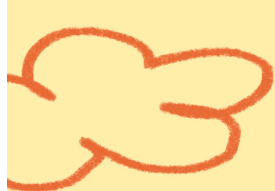




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SAN FRANCISCO

INGLESIDE
THE EXELSIOR
CROCKER-AMAZON



Carolyn Chris

Age: 85
Neighborhood: Ingleside
Excelsior
Interview by: Kendra
Moore
Written by: Charlie Gill

Carolyn is a painter, gardener, and volunteer usher.

Carolyn came to San Francisco in 1954 when her father was placed here with Bank of America. They were a British family, so California felt far from home. After a short while, her family enrolled her in school and then departed San Francisco, leaving her behind with her studies. Carolyn was forced to be independent from a young age.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, being comfortable with independence can be a key to happiness. Carolyn loves to garden, knit, paint, write, email with friends, and take her dog Fiona out on short walks in her neighborhood. Before the pandemic, Carolyn had been a long-time volunteer usher at the Opera House and Symphony Hall. She cherishes the relationships she's built with other volunteers and the regular patrons who've become friends over the years. It makes her happy to greet a concert-goer by name when they enter the hall, so she is excited to pick up where she left off.

When asked to offer advice for younger generations, Carolyn keeps her messages practical and abundant.

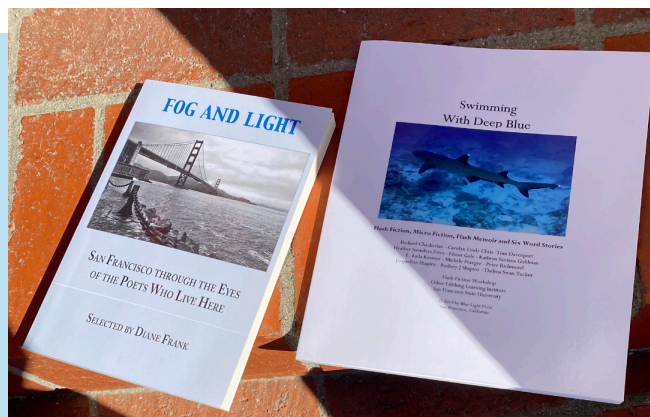


“LEARN HOW TO BE ALONE. DON'T WASTE FOOD AND WATER. TAKE CARE OF YOUR TEETH AND GUMS. GET OUT AND EXERCISE. DON'T CHEAT OR STEAL.”

1

As for raising children – she has two sons – Caroline believes that education is the most important aspect of parenting, saying, “Put the money in at the foundation.”

AS SAN FRANCISCO CONTINUES TO GROW, CAROLYN WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE INTERESTING ARCHITECTURE SPROUT UP.



6

She hates the “awful slab buildings” that line Market Street. She remembers when the TransAmerica Pyramid was built and the public outcry that ensued – though the Pyramid has grown on her over the years. The jury is still out on the Salesforce tower, though, which she calls “the manly building” with a laugh.

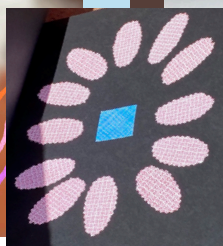
for fun. She recently finished knitting a blanket that had taken her months, which made her immensely happy. Now she can move onto the next knitting project.



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As for aging, Carolyn sometimes has to remind herself that she is in fact old. “I’m surprised I got so old so soon,” she says. She often finds herself comparing herself to others, wondering how old or young they might be, and how she stacks up. She has felt dizzy a few times over the past year, and she is learning how to cope with the way aging has affected her body. At the end of the day, though, she still feels youthful. “It’s amazing,” she says.

Independent life can be peaceful in older age. Carolyn paints and writes, even contributing to anthologies when she is able. She’s growing out her hair right now just



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Charles George



Age: 98

Neighborhood: Ingleside Excelsior

Interview by: Anna Chodos

Written by: Chadni Sehgal

What is Charles George, who has already reached 98, looking forward to? "Just trying to live one day more."

This is a mantra that has served George well. Full of wisdom and life experiences, George is also relentlessly positive, a trait he's held on to through the ups and downs of life. And in his long one, there have been plenty.

