive environment as we do with all our projects in

occupied areas, DPR also had the opportunity to work closely with the school and involve the kids in our project. It turned out to be a rewarding experience for everyone involved. The students frequently visited the site during school-planned field trips to learn about construction, the building, math and other fundamentals. They participated in purely fun activities as well, such as painting a mural on our pedestrian walkway. When the project was completed, students at Harborside awarded DPR with a plaque thanking us for our "outstanding support."

My children also experienced construction close up when their elementary school was replaced with new buildings a few feet away from the existing campus. The faculty at that school took the opportunity to educate the students about construction and the process by which great things are built. It was a good learning experience for my kids.

I look forward to seeing the Heart Center completed in a way that benefits not only the community and future hospital patients, but the neighborhood as well.

Pete Kreuser  
Project Executive  
DPR Construction, Inc.

## New Chapel Will Better Meet the Need

I have been intimately involved in the development of the new chapel being designed as part of the new Alex G. Spanos Heart Center. The Sisters felt strongly that a chapel could be located in the new building to provide even better service to our patients, their families and our staff. While beautiful and welcoming, the existing chapel is located in a corner of the facility, not in a central area.



Sr. Kathleen Horgan

During the design process, we enlisted the help of former Sacramento resident Thomas Lucas,

SJ, PhD. Father Lucas graduated from Sacred Heart Parish School and is now the Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Department at the University of San Francisco and an expert in sacred space design. Together with our architects,

we have designed a chapel that incorporates the Heart Center's arts and crafts style and the beautiful stained glass windows of the current chapel. The new chapel will be on the first floor of the Heart Center, close to entrances, the admitting area and the central waiting area. We expect this chapel to provide a more accessible place for our staff and patients who need a place for quiet prayer or Sunday Mass.



Sketch of the Chapel design proposed for Mercy General Hospital's Heart Center.

Sr. Kathleen Horgan  
Director, Mission  
Integration  
Mercy General Hospital

Continued from page 2

Mercy General has conducted numerous neighborhood meetings over the last three years and has received and incorporated neighborhood feedback into its daily operations and the Heart Center project. We intend to continue the open dialogue with our neighbors through the publication of *Community Connection*; through our Neighborhood Liaison, Sandra Meyers; and through the quarterly Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings (see schedule in Calendar of Events). If you have any questions or comments, please contact Sandra directly at 916.453.4432 or Sandra.Meyers@chw.edu.

## Visit Our Web Site for More Information

Mercy General's *Community Connection* was created to help members of our community follow the progress of our Heart Center project, as well as to answer frequently asked questions.

Previous editions of the newsletter contain a wealth of helpful background information. To view back issues of *Community Connection*, visit [mercygeneral.org](http://mercygeneral.org); click on Programs & Services; choose Community Programs; then choose Neighborhood News and click on Community Connection Newsletters on the right side of the page.



Mercy General Hospital

CHW

4001 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819

## Calendar of Events

### Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

The NAC meetings have been scheduled for the remainder of 2005. All meetings will be held at 6 p.m. in the Mercy Medical Plaza Auditorium B. Please contact Sandra Meyers, Mercy General Neighborhood Liaison, if you plan to attend. She can be reached by phone at 916.453.4432 or by e-mail at Sandra.Meyers@chw.edu.

Wednesday, June 8

Wednesday, Aug. 24

Wednesday, Nov. 16

### 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Community Health Fair

Saturday, Sept. 10, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mercy General Hospital

Free

On Feb. 11, 1925, Mercy General Hospital opened its doors at 40th and J Streets. To celebrate the hospital's 80th anniversary, we are hosting a community celebration and health fair. There will be a variety of health screenings and fun activities. More information will be shared in the coming months, but mark your calendar today!

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