

Wednesday
March 17, 2021

LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS | SERVING THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY REGION

\$50-million gift assures Friese Family Patient Tower will rise at Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center

By Marianne Love
Staff Writer

A \$50-million gift from a San Fernando Valley family is earmarked to support the expansion and renovation of Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center, a project that is expected to be completed in two years.

The new, five-story patient tower will be named the Friese Family Patient Tower to honor philanthropists Donald and Andrea Friese, their children and grandchildren.

“The San Fernando Valley has been our home for decades,” Donald Friese said in a prepared statement. “We’ve raised our family and built our business in Southern California. We want to give back to the community that has given us so much. We can’t think of a better way to express our gratitude than to help bring world-class healthcare close to home.”

Friese’s rise to wealth from poverty is a story about hard work, being



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driven, achievement-oriented, dedication and focus.

He grew up a poor orphan in rural Pennsylvania, adopted by a dairy farm family at age 12 before enlisting in the Army after high school.

“He enlisted in the Army to get away from what was not really an

easy life,” said his financial advisor Lloyd Greif. “He was put in an orphanage because his family was poor and couldn’t afford to feed all the kids. Both he and his brother were adopted by farmers who basically wanted cheap labor to work on the farms.”



An artist's rendering shows the Tarzana Reimagined Project at Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center, which will include 13 hybrid operational suites to expand surgical capacity.

After serving three years in the U.S. Army, Friese, now 80, moved to Los Angeles with \$125 in his pocket decades ago.

In 1961, he was hired as a warehouseman at C.R. Laurence Co., a small glass products manufacturer and distributor.

Friese climbed the ladder to its highest rung, building the company from \$250,000 in annual revenues to over \$500 million by creating an architectural hardware, equipment, tools and supplies juggernaut in the glass and glazing industry in the process.

In 2015, as chief executive officer and sole shareholder, Friese sold the company for \$1.3 billion, according to Greif, who orchestrated both that transaction and his gift to the medical center.

“Don gave \$86 million to his 1,700 employees depending on their

level and years of employment as an expression of his gratitude for their hard work in helping to build the company,” Greif said. “The day the deal closed, Don met with each employee individually, told them about the sale and said ‘as a token of our appreciation, we have a bonus check for you.’ He is a very kind, generous, caring individual.”

The Friese family, who lives in the Chatsworth/Porter Ranch area, has a personal connection to the Tarzana hospital. Two of their three children were born there and they currently have family doctors on staff.

The Friese Foundation assists organizations such as the Salvation Army and is committed to supporting child welfare, health care, veterans, animal rescue, education, entrepreneurship and more.

This \$50-million donation marks the largest ever to a Providence hospi-

tal in California and is among the largest across the 52-hospital health system, according to hospital officials.

The Tarzana Reimagined construction project is the single largest not-for-profit healthcare construction project in the history of the San Fernando Valley, according to hospital officials.

In addition to the expansion of its emergency department and pediatric intensive care unit, the project will include 13 hybrid operating suites to expand surgical capacity. A hybrid operating room and additional four new operating rooms will allow for new surgical procedures.

The medical center will also have the capability to expand its robotics program, as well.

Phase one of the construction began on the \$644.3-million project in the fall of 2017. Phase two plans remain in the works.

The 249-bed Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center has served the San Fernando Valley community since 1973 and has been recognized as a Healthgrades 100 Best Hospitals Award™ winner for two years in a row and is a recipient of the Distinguished Hospital Award – Clinical Excellence™ for four years in a row. Designated as a pediatric medical center, Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana is certified to treat critically ill children transported by the 911 emergency medical services system.