

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

BY PAMELA B. SMITH

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Mary Horning never expected that at midlife she'd be so familiar with every animated movie and all the latest toys. She never thought she'd have to spend so many nights tending a sick child or her days breaking up fights and taking kids to activities.

She'd done all that in her 20's. But when her drug-addicted daughter began putting her two grandchildren at risk, this 55 year old became a "mom" again. She convinced her daughter to give her temporary guardianship of the kids and she brought them into the home she shared with her life partner, Teri.

"We have a nice, but small, house and we were very cramped," Mary says. "If we had known how long this was going to go on, we would have moved to a larger house then, but we didn't know."

So they made do, devising creative storage ideas and shifting their schedules to accommodate the needs of the grandchildren, Zachary and Aundrea, who were 6 and 3 when they moved in. Eventually Mary's daughter stopped using drugs and has her children back, but Mary is still legal guardian for her grandchildren.

Jane and Bill Peters (not their real names) are in the process of adopting one of their granddaughters, Amanda, whose 33-year-old mother has been on drugs since age 13 and will likely not alter her lifestyle.

"She and her husband called us on Amanda's birthday in



February, but we haven't heard a word from them since," Jane says.

Jane said that she had not realized what an impact her daughter's lifestyle was having on Amanda until she had the girl in her home. "She was a basketcase when we got her," she says. Now, after being with her grandparents for almost two years, the youngster has gone "from a very wounded child to being open, happy and a hardly-shuts-her-mouth-up kid."

The situation of grandparents raising their grandchildren is becoming more common. According to the 2000 Census, some 300,000 grandparents in California report they are responsible for their grandchildren who are living with them; about 10,000 in San Diego County. This doesn't count the number of grandparents who are not legal guardians, but who are trying to raise their grandchildren mostly on their own.

To help grandparents and others who are raising a relative's child or children, AIS is helping to sponsor a free workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 5, at Helix Charter High School, 7323 University Ave., La Mesa. The event will educate participants about legal options, childcare benefits and other assistance, support groups, and more.

For adults who have been away from childcare issues for many years, taking on this responsibility presents many ques-

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tions and concerns. People often ask about finding a day care, getting financial assistance, getting health insurance for their grandchildren, getting help for psychological issues, etc.

Mary is a social worker, so she was already familiar with many resources, but she found more help than she had known about previously. She was able to get her grandchildren into a summer camp for free through the YMCA.

Mary will be among the panelists at this month's event, to offer helpful advice based on her own experiences. For instance, Mary recommends that people new to this situation pick up *Parenting* magazine because "there's a wealth of information." She also says that she never shies away from asking for a scholarship to an activity for the children. "I call the site and tell them my situation. People are really responsive." She said she recently got a 60 percent discount at a rock-climbing place for Zachary; "All I had to do was ask."

Jane says she would emphasize the positive of this experience; "Amanda has completely changed our lives, and not for the worse. We're reinvigorated. I went to Curves and lost 40 pounds. When you might have let yourself slide, this makes you keep yourself healthy. I feel younger in a lot of ways."

And, she adds, "we've turned our family room back into a family room, instead of a storage area. She's a joy."

The "Parents Raising Grandchildren" workshop is being cosponsored by Helix Charter High School, San Diego Community College Continuing Education and the Grossmont College Kinship Care Education Program. To register, call Su Hamano at (619) 971-1560.

There's also a local support group, Golden Guardians. For more information on the group, contact Martha Rawlings: (619) 337-1252, or email martha_rawlings@yahoo.com. ♣

THANKSGIVING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our special supplemental meal program, MOMEals, is gearing up for its annual Thanksgiving Day event, Thursday, Nov. 25, when volunteers will deliver hot turkey dinners to homebound seniors in San Diego County.

Last year, volunteers made the holiday special for more than 1,500 seniors with meals, a placemat decorated by schoolchildren and a flower. There is no charge to the recipient; the person must be over age 60, homebound and will be home on Thanksgiving day.

If you would like to recommend someone to receive a meal, you would like to volunteer, or make a donation, contact Adria Cavanaugh at (858) 495-5279. ♣



BEYOND THE VACCINE: AVOIDING THE FLU

This year's flu vaccine shortage means it's even more important than ever for all of us to take good care of our health. There are some simple steps we can take to stay healthy and protect others' health, too.

