

The History of St. Helena Hospital

Chapter XI

A Health Center Instead of a Sanitarium

On Tuesday, March 30, 1965, the St. Helena Rotarians, their wives, and guests gathered at the St. Helena Sanitarium for the regular weekly meeting of the club. During this meeting, the Rotarians were the first to hear the Sanitarium's announcement of plans for a massive building project that was to start later in the year. A four-story, reinforced concrete structure was to be built—a million dollar project—extending outward from the hospital wing which was built in 1948. The plan called for the old sanitarium building, built in 1878, to be razed, and that area used for parking, more than doubling the space available.

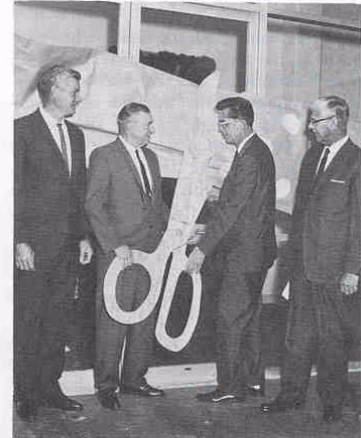
The St. Helena Star reported that, "The addition will be of reinforced concrete, four stories high, adjoining the older wing at the rear. It will be fire resistant, air conditioned, carpeted in most areas, and there will be a telephone and television in each room. On the first level will be the laundry, housekeeping, purchasing and storage departments. On the second will be the dining room, kitchen, bakery, parlor and eight guest rooms. On the third floor will be the main lobby, admitting office, administrative and business offices, and 15 guest rooms. On the fourth level will be 24 guest rooms." This configuration today remains almost nearly the same—we know the areas as A, B, and C levels, and ACRP.

Construction began in the latter part of 1965 and was completed about two and a half years later at a cost of \$1.5 million. On Sunday, May 12, 1968, a crowd of over two thousand gathered for the official opening ceremonies of the new \$1.5 million wing. The picture above was published in the *Pacific Union Recorder* along with an article celebrating the opening of the new center.

In conjunction with the Hospital's 125th anniversary celebration this year, the Center for Health, which is housed in the wing which was completed in 1968, is celebrating its 35th year of operation.

Vicki Saunders has worked in the Center for Health for the past 25 years. She began her employment here as the dietitian for the cardiac rehab program, which was in operation at that time. Vicki recalls that the Health Center's first director was Alan Rice. Alan currently serves as the Senior Vice President for Adventist Health and oversees the operation of St. Helena Hospital along with five other Adventist Health facilities in the Northern California region. The first program offered was a live-in five-day smoking cessation program which began in 1969. This was then followed by a weight management program, which was co-developed by Terry Hansen and Alan Rice. The forerunner of ACRP, the Alcohol Treatment Unit (ATU) was launched in 1975. The cardiac rehab program for which Vicki was recruited in 1979 merged into The McDougall Program which began in 1986 and ran until April 2002. For several years an eating disorders unit was operated that treated patients suffering from bulimia and anorexia. Other programs that have been offered by the Center for Health through the past 35 years include Choose to Loose, the Brain and Innate Giftedness Program, and the current seven-day Nicotine Addiction Program.

The Center for Health's newest program is called ONE—a specialized executive health profile. Participantss come and spend a day one-on-one with a physician and nurse who lead them through a gamut of tests and physical examinations and then serve as a liaison with them for a year to develop a preventive health maintenance program specially designed to meet



Napa County Supervisor Julius Caiocca and Northern California Conference President Elder James E. Chase symbolically cut a large "Band Aid" officially opening the new wing of the St. Helena Sanitarium and Hospital as other church and civic leaders look on.

individual needs. Future plans include the development of a new weight management program.

Originally called the Health Center, the facility has seen a number of programs come and go, but the main purpose has always remained the same. In his remarks at the opening ceremonies in 1968, James Chase, chairman of the Board, stated that the purpose of the "San" was to minister to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of mankind. The "San," Health Center, Center for Health—whatever name you wish to use, has continued to help people obtain optimal health through educating them in the ways of better living. Through the years guests have been taught how to overcome such problems as obesity, smoking and alcohol and chemical dependency. Executive health and other programs have been developed and guests have come to recognize the St. Helena Hospital and Center for Health as a leader in life-style medicine.

Today the Center for Health continues the legacy of restorative and preventive health care started here 125 years ago by the founders—Dr. Merritt Kellogg, William Pratt, and Asa Atwood. Their dream of a facility that would serve to restore the whole person, physically, mentally and spiritually lives on to this day.

Sources: *St. Helena Star*, April 1, 1965; *Pacific Union Recorder*, July 1, 1968; St. Helena Hospital Board Minutes, 1964-69; and Vicki Saunders, personal interview.