

## *Friends of Mondavi Center*

*Friends support educational programs and engagement at the Mondavi Center through outreach, audience development and fundraising*



# Friends Forward

*"The future depends on what we do in the present." - Mahatma Gandhi*

In this newsletter, we are thrilled to share some exciting updates about this year's initiatives, school matinee programs, Friends events, and committee information. But first, we extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated members, volunteers and Board, without whom the success of Friends would not be possible.

Serving as a Friends volunteer is a testament to the importance of our work. However, balancing this responsibility with busy personal lives requires remarkable dedication. Whether through donations, ushering, assisting at events, or providing invaluable advice, every contribution you make directly supports the success of our mission. Thank you for your time and energy that keeps Friends moving Forward.



*Ruth Kinsella, Friends of Mondavi Center, Co-President*

*June Lee, Friends of Mondavi Center, Co-President*

## Works in Progress

### **I. Partnership - strengthening the Friends and Mondavi Center Partnership**

Plans are in place to reignite Friends led tours of the Mondavi Center. Many thanks to longtime member, Mary Horton, who has stepped up to lead the new group of Friends tour guides for Mondavi Center.

### **II. Connections - creating connections between Friends and UCD students**

Friends volunteers are extending their help to usher at other Mondavi Center performances for UCD students held in the library or at other campus locations, as well as, passing out refreshments to students during finals week. Additionally, Board members are exploring the possibility of using Mondavi Center student interns to assist with Friends activities.

### **III. Visibility - enhancing Friends' public recognition and brand visibility**

A design for a Friends banner to be used in school matinee photos is under development. We are encouraging teachers to take advantage of pre-arrangements.

## 2024-25 School Matinees

This year, Friends of Mondavi Center is proud to provide tickets for **778 students** from **13 schools** across **six** school districts: Center Joint Unified, River Delta Joint Unified, Roble (K-6), Fairfield-Suisun, Travis Unified, and Davis Joint Unified, at a cost of nearly \$10,000, to attend five school matinee performances.

To ensure equitable access to Mondavi Center performances, Friends employs a rigorous and objective process to select schools for ticket funding. The *Friends School Outreach and Support Committee* initiates this process by utilizing a comprehensive rating sheet to evaluate schools based on four key criteria:

1. **Location and Availability of Transportation:** To guarantee that students can comfortably attend matinee performances, the distance to the Mondavi Center and availability of transportation options are assessed.
2. **Social and Economic Needs:** Friends prioritizes schools with students facing socioeconomic challenges to provide them with enriching artistic experiences.
3. **Teacher/School Support:** The level of teacher and school support for the program is evaluated to ensure that students are well-prepared and encouraged to attend performances.
4. **Historical Participation:** Schools with a strong history of participation in Friends-funded events are given preferential consideration.

This approach ensures that students from diverse backgrounds and circumstances have the opportunity to experience the transformative performances at the Mondavi Center.

Sponsoring student attendance is central to our mission, and we are immensely grateful for the impact we continue to make with the generous donations we receive.



# 2024-25 School Matinee Performances

- October 21, 2024 **Sons of Mystro** - Electric Violins play reggae classics, American pop songs, and their own creations, accompanied by a DJ & a drummer.



- November 18, 2024 **Around the Americas with 123 Andrés** - 2024 GRAMMY Winner for Best Children's Album



- February 24, 2025 - **Cirque Kalabanté: Afrique en Cirque** - colorful costumes and staging, featuring acrobats performing gravity-defying moves and human pyramids, all with the contemporary sound of live Afro-Jazz, percussion and kora.



- February 25, 2025 - **Words Take Wing** - author **Mitali Perkins** - notable books include *You Bring the Distant Near*, which received a National Book Award nomination, and *Rickshaw Girl*, which was adapted into a film.



- March 17, 2025 - **Yamato: 人の力 Hito no Chikara/The Human Power** - more than 40 Taiko drums on stage representing different characters. These intense and delicate sounds are celebrated all over the world.



# Events, Events, Events and more...

Friendship events are much more than just great food and lively company—they are a powerful means to unite individuals who share a commitment to providing young students with access to the performing arts. Through generous donations, Friends can purchase tickets for students in under-resourced school districts, offering them opportunities they might not otherwise have.

**If you are interested in helping with events, or want to be on the Events committee, please complete and submit our volunteer form:**

<https://bit.ly/FriendsofMondaviCenterVolunteer>



## **October 6, Sunday**

Friends Kick off event 4-6 pm – Garden party - Hosted by Friends members, Lynette and Ben Hart, at their home.

