

The Ebell Insider

we're so glad you're here!

We are delighted to introduce to you *The Ebell Insider*, a new quarterly newsletter written by members for members. It is another reflection of the importance, engagement, and talent of our Ebell member volunteers.

You, our Ebell members and volunteers, are not only the heart of this nonprofit organization—you are part of a powerful civic tradition. Volunteerism, especially women-led volunteerism, has always shaped this campus, this city, and this country. Volunteerism is not just service; it is vision in action. It's what transforms ideals into impact. And it's what built The Ebell from the very beginning.

This year, **206 member volunteers filled 452 distinct roles across more than 30 active committees and task forces**, including **19 Board members** performing their duties as committee and task force members. These are not honorary titles. These are *engaged, hands-on, and community-building roles*. In total, you contributed more than **24,288 hours** of your valuable time.

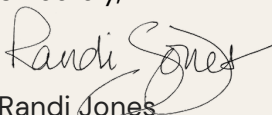
Our founding president, Harriet Williams Russell Strong, knew this. A civic leader, inventor, and fierce advocate for women's education, she believed that ideas mattered more than ego, and that service was the path to dignity and power.

In 1927, at the dedication of this very building, then-president Helen Read proclaimed: "So we may at last dedicate this house to service in its highest form: to the culture of the heart, that fine and broad culture, which comes only through service to others.... Let us dedicate this building to friendship, one of the most prized human possessions...not that which comes from mere social acquaintance, but that which comes from thinking, planning, and working together." That spirit is alive and thriving in each of you.

Our Ebell volunteers have brought their talent, time, and heart to everything from curating our historic art and costume collections...to welcoming guests...to steering finance and governance...to staging world-class public programs...to advancing equity and belonging...to caring for one another.

Thank you—past, present, and future volunteers—for modeling service, collaboration, and generosity for all of Los Angeles. You are The Ebell's legacy—and its future.

Sincerely,



Randi Jones
President, The Ebell of Los Angeles



Laurie Schechter
Editor, *The Ebell Insider*



Message from Randi Jones

President of The Ebell of Los Angeles



Randi Jones, President of The Ebell of Los Angeles

The Ebell of Los Angeles has long been a cornerstone in the cultural and civic landscape of our city, inspiring women and fostering community through arts, culture, education, and service.

As we continue to navigate the evolving cultural and economic landscape while advancing The Ebell's mission and impact, I am excited to share that Camille Schenkkan has joined our executive leadership team as Chief Operating Officer. With over 20 years of experience in management within the LA arts scene, Camille's appointment comes at an exciting time for The Ebell. Camille's extensive background in organizational development, community engagement, and arts

education will enhance our mission and strengthen our infrastructure. Her collaborative approach and strategic mindset align perfectly with our goals as we enter this next chapter of growth.

I am also delighted to share that Stacy Brightman's title will become Chief Executive Officer. Under Stacy's visionary and indefatigable leadership, The Ebell has grown into a genuinely vibrant and enduring hub for thought-provoking programming that focuses on women-centered stories, resonating deeply within our community.

Working together with these leaders, our dedicated board, passionate member volunteers and supporters, and our talented staff, I am confident that we will meet the challenges of campus renovation and continue to expand our reach, relevance, and impact in the community.

We will find a way or make one!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randi Jones".

Randi Jones
President, The Ebell of Los Angeles



Camille Schenkkan, Chief Operating Officer
photo by Sarah Sido



Stacy Brightman, Chief Executive Officer

A Season of Stories, Strength, and Celebration: The Ebell of LA's 2025–2026 Season Preview

The Ebell of Los Angeles proudly unveils its 2025–2026 season — one that celebrates women's leadership, civic engagement, and the enduring power of art and education. From speaker events and field trips to live performances and wellness offerings, this season reflects The Ebell's founding spirit and commitment to inclusivity, inspiration, and impact.

A Stronger Spotlight on Women's History Month

A major shift this season: our annual Ebell Open House moves to March 2026, aligning with Women's History Month. Reimagined as a marquee event, it will spotlight our mission and the stories of remarkable LA women.

March highlights include:

- **"We Can Do It" Celebration** – Mar 22
- **Keynote: Dr. Diana Ramos, CA Surgeon General** – Mar 9
- **Juried Art Show** – Mar 19
- **The Ebell Institute Public Symposium** – Mar 26

The month will feature panels, performances, field trips, and partnerships—all honoring women's voices and achievements.

