

# AGING & independence

August 2009

## Smoothing the Path for Those Who Follow

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Robert Bettinger's world has been altered many times over. He has lived in several different cities, shifted in his career, and has had enormous transformations in his relationships. No wonder he's called upon for counsel when someone else is having trouble adjusting to change.

As a former Episcopal priest who became a psychologist, Robert is well schooled in helping others. And he sees that as his purpose in life; "I want to make the world better for others, starting from within themselves," he says. "There's no way I can't be doing that."

His own biggest self-realization happened in 1975 when he acknowledged that he was gay. He was living in San Francisco at the time, was still involved with the church although working elsewhere and was married with four children.

"Coming out as a gay man has been an ever enlarging and continuous process, impacting my family and my career," he says.

Time and continuing to share his life with his family has helped them adapt. Last August, all of Robert's children and his three college-age grandchildren joined 120 of his closest friends in celebration of his 80th birthday. And his family joined him that same weekend when he performed a wedding for two of his gay male friends.



ROBERT BETTINGER, PH. D.

Now turning 81, Robert has not slowed down in his desire to reach out to others who are struggling with change in their lives. He cochairs a committee collecting stories of how LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) seniors are planning for their housing needs in their senior years. This will be followed by a needs assessment to help shape the future of LGBT housing in San Diego.

He's volunteering with the LGBT Community Center, including days when the San Diego Food Bank distributes food to the community from that location. He gives presentations about diversity for various organizations, and has been a great resource for various bereavement needs.

Robert assisted ElderHelp with an online continuing education program for doctors and nurses regarding the special needs and issues of LGBT patients. He supported the Aging As Ourselves program, which had been coordinated by ElderHelp, to provide a safety net of supportive services for LGBT seniors, but is no longer in operation.

Robert had tapped into the services of Aging As Ourselves four years ago after he broke his ankle. A senior volunteer, who was also gay, helped him get to his medical appointments and he was very appreciative of this special

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service; "It's hell to have someone helping you who is unfriendly to the LGBT community."

That's why he continues to offer his services in his Hillcrest neighborhood; "I'm an unofficial mentor to gay people who need help getting through a dilemma."

To remain helpful, Robert works hard to stay fit. He has had a lifelong love of hiking and will walk or hike three or four miles a day. He also bikes and swims, but doesn't enter triathlons; exercise is his rejuvenation. He watches his diet and is a member of a club for vegetarians. And he remains socially active in many ways, belonging to several groups for older gay men, including a weekly discussion group, and clubs focused on outdoor activities. He's not currently in a relationship; two of his previous partners have died. But he's still open to meeting someone new.

Being a practical man, Robert is also facing his mortality. He's documenting important medical and financial information on flash drives for his children, plus including elements of his history and the important changes of his life, to perhaps help make their challenges easier. ♣

## FREE TOOLS TO ASSIST CAREGIVERS

Our Family Caregiver Support Program has created booklets, CDs and DVDs, plus a toolkit, to help family caregivers. These resources will help them better tackle the tasks involved in helping their loved ones, while taking care of themselves. Below is the listing of available materials:

*Caregiver's Handbook: A Guide & Resource for the Sandwich Generation:* Stories, tips and resources to benefit family caregivers, especially parents who also are caring for their parents.

*Caregiver's Handbook: A Guide & Resource for the Sandwich Generation (Spanish)*

*Caregiver's Handbook: A Guide & Resource for the Sandwich Generation (CD/audio book)*

*Your Future Now* DVD and companion legal guidebook: Information on decisions and documents needed to make sure your loved one's wishes are followed. Includes several resources for more information and help.

*Your Future Now* DVD (Spanish Subtitles)

*Yoga for Caregivers* DVD: Simple yoga postures designed to bring relief from stress and enhance well-being.

*Caregiver's Toolbox:* An organizer with pockets for documents, plus pages to record important health and personal care information.

For more information on the San Diego Caregiver Coalition, see [www.caregivercoalitionsd.org](http://www.caregivercoalitionsd.org).