He grew up in North Carolina, worked in many jobs but found training as a chemist and ultimately a job doing chemistry at the Philadelphia naval shipyard. This job, too, came to an end, but it was the beginning of his move to San Francisco. He explains, "The higher ups in Philadelphia decided they had to cut down on the number of chemists, and I had the option of working at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the San Francisco Navy Yard. I was very familiar with New York. But one night, my wife looked at me and said, 'Gee, San Francisco, I think we better try'. It was my wife who made that decision, and I never regretted it. That's why I came."

"IF YOU GET OUT THERE TRYING TO DO SOMETHING, YOU'LL BE SURPRISED, BUT SOMEBODY OR SOMETHING WILL COME ALONG AND HELP YOU, THAT'S WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING."

He came, and he stayed, despite the racial discrimination and troubles he faced at the San Francisco Navy Yard. He was passed over for promotions over newer employees, and he described the work environment as often being, "cold and toxic", particularly due to a senior who had hated the idea of working with a person of color.

Eventually he moved on, taking on a job at The Mint, where he was not treated well but he held on to the position. "Over time, they downgraded me. With the same pay. I liked that because I had very little to do. I was foolish enough to stay about 26 years and then I retired."

He may have retired from The Mint, but he went on to work a job at University of San Francisco as a warehouse manager and then in a lab doing electro-chemical research. He retired "for good" at 95 years old.

So what got him through tougher years at work and in life? For one, he loved to stay active physically and to socialize prior to



the pandemic, it was at 24 Hour Fitness, a gym he's been going to since 1993, that he used to be able to do both and where several other members became "like family." He was disappointed to be shut out of his gym because of COVID, but he understood the need for it and shared another mantra, "It could have been worse." This is a phrase that keeps him going and focused on the positive.

As Charles has gotten older, he has seen that, "If you get out there trying to do something, you'll be surprised, but somebody or something will come along and help you, that's what keeps you going." It's what he thinks about when things don't work out for him right away. Advice to contemplate from a man who has been there, done that, and smiled through it all.



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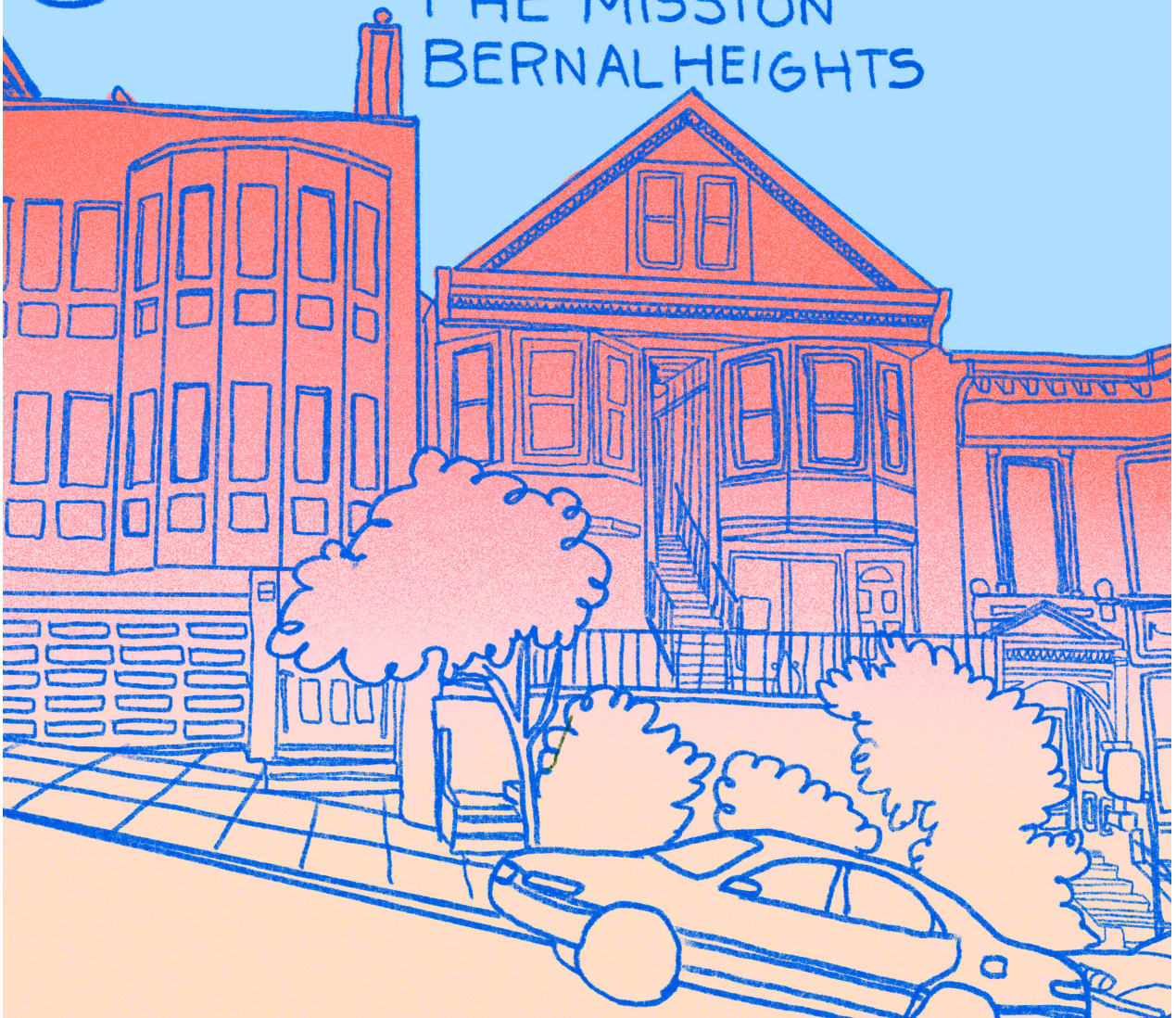
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SAN FRANCISCO
POTRERO HILL
THE MISSION
BERNAL HEIGHTS