Season Highlights at a Glance:

- **Opening Day with Jessie Kornberg on LA's Arts Landscape** – Oct 6
- **Holiday Luncheon & Boutique** – Dec 10
- **Mother's Day Brunch** – May 10
- **Legacy Tea** – June 1
- **Live in the Lounge:** Lunar New Year (Feb 17), Shakespeare's Birthday (Apr 6)

LA VOICES Program Series:

- **LA Jewish Symphony** – Oct 12
- **Chorale Concert & Tea** – Dec 14
- **Inner City Youth Orchestra** – Feb 15
- **Women's History Month Concert** – Mar 15
- **Versa-Style Dance** – Apr 12
- **Voices of Asia** – May 31

New & Signature Programs:

- **Field Trips:** Virginia Robinson Gardens, LACMA's newly opened campus, Japanese American National Museum, LATINAFest, Wat Thai, Natural History Museum
- **Movement Series:** Gentle Ballet, Line Dancing, Gentle Jazz, Walk & Talks
- **Partnerships:** AALAO Recitals, Black History Month Recital (Feb 15), Ben Kerr Father's Day Recital
- **Scholarship Awards Dinner** – Sept 11

Whether you're a returning member or new, we invite you to connect, celebrate, and be part of this unforgettable season. Stay tuned for event details and registration links!

The Chorale Goes to NY

CHRISTIE MCAVOY

How do you get to Carnegie Hall? It's not just "practice, practice, practice" if you're the Ebell Chorale.

The Ebell Chorale is one of the oldest programs of the organization. Founded 110 years ago to celebrate the power of shared musical experience, the chorale has been a mainstay of The Ebell's cultural programming for decades. Its biannual concerts and concerts in senior living facilities have brought joy to members and residents throughout each year. This year, however, there was an added adventure. The chorale and its conductor Yu Han Tan were invited to Carnegie Hall to participate in a chorale concert of Mozart and Vivaldi conducted by two renowned women conductors Dr. Wen Chin Liu-Young and Dr. Lizette Canton. Joining four other choirs from across the United States and Canada, twenty-seven women spent the last six months not only learning the repertoire but also fundraising and organizing busy schedules, travel and hotels. The staff, led by Dr. Stacy Brightman, provided invaluable assistance with fundraising. Ebell Friends, led by the intrepid Fran Varga, made sure that the logistics were seamless. "I will find a way, or make one", The Ebell's longstanding motto, was employed at every turn. The members of the chorale are multi-talented, and the cooperative spirit and "can do" attitude were constantly on display.

The Spring Concert titled "On/Off the Beaten Path" highlighted much of the repertoire which was reprised in New York City in two concerts. In addition to the Carnegie performance, the chorale performed at St. John the Divine, New York's historic cathedral, and an architectural and acoustical masterpiece. In this venue, the chorale performed our anthem "In Veniam Viam (I Will Find a Way)" and a rousing version of "We Shall Overcome", along with "Over the Rainbow" (our homage to Judy Garland, who in addition to being discovered at The Ebell went on to play Carnegie Hall).



Yu Han summed the effort up this way: "This wasn't just a milestone for the Chorale; it was a testament to what happens when an arts organization embraces growth, invests in its artists, and empowers its programs to dream bigger. What we accomplished this year was not just about beautiful music. It was about empowerment, sustainability, and the power of the arts to spread our mission beyond our walls. Our voices echoed from Wilshire Boulevard to Manhattan—and they carried with them the story of a community committed to excellence, integrity, and the belief that the arts are not just relevant, but necessary."

Ebell Scholar Profile

An Opera Star is Born

JUDITH DAY & ANNMARIE HEHIR

For students who became Ebell scholars during the pandemic shutdown, the experience was a decidedly more distant one. Applicant interviews took place virtually, and the incoming scholars could not visit The Ebell for in-person events. And so, it was with great pleasure that Judith Day and Annmarie Hehir from our Scholarship Committee finally caught up with Lurdes Zapata, a 2021 Ebell scholar, to discuss her experiences and her future plans.