When you are stressed, your immune system weakens and that makes you a target for the latest viruses. Eat foods that are healthy and vitamin rich. Get plenty of sleep. Stay active. Don't forget to wash your hands often with plenty of soap and warm water, particularly after coughing and sneezing, before eating, and after using the washroom.

If you have been unlucky enough to get the flu, take steps to speed up your recovery and prevent sharing the "bug" with others. Get lots of rest and drink lots of fluids. Stay off work until you are feeling better.

Don't visit friends or relatives in the hospital or in a long-term care facility if you have the flu. Also stay away from infants, people over the age of 65 and those with chronic health problems. Anyone in these groups can catch the flu easily and if they do, they will likely be sick longer.

Antibiotics are not effective in treating illness caused by the flu virus, but they may be required to treat bacterial infections like pneumonia that sometimes develop along with the flu. For more information, talk to your doctor. And be sure to ask him or her about the pneumococcal pneumonia shot — you may need one if you're 65 or older, or if you have certain health problems. ♣

SIGN UP FOR INTERGENERATIONAL GAMES

There will be two Intergenerational Games this month pairing older adults with youngsters in fun competition. The first Games will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 10, at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, 2800 Olympic Parkway in Chula Vista. To register, or for more information, contact Senior Olympics at (619) 226-1324 or email: info@sdseniorgames.org. The second Games will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 17, at the Boys and Girls Clubs of East County, 1171 E. Madison Ave., El Cajon. To register, call the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) at (858) 505-6399. ♣

GET ON OUR EMAIL LIST

Would you like to be on our email list to receive notices of some special items that come to our attention between newsletters? If so, send your email address to denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov. We promise not to clutter your email! ♣

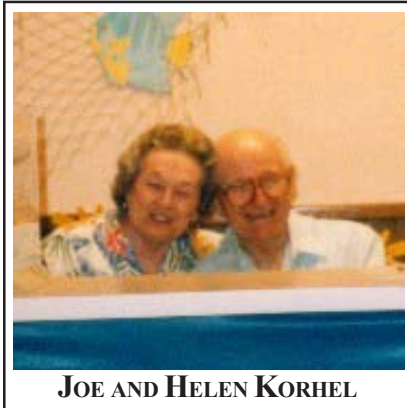
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RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Joe and Helen Korhel, nominated by Leisa Carosella of the Vista Senior Center, are our RSVP Volunteers of the Month. Joseph and Helen have been volunteers in support of the Senior Nutrition Program at the McClellan Senior Center for the past 12 years. Joe helps set up the dining room for the 150-200 seniors who come in for lunch and drives the golf cart, while Helen answers the lunch reservation phone. Together they work at the lunch reservation desk checking in lunch guests, and after lunch Helen tallies the lunch guest numbers while Joe counts the lunch contributions. If a volunteer cannot come in for work, they are always willing to fill in. Congratulations, Joe and Helen, and many thanks. Your efforts truly make a difference in North County.



JOE AND HELEN KORHEL

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Public, nonprofit and health agencies throughout the county continue to look for volunteers to help meet community needs. Potential volunteers can call RSVP at **(858) 505-6399** for more information on our most recent opportunities:

Lutheran Social Services East County Zip Trip needs transportation and dispatch volunteers.

Walkabout International needs an office receptionist.

Boys & Girls Clubs of East County, El Cajon Clubhouse needs recreation aides.

San Diego Humane Society needs volunteers in Pet Assisted Therapy.

County of San Diego Foster Care needs volunteers to enrich the lives of foster youth through special one-on-one mentoring relationships.

Compeer San Diego needs volunteers to make a weekly friendly and supportive phone call to individuals with a mental health challenge.

NEED MORE FLEXIBILITY?

Volunteer San Diego is a partner of RSVP, as they also connect volunteers with opportunities throughout San Diego County. Unlike RSVP with minimum age requirement of 55, Volunteer San Diego serves all ages and specializes in episodic projects. Call **(858) 636-4131**.

