



The Caring Neighbor

From the Caring Neighborhoods Program, City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation
2921 Truxel Road, Sacramento, CA 95833. (916) 566-1594. tgray@cityofsacramento.org
www.caringneighborhoods.org

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CARING NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER

Aleecia Macias is an incredible Caring Neighbor. Her enthusiasm and desire to make a difference has touched the lives of several neighborhood seniors.

Many seniors spend the holidays alone, and some do not receive any Christmas gifts, visits, or greetings. In hopes of brightening the holidays for less fortunate seniors, Aleecia coordinated a Caring Neighborhoods project with more than 20 neighbors, friends, and co-workers who donated and delivered Christmas gifts to over 30 elderly neighbors.

First, she recruited volunteers and distributed paper mittens from the Eskaton TLC Giving Tree, featuring a senior's Christmas "wish" or desired gift, such as a pair of slippers, stationery, a grocery store gift card, or sweatshirt. In Aleecia and volunteers decorated beautiful packages including the requested item, assorted trinkets or goodies, and personal greeting cards and messages in hopes of making their Christmas a special one.

A week before Christmas, Aleecia and more than 20 volunteers teamed up in small groups to deliver gifts to neighborhood seniors. In a heartfelt effort, they also visited elderly neighbors who were overjoyed, tearful, and speechless at the kindness and companionship of these Caring Neighbors.

THANK YOU, Aleecia, for making a difference!

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

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR SENIORS

You and your neighbors can make a difference for an elderly neighbor this holiday season by donating and/or delivering Christmas gifts to neighborhood seniors. Many will spend the holidays alone, and this is a special opportunity to touch their hearts this holiday season.



The Giving Tree Project with Eskaton TLC is an annual endeavor where neighbors, individuals, and businesses donate and/or deliver Christmas gifts to elderly clients. Volunteers choose a mitten with the name, age, and Christmas "wish" or desired gift, purchase the item, wrap, and return it. Then, volunteer groups deliver the gifts to elderly neighbors living in their neighborhood.

Several Caring Neighbors have participated in this heartwarming project, and have enjoyed uplifting holiday experiences treasured by elderly neighbors. Last year, Caring Neighbors donated more than 50 presents and made deliveries to over 100 neighborhood seniors, and many sang Christmas carols and/or shared a friendly visit.

You and your neighbors can share the holiday spirit with a special senior by donating and/or delivering presents in your neighborhood. This is a wonderful holiday project for all ages in your Caring Neighborhood, family, volunteer group, school club, or church.

For more information, call 566-1594 or tgray@cityofsacramento.org, or Terri Becker, 334-1072.

Eskaton TLC is a FREE telephone reassurance program where volunteers make daily phone calls to help over 450 seniors live safely independently at home.

AMERICORPS*NCCC YEAR-END PROJECT

Nearly 200 AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) volunteers joined Caring Neighborhoods and Volunteer Services for a year-end community service day in the Avondale/Glen Elder Neighborhood. Over 90 volunteers provided exterior home and yard improvements for several elderly neighbors, while others completed a variety of enhancement projects.

Prior to the work day, volunteers prepared homes for painting, yards for landscaping, and fences for repairing. In temperatures reaching a stifling 107 degrees, volunteers worked diligently and without complaint.



Volunteers helped 87 year old Mrs. S., who has lived in her home since 1947. Unable to pay for repairs, volunteers painted her house and metal window shades, then cleared an acre of dry weeds and shrubbery, where a fire destroyed a barn a few years ago. When interviewed by Univision, KXTV 10, and Fox 40 she told reporters that volunteers were “a godsend” and made her house “look like new.”

Others included Mrs. M., an elderly neighbor who lives alone. She could not afford landscaping services, so volunteers removed overgrown weeds and applied plastic sheeting and decorative rock. She was so appreciative that she gave one of her hand-made afghans to the group.

Volunteers also engaged in a variety of neighborhood improvement projects coordinated by Mary Lynn Perry, Volunteer Program, including: abating gang-related graffiti, stenciling storm drains to discourage pollution, cleaning the George Sim Community Center, removing debris from illegal dumping sites, improving a low-income housing complex, distributing resource information to neighbors, and restoring two community gardens. At the end of the day, Councilmember Kevin McCarty provided a delicious lunch to volunteers.



This project could not have been possible without generous donations from neighborhood businesses and community partners.

THANK YOU DONORS: Container USA, Rebuilding Together, Citizens Acting Collectively, Girl Scouts of Tierra del Oro, Home Depot-Folsom Boulevard, Home Depot-Florin Road, Hastie’s Capitol Sand and Gravel, Redi-Gro Corporation, Bill Taylor, Infoline Sacramento, and Councilmember Kevin McCarty.