Lurdes is a recent graduate of the Bob Cole Conservatory at California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in opera performance. While she was accepted to other programs across the country, she chose the Bob Cole Conservatory because it was a smaller program where she could get the individual attention she needed. She credits the strong mentor relationship she developed with her voice teacher and the support she received from her other professors to help build her confidence and become successful in her program.

Her dedication and hard work paid off. While at Long Beach, Lurdes auditioned and was accepted to the Bob Cole Chamber Choir and Opera Program. With these groups she toured Italy and Slovenia and performed her first role as Adele in "Die Fledermaus." This season, she performed with the Los Angeles Opera as a supernumerary in "Turandot" and "El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego." Working on both productions was her first experience performing in such a large-scale, professional setting.

Lurdes spent two summers in Austria attending summer music festivals. She says it was the Ebell money she received that made it possible for her to participate in these opportunities. These funds were also allocated for recordings needed to apply to graduate school and travel to nine graduate schools for in-person auditions.

She's now headed to the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University to earn a Master of Music for Opera Performance, giving her even more opportunities to perform. "It's as if I am now working in an opera house that happens to be in an academic setting." She will continue to study German at Northwestern and plans to begin her professional career in Europe.

The Scholarship Committee wishes her all the best for continued success.



Lurdes Zapata

The Storytellers:

How Ebell Docents Bring the Building to Life

CHRISTIE MCAVOY & JILL SCHEETZ

Over twenty members have been trained to guide guests and members through their experience of The Ebell's civic and architectural history. These passionate volunteers are deeply committed to preserving and sharing the story of our historic building and the women's organization that has thrived for over a century. As they lead visitors across the campus, they bring history to life with engaging stories of artistic achievement, civic leadership, and architectural significance. Tours highlight notable contributions by individual members and the organization, the club's vibrant past, its role as a popular filming location in Los Angeles, and the dynamic programs and events that define The Ebell today.

Following a series of training lectures focused on architectural vocabulary and detailed room-by-room descriptions, each docent receives a comprehensive manual filled with research, archival photos, and historical context. Using this as a foundation, each docent develops her own script tailored to her interests and those of her audience. No two tours are the same. Routes vary throughout the building, and each room reveals a chapter in The Ebell's history and the remarkable women who shaped it. Docents often work in pairs to enhance the experience and ensure a smooth flow of visitors, offering multiple perspectives along the way. They also address questions about upcoming renovations and new initiatives like The Ebell Institute. The tours are so compelling that many guests are inspired to become members on the spot.

Jill Scheetz, one of our most active storytellers (she also volunteers for the LA Conservancy and the Central Library) shares that, "Being a docent is rewarding in so many ways. The Docent Corps is the bridge that connects the past to the future. The more tours the organization can conduct, the better the chance of raising awareness in the community for the needs and the value of The Ebell to the city of Los Angeles."

If you're interested in becoming a docent, we invite you to attend our upcoming Docent Training session on Saturday, August 16. Additional opportunities will be available—be sure to check our calendar for future training dates.

What is The Ebell Rest Cottage Association?

JULIA SMITH

The Rest Cottage Association (RCA) was established in 1918 as a place for women to rest and recover—a literal cottage offering convalescence and care. Over time, the cottage was sold, and the proceeds were used to set up a philanthropic endowment to fund the RCA. Today, the RCA Committee manages the endowment and awards grants to nonprofit organizations such as the ones below that support women and their children in Los Angeles County—carrying forward its legacy of Relief, Compassion, and Action.



Jewish Family Service Hope Transitional serves domestic violence survivors like Alma by providing women and their children with safe shelter and an array of comprehensive services.

A victim of domestic violence, Alma called the Hope counseling agency's 24/7 hotline and was sent to one of their emergency shelters. There, she was assisted in securing a permanent restraining order, provided clothing and toiletries, and began daily therapy sessions. Within a few weeks, she moved to a long-term transitional housing program, Hope Transitional, where she stayed rent-free for 14 months.

We Still Move (formerly Critical Mass Dance Company) is a community led nonprofit that centers the wellness of women through the healing arts and movement. A participant shares her experiences.

Dance from the Heart was a truly transformative and healing experience. The workshops allowed me to connect to my body, to heal my body, and to connect with my spirit. The workshops not only supported my own personal growth but also supported my parenting and relationships.

We invite you to get involved! Joining the RCA Committee is a rewarding way to apply your life and professional experience, connect with new people, broaden your knowledge, and make a meaningful impact.

