



KENNETH SONG/NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

Major donor Lynda Fairly has the arts center named for her, and David Powdrell was chairman of the successful capital campaign to raise more than \$3 million for the facility.

‘Modern-day barn raising’

Carpinteria Arts Center teams with activities for young and old

By **MARILYN MCMAHON**
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

David Powdrell compares it to a modern-day barn raising, “the collective action of a community in which a barn for one of the members is built or rebuilt collectively by members of the community.”

In this case, it wasn’t a barn. It was the expansion of the Carpinteria Arts Center by the community of Carpinteria with a

population of 13,622 as of 2017.

“It’s a crazy, amazing story. Everyone pitched in. We had donations that ranged from \$5 to \$1 million, and carpenters, electricians, painters and other laborers, skilled and unskilled, donated their services that would have cost \$600,000 otherwise,” said Mr. Powdrell, interim executive director of the Lynda Fairly Carpinteria Arts Center that became a reality in May.

Located on the site of the former Cajun Kitchen at 865 Linden Ave. in Carpinteria, it is across

the courtyard from the original Carpinteria Arts Center, which began in 2005 with the purchase of property at 855 Linden Ave.

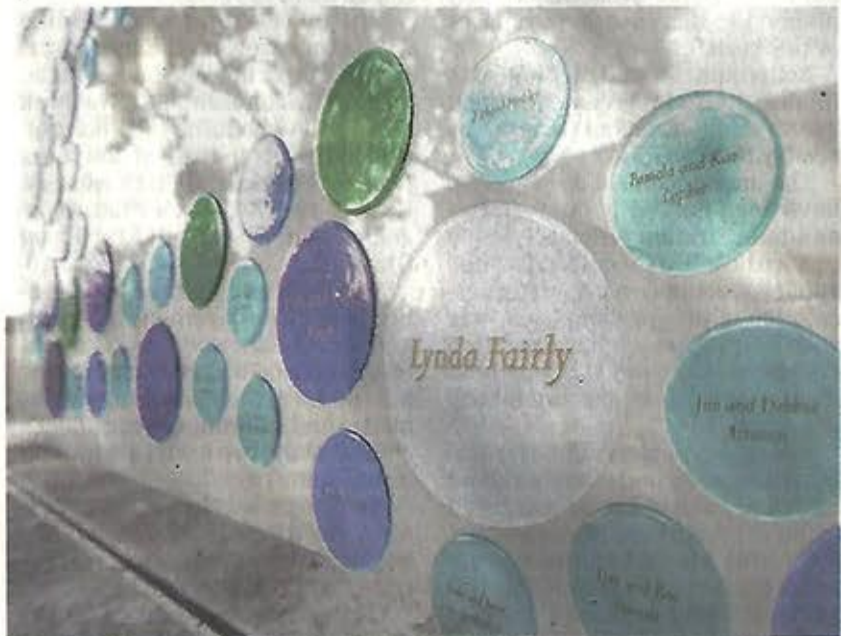
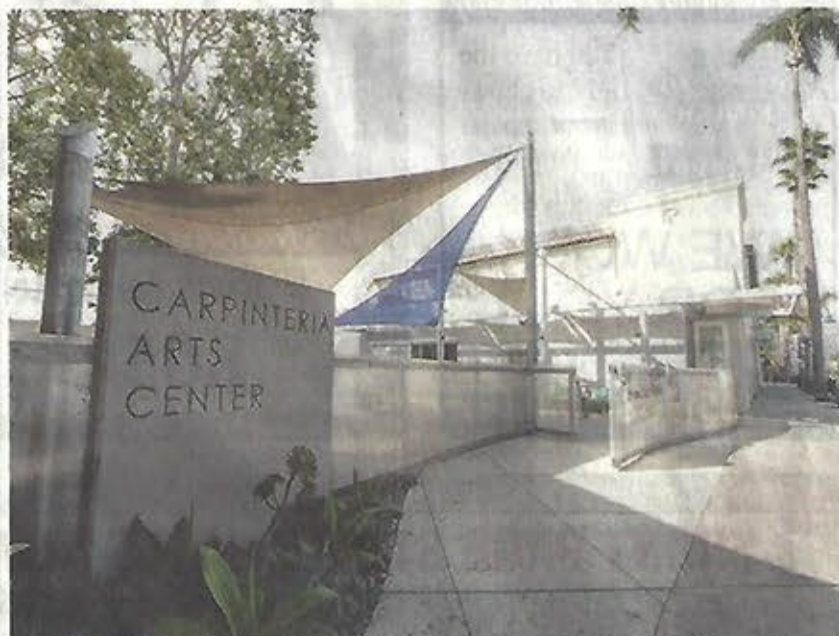
“The late Patti Sim, who was passionate about art, sold it to us for a song and a dance. She saw Carpinteria as a destination arts center. She lived three doors away from me and spent a lot of time at my kitchen table. We paid \$450,000 for the property, which had a small house on it, and we used it as a gallery for a decade,” said Mr. Powdrell, chairman of the center’s board of directors for 10