To request any of these tools, call (858) 495-5083, and leave your name, phone number, address and which item(s) you would like to receive. ♣



**FIND A COOL ZONE -- BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAIRWOMAN DIANNE JACOB HANDS OUT POPSICLES AT THE COOL ZONE KICKOFF AT THE EL CAJON SALVATION ARMY NUTRITION CENTER. THE COOL ZONE PROGRAM ENCOURAGES OLDER ADULTS AND OTHERS TO GO TO AN AIR-CONDITIONED LOCATION DURING HOT SUMMER DAYS. TO FIND A COOL ZONE SITE NEAR YOU, SEE [WWW.SANDIEGO.NETWORKOF CARE.ORG/AGING](http://WWW.SANDIEGO.NETWORKOF CARE.ORG/AGING) OR CALL 1-(800) 510-2020.**

## ATTEND THE NEXT PA/PG AUCTION

The County's Public Administrator/Public Guardian's office coordinates a personal property auction every quarter, with the proceeds benefiting clients or beneficiaries.

The next auction will be held Saturday, Aug 15, at the PA/PG warehouse, 5201-A Ruffin Road in Kearny Mesa.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. Vehicles will be auctioned at 8:30 a.m.; all other items will follow. Customers are required to pay for and pick up the auction property by 2 p.m. that day.

Proceeds from the auction are returned to individual estates in which the assets originated. Money earned by decedent estates is distributed to the heirs or beneficiaries. Funds earned by conservatorship estates are used to pay for housing, medical care and other personal needs for persons found by the court to be unable to provide for their own care.

To see some of the items for auction, or for additional information, see [www.papg.org](http://www.papg.org). ♣

# HONORING



## RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

### VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Judy Taylor, nominated by John Sunde of the Mira Mesa/Scripps Ranch Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol, is our RSVP Volunteer of the Month. Judy has been an RSVP volunteer for more than four years and has served more than 1,550 hours. She manages the office by making sure patrol lists are posted and patrol openings are filled. She also ensures that signup sheets are posted for recruiting and for the many other assignments that are requested by the community. She sets up recruiting tables at various locations. Judy also records all the patrol meeting minutes. When a patrol member is ill, she makes sure he/she gets flowers and a card. On her own, Judy takes care of some of her colleagues' homebound parents, relieving the caregivers for a few hours. Congratulations, Judy. Your volunteer efforts are making a difference in the community.



JUDY TAYLOR

### FIRST LADY EMPHASIZES SERVICE

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act reauthorized national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the umbrella agency for Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. First Lady Michelle Obama attended the opening session of the National Conference on Volunteering and Service and issued this call for service: "This new Administration doesn't view service as separate from our national priorities, or in addition to our national priorities. We see it as the key to achieving our national priorities. We believe that the only way to build that new foundation for our economy is to establish a new role for service in this country."

### 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:

**Jewish Family Service** needs volunteer drivers for the On the Go program's Rides & Smiles, which provides both group and individual transportation to older adults age 60 and over for necessary medical and personal appointments. Areas served are: North County Inland, University City/La Jolla and College/Del Cerro/San Carlos.

**Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)** needs volunteers to greet customers, operate the camera, and to perform other office support functions.

**Alvarado Hospital** needs hospital auxiliary volunteers.

**Travelers Aid Society** needs volunteers for information and referral.

### SPOTLIGHT: SAN DIEGO BLOOD BANK

Y-FRIENDz, a program of YMCA Youth & Family Services, is a mentoring program for children, ages 4-15, who have one or both parents incarcerated. There are more than 15,000 such children in San Diego County alone!

Y-FRIENDz's goal is to match these children with caring adult mentors. Y-FRIENDz staff members provide mentor training and orientation, ongoing case management and support for mentor-mentee matches, as well as monthly events for the mentors, children and their families.

Richie and Cristian have been paired in a mentor-mentee friendship with Y-FRIENDz for almost two years. They recently visited Sea World, went ice skating, plus they often work out together. Richie has had the opportunity to watch Cristian grow and change through this time; "Cristian has gone from the quiet 12-year-old kid introducing me to his pet fish on our first meeting, to the confident young man starting his journey as a freshman in high school." FRIENDz looks forward to supporting Richie and Cristian in their third year of their match.

