



PASADENA  
SHOWCASE  
H O U S E  
*for the Arts*

**Introducing Members of the  
2023/24 Provisional Class**

**Ani Kenderian – Provisional Chair  
Cindy Bengtson – Membership Chair**

## **Andy Bishop**

*2023 Renaissance Man!*

Steeped in Yahoo ad analytics by day for almost 20 years, writing plays/coaching show choirs/building the Cal Poly Rose floats/coaching youth volleyball team, and being with family by night, Andy is a whirlwind of tech/art/music/family with a dynamic personality! When asked how he learned about us, he said "I'm a sucker for Instagram ads. Whether it's blue sunglasses you can wear indoors at the dinner table or chenille armchairs I don't have room for, I am constantly buying things off Instagram ads."

One reference said: "Andy is truly an awe-inspiring creative that my family has known for over 30 years. I can honestly tell you he has never left a project or commitment unfinished. He is proactive in a way I have never seen before. An example of that is showing up at his eldest daughter's wedding venue with tape in hand to measure the ceremony area only to later upload it to a design program just to make sure there was room for everyone to be comfortable."

Another said: "Andy sees the spark in others and is curious, dependable, well-versed, and an outside-the-box thinker. He is biased toward praise and inclusiveness. I don't believe I've ever seen him become "ruffled" by a task. (I am the opposite.) I can attest that he excels greatly at "unruffling" others!"

While deep in tech, Andy is an artist at heart. He is passionate about music and arts and is excited to help us support programs for children and adults throughout our community!

## **Candace Carlson**

*She's all about the Community!*

Candace has been helping others her whole life! Food banks, visiting homebound seniors, Meals on Wheels, and more were part of her life with her parents growing up. A current member (and/or Board Member) of the Junior League of Pasadena, So Cal Leadership Network, Get on the Bus, National Charity League, and Delta Gamma she is deeply connected to many parts of our community. Her day job is one of the biggest in Pasadena as she is in charge of all communications for the Tournament of Roses organization! Prior to T of R, Candace was a TV producer for the TV Guide Network and KTLA5.

Per PSHA Member Charlotte Lacey, “Candy consistently demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility and a genuine desire to help those in need. Candy possesses strong organizational skills which allow her to juggle multiple tasks efficiently and prioritize effectively. Furthermore, her adaptability and willingness to take on new challenges make her an invaluable asset to any group.”

On her application, Candace wrote “Visiting Pasadena Showcase has been a family tradition for decades! Each year we marvel at the beautiful home and the talent of the designers. Showcase House is a wonderful way to support music programs with hands-on volunteering. Being a part of an iconic tradition in Pasadena would be an honor!”

Candace is concerned children today are not experiencing and learning about music and arts. She would like to help ensure funding for local programs by volunteering with PSHA.

## **Debra Dana**

*A Joyful Volunteer*

Debra moved south to Altadena from Sacramento a few years ago to be close to her grandchildren. But while living up north, Debra gave, freely and joyfully with her time and talents for over 10 years to the Assistance League of Sacramento. Her hands-on work involved being Chairman of Operation School Bell, with a \$200,000 annual budget for 39 elementary schools funding school supplies, uniforms, and other needed clothing. And she actually took the children to the local Target to ensure they got “the right stuff.”

Additionally, Debra worked in non-profit retail at the Assistance League Thrift Shop, where she rose to store manager. Debra’s friends also report that she has a deep appreciation for music that she is now actively sharing with her grandchildren. Debra wrote in for membership as a result of our Pasadena Showcase House “thank you” for her visit that included the very timely mention of membership. We are pleased she jumped on this opportunity and will welcome her work ethic, enthusiasm, and talents.