years.

A self-employed certified public accountant who earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder and master’s degree from William Howard Taft University in Denver, he is a professional photographer, plays keyboard for The Nombres, a local rock band, and is passionate about the importance of the arts, especially for children.

As the popularity of the center increased, the board began expansion plans.

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The Lynda Fairly Carpinteria Arts Center is located on the site of the former Cajun Kitchen at 865 Linden Ave. in Carpinteria, across the courtyard from the original Carpinteria Arts Center, which began in 2005 with the purchase of property at 855 Linden Ave. Donors to the Carpinteria Arts Center have their names prominently displayed on one wall.

'The \$5 donations meant just as much to us as the larger ones'



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An expansion of the Carpinteria Arts Center on Linden Avenue opened in May. Besides an art gallery, the center offers After School Arts for children and classes for adults in painting, making jewelry, drawing, print making, journaling, playing the ukulele and guitar, to name just a few.

ARTS CENTER

"We were going to build a two-story structure, but when we found out it would cost \$6.9 million and (we'd) lose our courtyard, we re-thought our vision," he said.

When the Cajun Kitchen next door became available for \$1.5 million, the board, under the leadership of Mr. Powdrell, began the "Building a Home for the Arts Capital Campaign" on Dec. 29, 2015, to raise \$3.1 million for purchase of the restaurant, remodeling and to create an endowment.

Three years later, they not only reached their goal but exceeded it, raising more than \$3.6 million.

"The \$5 donations meant just as much to us as the larger ones," said Mr. Powdrell. "Most of the money came from Carpinterians, but we also received \$50,000 worth of lighting from the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, which didn't need it for its remodeling project."

The largest donor with \$1 million was Lynda Fairly, 75, who had moved to Carpinteria in 2013 after living in Santa Barbara for many years. In 2007, she retired from Santa Barbara City College, where she was assistant dean of student activities, admissions and student affairs before becoming vice president of adult education.

During her long career as an

educator, she taught second grade in Los Angeles and first grade at Taiwan American School, was assistant dean of women at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and assistant dean of student affairs at Whittier Community College.

Currently, she volunteers creating meals for Food From the Heart and as co-facilitator of a caregiving group for Parkinson's caregivers. She also serves on the boards of MOXI, the Friendship Center and the Parkinson's Association.

"When I moved to Carpinteria five years ago, I researched the nonprofits in the area. I thought the Arts Center was just a place for adults to learn how to paint or draw," said Ms. Fairly. "After meeting David and finding out that the center's main component was educating children about the arts, I was impressed. I checked the organization's finances, which they handled well but needed money. I became a member of the board and helped raise money for the new addition."

"My first donation was \$250,000

for naming the courtyard, and when no one else stepped up with a large amount, I thought, 'Why not?' and contributed \$1 million. I really believe in education for children, and it's so much more fun to see my money being used while I'm still alive rather than after I'm dead."

Every day, including weekends, the center teems with activities for children as young as 3 or 4 to those in their 90s.

Among the programs are After School Arts for children and classes for adults in painting, making jewelry, drawing, print making, journaling, playing the ukulele and guitar, to name just a few.

There are special events like the Arts & Crafts Fair from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 7; a Farm to Table Gallery Reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Sept. 15; and the Summer Concert Series "South on Linden" featuring the Summerland Band from 6 to 9 p.m. Sept. 28.

"We are here to celebrate all the arts — music, art, theater. Arts matter. Arts change lives. They don't discriminate. They create connections. They have the capacity to make differences in a good way," said Mr. Powdrell.

FYI

The Lynda Fairly Carpinteria Arts Center is located at 855 and 865 Linden Ave. in Carpinteria. For more information, call 805-684-7789.

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