For details regarding volunteering with Y-FRIENDz, contact RSVP at **(858) 505-6399**.

## UPCOMING SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES

Don't miss an opportunity to attend one of our "Senior Expo: Protect Yourself & Your Wallet" events. This program provides physical and financial self-defense techniques and recently received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Mary Davis, a 70-year-old black belt in karate, shows how to avoid trouble and what to do if you are physically attacked. Representatives from the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and Adult Protective Services provide tips on how to avoid being a victim of scams or fraud.

Here is the current schedule:

**Sept. 3** (Thursday) at the Allied Gardens/Benjamin Branch Library, 5188 Zion Ave., San Diego 92120.

**Oct. 20** (Tuesday) at the San Marcos Community Center, 3 Civic Center Dr., San Marcos 92069.

All events run from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch is provided. To reserve a seat, call **(800) 510-2020** and press "4." Leave your name and phone number, plus which date/location you want. ♣

## LONG TERM CARE PROJECT UPDATE

Dr. C. Gresham Bayne, MD, chief medical officer of Janus Health, Inc., will be the guest presenter at the next meeting of the Long Term Care Integration Project Planning Committee, which will be held from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Friday, Aug. 21, at the UCSD Extension Mission Valley Center, 404 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 102, Room 27, San Diego 92108. Dr. Bayne will discuss physician-directed collaboration with home health and other services. For more information, see [www.sdltcip.org](http://www.sdltcip.org). ♣

## PROJECT CARE USING REVERSE 9-1-1

San Diego's "Reverse 911" system, employed during the firestorms to move thousands to safety, is now being used as part of the aging services safety net. The County of San Diego's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has designated a portion of its system, also known as "Alert San Diego," to allow Project CARE sites to contact frail seniors by phone on a daily basis.

Project CARE has been providing telephone reassurance for more than a decade. With computers and guidance from AIS, Project CARE partner agencies have offered daily phone calls to hundreds of frail and vulnerable county residents, saving lives and providing peace of mind. Now that the original computers are becoming obsolete, the partnership between AIS and OES allows Project CARE sites to use state-of-the-art internet software to complete the calls.

The new system significantly expands capacity and works with modern operating systems.

Del Mar Community Connections was the first Project CARE site to implement Alert San Diego, followed by Elderhelp of San Diego, Vista and San Marcos. The software is available to all 16 Project CARE agencies.

Each Project CARE site is run independently, usually by senior centers or nonprofit groups. But they all offer much more than the regular phone call. Project CARE also works in cooperation with law enforcement volunteers who offer welfare-check visits (You Are Not Alone). Some of the other possible Project CARE services include:

**Gatekeeper:** Utility meter readers and refuse collectors recognize warning signs that their customers may be in trouble and report the situation to the appropriate authority.

**Minor Home Repair:** Volunteers and local business groups are recruited to assist in making minor home repairs for seniors and the disabled.

**Postal Alert:** Letter carriers keep a watchful eye on mailboxes belonging to older and disabled residents. If mail has not been picked up for several days, the letter carrier will check to see if the individual is okay.

**Safe Return:** A nationwide identification system of the Alzheimer's Association that helps authorities locate, identify, and safely return persons with dementia (and other cognitive impairments) who wander and become lost.

**Vial of Life:** Seniors and adults with disabilities who sign up for Project CARE will be given a magnetic plastic container to hold information on the individual's medical history. Paramedics use the information in the container to save precious time in providing medical assistance.

To locate a Project CARE site, call **(800) 510-2020**. ♣

## HICAP CAN SPEAK TO YOUR GROUP

Representatives from the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) can speak to your organization or club regarding Medicare and private insurance information, including the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. HICAP, administered by Elder Law and Advocacy, is a nonprofit funded by AIS and the California Department of Aging. HICAP does not sell or recommend any specific health insurance product. Call **(800) 434-0222** to find out more. ♣

## SHARE AIS WITH OTHERS

Do you know of other people who could benefit from the information provided in 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](mailto:denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov); 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](mailto:denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov).