## **Jennifer Davis**

*Community Volunteer*

Jenn was a Pastor's wife for 23 years serving in all capacities as minister's spouses do so she is familiar with events, managing people and more. She has recently relocated from No Cal to live near her adult daughters and wants to immerse herself in giving to the community. In addition to her many church duties, she is a past member of Kiwanis of Escondido and has worked part time at a garden center and a golf course. For fun, she computer designs gardens for friends to insure continual blooms and vegetables year-round. She is excited to get involved with our organization and meet new community minded friends.

## **Mia Dunne**

*Drums to Pups—Helping in Many Ways!*

Mia already has ties to PSHA! She is Board President of Makoto Taiko, a non-profit Japanese drumming ensemble, that receives grants from PSHA. She also arranged for MT to become a CVO in 2023 and send community volunteers to staff the house this spring. Mia feels honored to be able to have a career doing what her heart tells her to do! Raising funds and using funds for animal and human welfare. In addition to her work with the Humane Society, she is a Board member for the Arroyo Food Corp, Pasadena Animal League, and Makoto Taiko.

PSHA Member Charlotte Lacey said “Mia possesses a rare combination of creativity, meticulous attention to detail, and a deep understanding of the principles of volunteering. She is highly organized and consistently meets project deadlines without compromising the quality of her work. Mia's collaborative spirit enables her to work effectively within multidisciplinary teams. Her strong communication skills ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed and involved throughout the event process, fostering an environment of trust and transparency.”

Mia wrote “It is always rewarding to know that you are making a difference in the community whether it's for kids, animals, or another group. It is also rewarding to meet people from all walks of life through community service.”

## **Valuska Frueholz**

*Friends in High Places*

Valuska has a career in hotel and event management and had the distinctive position as White House Liaison for Century Plaza Hotel! After 18 years at that property, she moved to a manager slot at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. Her enthusiastic references tell us that she is a perfect, professional hostess for her venues, but also creative in event planning and problem-solving.

She is client-oriented, so understands what it takes to please customers. Plus, one of her references told us she was great at “maintaining a good attitude even when difficult situations arose and still making sure goals were met.”

Valuska gets it that “through volunteer service, you get much more than you put in.” She has attended several Showcase Houses and recognizes the work involved and is ready to get involved. Bringing her event planning experience to Showcase will be a wonderful addition to our already event-enthusiastic association!

## **Cyrice Griffith**

*Art, Architecture, and Awesome!*

Cyrice's commitment to the arts began early in her professional career, as the Director of Community and Education Programs for the Music Center of Los Angeles County, for 6 years. She has launched multiple initiatives for youth education for the Los Angeles Entertainment Foundation and at the University of Southern California. She was among the founding families of the Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts and served as a school-to-work liaison for the Pasadena Unified Career Pathways Program Arts Academies.

Currently, her day job is to lead the Los Angeles chapter of the American Institute of Architects but her second career is designing unconventional artistic chess and checkers sets that allow for traditional play but are also design/décor pieces.

On her application, she stated "As a lifelong youth arts advocate, and part-time artist, I am consciously seeking balance to my very demanding work life in an activity that promotes the value of the arts and facilitates youth engagement in the arts-music. There is just some indescribable calling within me that is fueled by creating paths for success for youth with natural talents for the arts. The reward of bearing witness to their joy in finding and pursuing a creative passion drives me."



## **Angel Grigorian**

*Grounded in Pasadena Philanthropy*

Marcia Kreditor recommended Angel reach out to Pasadena Showcase. She responded and we first met Angel at our May 7 new member reception this year.

Her charity work is broad-based but centered on her children. As they grew, she moved from leadership in Girl Scouts of the USA to working with the National Charity League, a VP spot with the parents' organization at Westridge School for Girls, and was most recently on the Hospitality committee for USC's Town and Gown event. Erin Dundee worked with Angel on this assignment and found her to be "the one you could count on."

Angel is a self-starter. In 2004 she started her own real estate management company and continues her successful venture almost 20 years later.

Now in a transitional time with grown children, we think Angel will find a great outlet for her time and talents in Pasadena Showcase. And her real estate management career is a decided fit for our annual Benefit Committee.

