



A PIANIST REFLECTS ON A HALF CENTURY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Kurt will never forget the moment he met Janis Joplin. "I lived on Haight Street, a block away from Janis. One night, I was at a show and she sat down right next to me on the sofa!"

Read Kurt's full story and more in the November issue of our Nourish newsletter.

CLIENT PROFILE: KURT REFLECTS ON 50 YEARS IN SAN FRANCISCO AS A TALENTED MUSICIAN

NOTES OF SAN FRANCISCO

Kurt was raving about his favorite meal, Cheese Tortellini, as he walked through his sparse but neatly arranged kitchen. Sunlight from the late autumn afternoon flickered on the walls. “I love the program. My budget won’t allow me to eat out. It’s just so easy. Pop the meal in the microwave and boom, bam. Done.” He was feeling especially glad to be home, where he’s lived in the Mission District for the past 40 years.

At 72, Kurt radiates a delightful mix of tranquility and ambition. He is always entertaining (or scheming as he may put it) his next project in life, including the possibility of enrolling in a Master’s Program in Music. Among many of his accomplishments, Kurt is a prodigious piano player. On this particular afternoon, he had just finished playing one of his favorite songs, *Carnival*, by Antonio Jobim. His fingers danced along the keyboard like the light against the wall. The room was aglow with energy.

Kurt was born in Pocatello, ID in 1946. His ancestry is Native American and his parents belonged to the Shoshone Indian tribe. He and his sister were adopted at the age of 6. Two years later, Kurt started playing piano. “My sister and I played piano on this TV show in Twin Falls. We were little kids and I remember it was so fun.”

After that brush with fame, playing piano became a lifelong passion for Kurt. He went on to get a Bachelor’s Degree in Music from San Francisco State and he’s been in the city ever since. He remembered fondly the frenetic energy of the 60s in San Francisco. “It was electric. Unbelievable.” He will never forget the moment he met Janis Joplin. “I lived on Haight Street, a block away from Janis Joplin. One night, I was out at a live music event and she sat down right next

“My sister and I played piano on this TV show in Twin Falls. We were little kids and I remember it was so fun.”



Photo: Maren Caruso

to me on the sofa!” As he recounted this memory, the expression on his face was timeless as if all the years in between evaporated into thin air.

As an adult, Kurt was diagnosed with glaucoma. He received treatment, but that didn’t stop the disease from progressing. “I have a little vision over here. I can see my arm moving and I can see light and dark. Over here, its midnight,” he said, describing his eyesight without a hint of pessimism. Kurt navigates his apartment and the city with grace and confidence. He has a spry and insatiable energy. He is

always moving and thinking about the next thing he is going to do.

While he recognizes the music scene of the 1960s and 1970s has faded away, he has not. He loves San Francisco and never wants to leave. He has enjoyed a life he could only have dreamed of growing up in rural Idaho. When asked what advice he might offer a millennial just moving to the city, he said, “You’re late.”

For Kurt, he’s right on time, and right where he wants to be – moving and grooving to the beat of a city that never gets old.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT — MAREN CARUSO



Caption?

For the past year and a half, we've been very fortunate to work with Maren Caruso. Maren volunteers her time and talent as a pro bono photographer. For this year's upcoming Star Chefs & Vintners Gala, she'll team up with floral designer Matthew Drewry Baker to create a fresh new look for this legendary event.

Maren is an extraordinarily talented photographer. In describing her motivation to volunteer for Meals on Wheels, she said, "I've always been

interested in documenting people in their environments. About a year ago, I was itching for a personal project, one that would direct me to give back to my community in some way. By sharing [my photography], I hope to encourage others to mobilize and give back in any way they can to Meals on Wheels or another non-profit that can use community support."

Maren has created an incredible library of images that communicate the beauty of working with homebound seniors. Thank you for being part of our community, Maren!

IT WASN'T JUST ME ALONE

Vietnam Veteran, Stenis, is grateful for the help he receives from Meals on Wheels

At the age of 66, Stenis possesses an unwavering curiosity about life. "I feel spiritually connected." He lives a simple life. He has turned his small, single room occupancy hotel room in the Tenderloin into a cozy living space, commemorating all the phases of his life: childhood in Chicago, the Marines in Japan and Vietnam, and his time as an adult in California.

He is extraordinarily grateful for the support he receives from Meals on Wheels and the Home Depot Foundation. When asked how he feels about the help he's received, he said with conviction, "I am grateful." His voice became animated when he showed off the improvements to his home. "I got me the towel rack, the bathroom rack, the toilet stool, the safety bar, a seat in here for the shower. A metal bookcase." But he was most excited about his new pillow. "This is what I was sleeping on," as he motioned towards an old, well-worn pillow. "I was having problems with my right shoulder. That




Caption?

made a big difference. Now I don't have a frozen shoulder."

Heart problems, shortness of breath, and degenerative bone disease make it difficult for Stenis to move around easily. But he makes the best of life and remembers the good times. He

was especially proud of his year in the Marines, but quickly defers credit to his fellow marines. "When I look back, there was a lot of us there. it wasn't just me alone." As for how he feels about Meals on Wheels, he said, "I appreciate it. I'm glad they have the program for us." Then after a small pause, "Thank you."

Inside this issue of
Nourish

- Notes of San Francisco
- Volunteer Profile —
Maren Caruso
- It Wasn't Just Me Alone 

TOGETHER, WE CAN DELIVER
mowsf.org

COMING UP AT MEALS ON WHEELS



Photo by: Constanza Hevia H.

- **NOVEMBER 13, 2018: VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

We would love for you to join our volunteer team. Sign up at mowsf.org/signup for our next Volunteer Orientation.

- **NOVEMBER 22, 2018: THANKSGIVING DAY MEAL DELIVERY**

We're looking for 600 volunteers to join us on Thanksgiving Day. Individuals, groups and families are welcome. Find out more info at mowsf.org/thanksgiving.

- **BEFORE NOVEMBER 23, 2018: THANKSGIVING PLACEMATS**

We're looking for 600 volunteers to join us on Thanksgiving Day. Individuals, groups and families are welcome. Find out more info visit [mowsf.org/files/MOWSF Thanksgiving Placemat Guidelines.pdf](http://mowsf.org/files/MOWSF%20Thanksgiving%20Placemat%20Guidelines.pdf)

- **JANUARY 17, 2019: KITCHEN TOUR & LUNCH**

Join our CEO Ashley McCumber, for a tour of our kitchen and lunch. RSVP to Marie Nedich to reserve your spot.

Marie Nedich | mnedich@mowsf.org | 415-343-1304

*Space is limited to the first 25 guests who RSVP