

# NEWS & NOTES

# Lodi Community Foundation

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## The remarkable—and generous—Amelia Ernst

By Rich Hanner, *News-Sentinel* editor

Amelia Ernst says there is nothing remarkable about her.

Amelia Ernst is just wrong.

And that's a rarity, because even at 86, her mind is razor-sharp and her memory is spot-on.

But the case for Ernst being remarkable is irrefutable.

Consider:

She knows three languages: English, Spanish and German. She holds master's degrees in both history and psychology.

She taught and served as a counselor in Lodi and Stockton over a span of more than 50 years, instructing everything from shorthand and accounting to English and economics.

At age 81, she jumped in when another teacher fell ill and taught English as a second language at the Lodi Adult School.

Her bright mind and irrepressible spirit have touched thousands of lives in Lodi.

And now, Ernst has provided a gift that means many more lives will be touched well into the future.

As part of her estate planning, Ernst is creating a legacy endowment to Lodi's Adult Day Care services. Her generosity will create a stream of revenue for the program far into the future.

Based at Hutchins Street Square, the program provides daily activities for Lodi residents dealing with dementia and related challenges. It also provides a respite for caregivers, often spouses or other family members.

"When I heard about Mrs. Ernst's gift, I had tears in my eyes," said Terri Whitmire, long-time program director. "This is our first endowment. What it means is huge for us. Just huge."

### A PURPOSEFUL LIFE

At her home on a recent morning, Ernst sat in her library, an Apple computer nearby, her blue eyes clear and bright.

She talked about her life of helping and achieving; a life of purpose.

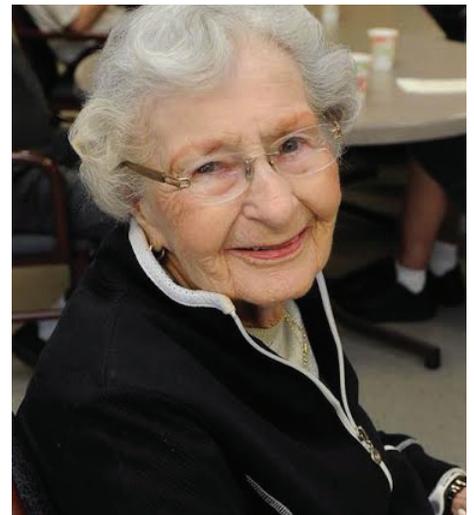
Born in South Dakota, she moved with her family to Lodi as a girl. She and a boy in the neighborhood, Ernie Ernst, developed a friendship and later married.

Ernst attended Emerson Elementary, Needham School and Lodi High, where she was captain of the drill team.

She recalls her father being deeply supportive of his daughters' dreams of going to college. (Ernst's sister, Esther Lust, died in 2001.)

Her uncle, who had two boys, once told her father that he needn't worry about saving for college.

"He said my father wouldn't need to



send girls to college. My father told him that girls deserved a college education as much as boys, and they needed an education to assure their future," Ernst recalled.

She studied at Sacramento City College and then transferred to UCLA. Befitting her wide-ranging intellect, she earned her degree in 1948 with a double major: Fashion design and business.

She dabbled in the world of fashion but found the opportunities scarce.

"Unless you lived and had contacts in Europe, you couldn't get a break," she said.

She returned to Lodi and began her career in education, first teaching at

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## Lodi Community Foundation Redirects Focus of Strategic Plan

*The mission of the Lodi Community Foundation is to advocate and facilitate charitable giving to create lasting legacies that build a stronger Lodi community.*

On a hot summer's day, the Lodi Community Foundation Board of Directors gathered to address the question "What is next for the Lodi Community Foundation?" The Foundation had previously implemented a strategic plan in 2010, but given the growth of funds and experience feels that they can begin to concentrating on visibility and individual donors. By shifting the focus of its strategic plan, The Lodi

Community Foundation is set to make tremendous strides.

The day-long meeting, under the direction of Patricia Jones, MBA, strategic planning coach, has resulted in a more defined sense of purpose for the LCF Board of Directors. The board is currently developing a business and marketing

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# LCF Funds

The Lodi Community Foundation is thankful for all of the donors that donate to our funds in an efforts to support the community more efficiently, effectively, and in a sustainable manner.

All Veteran's Plaza Fund

Children's Endowment Share Homes

Concert Association Endowment Fund

Hospice of San Joaquin Endowment for the Benefit of Lodi Area Residents

Hutchins Street Square Foundation Endowment

Joe & Susan Maley Fund of the LCF

Joyce Clarkson-Harmon Endowment (Tree Lodi)

Lodi Community Concert Association

Lodi Community Foundation Fund

Lodi Library Foundation Endowment

Lodi Parks and Recreation Fund

Pregnancy Resource Center of Lodi Endowment

Salvation Army Culinary Program Endowment

Save the Lodi Grape Bowl

Sheila Wishek Fund

Women's Center of San Joaquin Phoebe Watt Endowment

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AMELIA ERNST CONTINUED FROM THE COVER...

Needham, then Lodi and Tokay highs, and finally, at Delta.

Ernst has always been a quick learner, and that led to her taking on a striking array of courses, among them business, accounting, economics, psychology, history and keyboarding. She earned a master's in history from University of the Pacific.

In her years of teaching, she only booted out one student.

"I told them I had high standards, and that included never using profanity," she said. "I expected them to meet the same standards. One student was upset about getting an F and I told him: 'You had to get a 60 percent to get a D and you didn't. I had no choice but to flunk him on that paper. He used the F word and I told him that was it — he was done with the class.'"

As her career progressed, she discovered an affinity for counseling, and she returned to college to earn a master's in psychology at the University of La Verne.