In addition to grantmaking, the Social Services sub-committee offers hands-on volunteer opportunities and provides direct support to the organizations we fund.



Meetings are monthly, both in person and via Zoom. Training is provided to help members review grant applications and participate in the selection process. It's a true team effort. The annual grant review process begins in September, making now the perfect time to get involved!

For more information, please email rca@ebellofla.org or call Kay Balue at 323-497-1522.

Social Services Visits an RCA Grantee: St. Anne's

LIZZIE BLATT

St. Anne's Family Services provides high-quality supportive housing programs, early childhood education, mental health, and family-based services to more than 2,100 young women, children and families. It is one of the RCA's current grantees and since 2024 has been the regular Monday morning destination of Social Services Committee members Miranda Butler, Laura Scott, Paulinda Schimmel, Lizzie Blatt, and soon-to-be Ebell member Jen Eldridge, who work in the St Anne's Pantry, packing orders for needy families in the community.



Paulinda Schimmel and Lizzie Blatt at the St Anne's pantry.

The pantry houses basic household necessities, ranging from diapers and cleaning products, to breakfast bars, spaghetti, canned vegetables, and toothpaste. "It was started in 2022 in response to the call to action from program participants facing food insecurity," says President and CEO Lorna Little. "It is a vital part of our broader efforts to address food insecurity and support the overall wellbeing of the individuals and families we serve. It not only provides access to essential items but also fosters dignity and stability during times of need."

Since its inception, the pantry has fulfilled orders for more than 415 families, providing support for a total of 1,036 individuals. The pantry is restocked every three months or so, to keep up with demand. Generous suppliers also provide critical financial and in-kind contributions to help keep the pantry stocked and running.

The members of the Social Services Committee feel privileged to be able to lend a hand in this enterprise. Every hour we spend is an hour giving a highly-skilled staff member time free to do the job they were trained to do, and that gives us tremendous pleasure.

Art Treasures at The Ebell

NANCY BISHOP



Harriet Williams Russell Strong
by Joseph Mason Reeves

The many paintings found on the walls of The Ebell are far more than pleasant wall decorations. They hold stories of the artists who created them, the subjects represented, and any number of conditions around the actual creation, not to mention the path that brought the artworks to their present home. This information can be interesting and can aid in deepening an appreciation of the art collection.

It is for that reason that members of the Historic Collections Committee have decided to bring a little more attention to some of these artworks by initiating a “Focus on Ebell Art” program.

Several times throughout the year, we spotlight a single piece from our collection, inviting members, guests, and the broader community to take a closer look at the artists and stories behind the work. The featured work will be displayed in or near the Art Salon and accompanied by interpretive materials both in print and online. Members are encouraged to stop by and spend a few moments each month with the selected piece, taking time to reflect, react, and connect. To date, we have featured two paintings.



Self-Portrait
by Kathryn McManaman Mau

The first painting was the portrait of Harriet Williams Russell Strong, the first president and one of the founding members of The Ebell of Los Angeles. This powerful portrait was painted by Joseph Mason Reeves, 54 years her junior. It was given to the Ebell by Mrs. Strong’s daughters. The posted article barely skimmed the surface of Mrs. Strong’s impressive life. There is quite a bit of information about her available online and in The Ebell archives. Less is known about the artist.

The next painting selected was the self-portrait by former member and gifted painter Kathryn McManaman Mau. After studying with two eminent artists in New York, Kathryn moved to California where she pursued her career. This painting reflects The Ebell’s long history in valuing women’s creative output and the organization’s role in providing opportunities for women in the arts. The Ebell owns nine of Kathryn Mau’s paintings, most of which feature the single image of a woman.

This is just the beginning of what we hope will be a new way to appreciate the art around us. Coming soon: “The Grand Tour of Europe.”

Caregiver Support at The Ebell

The Power and Importance of Support Groups

LAURIE SCHECHTER & ELIZABETH MALLOY

At The Ebell of Los Angeles, we celebrate women who lead, serve, and uplift their communities—and few roles reflect that spirit more powerfully than that of a caregiver. Whether tending to an aging parent, an ill partner, or a loved one in need, at home or afar, caregiving requires compassion, resilience, and strength. Yet even the strongest need support. This is why caregiver support groups are so essential—and why The Ebell is proud to encourage and offer this vital service.