Jeremy Ganter, Mondavi Center Executive Director, will be guest speaker.

## **October 19, Saturday**

Tour of the Gorman Museum of Native American Art. No cost: Up to 30 guests for private tour – 12 pm; free parking

## **January 11, 2025**

Vintage Cocktail Party - 5:00pm - 7:00pm - Location to be announced

## **January 2025**

Gorman Museum tour - 2nd opportunity for those who could not attend in October. Date to be determined.

## **February / March 2025**

Informational talk by Dr. Jacqueline Hague, Mondavi Food Center “Tea and Why It Matters” – Venue TBD.

## **April 2025**

Friends Annual potluck brunch - date TBD. Hosted by Artie Lawyer and Candace Gilmore.

# Committee Highlights

## School Outreach and Support Committee

The Friends of Mondavi Center School Outreach and Support Committee offers an incredible opportunity for local students to experience live art performances. Here's a look at what goes into the work of a successful committee.

1. **Outreach to Schools:** We actively reach out to area schools to promote the program and encourage participation, ensuring that as many students as possible can benefit from this unique educational opportunity.
2. **Collaboration for Educational Resource:** In partnership with the Mondavi Center Arts Education Coordinator and the School Outreach Chair, we secure study guides that enhance the learning experience for students attending the performances.
3. **Volunteer Coordination:** A key part of our work is recruiting and organizing volunteers for the School Matinee Support Committee. These volunteers play an essential role in the program's smooth operation.
4. **Pre-Matinee Classroom Talks (PMCT):** We develop a detailed schedule for PMCTs and work with teachers and schools to confirm their interest. This program offers students valuable context and insight before they attend the performances.
5. **Docent Training and Coordination:** We oversee the staffing, scheduling, and training of docents who lead the PMCTs, ensuring they are well-prepared to engage and educate students.
6. **Reporting and Accountability:** Finally, we ensure that all volunteer hours are submitted monthly to the Friends Board, maintaining transparency and accountability within the program.

This committee is the key to opening the door for students to gain access to enriching cultural performing arts experiences. Members of this committee have the rewarding opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the lives of young people.

If you are interested in joining this committee, please complete and submit the form: <https://bit.ly/FriendsofMondaviCenterVolunteer>

We are delighted to introduce the Co-Chairs of our Friends of Mondavi Center School Outreach and Support Committee, Russ-Ewers and Sharon Opfell. Their dedication and expertise are invaluable to our mission of bringing the transformative power of live performances to young minds. Now more about our Co-Chairs....

### **Russ Ewers**



When Russ and his wife, Sharon Ewers, moved to Davis, California in 2021, he quickly sought out ways to get involved in his new community. He found the Davis Bike Club to satisfy his passion for cycling and quickly joined its Board as secretary.

Through his wife's walking group, Russ learned about the opportunity to volunteer as an usher for student matinees at the Mondavi Center as part of the Friends of Mondavi. With his lifelong love of live theater, Russ found that volunteering at the Mondavi was a natural fit.

Once he was involved with the Mondavi Center, Ewers was quickly brought into contact with other dedicated volunteers who encouraged him to take on additional volunteer commitments. He joined the School Outreach Committee and after two years of learning the ropes, Ewers was asked to step up as a co-chair of the School Outreach and Support Committee. Although initially hesitant, Russ has embraced this role and made significant contributions, including developing a Friends school matinee selection ranking system.

### **Sharon Opfell**



In the summer of 2019, Sharon Opfell was invited by a friend to join the Friends of Mondavi Center. With a deep interest in the arts and a background in education, Sharon was intrigued but didn't know much about the "Friends" at the time.

Sharon started as a docent, visiting several schools during her first year, and also volunteered as an usher for the school matinee programs — an experience she thoroughly enjoyed.

Everything changed dramatically in 2020 with the COVID-19 shutdown of live performances at Mondavi Center. When the Mondavi Center reopened in 2022, Sharon was asked to chair the Friends School Matinee Support group. Although she didn't feel entirely ready or qualified for this role, the Board's warm and encouraging support made all the difference. Sharon assumed the role of chair and began her work with the docents. However, the K-12 school classroom landscape had shifted significantly due to COVID-19, reducing the need for in-person docents. Recognizing these changes, the Friends Board decided in 2024 to merge the School Outreach program with the School Matinee Support group. Sharon is now serving as co-chair of this newly formed School

Outreach and Support Committee. We are grateful for Sharon's commitment to supporting arts education in the community through her work with schools and students.