## **Mary Hall, Ph.D.**

*A smile and heart that fights on!*

Per Mary, she learned about PSHA through volunteer work for USC Trojan Affiliates and friends – PSHA members Marcia Kreditor and Erin Dundee. Mary has served been the community organization liaison for the USC group, organizing and mentoring them for several years! Most of Mary's life has been filled with teaching and leading in school districts around LA for 37 years! She is passionate about the cultural and civic enrichment of children in our community. She has been a Docent at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens for 12 years.

PSHA Member Marcia Kreditor wrote this about Mary: "PSHA could not be luckier to get Mary Hall as a member. I first met Mary at Town & Gown an SC group where I worked on scholarship with her and then on Hospitality, her domain for a few years. I always thought it was a privilege to work with Mary. Mary consistently does any job well. She contributes to the group dynamics with valuable and meaningful input. I am thrilled to know she will be joining PSHA and have no doubt that she will make meaningful contributions and be an asset in any position she will chair in the future. All I can say is WOW!"

## **Gary Kearney**

*It's all in the family!*

Gary has been a family law attorney for 40 years but out of the office, his passion is community leadership, music, fun with friends, and remodeling structures! Gary has been a Board member/officer of the Pasadena Bar Association, Sierra Madre Kiwanis Club, Boy's Club Council, the University Club of Pasadena, and Pasadena Rotary. He and his wife PSHA member Mary Lou Byrne recently remodeled parts of their home. He headed up the University Club lounge remodel and is currently co-chairing the University Club's restoration of their kitchen and dining area due to the major fire there.

Per reference PSHA Member Peggy Kelley: "Gary is great on so many levels: He is an attorney so can support the contract process. He is heavily involved at the University Club so he understands the dynamics of working and being on committees. He LOVES classical and all forms of music and believes in the arts."

PSHA Member Garrett Collins' reference said "Gary is an accomplished attorney in the Pasadena area, recently retired and looking for opportunities to give back to the community with the additional time available to him. Gary has taken many leadership roles across multiple service organizations and possesses a great number of skills that will benefit Showcase. Gary has a lot of experience with project management, most recently in managing the renovation of the University Club. (He is a tremendous woodworker, and handyman, and can build anything Showcase needs!) I can't wait for him to join the ranks of our members!"

## **Julia Kwon:**

*A Designer in Real Estate*

Cindy Bengtson recommended Julia Kwon consider membership with Pasadena Showcase based on their experiences working together at the National Charity League. Julia has long worked in organizations connected to her daughter: Brownies, Girl Scouts of the USA, Awana, and Westridge School for Girls before her NCL association.

Julia's career background seems so perfectly suited to Pasadena Showcase: design and real estate! Starting as a fashion designer, Julia was later, and for ten years, head designer and owner of Baxis, Inc.

For the last 12 years, Julia has been a Realtor and Luxury Properties Specialist at Berkshire Hathaway Home Service, California Properties. This is a good place for a Pasadena Showcase member to master!

Michele Lembo interviewed Julia and reports that Julia particularly likes the idea of a team effort and is looking forward to joining the Pasadena Showcase.

## **Susan Miali**

*Go to girl Susan!*

Susan is clear about her interest in PSHA-she wants to do more volunteer work and make new friends! While a busy realtor, she has done a variety of non-profit projects and now wants to join a group and devote time and energy over the long term. She has sewed for HonorBands, a non-profit organization that makes black bands for fallen police officers and firemen. She's worked with the Rotary Club of Monrovia in putting food packages together for needy families and organized the annual charity Coldwell Banker pancake breakfast and silent auction. She's picked up a hammer and worked on homes for Habitat for Humanity.

Her reference said about her: "Few people match her enthusiasm for things that she becomes interested in. Susan is always the first one to jump on board to participate. She is an organizer and problem-solver at heart. In fact, we often call her 1-800-SUSAN because she is the go-to person for almost anything."