Finding Strength in Community: Caregiving can be isolating. Many caregivers feel they must shoulder their responsibilities alone, often putting their own needs aside. At a time when they give so much, caregiver support groups offer a place to receive. They are spaces of empathy, where those walking a similar path can gather, share, and be understood.

Practical Wisdom and Shared Experience: Support groups also provide a wellspring of practical help. Whether it's navigating medical appointments, understanding care options, or managing daily tasks, group members exchange advice that comes from lived experience. These conversations can offer clarity and reduce the overwhelming burden of decision-making.

Caring for the Caregiver: Perhaps most importantly, support groups offer emotional care for the caregiver. They reduce stress, lessen feelings of guilt or burnout, and remind participants that their own well-being matters too. By taking time to connect with others, caregivers build resilience and restore their own capacity to give.

An Invitation to Connect: At The Ebell, we know that women flourish in community—and caregiver support groups are community at its most meaningful. Our Ebell Caregiver Support Group is open to all types of caregivers and meets on the second Thursday of every month from 7–8 pm. It is facilitated by member Elizabeth Malloy, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and certified Aging Life Care Manager / Dementia Practitioner.

If you are a caregiver or concerned about your loved one, consider joining us. You are not alone—and you deserve support, just as you give it so generously to others. For more information, contact Elizabeth Malloy at 415-425-7528 or elizabeth@egmalloy.com.



Emma Welch: Champion of Legacy, Leadership, and Community

LAURIE SCHECHTER



Emma Welch is an Ebell Lifetime and Early Career member whose professional and volunteer work reflect her deep dedication to service, community, and empowering others. With a background in public policy, business, and law, along with a passion for connecting people, Emma brings intelligence and compassion to The Ebell and the broader Los Angeles community.

“The common thread throughout my career has been building meaningful partnerships where both sides benefit,” said Emma.

With an undergraduate degree from Duke University and a recent Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School, Emma began her career with major corporations like LinkedIn and TikTok, focusing on community relations and partnerships. Currently, Emma serves as Planned Giving Manager at the California Community Foundation (CCF), one of the largest and most impactful philanthropic organizations in the region. In this role, she works with donors to create personalized giving plans, ensuring their legacies support causes close to their hearts.

In addition to her professional work, Emma is a deeply engaged civic volunteer. At The Ebell, Emma has been instrumental in revitalizing the organization’s relevance for younger women. She reestablished The Ebell Juniors, a vibrant committee that fosters programming, inter-generational connection, mentorship, and service among early career members. She has served on the Nominating Committee, led membership outreach efforts, and participated in various programming and fundraising initiatives. She is also a Board Member of Duke Alumni Southern California and an Advisory Board Member of the Windsor Square-Hancock Park Historical Society.

“I am committed to the future of the Ebell and want to help cultivate new leaders, particularly encouraging younger members to get involved, and shape the organization's future.”

Whether guiding donors, supporting fellow members, or building bridges across generations, Emma exemplifies our Ebell values and the best of civic leadership in Los Angeles.

Skip Black

POEM BY LAURA LOUDEN

The Little Black Dress has power
Black is slimming, forgiving
But wrong for us.

Dearest Friend
Black diminishes and
Hides our light.

The ones you miss
Would strew your path
With marigolds, yellow as the sun.

