

**ES
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East Sac Baby Boomers News

Paying it Forward and Having Fun

www.EastSacBabyBoomers.com

Summer 2018

ESBB P.O. Box 191342
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**SOCIETY
FOR THE
BLIND**
More than what you see

East Sac Baby Boomer Member Spotlight



ESBB member Debra Celiz

This issue of the ESBB News spotlights an individual who truly exemplifies the spirit of *Pay It Forward*. Her story is one of triumph over tragedy and happiness attained through service to others.

Debra Celiz is the second youngest of nine children born to Mexican immigrant parents. She was delivered at County Hospital, now known as UCD Medical Center, and was raised in a full house located at 24th & T Streets, Sacramento. She attended Newton Booth Elementary, Sutter Jr. High and Sacramento High School (Class of '69).

During her junior and senior high school years she acted in school productions, local community theater, the Music Circus and danced with the Camellia City Ballet Company.

After graduating from high school she moved to San Francisco where she attended S.F. City College and continued pursuing her acting and dancing interests. She performed in improvisational theater and studied with the San Francisco Ballet. Debra also worked in film, appearing prominently in the cult classic American Graffiti.

At age 22 Celiz began a career in health care administration. She studied business at S.F. State College and Golden Gate University. Following college she spent seven years managing a large ophthalmology practice, eight years managing a medical imaging center and three years in management at UCSF Medical Center.

While working at UCSF Med Center she began struggling with her vision. Debra had difficulty differentiating

shades and contrast. She had problems locating the cursor on her computer screen and began losing the ability to clearly read patient's medical charts. She was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, an inherited condition that involves both eyes, usually starting later in life, and progresses inevitably to blindness. There is no treatment or cure. Eventually she could no longer work or drive, so in 2013 Debra came back to her hometown to be close to family. She moved into her current residence in Curtis Park and resigned herself to a life spent at home, alienated from friends and living on memories of a life once lived.

Celiz had heard of the Society for the Blind, located at 12th & E Streets in Sacramento, and of the store found within the facility which catered to the visually impaired. The North State Assistive Technology store offered a variety of specialized products that assist the blind. Debra went there seeking extra-thick lined paper on which she could still manage writing. The receptionist asked Debra if this was her first visit, which it was, and if she wished to speak with someone. Celiz was then introduced to Shane Snyder, Director of the Senior Impact Project (SIP).

While Snyder gave Debra a tour of the facility he explained the many services and technologies offered free of charge to the visually impaired. At one point he took out his phone, aimed it at his shoes and an electronic voice announced: "*Brown shoes with tassels ... polka dot socks*". Debra was blown away.

Shane encouraged Debra to participate in a Senior Impact Program Retreat (see back page article). Each month an eight day intensive training is held at the Society For The Blind to provide training in non-visual skills and alternative techniques which help seniors to improve and maintain their independence.

Debra attended the retreat and it changed her life. Celiz: "*The instructors were amazing. So caring, nurturing and understanding. And the mentors were blind!*" By the end of the retreat Debra was full of hope. She was now resolved to engage fully and freely with the world around her. She was grateful to those who helped her in so many ways and that gratitude became the inspiration for her to be of service to others.

Debra now serves as a volunteer mentor for the Senior Impact Project. She speaks at Society For The Blind visitor breakfasts/lunches, does outreach at senior centers, nursing homes, health fairs and for the Department of Rehabilitation. She also solicits donations (very effectively).

She is a source of encouragement for the visually impaired and offers help along the way for those experiencing the journey of blindness. She is an inspiration to all who know her. Debra Celiz poignantly expresses her outlook on life: "*I am so grateful. Going blind was a gift.*"

What's Up With ESBB In 2018?

ESBB is currently renovating its website: eastsacbabyboomers.org. The new website will enable ESBB to more fully engage with its membership, clearly define its mission, announce and promote upcoming events, offer access to archival images, newsletters and activities, link members with specific directors/departments (media, sponsorship, volunteers, events, etc.), all presented on a user-friendly platform easily navigated.

Stay informed of upcoming ESBB events and activities by visiting our website and by checking out East Sac Baby Boomers on Facebook. Upcoming activities include: Open Mic Meet & Greet in July, Take Me Out To The Ballgame at Raley Field in late summer, Run To Feed The Hungry on Thanksgiving Day and ESBB Concerts For Life Benefit Live Music event in December.

ESBB 2018 Board of Directors

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ESBB Contact Information

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SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

More than what you see

East Sac Baby Boomers' successful fundraising efforts have enabled the organization to expand its support of local charities and community based causes. ESBB is proud to announce its recent sponsorship of Sacramento's

Society For The Blind - Senior Impact Project.

The Society For The Blind (SFTB) Senior Impact Project (SIP) is open to individuals aged 55 or older who live in Sacramento and nearby counties. The mission of SIP is to empower individuals living with low vision or blindness to discover, develop and achieve their full potential. All services, including transportation, are **free of charge**.

Held each month in Sacramento, SIP offers an eight day intensive training program which provides training in non-visual skills and alternative techniques which help individuals improve and maintain their independence. Classes include Orientation & Mobility training, Daily Living Skills, Introduction to Braille, and Introduction to Computers. Participants receive individual attention from certified instructors and are coached by adept blind mentors.

In addition to classes, participants also engage in discussion groups, seminars, and community excursions. Participants acquire life-altering skills

and positive attitudes while forming lasting bonds with other individuals experiencing vision loss.

If an individual is unable to attend the SIP retreat for health or mobility reasons, short term, in-home training is available. If SFTB determines that in-home training is necessary, a skilled instructor will visit the senior's home in order to teach skills and offer resources based on the individual's needs and goals.

The Senior Impact Project offers monthly support groups at the SFTB facility located at 1238 S Street, Sacramento, CA 95811. Support groups provide seniors with resources and methods for coping with vision loss. SIP also offers special workshops and seminars on family support, daily living skills and other important topics.

SIP is a perfect fit for East Sac Baby Boomers. Due to the generosity of individual donors, business sponsors and event attendees, ESBB members and supporters have been given an opportunity to effectively *Pay It Forward* in order to help those living within our area.

SIP Manager: Kathleen Shevlin (916) 889-7516 or kshevlin@societyfortheblind.org
For more information about any SFTB programs and services, or to be added to their email list for upcoming events, please contact: SocietyfortheBlind.org & (916) 452-8271 ext. 506



The relationship East Sac Baby Boomers has forged with the American Cancer Society and its Road To Recovery Program has been satisfying, rewarding and effective. It's been two years since ESBB and ACS-RTR have formed their partnership and ESBB is proud to continue its support of this worthy program.

Cancer patients cite transportation to and from medical treatments as a critical need, second only to direct financial assistance. An estimated 3.6 million Americans delay or have difficulty getting needed medical care each year due to the lack of available and affordable transportation to treatment. The ACS Road To Recovery Program offers transportation services free of charge and ESBB has helped provide this crucial service to hundreds of patients. The RTR Program has become a valuable asset to our community.

ESBB has provided our community with an opportunity to show its generosity and to *Pay It Forward*. Thus far ESBB has contributed \$20,000 to the American Cancer Society's Road To Recovery Program. Let's keep it going.

To volunteer as a RTR driver visit: cancer.org/drive or for more information about the American Cancer Society call: 1-800-227-2345.