

AGING & independence

February 2008

Giving Back the Best Way She Can

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If only all the many friends she has collected throughout her life were still around, Grace Case's days would be as rich and interesting as her memories. But the tough part about being 91 is that you outlive your pals.

Arthritis in her legs has made it harder for this former New Yorker to get out to meet new friends; "I have fibromyalgia. . . sounds like an Italian resort, but believe me, it isn't."

Grace is a funny and friendly sort. Although she lives alone in a Point Loma apartment complex and her two sons live in different cities, she does what she can to keep connected with others. Grace is an excellent example of someone who doesn't let age or disability stop her from being a part of the community. She volunteers from her apartment, doing what she loves -- talking.

She's on the phone for hours each Saturday and Sunday, calling other seniors who also live alone, as part of Project CARE's program called Are You OK? Project CARE acts as a safety net, making sure older adults who sign up for the program have people looking out for them. Postal and utility workers call for help for a senior who suddenly stops picking up mail or paying bills. Many Project CARE sites throughout the county also offer the Are You OK? phone call. In Point Loma during

the weekdays, the calls are handled through the Project CARE site. Grace is a recipient of those daily calls and knows how comforting it is to have someone checking up

on her well-being. But there's no one to handle the weekends, so Grace has taken that on. She also makes calls for AIS's Meals on the Move (MOM) program that serves holiday meals to homebound seniors on Thanksgiving and Mother's Day.

"Basically, I'm a service person," she says. "Boy, they love the phone call. It does them a lot of good."

There's no doubt that the recipients of her calls have learned a bit about Grace's colorful past as a Radio City Music Hall Rockette, a vaudeville (and burlesque) entertainer, and a costume designer.

This only child learned early in her life that she had to make the most of tough times after her father was financially wiped out in the 1929 stock market crash. She had been taking dancing lessons three times a week

along with piano lessons, but all that ended abruptly and the teenager was soon dancing to make money.

"I became very independent by the age of 15," she says. She has many, many stories to tell about her experiences



GRACE CASE

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VACCINATE AGAINST SHINGLES

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now recommends that adults age 60 and older be vaccinated against shingles, a painful itching or tingling of the skin that is often followed by a painful skin rash of blister-like lesions, usually localized to a small area on one side of the body, and often the face or trunk. Pain can continue even after the rash has disappeared. Other symptoms can include fever, headache, chills and upset stomach.

Shingles is caused by the varicella zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox. Anyone who has had chickenpox can develop shingles because VZV remains in the nerve cells of the body after the chickenpox infection clears and VZV can reappear years later causing shingles. Shingles most commonly occurs in people 50 years old or older, people who have medical conditions that keep the immune system from working properly, or people who receive immunosuppressive drugs.

Only a single dose of vaccine (Zostavax) is currently recommended. Zostavax does not treat shingles after the condition has developed.

Consult with your physician first, in case there is any medical reason not to take the vaccine. Generally, people with weakened immune systems due to cancer treatment, HIV disease or organ transplants should not receive the vaccine because it contains live, weakened viral particles. ▲

AN AWARD FOR THE LEGACY CORPS

Our Legacy Corps program, which pairs senior mentors with teens to provide respite for family caregivers, is receiving one of three national Awards of Excellence from the 2007 Older Volunteers Enrich America program sponsored by MetLife Foundation. The award program, administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), recognizes organizations nationwide for effective recruitment and engagement of older volunteers.

The Legacy Corps was selected for this honor because its “practices in recruitment, training, retention and recognition of older volunteers set a standard of practice for others,” according to the n4a press release.

The program is recruiting senior mentors, plus teens and young adults, for its fourth year, which begins April 5. Benefits to the team members include a monthly living allowance of \$200, an educational award of \$1,250 for a year of service, an opportunity to continue learning, and the chance to make a difference for caregivers and older adults.

The program is part of a national project with the University of Maryland Center on Aging and AIS. San Diego is one of nine sites for this international initiative. AIS partners with New Alternatives, Inc., to coordinate the program.

