



The Caring Neighbor

A Newsletter from the Caring Neighborhoods Program
City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation

Spring 2004



CARING NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER



Max and Virgie Villavert are incredible neighbors from the **South Natomas Caring Neighborhood (SNCN)**. Their compassion for seniors and desire to help others is invaluable to those receiving their kindness and an inspiration to all who know them.

The Villaverts developed a concern for seniors while working at Kaiser Hospital. Max and Virgie felt helpless when frail elderly patients returned home living alone or requiring care from an aging spouse. Hoping to help the elderly in their neighborhood, they created **SNCN**.

Max and Virgie constantly reach out to neighborhood seniors and encourage neighbors to do the same. Regularly, they call or visit elderly neighbors, such as Mr. S. – who lives alone, or Mr. C. – who has Dementia. Even after late shifts and caring for their granddaughter, Virgie prepares a meal for a special senior while Max provides rides for seniors to shopping or the community center.

These special neighbors organized two projects for neighborhood seniors. The **SNCN** Thanksgiving Spaghetti Feast was a free event with the Evangel Baptist Church. Nearly 20 seniors and 50 volunteers enjoyed a delicious meal, prepared by Virgie and served by a teen group, and musical performances from a youth choir and a Samoan senior. Generous donations were made by **Del Monte Meat Company, Wonderbread, Sierra Spring Water, Albertson's** (Truxel Road), **Raley's** (Truxel Road) and **Raley's, Inc.**

Also, **SNCN** delivered Christmas presents to elderly neighbors through the Eskaton TLC Giving Tree project. These seniors were overjoyed to receive a gift, friendly visit, and Christmas carol from the group accompanied by Max on guitar. After wishing a Merry Christmas to an elderly couple in poor health, one neighbor tearfully replied, "We will now that you have come."

THANK YOU Max and Virgie for making a difference in your neighborhood!

Do you know of a SUPER VOLUNTEER who deserves to be recognized? We would love to hear about your efforts! Please contact Tracey Gray at (916) 566-1594 or tgray@cityofsacramento.org and let us know how you are making a difference in your neighborhood!

GROCERY DELIVERY HOUSE CALLS

While visiting an elderly relative upon her return home from the hospital, I noticed that her refrigerator was nearly bare. In addition to being ill, she was unable to drive to the grocery store as her driver's license expired during her hospital stay. Neighbors and family brought meals, but I wondered what she would have done without loved ones to help out.

Grocery shopping is a common obstacle for many seniors. Transportation or health conditions can limit a person's accessibility to the grocery store let alone their ability to retrieve much needed groceries. Some use costly taxi services, which is not an option for those struggling to make ends meet. Meanwhile, others use public transit or walk to the neighborhood store, and simply carrying multiple grocery bags can be challenging to those even in the best of health.



Local businesses provide grocery shopping and home delivery services to homes in Sacramento County. Options include a selection of goods or shopping for your favorite products at the store(s) of your choice. Ordering is easy and can be made via phone, fax, email, or online, and payments are accepted with check or credit card and sometimes cash. Some businesses may charge a delivery fee, but it is well worth the convenience. For more information, contact the following businesses:

We Go Shop
(916) 519-3248
www.wegoshop.com
Shopping and delivery

Crystal Cream and Butter Company
(916) 444-7200
Home delivery of groceries

Schwan's
(888) 724-9267
www.schwans.com
Home delivery of frozen foods

Taylor's Market
(916) 443-6881
www.taylorsmarket.com
Home delivery to 95816, 95818, 95819, 95822, and shipping to ALL areas

Safeway
(877) 505-4040
www.safeway.com
Online orders only

Errands 4 U
(916) 919-4885
errands4u@comcast.net
Services Elk Grove

ADOPT-A-SENIOR SPRING CLEANING



In April, **W.I.A. Youth** and **Caring Neighborhoods** worked together to assist several seniors with spring cleaning at the Capital Estates

Manufactured Home Park in South Sacramento. Volunteers were participants in the **Adopt-A-Senior Project** between the **City of Sacramento's Caring Neighborhoods** and **W.I.A. Youth Programs**, providing outdoor repairs and yard work to elderly neighbors who are unable to complete the work and do not have a family support system.