She relished helped students map out career and academic plans, and regularly found internships and part-time jobs for students around town.

"If they did not have a B, I wouldn't consider them," she said. "I never referred a student who wasn't hired and I never referred a student who was fired. In fact, it got to the point where the employers didn't even interview them, they just hired them."

## A SPECIAL EMPATHY

She and her late husband, a fruit contractor, traveled widely. They did not have any children, but were active in church and community activities.

For most of her life, Ernst has dealt with cardiac challenges. She suffered a heart attack at age 35 and has had two open heart surgeries.

After heart problems recurred this June, she reviewed her estate planning. After conferring with attorney Sabrina Schnewei-Coe and financial planner Darrell Drummond, Ernst decided to leave a substantial portion of her estate to the adult day care program.

"My parents were both very giving people," she said. "They gave regularly to the Methodist Church and the Gideons International, which provides Bibles. So my husband and I tried to replicate their model of compassion."

Her mother suffered a stroke and lived for several years in a local skilled nursing home before passing away. Ernst has witnessed how diverse activities can enrich the lives of those dealing with chronic age-related ailments. She's witnessed, too, the sacrifices of caregivers.

She has special empathy for those families who are taking care of a loved one, but lack the money for a day care program.

"They are unsung heroes, and they deserve a break," she said.

## LODI COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Mary Ann Maggio, Secretary/  
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**Renee Hall**

Drummond said Ernst's endowment, made through the Lodi Community Foundation, will make an ongoing difference for the program.

"Her generosity will help adult day care continue. It is not a one-time gift, but a gift that will help provide sustainability," he said.

Ernst hopes her gift might inspire others to arrange legacy donations before they pass away.

Sitting in her sunlit library, though, she insisted her gift is quite modest — and that her life has been, in her words, "very mundane."

Terri Whitmire is among those who would disagree.

"What she has given us will help many families in the community for many years to come," she said. "It is a wonderful gift from a wonderful woman."

# WINNERS OF THE 2014 LIGHT THE SPARK INITIATIVE GRANTS

The Lodi Community Foundation is proud to announce that the World of Wonders Science Museum and the Lodi Lion's Club are the recipients of the 2014 "Light the Spark" grants. Each organization will receive \$2500 as a matching grant to help begin and develop endowment programs. Representatives of the World of Wonders Science Museum and the Lodi Lion's Club will receive their awards at the Philanthropy Summit on November 13 at Hutchins Street Square.



The purpose of the "Light the Spark" program is to encourage and facilitate the development of organizational endowment programs that can build a strong financial base for the long term sustainability of non-profit organizations.

The Lodi Lions, according to spokesperson Richard Prima, "is excited and very appreciative to receive this grant from the Lodi Community Foundation. The establishment of our endowment fund will help sustain our Club in to the future so we can continue to provide community service to the Lodi community. It will also help broaden our membership base and provide a lasting legacy."

"The World of Wonders Science Museum is honored to receive the Light the Spark award from the Lodi Community Foundation," said Sally Snyder, President of the organization. "By starting an endowment through LCF, the WOW Science Museum will enhance its mission of offering hands-on programs for all ages and will enable WOW to continue engaging inquisitive minds in the process of scientific discovery."

The "Light the Spark" initiative will be accepting applications for next year's awards in late spring 2015.



Applicants are judged on a variety of criterion: community impact, volunteer leadership, financial viability, and long term plans for the promotion and growth of their endowment program. A committee of the Lodi Community Foundation reviews the applications and recommends the recipients to the local Board of Directors of the Foundation.

The Lodi Community Foundation will provide local non-profit organizations with technical assistance regarding endowment programs, policies and procedures in the preparation of their applications.

Congratulations to this year's recipients, the World of Wonders Science Museum and the Lodi Lion's Club.

## STRATEGIC PLAN CONTINUED FROM THE COVER...

plan to implement in 2015. They also addressed the working relationship with Sacramento Regional Community Foundation, and plan to have a statement in place to inform donors of the benefits of such partnership. Board members are focusing on building and creating relationships with our local community and government leaders in order to grow the Foundation.

Over the next year, look for updated marketing materials, a revamped website, and Lunch and Learn sessions, designed to educate our local financial advisors on the benefits of keeping funds locally with the LCF. The board is reenergized, focused and committed to the philanthropic sustainability of the community we live in. For further questions please contact the Foundation office at 209.366.1222.

## New Social Media Presence



This fall, the Lodi Community Foundation stepped into the social

media realm and launched a Facebook page. We hope that this additional method of outreach from LCF will help members of the Lodi community not only feel more connected to one another, but also keep in better touch with what is going on in our city throughout the year.

LCF is also in the process of revamping our website and we hope to have an updated, easier to navigate site up and running by the end of 2014. A new website will be an exciting start to 2015!

We hope you will connect with us online. "Like" us on Facebook, by visiting [www.facebook.com/pages/Lodi-Community-Foundation/193741703977163](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lodi-Community-Foundation/193741703977163) or searching for Lodi Community Foundation.

If you are interested in learning more about the Lodi Community Foundation or would like to make a donation to one of our funds, visit to our website at [www.lodicommunityfoundation.org](http://www.lodicommunityfoundation.org).

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”**

*~Margaret Mead*

To make a contribution to the **Lodi Community Foundation**, please complete the following:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. (Please select a fund from the list inside.)

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Return this form to: Lodi Community Foundation • P. O. Box 2278 • Lodi, CA 95241-2278

For more information or to donate online, please visit us at [LodiCommunityFoundation.org](http://LodiCommunityFoundation.org). You can make a secure donation by clicking on the **Give Now** link. Questions? Email us at [LodiCF@gmail.com](mailto:LodiCF@gmail.com).

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