To find out additional information about the Legacy Corps and/or to volunteer, contact New Alternatives at (619) 253-5155. ▲



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

and is working on her memoirs; “something to concentrate on from my neck up instead of focusing on the pain from my neck down,” she says. “I just keep writing. I don’t know how good it is. People would have trouble believing it’s true. One day on a buffet line with (choreographer George) Balanchine and the next day in a bread line at the VFW to feed my two kids...”

Her career even included several years in social services, including the Can Do Centers on the East Coast and the Loaves and Fishes Emergency Food Bank in Ocean Beach.

In the early 1970’s, she had retired to San Diego and moved in with her sister-in-law until the woman’s death. All along the way, Grace has remained as active as possible.

“Grace is always there to do whatever she can for us,” says Jean Durgan, who coordinates several senior services in the Point Loma and Ocean Beach areas, “from making phone calls to playing the piano.”

Grace has entertained at sing-alongs with seniors and preschool children during the Life Enrichment program at St. Peter’s by the Sea Lutheran Church.

“She is just a wonderful mentor for how to always keep a positive attitude, keep moving and thinking all your life,” Jean says. “I just admire her and the way she continues to live her life.”

Grace admits that being active is ingrained in her: “I can’t sit all day and watch movies and ‘All My Children.’” She couldn’t even sit still long enough to watch the recent Rockette Christmas special: “Watching them makes my feet hurt.” ▲

HONORING



RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



ORA L. FOWLER

Ora L. Fowler, nominated by Rosemary Pope with the Fourth District Senior Resource Center, is our RSVP Volunteer of the Month. Ora has been a volunteer for almost two years and has served more than 2,400 volunteer hours. Ora helps by tracking RSVP volunteer hours, completing administrative front-

desk duties and serving as a hostess at facility rental functions. She also conducts facility tours, serves as the culinary aide and accepts donations during lunch programs. Ora volunteers at the center's gift shop, coordinates casino bus trips, and also assists with fundraising and the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas food drives. She has also helped with the formation of the Fourth District Senior Community Choir. Congratulations, Ora. Your volunteer efforts are making a difference in San Diego.

RSVP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Public, nonprofit and health agencies seek volunteers in their communities. Potential volunteers can call RSVP at **(858) 505-6399** for information on the following opportunities:

The **Chula Vista Senior Volunteer Patrol** needs volunteers to serve a minimum of six hours a week. Duties include enforcing handicapped parking regulations, fingerprinting children and conducting vacation home checks.

North County Lifeline is in need of intake specialists, translators and receptionist volunteers for the tax preparation program in Oceanside and Vista, which offers free tax preparation for low-income families and individuals.

Grossmont Hospital needs volunteers to transport patients, visitors and staff between hospital and parking areas and to assist security staff with parking patrol.

Mental Health Systems has 90 programs in San Diego. The staff needs administrative support, volunteer development, and program support.

Blind Community Center of San Diego needs drivers

to provide transportation to educational, social and recreational programs.

Tri-City Hospice needs patient/family volunteers, bereavement volunteers and office support.

San Miguel Consolidated Fire District in Spring Valley needs a fire prevention assistant, and volunteer help for data entry, program development, accounts receivable, customer service and receptionist duties.

BOB PRATH HONORED BY AARP

RSVP volunteer and AIS Advisory Council Chair Bob Prath has received California's 2007 AARP Andrus Award for Community Service, the association's most prestigious



BOB PRATH

and visible volunteer award for community service. Bob believes that volunteering is the ultimate healthy aging activity. He has been a volunteer in health advocacy, disaster preparedness and intergenerational work, as well as projects involving mobility and transportation. He has served AARP as a regional mobilizer, regional volunteer leader and, most recently, as the state

coordinator for Community Presence teams, managing regional volunteer leaders throughout the state. Bob and his wife, Karen, can often be found volunteering side-by-side at AARP and RSVP events. Congratulations!