You might also want to check out the Life Options Annex in Chula Vista, particularly if you are interested in evening and weekend volunteering with a minimal time commitment. Several orientations are scheduled at the Norman Park Center, 270 F Street, Chula Vista, **(619) 691-9774**. The time is 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 23, Dec. 21, Jan. 25 and Feb. 22.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF MEMBER

The newest addition to our RSVP staff is Carolyn Noonan. She is working 20 hours per week answering phone requests, recording hours sent to us from RSVP workstations and individuals, and processing applications of new volunteers. We're glad to have you, Carolyn!



CAROLYN NOONAN

RSVP ON THE MOVE...

Because of the need for additional space in the AIS Call Center (our previous location), the RSVP staff has moved to the second floor of the AIS building, 9335 Hazard Way in Kearny Mesa.

Our phone number will be the same: **(858) 505-6399**, as will our fax number **(858) 495-5236**. Stop by and see our new space!

ELDERCARE DIRECTORY AND A NEW GUIDE

The 2005 edition of the *San Diego Eldercare Directory* has been published and will be available at senior centers, county and city libraries, *San Diego Union-Tribune* offices and from our AIS Call Center (800) 510-2020. The directory, published by the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and cosponsored by AIS, offers tips and lists of important resources to aid older adults and family members. Information from the directory is also included in the Web site: www.eldercare.uniontrib.com.

AIS has also sponsored a new *Going Home* guide, an information booklet and resource tool for hospital patients and their families, just published by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. The guide, to be distributed mostly through the local hospital social workers and discharge planners, will answer many questions older adults and others may have about placement issues, home care, equipment needs, financial concerns and other matters as they prepare to leave the hospital. ▲



NEWS FROM THE ACTION NETWORKS

Have you become involved in an action network yet? These are regional groups dedicated to taking active steps to improve the lives of older adults and persons with disabilities in their communities. If you'd like to find out more, here is information about each of the action networks:

A newly created San Diego Community Action Network is making strategic plans in a series of meetings, the next of which is from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 30, at the Health & Human Services Agency building, 8965 Balboa Ave., in Kearny Mesa. Contact Cathy Babin Weil for information: (858) 505-6305 or cathy.babin@sdcounty.ca.gov.

To learn more about the activities of North County's action network, see www.localcommunities.org/lc/atf. There's information about transportation, shelters, Project CARE, wellness, support groups, community meetings and more. For more details, contact Marty Dare at (760) 754-5945, or martin.dare@sdcounty.ca.gov.

East County's action network recently assisted in coordinating a Senior Employment & Volunteer Recruitment Fair. The group is working on finding more volunteer drivers for a new Zip Trip transportation program in Spring Valley for seniors and persons with disabilities. The next meeting will be held from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 15, to ac-

knowledge accomplishments and all members and volunteers with a holiday thank-you. For more information about the East County action network (ECAN), contact Kathy Holmes-Hardy at (619) 401-3994, or kathy.holmes-hardy@sdcounty.ca.gov.

For more information about South Bay's action network, contact Anabel Kuykendall at (619) 476-6142 or anabel.kuykendall@sdcounty.ca.gov. ▲

LONG TERM CARE PROJECT UPDATE

The Nov. 10 Planning Committee meeting will feature a presentation by local experts on "medical home visits," the support "team" to make them effective, and why these need to be an integral part of any quality system of care for the elderly and disabled. The meeting starts at 10:30 a.m. at the Sharp Operation Center, 8695 Spectrum Center Dr., San Diego. Call (858) 495-5428 for more information or see www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cnty/cntydepts/health/ais/lc/. ▲

NEW FEATURE ON NETWORK OF CARE

The Network of Care Web site now has a button on the home page that links to information about elder and dependent adult abuse. It provides training for mandated reporters and others. The abuse reporting form, used after a verbal report is made to (800) 510-2020, is also included.

To find the new elder and dependent adult abuse feature, go to www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/aging. Look on the left side of the home page for the words "Abuse Prevention" and click. You'll see some general documents about elder abuse, plus audio information for specified mandated reporters, including law enforcement and clergy. You can also take a brief quiz after you listen and read the material. Send that in and you will receive the answers and a certificate of completion. Check it out and give us your feedback. ▲

WALKING GROUPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Southern Caregiver Resource Center is offering two walking groups through its Caregiver-to-Caregiver Network. This is a great way to relieve stress and help caregivers meet one another.