### AUG 6, THURSDAY

**8:15 TO 10 A.M.**

San Diego Council on Aging will meet at Continental Rehabilitation Hospital, 555 Washington St., San Diego 92103. This networking group meets regularly on the first Thursday of each month. For information, call (619) 464-6801.

### AUG. 6 & 20, SEPT. 3

**11 A.M. TO 1 P.M.**

Food for Thought at the Vista Library, 700 Eucalyptus Ave. in Vista, features yoga and lunch (for a donation of \$3.50 for seniors and \$6 for others). The yoga program is free. To sign up for the lunch, call (760) 726-1340, ext. 1531.

### AUG. 12, WEDNESDAY

**10 TO 11:30 A.M.**

Free four-week basic computer class with seniors teaching seniors will be held each Wednesday at the Bayside Community Center in Linda Vista, 2202 Comstock St., San Diego 92111. Call (858) 278-0771, ext. 3033.

### AUG. 15, SATURDAY

**8:30 A.M.**

Public Administrator/Public Guardian auction, with proceeds benefitting cli-

ents or beneficiaries, will be held at the PA/PG warehouse, 5201-A Ruffin Rd., San Diego 92123. Vehicles to be auctioned at 8:30 a.m., followed by other items. See [www.papg.org](http://www.papg.org).

### AUG. 17 & SEPT. 14, 28

**9 TO 11 A.M.**

The United Through Reading Grandparent Program will create a free DVD of you reading for your grandchild at the War Memorial Building near the Zoo in Balboa Park. This nonprofit will supply books, or you can bring your own. Appointments are required; call (858) 481-7323, ext. 214 or email [linda.hopkins@UnitedThroughReading.org](mailto:linda.hopkins@UnitedThroughReading.org).

### AUG. 20, THURSDAY

**9 A.M. TO 2 P.M.**

"Finding Balance in the Art of Caregiving," a free conference for family caregivers, will be held at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Dr., La Mesa. Sponsored by the San Diego Caregiver Coalition and the City of La Mesa. Lunch provided. Registration required; call (800) 827-1008.

### AUG. 22, SATURDAY

**10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.**

The fourth annual Senior Resource Fair, sponsored by the San Diego LGBT Community Center, will be held at the center, 3909 Centre St., San Diego 92103. Theme is "Life is a Banquet (on a Budget)." For additional information, call (619) 692-2077, ext. 212 or email [aschwartz@thecentersd.org](mailto:aschwartz@thecentersd.org).

### AUG. 22, SATURDAY

**10 A.M.**

SDSU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute will host a fall semester open house

at the SDSU Extended Studies Center, 5701 Hardy Ave., San Diego 92115. Learn about upcoming classes. RSVP to (619) 594-2863.

### AUG. 25, TUESDAY

**1 TO 3 P.M.**

Medicare information will be presented by HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) at the Bonita-Sunnyside Branch Library, 4375 Bonita Rd., Bonita 91902. For more information, call (800) 434-0222.

### SEPT. 3, THURSDAY

**11 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.**

"Senior Expo: Protect Yourself & Your Wallet" will be presented at the Allied Gardens/Benjamin Branch Library, 5188 Zion Ave., San Diego, CA 92120. This program provides both physical and financial self-defense techniques. Reservations required; call (800) 510-2020, press "4," and leave your name, phone number and state Sept. 3.

### SEPT. 11, FRIDAY

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

"It's a Balancing Act," a symposium for patients with Parkinson's disease and their families, will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton San Diego, 8110 Aero Dr., San Diego 92123. For more information, see [www.pdasd.org](http://www.pdasd.org) or call (877) 737-7576.

### SEPT. 17, THURSDAY

**9 A.M. TO NOON**

"Meet the Pharmacist Day" will be held at the Davis Family YMCA, 8881 Dallas St., La Mesa. Meet one-to-one with a pharmacist who can review your medications. Reservations required. After Aug. 16, call (877) 926-8300.