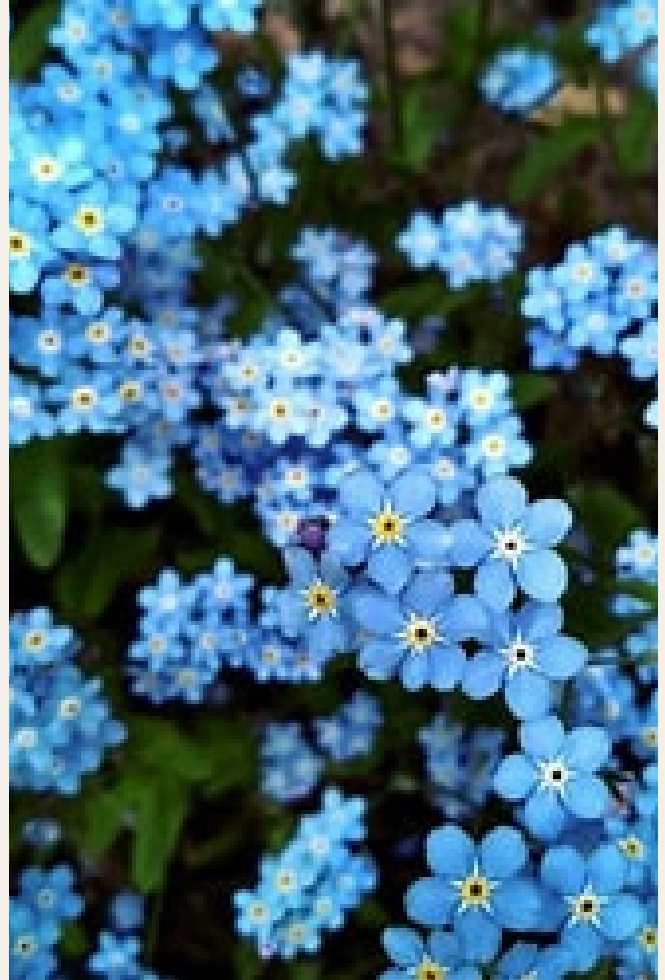
And feed you berries
Grown on a hill charged purple
By their fruit.

Black is for a lake
On a moonless night or
Frames holding moments.

We can forgive our own sadness
So heart-sister, please
Step from the shadows.

We'll dress in tangerine, scarlet
And twirl on grass
pink with clover.

Until your eyes, bluer than the sea
Or grandmother's forget-me-nots
Remember how to shine.



Your Art, Your Story

Have a poem, short story, photo, or painting you'd love to share? We welcome member submissions to be featured in future issues of our quarterly! Showcase your voice and vision with our community.

[LET'S CHAT!](#)



Our Congratulations

Congratulations to **Elaine Lubkin** and her daughter **Janet Keller** on the arrival of their first great-grandchild / grandchild, respectively. Levi Jack Missirlian was born on June 24, 2025, at 7 pounds 2 ounces. The mother and daughter duo could not be more thrilled.



Janet Keller, Rachel Missirlian, Elaine Lubkin, and Levi Jack Missirlian

Marnie Bodek and Ed Moss are overjoyed to announce the birth of their first grandchild, Elinor (Ellie) Kay Moss on May 7, 2025. Ellie arrived 5 weeks early at 5 pounds 6 ounces. She and her parents are thriving. In addition to her grandparents, Ellie is welcomed by Marnie's sister, **Janna Bodek Harris** and Brother-in-Law, Jim Harris.

Our Condolences

We are saddened to share the passing of our beloved member, **Morency Maxwell**, earlier this year at the youthful age of 95. She was an active member of The Ebell Scholarship Committee and the LA Opera League. Her presence, grace, and contributions to our community will be deeply missed. Our thoughts are with her daughters, Ebell members **Carole Brogdon**, **Cecily Brogdon** and **Daphne Brogdon**, their families and friends.

It is with a heavy heart that we learned from member **Wilma Pinder** of the unexpected and sudden passing of her beloved husband and partner, Frank (Frank Edward Pinder, III, M.D.) who died on March 11, 2025. Wilma and Frank met at USC as undergrads and were married shortly thereafter. They had three children, including **Tiffany Patierno** who is also an Ebell member. Frank was a frequent attendee at Ebell events and will be deeply missed.

If you have news (births, deaths, weddings, anniversaries, etc.) that you'd like to share with other members in our next quarterly newsletter, please send your information to newsletter@ebellofla.org.



Your Space for Member-to-Member Connection

JOIN THE CONVERSATION, SHARE YOUR UPDATES, AND STAY IN THE LOOP WITH
OUR MEMBER FACEBOOK PAGE

Want to see what's happening right now in our community? Looking for a space to connect, share, and support each other in real time? Our Members' Facebook Group is the place to be!

This private group is where members:

- Share photos from events
- Ask questions or advice
- Post opportunities or collaborations
- Make announcements and promote their projects
- And just check in with one another between meetings

While our eblasts and newsletters keep you informed on the big-picture happenings, the Member Facebook Page brings the day-to-day moments to life. It's a casual, interactive space where members can connect, and share.

Let's bring our amazing community to life online, too. Join the conversation today!

[CONNECT HERE](#)