## **Jennifer Miller**

*Passionate about design!*

Jennifer got excited about PSHA when she visited the House with her Mom in May 2023 and “the lovely lady handing out programs” spoke so highly of the organization that she went home and read all about us online and applied!

She is interested in being a member because she absolutely loves interior design and would like to meet like-minded individuals who are interested in giving back to the arts.

A young career attorney, Jennifer’s volunteer work so far has been with “weSPARK Cancer Support Center” and as a Big Sister! Per one reference, “Jennifer is one of the most determined, committed, passionate, and reliable people that I know. These characteristics cross both her professional and personal life. In fact, no matter how demanding one’s profession may be, Jennifer has always inspired me to dedicate time to causes that benefit others.”

Jennifer hopes to focus on legal details during the day—and design desires after hours with us!

## **Rena Morris**

### *Wants to Make Friends*

Stephanie Johnson suggested to Rena Morris that she attend our May 7th new member reception and as a result, Rena forwarded a completed application very soon afterward.

Rena is presently a wealth manager with Irvine Advisors and is strongly recommended by Michael Culwell, a principal at that firm. Prior to her work there, she was a Registered Representative at TRW Investments for 17 years.

Rena lives in West Pasadena with her husband, who is a doctor. She is also close with her two daughters and grandchildren but wants to find time for Showcase.

In her applications, Rena notes that she would like to join Pasadena Showcase as a diversion from work, something different to do. She is also eager to make new friendships.

## **Mark Ostensen**

*General Contractor*

Mark is a general contractor and partner in his construction firm. He has known of our organization but not how we operate and was excited to hear about us from Provisional Susan Miali. His past volunteer experience has been to bike from LA to San Francisco for AIDS Lifecycle in 2016, 2017 and 2018. He loves a sense of community and is eager to get involved with us and the Pasadena community.



## **Teresa Pfiffner**

*An Enthusiastic Emmy-Award Winner!*

Teresa has enjoyed a 40-year career in stage management for game shows and then as an assistant director winning Emmy Awards for *Cheers* and *Murphy Brown*.

Currently, Teresa works at Disney Studios overseeing meetings and events plus managing the 56-member Studio Operations Team. Her references report that Teresa has “exemplary organizational, communications and supervision skills” and always maintains her arm and friendly personality.

Teresa helped create the Woodland Hills PTA's school's Arts and Music Program, specifically securing initial funding. She further supports this organization by managing annual auctions and securing sponsorships from local businesses. Plus, Teresa found time to serve as a docent and event volunteer at the Pasadena Museum of California Art.

Colleen Robertson and Jan Suter both highly recommend Teresa Pfiffner, another recruit from Colleen's exercise class. If she can keep up with those two, we know Teresa has the energy to go the distance for the Pasadena Showcase!

## **Alis Pruett**

*Manager, Water Technology, Control Systems and Cybersecurity for LA Dept of Water and Power*

A high-powered engineer by day who manages 20 LADWP engineers, Alis loves “all things design” and wants to surround herself with people passionate about both design and the arts.

Her volunteer work has been focused on professional associations. She has been the President and Treasurer of the LA Dept of Water and Power Society of Women Engineers for the last 4 years and recently served on the organizing committee of the National Society of Women Engineers 3-day Annual Conference attended by 17,000 participants. She is excited to be joining a group that supports the arts through a huge design event.

## **Robin Radin**

*A new career and a new charity focus!*

Robin has been to the last 25 Showcase Houses with family members but never had time to consider joining when working long hours for major business consulting firms and raising her family. Retired a few years ago and just starting a new more informal career in real estate, Robin is ready to commit! She says she's been looking for a charitable organization that suits her interests - interior design and real estate. On a business level, she's brought clients and prospective clients to enjoy an afternoon at the House!