SPECIAL THANKS to Mary Lynn Perry, Ana Estrada, Chuck Drumsta, City of Sacramento Area 3 Neighborhood Services, Solid Waste, Information Technology, George Sim Community Center staff, and Parks Volunteer Program.

GREAT JOB and **THANK YOU AmeriCorps*NCCC volunteers** for your outstanding efforts to help neighborhood seniors live safely and independently.

HELP SENIORS STAY WARM & SAFE

Cold mornings and evenings have caused many of us to turn up the thermostat. Several elderly neighbors are especially vulnerable to cold weather and may use several types of heating sources to stay warm, some that may be hazardous. For example, 96 year old Mr. H. uses his oven to keep warm because he cannot afford to repair his broken house heater, and 81 year old Mrs. T. goes to bed at night while it is still warm from the wood burning in her fireplace.

Using open fires and heating appliances indoors is dangerous. Please encourage your senior neighbors to stay safe and warm by sharing these tips from SMUD:

- ⇒ Cover the fireplace after fully extinguishing a fire
- ⇒ Never heat your home with a kerosene heater, oven, dryer, or unventilated appliance
- ⇒ Never use lighter fluid or gasoline to ignite a fire in the fireplace
- ⇒ Never burn treated or painted wood in your fireplace
- ⇒ Never use barbecues or charcoal inside your home, even in the fireplace



TOP GIVER AWARDS

Caring Neighborhoods' volunteers received the 2005 Top Giver Award for outstanding service to the City of Sacramento, presented by Mayor Fargo.

Jo Fleming and the **Society of Hispanic Professional Engineering (SHPE)/MESA Club**, Sacramento City College were recognized for their extraordinary efforts to help elderly neighbors live safely and independently at home.

Jo Fleming was recognized for her service to neighborhood seniors through her Caring Neighborhood, Neighbor Helping Neighbor. In addition to coordinating a discount food purchase project, Jo rallied neighbors to help with a monthly yard care project, transportation assistance and companionship for elderly neighbors, and continues to make a difference.

Also, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineering/MESA Club at Sacramento City College, lead by Art Hernandez, was recognized for a continuous volunteer commitment of over 200 volunteer hours to the Caring Neighborhoods Program. Students were honored for their arduous efforts through yard improvements and house painting for a 96 year old neighbor, and helping more than 12 seniors through the Campus Commons Caring Neighborhood's Spring Cleaning project. SHPE students continue to help elderly neighbors live safely and independently in their own homes.

CONGRATULATIONS Jo and SHPE !

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS STUDENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Students from LaSallian Vincentian Youth Assembly, hosted by Christian Brothers High School, made a difference for more than 40 elderly neighbors, fulfilling a three-day community service commitment and contributing over 300 volunteer hours to the Caring Neighborhoods Program.

At the Oak Park Community Center students created personal greeting cards and assembled gift bags for several elderly neighbors. Then, students and teachers delivered the items, including goodies and resource information. The seniors were overjoyed to receive a special visit and treasured personal messages on hand-made cards, while the students realized their potential to touch the lives of others through small acts of kindness.

Visits with seniors such as Mrs. H. were especially memorable. Students listened to stories and poetry written by the 91 year old neighbor over 50 years ago. Others visited with Mr. R. as he shared his experiences in the Army during the Korean War and his long-time love of golf. Another group visited with Mrs. J., who emigrated from Britain during the dark days of World War II. Students also helped with small tasks along the way by watering an elderly man's yard and replacing smoke detector batteries for another senior.

Afterwards, students shared their experiences and acknowledged the impact their visits made on elderly neighbors. With a greater appreciation for our elders, some pledged to spend more time with grandparents, while others asked to stay in touch with seniors on their routes.

THANK YOU, students for making a difference, and a special thanks to Dee Dee Cornelius and Oak Park Community Center staff.










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South Natomas Community Center
2921 Truxel Road
Sacramento, CA 95833



HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS THIS FALL

-  Make a difference for a special senior this holiday season, and donate a gift to the Giving Tree Project. Or, volunteer with your neighbors to deliver gifts to neighborhood seniors
-  Share information with elderly neighbors about saving money on energy bills through SMUD's Energy Assistance Program Rate (EAPR). For more information, contact (888) 742-7683.
-  Invite an older neighbor to join your family for Thanksgiving dinner. Or, take an extra portion of the meal or dessert to him/her.
-  Create a friendly visitor project for the holidays. Encourage neighbors to take turns visiting elderly neighbors, especially those who are homebound or live alone. For more information call 566-1594.
-  Spend an evening with neighbors, friends, or family members and help an elderly neighbor with holiday decorating. Hang lights around windows or outdoors, decorate a Christmas tree, and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate.

Caring Neighborhoods is a neighborhood-based volunteer program through the City of Sacramento, Office of Older Adult Services, which encourages neighbors to work together to help elderly neighbors with small tasks so that they may live safely and independently at home.