

neighbor to neighbor

COMMUNITY NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ORANGE

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROVIDE TECH TUTORING FOR SENIORS — BUT IT'S MUCH MORE THAN THAT

What began as a small community service project has grown into something far less technical — and far more meaningful.

Every Friday during the academic year, a group of Chapman students walks into the Orange Senior Center, sits beside a senior citizen with a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, and starts helping.

The program began in 2017 when Chapman student Jacob Pace ('20) launched a tech tutoring initiative for local seniors. Eight years later, members of Beta Theta Pi fraternity continue the weekly tradition, offering one-on-one help to older adults navigating an increasingly digital world.

But students and seniors say the program is about far more than troubleshooting devices.

Kamy Merritt, Director of Operations & Programming at the Orange Senior Center, has watched the program grow over the years. Seniors come in with a wide range of needs — setting up email, renewing DMV registrations online, ordering groceries through Instacart, or accessing medical portals.

“Living in a technology-driven society — even going to the doctor and accessing medical

records requires basic skills,” Merritt said. “This allows them to do many things on their own. It gives them that freedom.”

Over time, something unexpected happened.

“It’s turned into more than just a class,” Merritt said. “It’s almost like a grandparent-grandchild relationship.”

For senior psychology major Lyle Diaz, who helps coordinate the effort for Beta Theta Pi, the weekly visits have become one of the most meaningful parts of his Chapman experience.

“You get caught up in school and everything else,” Diaz said. “To come here for an hour and help someone right in front of you and see how happy it makes them — it’s a feeling you get addicted to.”

Students and seniors often catch up about school, vacations, and family. Diaz recalled being invited to help a couple set up their home computer.

“They made me dinner and packed food for my roommates,” he said with a laugh. “They really do fill that emptiness when you start to miss home.”

For the seniors, the help — and the companionship — matter just as much.



Members of Beta Theta Pi lending their tech skills, and their time to local seniors.

“I always depend on them if I have questions,” said Orange resident Lelita Oliveros. “They’re very helpful, very patient, and respectful.”

As Merritt notes, the program’s consistency is what makes it special.

“They show up every Friday,” she said. “We really appreciate the love and care they have for our seniors.”

Eight years after it began, the program continues to bridge generations — one conversation at a time.

HILBERT MUSEUM CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA ART



Artist Millard Sheets’ mosaic greets visitors at the Hilbert Museum of California Art

The Hilbert Museum of California Art at Chapman University is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2026, but the story behind the museum actually began more than three decades ago.

In 1992, Orange County businessman Mark Hilbert and his wife, the late Janet Hilbert, were browsing consignment shops in Palm Springs after purchasing a small desert home. In a vintage shop, they discovered a wall of colorful California Scene watercolors and decided to buy one to brighten their living room.

That simple purchase sparked a lifelong passion for collecting California art. In 2016, the Hilberts opened the Hilbert Museum at Chapman University to share their growing collection with

the public. The museum remains the first and only institution dedicated to telling the story of California through works by fine artists as well as Hollywood studio artists and animators.

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, the museum is hosting 11 months of exhibitions, lectures, and special events throughout 2026.

Five new exhibitions debuted on Feb. 7, highlighting the breadth of the museum’s collection. They include the first museum exhibition of animation drawings by Disney and Pixar artist Jørgen Klubien, maritime prints by California master Phil Dike, and an exhibit pairing Asian “scholar’s stones” with paintings from the Hilbert Collection.

Additional displays feature illustrations by Western artist Maynard Dixon and a collection of California rock concert posters curated by Chapman students.

The museum’s anniversary lecture series will continue throughout the year with talks by artists, historians, and special guests.

The Hilbert Museum of California Art is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. For more information and to make your reservation, visit HilbertMuseum.org.

Need to Know

**Commencement Weekend:
May 22-24, 2026**

Fireworks Friday, May 22, 8:45 p.m.

All attendees will be advised to park in Chapman lots and structures.

Need to be in touch?

- Contact Chapman University's Office of Community Relations at **(714) 289-2097** or email **neighbors@chapman.edu** to engage and provide feedback.
- To report a disturbance that needs urgent attention, please call City of Orange PD dispatch at **(714) 744-7444**

YOU'RE INVITED!

Join us for these engaging events at Chapman.

There are many terrific Chapman University events that neighbors are welcome to attend. Here are just a few. Find more at the University's online events calendar: events.chapman.edu. Advance tickets for performing arts events may be purchased online at tickets.chapman.edu.

Opera Chapman Presents – Rusalka: The Little Mermaid

April 24, 7:30 p.m. & April 26, 2 p.m.

Musco Center for the Arts

A full-scale performance of a major opera with music performed by the Chapman Orchestra.

Discover the original Little Mermaid. In Dvořák's lush and haunting masterpiece, a water nymph longs to leave her moonlit world behind for human love. But desire comes at a devastating cost. Sweeping orchestral color, radiant lyricism, and the beloved "Song to the Moon" illuminate this timeless fairy tale of passion, sacrifice, and transformation.

Tickets: MuscoCenter.org or 714-997-6812

Spring Dance Concert

May 8 & 9, 7:30 p.m.

Musco Center for the Arts

Join us for an evening of new choreography by senior dance majors at the Spring Dance Concert. After proposing their concepts last fall and rehearsing throughout the spring semester, Chapman's senior dance students will premiere their original works in a dynamic showcase of creativity and performance.

Tickets: MuscoCenter.org or 714-997-6812

The Hilbert Celebrates 10 Years

Now thru Feb. 2027

Hilbert Museum of California Art

Five new shows kick off the museum's year-long celebration of its 10th anniversary.

Rock On, California! California's Rock Poster Revolution, Jørgen Klubien at Disney and Pixar, Harbors and Horizons: Maritime Prints by Phil Dike, Stone and Scene, and Witness to a Vanishing West: Maynard Dixon and The Oregon Trail. Admission is free.

For information: HilbertMuseum.org



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CHAPMAN STUDENTS LEND A HELPING HAND TO NEIGHBOR IN NEED

For longtime Orange resident Maureen Gutierrez, a routine walk on Feb. 23 turned into a frightening moment.

Gutierrez, who is in her 80s, was walking near Collins Avenue when she suddenly lost strength in her legs and fell in a nearby yard, unable to get back up on her own. As she tried to recover, four Chapman University students driving through the area noticed her and quickly stopped to help.

The students helped Maureen to her feet, made sure she was okay, and took the extra step of driving her home safely. Although she did not catch their names, their kindness left a lasting impression.

"My mom calls the students her heroes," said her son Paul Gutierrez, who reached out to the Chapman Dean of Students Office to express their gratitude. "They not only helped her to her feet and made sure she was okay, but they also gave her a ride home. It's comforting to know that community still exists and that places like Chapman University are helping to keep it alive."

Moments like this reflect the shared sense of care that continues to connect Chapman students and the Orange community.



Maureen Gutierrez and her son, Paul Gutierrez, say they are grateful for the kindness of Chapman University students.

More inside! 