Robin cares about historic preservation and has been a docent with Pasadena Heritage for 15 years.

One of her references said: "I am one of her oldest friends, and I've always been impressed with her integrity, her work ethic, her sense of responsibility for her work and her family, and her incredible energy.

Robin does what she says she will do. In fact, she will go the extra mile. She is also just a lot of fun, raising the energy level and providing lots of laughs wherever she goes. She loves music, architecture, design, and dance.

## **Linda Reisz**

*Energetic with Drive*

Linda Reisz has an enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm that we must corral for Showcase! She just recently stepped down from an intense and time-consuming position as a prosecuting attorney with the LA District Attorney's Office and is looking forward to retirement in three or so years. Now she needs a place to channel all her drive!

And even now though still working, Linda is ready to take on Showcase. She was a docent volunteer this year and is respectful of our mission in music. As a "Band Mom" and "Choir Mom" at La Canada High School, she nurtured and supported her own children's musical careers in the instrumental and vocal fields.

Additionally, Linda has leadership positions as VP, Standards, VP, Programs, and ultimately President of the National Charity League, Glendale Chapter.

Linda's interviewer reported that they found her balanced, able to set a standard, and then assist others to success. And finally, she is "confident and competent," two character traits that will assist both of us as she progresses at Pasadena Showcase.

## **Wanda Sullivan**

*Retired and Ready*

Wanda Sullivan is ready to start a new chapter in her life. As she worked, most recently over the last 10 years, with Cigna Health Care as Director of Quality Initiatives, she did not have the time to reach out to the community except for garden clubs. For four years she was chair of the Children's Garden at the Stonington (Ct.) Garden Club and now has served just six months as an Associate Member of the Pasadena Garden Club.

Susan Pickering, Wanda's neighbor, recommended she look into joining Showcase, and as a first step, Wanda volunteered as a docent in this year's House. She loved it and the people she met and is now a great supporter of our music mission. Importantly for us and our Staffing challenges, Cindy Bengtson reports that Wanda stepped right into an active role. After her second shift, was training other CVO volunteers!

## **Tracy Tanidjaja**

*A Burst of Enthusiasm!*

Tracy's love of music came through her daughter playing piano, violin, harp, and guitar.

Tracy was in National Charity League for 6 years. Tracy was VP of The Affiliates Benefit for The Webb School for several years. She assisted the Webb School Speech Professor in creating a Speech and Debate team that competed locally and nationally. Tracy is a volunteer for Ability First in Claremont as well.

She and her husband own their own company so she understands operations and finances.

One reference said: "Tracy's best asset is her ability to establish wonderful rapport with people of all ages, especially young adults. She was very dedicated, and it was very kind of her to spend many Friday nights and make such a wonderful impact on our program."

## **Vartuhi Vartanyan,**

*A Rose!*

Vartuhi, who goes by “Vart” which means “rose“ in Armenian, is the sister to a delightful first-year active Showcase member, Gohar Ohanian (“Gohar” means “jewel.”).

Vart and Gohar hosted a wonderful French cooking class for 18 Provisional members this spring, and she fell in so naturally with our group that we had to ask her to join. She cooks and instructs with a steady and sweet smile and is genuine and charming.

Vart has worked in administration at HealthNet (20 years) and most recently as Director of Contracting for Anthem Blue Cross, a position she has had for over 5 years. Important for us, Gohar reports that her sister has handled financials for these companies and would be a good candidate in the future for one of our treasurer positions.

In response to the question, “Why are you interested in becoming a member?”, Vart replied, “Love, love, love arts, and music programs.” And to illustrate that comment, Vart has supported local music school programs as a band volunteer for four years at La Canada High School and a Board member at Leik Music School for 13 years.

Marlina Bryant, in her recommendation for Vart, said, “I can confidently attest to her outstanding character, unwavering reliability and commendable honesty.”

Vart will be a great contributing member to Pasadena Showcase.