Capital Estates is a community for older adults ages 55 years and older. Neighbors participate in a Caring Neighborhood, Neighbor Helping Neighbor, assisting frail or ill senior neighbors with yard maintenance and other tasks. As most residents are 80+ years, neighborhood volunteers are unable to help all in need. So, through the Adopt-A-Senior Project, youth volunteers gave neighbors a much needed helping hand.

Volunteers teamed up to help at least 10 elderly neighbors on a hot Saturday during Spring Break. Over 20 W.I.A. Youth and 10 Caring Neighbors pulled weeds, raked leaves, washed windows, trimmed hedges, cleaned rain gutters, and much more. Volunteers helped Mrs. S., a neighbor in her mid-80's who has lost much of her vision due to Macular Degeneration, pull weeds from her yard that were two feet high, and Mrs. P., a disabled senior who has Cerebral Palsy and lasting effects of Polio, remove overgrown grass and weeds from her back patio. After a day of hard work, seniors thanked volunteers with a tasty barbecue lunch prepared by Mary Jo and Harold Dodd.

The largest Adopt-A-Senior Project to date, this was an opportunity for seniors to meet teens from various backgrounds, and for the W.I.A. Youth to display their community service spirit. One elderly neighbor commented that the youth were "a breath of fresh air," as neighbors are regular targets of juvenile criminal activity. Another elderly neighbor wrote, "You'll never know how much I appreciated all your help. I used to stand and look at my messy yard and cry and wonder how I was going to get all that work done. Now I stand and look at it and cry because it looks so clean and neat."

THANK YOU Adopt-A-Senior Volunteers for touching the hearts of these special neighbors.

If you would like to nominate a senior for upcoming Adopt-A-Senior projects, please contact (916) 566-1594 or tgray@cityofsacramento.org.



SPRINGTIME SUGGESTIONS: HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS

- * Include a senior neighbor in a family activity or friendly evening with other neighbors such as a park picnic, backyard barbecue, or card game.
- * Help an elderly neighbor with Spring Cleaning. Work with neighbors of all ages to mow a lawn, plant flowers, wash windows, clean rain gutters, etc.
- * Prepare for summer! Organize a walking group with senior neighbors and/or encourage an older neighbor to join you in an exercise class. (Call 566-1594 for info)
- * Identify home safety hazards for slips and falls with an elderly neighbor. (Call 566-1594 for a free "Home Safety Checklist")

STAYING SAFE AT THE ATM

Technology has given us convenient access to our bank accounts through ATMs (Automated Teller Machines). It is easy to forget our vulnerability when simply withdrawing cash. Seniors are a major target of crime, so taking safety precautions when using an ATM is very important. Help neighborhood seniors stay safe by sharing these safety tips, recommended by the Golden 1 Credit Union, with your elderly neighbors:

- ✓ Park close to the ATM. Do not leave keys or unlocked valuables behind in the car, and NEVER leave the engine running.
- ✓ Have your card ready when you approach the ATM, and conceal your password and transaction amount.
- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings at all times, especially at night. Always look around and leave IMMEDIATELY if you see ANYTHING suspicious.
- ✓ Do not count cash at the ATM. Keep doors locked and windows up until you are ready to use the ATM.
- ✓ If you are followed after using an ATM, go to a populated, well-lit area. If necessary, call police.

Caring Neighborhoods Program

South Natomas Community Center
2921 Truxel Road
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 566-1594

tgray@cityofsacramento.org

www.caringneighborhoods.org

*"Make **your** neighborhood a **better** place to live!"*

