

## Rosie the Riveting

After volunteering at Mercy Medical Center Redding for 50 years, Mercy Guild member Rosie Tallerico has no plans to slow down

Fifty years ago, Lyndon Johnson was president, the first-ever episode of the original Star Trek was broadcast, the DNA code was first synthesized, the Beach Boys' Good Vibrations was at the top of the music charts, and Rosie Tallerico began volunteering at Mercy Medical Center Redding. Then a high school teacher at Central Valley High School, where she taught both Spanish and English, Rosie had long been fascinated by hospitals. Wanting a way to be involved – “As long as it didn't involve blood. I'm just not good with blood,” she says – she decided to volunteer. At that point, she only had Saturdays available so she joined the Mercy Guild, which coincidentally began around that same time. She worked in the Gift Shop and at the Information Desk.

“I had no idea I've been volunteering for fifty years,” she said recently. “I suppose it's my way of helping.”

Rosie retired from teaching after 32 years, but she didn't retire from volunteering. Now her time is spent taking the cart into the Maternity Ward where she delivers books to mothers of new babies. Inside the book is an application for their first library card. The program is done in conjunction with First 5, the California program recognizing that children's health and education is a top priority, especially for their first years of life. Education remains very important to Rosie.

Her first years were spent in Weed, California, where she was born in 1935. She grew up, went to the University of California, Berkley, where she received her teaching degree, and then returned to the North State area. Never married, she still lives in Redding, still does advanced placement testing for Central Valley High School during the first weeks in May, and still volunteers at Mercy Medical Center Redding.

Over the years, she's seen many changes, but one aspect remains the same: the people. “It's nice to talk to the people, to have them use me – and all of the Guild – as a sounding board,” she says. “I love being involved in a place that does what Mercy does.”

Rosie is 81 now. Her Saturdays are still spent at the hospital, delivering books and working in the Gift Shop. She worked her whole life. Now this is her hobby. “I tried crocheting once,” she says with a laugh. “I didn't like it.”

Rosie Tallerico is one of nearly 300 volunteers who devote time and energy, making a difference for those who find themselves in the hospital. They are committed to Mercy Medical Center Redding and to our surrounding community. Each year the volunteers help raise approximately \$50,000 to assist our patient care units. Each year, they make a difference by embodying a Dignity Health tenant: humankindness. Say hello... to Rosie.