NONAGENARIANS IN RSVP

Nonagenarian does not mean "not aging," but rather someone in his/her 90s. RSVP is proud that we have 30 volunteers in this age group. They volunteer at numerous workstations including the San Diego Air & Space Museum, California Highway Patrol in El Cajon and Alvarado Hospital, and five of them help out at the Salvation Army/El Cajon. None of us can avoid aging, but research shows that staying active in your community will improve your health and your community.

SAVE THE DATE FOR AGING SUMMIT 2008

Mark your calendars for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, June 26, to attend Aging Summit 2008 at the Town & Country Resort and Convention Center, with a simultaneous event at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido. This year's Aging Summit will focus on "Life-long Learning" and feature astronaut Buzz Aldrin.

We know that keeping yourself connected with others, being thirsty for knowledge and engaged in meaningful activities are keys to successful aging. Aging Summit 2008 will explore our options for lifelong learning and how our community can encourage our growth.

The biennial Aging Summits were initiated by County Supervisors Dianne Jacob and Pam Slater-Price as a way for our community to talk about issues that are important to older adults, baby boomers and others. The events include speakers and break-out sessions.

For more information: www.agingsummit2008.org. ♣

ST. PAUL'S INTRODUCES PACE PROGRAM

St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services in San Diego has opened a new service called P.A.C.E. (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly), which provides an individualized, coordinated set of medical and social services for seniors who meet certain criteria and wish to continue living in their own home or community (such as assisted living) despite chronic health needs. The PACE program becomes the sole source of services for Medicare and Medi-Cal eligible enrollees.

Participants receive primary medical care and may also receive specialty care, such as dental, podiatry and optometry, as well as physical, occupational and speech therapies, if needed. They are also eligible for dietary counseling, adult day services, medical equipment and supplies, and prescription drug coverage. Added to this mix are social services, including home care assistance. Transportation to the PACE center and to medical appointments is also included.

Individuals qualify if they are age 55 and older, live within an 8-mile radius of the PACE site (111 Elm St. #100, San Diego, 92101), and need the level of care provided in a nursing home but are still able to live in a community setting without jeopardizing their health or safety.

Because PACE becomes the primary medical care provider, participants need to change medical care providers.

To enroll, the senior (and family/caregivers, if desired) meets in his/her home with an eligibility consultant to talk about the program. This meeting is followed by a visit to the center and a medical evaluation to establish a care plan.

PACE, now in 35 cities nationwide, is modeled on the system of acute and long term care services developed by On Lok Senior Health Services in San Francisco in the mid-1980s. For most participants, the comprehensive service package allows them to continue living at home while receiving services rather than be institutionalized. Capitated financing allows providers to deliver all services participants need rather than be limited to those reimbursable under the Medicare and Medi-Cal fee-for-service systems. For information: www.stpaulspace.org or call (619) 677-3800 ♣

INTEGRATION PROJECT UPDATE

At the January meeting of the Long Term Care Integration Project Planning Committee, a panel of stakeholders discussed San Diego's challenges in coordinating services for persons with chronic care needs across their providers and settings. Identifying these challenges supports the new TEAM SAN DIEGO initiative to develop a curriculum that will improve the way health and social services providers improve care and outcomes. The next meeting will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12, at Point Loma Nazarene University in Mission Valley. For more information, see www.sdltcip.org or call Cindy Vogel at (858) 514-4652 to get on the LTCIP mailing list. ♣

SENIOR MONDAYS AT SCIENCE CENTER

The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center offers Senior Mondays on the first Monday of every month. The discounted tickets (\$5) for seniors ages 65 and older include gallery admission, a "scholars" lecture series at 12:30 p.m. and an IMAX film at 2 p.m. Upcoming lecture topics include: Exploring Mars, Feb. 4; Genetic Mutations, March 3; Future of Water, April 7; Materials Science, May 5; Stem Cells, June 2; History of Man, July 7; and Biodiesel, Aug. 4.