Esperanza Ye Wong

Age: 84 ~ Neighborhood: Potrero Mission ~ Interview by: Anna Chodos ~ Written by: Charlie Gill

Esperanza is a family woman who's always looking for ways to help.

Esperanza grew up in the Philippines, but her Chinese heritage forced her to face discrimination at a young age. She remembers that her parents were prohibited from starting their own business since they were Chinese citizens, so they decided to uproot their family for new opportunities in the United States. They were looking for a chance to start fresh, in a place that accepted people from all backgrounds. At the time Esperanza was afraid of flying, but she had no choice but to follow suit. She's lived in San Francisco ever since.

Esperanza loves San Francisco's weather. "There's no need for a special jacket," she laughs. She appreciates how convenient transportation can be in the city, especially as she no longer drives. If she needs to get somewhere, she can take a bus anywhere she'd like. That said, Esperanza rarely needs to go far. Most of her closest loved ones actually live on her block.

At one point in her life, Esperanza shared her home with many family members, housing multiple siblings and generations of Wongs in her home. Over the years though, when opportunities presented themselves, those family members were able to buy their own property—but they made sure to stay close. Today, Esperanza is grateful that she can step next door to see her brother, walk a short way to see her sister, and regularly eat meals at her daughter's home.

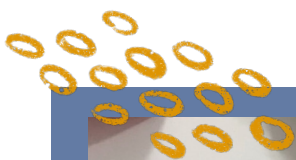
ESPERANZA'S NEARBY FAMILY—AND OF COURSE, FOOD—KEEP HER IMMENSELY HAPPY WITH AGE.

She enjoys eating out at restaurants or simply finding deals on produce at Safeway. Her favorite food is salmon. She credits her longevity to eating the right way. "Salt and sweet, that's no good," she says, and she encourages others to watch their diets as well. "You cannot control getting older. You have to watch out and take care of your body first."

**THESE DAYS
ESPERANZA FEELS
AS THOUGH SHE'S
GOT IT ALL, SO SHE
DEVOTES AS MUCH
TIME AS POSSIBLE TO
HELPING OTHERS.**



67



68



These days Esperanza feels as though she's got it all, so she devotes as much time as possible to helping others. She is quick to lend a hand to those in her circle. "Depends what kind of help they need," she says. "If it's food, or whatever they need-if I'm available, I'm helping them."

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