---

## Ushering

Providing ushers for our school matinees is a major commitment of Friends which requires over 40 trained volunteers for each performance. This year, in partnership with Mondavi Center staff, we provided two comprehensive training sessions, one in August and another in September. Our team of dedicated volunteers finds joy in greeting students as they get off the bus and enter the grand Jackson Hall in the Mondavi Center — many for the first time. By joining our team, you can play a vital role in fostering the love of the performing arts in the young hearts of students. Share the joy, make a difference, and become an usher with Friends of Mondavi!

Ushers play a vital role in ensuring our student matinees run smoothly. We are deeply grateful for their dedication and hard work. ***If you are interested in joining our Ushering team please volunteer:*** <https://bit.ly/FriendsofMondaviCenterVolunteer>

---

## 2024-2025 Friends Executive Board

Ruth Kinsella, Co-President

Juney Lee, Co- President

Candace Gilmore, Vice President

Sharon Ewers, Secretary

Kathy Coulter, Treasurer

Karen Street, Events Co-Chair

Nancy White, Events Co-Chair

Jo Anne Boorkman, Membership  
Co-Chair

Sandy Chong , Membership  
Co-Chair

Sharen Opfell, School Outreach and  
Support Co-Chair

Russ Ewers, School Outreach and  
Support Co-Chair

Artie Lawyer, Ushers Chair

Yulia Kiefer, Ex Officio, Director of  
Finance & Admin, Mondavi Cente



# What Can I Do to Help Friends?

## **Join Us!**

### **Membership**

We invite you to join Friends and participate in our many volunteer opportunities:

Contact us for more information, please email: [friendsofmondavi@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmondavi@gmail.com)

To become a Friend or renew your membership:

- Donate a minimum of \$125 to the Mondavi Center Annual Fund, click [here](#).

Be sure to check the box “**I would like to become a Friend of the Mondavi Center**” at the bottom of the donation page.

- **NEW!** Or join us as **Friends of Friends**, and participate in volunteer opportunities with *no donation requirement*. Complete your volunteer form by clicking this link or scanning the QR code. <https://bit.ly/FriendsOfMondaviCenter>



### **Sponsorship**

Non-members, like members, can help through donations. Our mission is to provide opportunities for students who otherwise would not be able to attend an arts performance at the Mondavi Center. Your donation, no matter how small, can make a big difference.

**The following is what your donation will help buy:**

- \$11 will sponsor a student with a ticket to an unforgettable performance
- \$15 will sponsor a chaperone, one chaperone is needed for every 10 students
- \$375 will sponsor a whole classroom of 30 students and their chaperones.

To sponsor please write a check to: **UC Regents**

On the memo line, write "*Mondavi Center K-12 Matinee Ticket Program*".

Give the check to a Friends of Mondavi Board member or send it to:

**UC Regents  
Mondavi Center  
One Shields Avenue  
University of California  
Davis, CA 95616**

## FAQs

Q - What is Friends affiliation with the Mondavi Center?

A - Friends is a partner of Mondavi Center, composed of volunteers and donors who support the performing arts and school matinees for students.

Q - How do you become a Friend?

A - To become a Friend or renew your membership: Contribute a minimum of \$125 to the Mondavi Center Annual Fund [here](#). Be sure to check the box “**I would like to become a Friend of the Mondavi Center**” on the donation page

Q - What is the difference between "Friends" and “Friends of Friends?”

**A - Friends Members** shall contribute a minimum level per household to the Mondavi Center Annual Fund. The level shall be established and approved by the Board. The level shall be established so that it represents a firm commitment of support to the Mondavi Center. Friends members may serve on the Board, vote on Friends policies, volunteer and attend Friends events.

**A - Friends of Friends** have no minimum contribution level and may designate that their donation go directly to support the school matinee program. Friends of Friends may participate in all Friends activities, including events and volunteer opportunities. Join Friends of Friends here: <https://bit.ly/FriendsOfMondaviCenter>

Q - How do I volunteer to be an usher at school matinees?

A - Members simply complete the VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FORM and indicate their interest in ushering <https://bit.ly/FriendsofMondaviCenterVolunteer>

Q - How do I contribute to the school matinee ticket program?

A - Donations to the Student Matinee Ticket Fund are always welcome. Make your check made out to: UC Regents. Write "Mondavi Center K-12 Matinee Ticket Program" on the memo line.

Q - How do I contact the Friends of Mondavi Center?

A - Contact us for more information, please email: [friendsofmondavi@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmondavi@gmail.com) or scan the QR code to access our website. <https://bit.ly/Friends-of-Mondavi>