The IMAX films are: "Antarctica," Feb. 4; "Forces of Nature," March 3; "Dolphins," April 7; "Space Station," May 5; "Journey into Amazing Caves," June 2; "Amazing Journeys," July 7; and "Lewis & Clark," Aug. 4.

For more information, call (619) 238-1233, ext. 808, or see www.rhfleet.org/site/visit/senior.html. ♣

SHARE AIS WITH OTHERS

Do you know people who could benefit from this *Aging & Independence* bulletin? Would they (or you) also like to be on our email list for special notices? Send mail and email information to Denise Nelesen, 9335 Hazard Way, San Diego, CA 92123; or denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov, or call (858) 505-6474. ♣

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.

FEB. 6, WEDNESDAY

10 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.

Senior Housing Expo will be held at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Dr., La Mesa. The Expo is a free event for seniors interested in learning more about housing options, including assisted living, reverse mortgages, shared housing and more. There will be speakers and exhibits. For more information, call (619) 464-0505.

FEB. 7, THURSDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

"Heart Healthy Eating" will be presented by Sharp HealthCare registered

dietitian Vincent Alvarez at this free lecture at the St. Peter's by the Sea Lutheran Church, 1371 Sunset Cliffs, San Diego. Registration required; call (800) 827-4277.

FEB. 7 & 21, THURSDAYS

11 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

The Food for Thought program at the Vista Library, 700 Eucalyptus Ave. in Vista, will feature Gentle Yoga by Yoga Vista for both programs, which are followed by a gourmet lunch. A donation of \$3 for seniors and \$5 for others is suggested for lunch. Reservations are required for lunch, but not for the program. Call (760) 726-1340, ext. 1531.

FEB. 9 AND 16, SATURDAYS

10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

The San Diego County Library Adult Literacy Program and the Laubach Literacy Council of San Diego County will co-host a two-session tutor training sequence for its English as a Second Language (ESL) program. The workshops will be held at the Ray and Joan Kroc Salvation Army Community Cen-

ter, Building A, 6605 University Ave., San Diego 92115. Both sessions are required and are free of charge. Following the training, tutors will be paired with learners, either one-to-one or in small groups that will meet at County Library branches or Laubach Centers. For more information, or to register, call Dr. Charles Ross of Laubach at (619) 442-1481; email: intgallery@aol.com.

FEB. 10, SUNDAY

9 TO 11:30 A.M.

Free seminar for caregivers will be offered at Jewish Family Service/Turk Family Center, 8804 Balboa Ave., San Diego, 92123. Speakers will include psychologist Ken Dellefield, attorney Richard Scott Stewart and geriatric social worker Hedy Dalin. Register at (858) 637-3040.

FEB. 21, THURSDAY

8:30 TO 9:30 A.M.

"2008 Medicare and HMO Update" will be presented by Jean Soderberg of HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) at the Health & Human Services Building, 8965 Balboa Ave., San Diego. For additional information, call (800) 434-0222.

JOIN A COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

The San Diego Community Action Network (SanDi-CAN) meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon the last Tuesday of each month at the War Memorial Building, 3325 Zoo Dr., San Diego. For more information, call Brian Rollins at (858) 505-6305; www.localcommunities.org/lc/sandican.

The East County Action Network meets from 1 to 3 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at Wells Park, 1153 E. Madison, El Cajon. Call Kathy Holmes-Hardy at (619) 401-3994, or see www.EastCountyActionNetwork.org.

The South County Action Network meets from 1 to 3 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the San Diego County Library, Bonita-Sunnyside Branch, 4375 Bonita Rd., Bonita. Contact Anabel Kuykendall, (619) 476-6223, or see www.localcommunities.org/lc/socan.

The North County Action Network meets from 1 to 3 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at 1370 San Marcos Blvd., Room 100, in San Marcos. Contact Karen Singer at (760) 754-5945; www.localcommunities.org/lc/atf. ▲

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council will meet at noon Monday, Feb. 11, at Aging & Independence Services, 9335 Hazard Way, Kearny Mesa. 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.