One walking group goes from 11:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at the Mission Bay Information Center. The second goes from 8 to 9 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays beginning at the Lake Murray concession stand. Drop-in walkers are welcomed. If you need respite help so you can join a group, contact SCRC at (800) 827-1008. ▲

SEND IN YOUR ITEMS

This monthly calendar welcomes your contributions. Just send items by the 10th of each month preceding the issue date to: Denise G. Nelesen, editor, Aging & Independence Services, 9335 Hazard Way, San Diego, CA 92123-1222. Or fax to: (858) 495-5080. Or you can email to denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov.

NOV. 12, FRIDAY

2 TO 4 P.M.

“Create a Life You Love to Live,” a free peer support group for disabled persons, will be held at the Access Center, 1295 University Ave., #6, San Diego. For more information, contact Inge Bonn at **(619) 293-3500**.

NOV. 13, SATURDAY

6:30 A.M.

The Alzheimer’s Association’s 5K Memory Walk will be held at Balboa Park (corner of President’s Way and Park Blvd.) The walk begins at 7:30 a.m. Registration cost is \$35 and includes a t-shirt. For more information, call **(858) 492-4400, ext. 107**.

SAVE THE DATE:

CONSUMER PROTECTION DAY

SATURDAY, JAN. 29, 2005

8:30 A.M. TO 2:30 P.M.

TOWN & COUNTRY RESORT

A free event to help you avoid being a victim of fraud, scams and other abuse. Sponsored by AIS, District Attorney, City Attorney, Elder Law & Advocacy, Elder Financial Protection Network, Sharp HealthCare. Reservations: **(800) 827-4277**.

NOV. 15, MONDAY

9:30 A.M.

“Winning in Tough Financial Times” workshop will be held at the Imperial Beach Senior Center, 1075 8th St., Imperial Beach. The workshop will help participants make the most of their money by tracking expenses, creating a spending plan and tapping into discounts, plus learning about resources. To register, call **(619) 424-7077**.

NOV. 16, TUESDAY

6:30 P.M.

“How to Start Your Own Business” will be discussed at the Norman Park Center, 270 F St., Chula Vista. A representative from SCORE, a non-profit organization providing counseling for small businesses, will teach how to write a business plan, apply for a loan, etc. To register, call **(619) 691-9774**.

NOV. 17, WEDNESDAY

9:30 TO 11 A.M.

Diabetes lecture and screening will be held in the Medical Staff Conference Room of Sharp Cabrillo Hospital, 3475 Kenyon St., San Diego. Since November is Diabetes Month, this is a good time to learn the latest on this life-threatening illness. Registration is required; **(800) 827-4277**.

NOV. 17, WEDNESDAY

6 P.M.

“New Understanding of Pain Development and Treatment” will be presented by Dr. Tony Yaksh, UCSD Department of Anesthesiology, at the university’s Garren Auditorium. This lecture is offered by the Sam & Rose Stein Institute for Research on Aging. For information on parking, call **(858) 534-6299**.

NOV. 18, THURSDAY

3 TO 4:30 P.M.

“Managing Holiday Stress: A Workshop for Caregivers” will be held at Sunrise Assisted Living, 3302 Bonita Road, Chula Vista. To register, call **(619) 409-5225**. The same workshop will be held in Spanish on the same day from 2:30 to 4 p.m. at the Glenner Alzheimer’s Family Center, 280 Saylor Dr., Chula Vista. Call **(619) 420-1703** to register for the Spanish workshop.

NOV. 19, FRIDAY

7:30 P.M.

The New City Sinfonia, a 40-member chamber orchestra with many senior musicians, will present its free Fall concert at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4190 Front St. (across from UCSD Medical Center) in Hillcrest. For information, call **(619) 527-4457**.

DEC. 1, WEDNESDAY

6:30 TO 8 P.M.

“Coping with Anxiety” will be presented at Scripps Memorial Hospital, 354 Santa Fe Dr., Encinitas. Learn how to recognize anxiety and how it can be treated. To register, call **(800) 727-4777**.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Aging & Independence Services Advisory Council will meet at noon Monday, Nov. 8, at Aging & Independence Services, 9335 Hazard Way, Kearny Mesa. The meetings are open to the public.

CA SENIOR LEGISLATURE

The San Diego CSL meets at 10 a.m. on the second Monday of the month at AIS.