



The Caring Neighbor

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

January/February 2005



CARING NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER

Mabel Elliot, Margo Williams, Mildred Whittiker, and Beatrice Heard are 4 amazing neighbors from the **St. Andrew's A.M.E. church** Caring Neighborhood, in downtown Sacramento. Their kindness and empathy has continued to make a difference in the lives of many neighborhood seniors for more than 7 years.



Mabel, Margo, Mildred, and Beatrice are very special nurses who provide free blood pressure checks and monitoring for approximately 60 to 80 senior neighbors, during 4 days of volunteering each month at the Women's Civic Improvement Club (WCIC) in Oak Park, Sam Pannell Community Center in Meadowview, and St. Andrew's A.M.E. church.

For some, this is their only regular interaction with a medical professional. For seniors who do not take their blood pressure medication properly, **WATCH OUT!** Regular monitoring reveals this behavior to the nurses, who in their special ways, encourage them to get on track. Occasionally, patterns of dangerously elevated blood pressure are detected, usually caused by an unsuspected illness. After referring the senior to a doctor, conditions from hypertension to heart failure have been diagnosed. Without their compassion, red flags, such as high blood pressure, may go unnoticed until an emergency occurs.

Most importantly, however, is the caring and concern shown by these wonderful nurses. Regular visitors look forward to a big hug and heartfelt visit. Oftentimes, the nurses comfort a family while an elderly loved one is receiving an operation, explaining the procedure in common language. This heartfelt, helping hand is a consolation to family members and a true example of these beneficent women.

THANK YOU, Mabel, Margo, Mildred, and Beatrice, for your dedication and outstanding service to neighborhood seniors!

COLLEGE STUDENTS REACH OUT

A group of extraordinary students from **Sacramento City College** received an award from the **Avondale/Glen Elder Weed and Seed Program** for making a difference.



David Troth and classmates were required to complete a community service project, and wished to volunteer with seniors through the Caring Neighborhoods Program. They chose to help Mrs. R., an elderly neighbor who lost her husband to Alzheimer's Disease last summer after providing his care for several years, and is the caregiver of her adult son who has a medical condition. Mrs. R. has had difficulty tending to her yard, and was at risk of being cited for code violations, so David's team decided to help out.

Volunteers contributed over 20 hours of service, mowing front and side yards, pulling weeds, landscaping planter boxes/areas, removing debris, sweeping driveway and sidewalks, raking leaves, transplanting potted plants, and taking time out for a short visit with Mrs. R. She was overwhelmed at their generosity and arduous efforts, and grateful for their kindness.

David's group and the Caring Neighborhoods Program were presented awards for outstanding service on behalf of senior neighbors in Avondale/Glen Elder neighborhood at a Weed and Seed Committee meeting with outgoing Councilmember Dave Jones.

GREAT WORK, David, Sterling, Rachelle, Alicia, and Naomi, and **THANK YOU** for making a difference!

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

ADOPT-A-SENIOR

W.I.A. Youth Program

volunteers showed their commitment to making a difference through another fantastic Adopt-A-Senior Project, a community service endeavor with the Caring Neighborhoods Program.



Youth volunteers worked together to make yard improvements for Mrs. H., a senior in the Freeport Manor neighborhood. Mrs. H. has a very difficult time walking, and suffers from a variety of medical conditions causing her to be hospitalized on several occasions in recent months.

Mrs. H. was at risk of being cited for various code violations on her property. Previous tenants left an abundance of junk scattered in the front and back yards, and when she needed to move back into her home, she was physically and financially unable to remove the items left behind. Disheartened at the condition of her yard and frustrated at her inability to clean it up, Freeport Manor On the Move President, Helen Freeny, contacted us to see if we could help.

Adopt-A-Senior volunteers arrived early on a Saturday morning to offer a helping hand. They began disposing of yard debris such as shower doors, cardboard boxes, and old yard equipment, accumulating it on the street to be collected on Neighborhood Clean Up Day. Volunteers also arranged potted plants and yard rocks, and then planted grass seed so that Mrs. H. could enjoy the view from her front porch.

Mrs. H. was incredibly grateful for the Adopt-A-Senior volunteers who reached out to help her live safely at home. **THANK YOU W.I.A. Youth Program** volunteers for your hard work and willingness to help this special senior!

The Adopt-A-Senior project is an ongoing endeavor between Caring Neighborhoods and the W.I.A. Youth Program – a job training and mentoring program, also sponsored by the City of Sacramento, - providing outdoor home repairs and/or yard work to frail or low-income seniors. Through the Adopt-A-Senior Project, youth volunteers can develop a community service spirit and help elderly neighbors live safely and independently at home.

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

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

Do you know of an elderly neighbor who could use a little help with a big project? The Caring Neighborhoods Program would like to help! We are currently seeking nominations of Sacramento County seniors who could use a helping hand with light maintenance or home repairs, to be completed by our community service and Adopt-A-Senior volunteers.

Possible assistance may include yard maintenance, pulling weeds, raking leaves, cleaning rain gutters, house painting, repairing a fence, etc. Ideal candidates may be living alone, on a fixed income, frail or suffering from a major medical condition, and/or do not have able family members living with or nearby them. Our volunteers are eager to help! For more information or to nominate an elderly neighbor for this heartwarming project, please contact Tracey Gray, at 566-1594 or tgray@cityofsacramento.org.



HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS THIS WINTER?

- ♥ Assemble and deliver a box of goodies for an elderly neighbor on Valentine's Day
- ♥ Share information about SMUD's discount programs with an older neighbor and assist in the application process
- ♥ Stick to that New Year's Resolution to get into shape and include a senior neighbor in your efforts. Designate a neighborhood walking regimen or exercise video program, and invite a senior neighbor to accompany you
- ♥ Work with your neighbors to establish a Neighborhood Emergency Contacts list to share with elderly neighbors in case of an emergency or disaster. Be sure to indicate neighbors who are available in case of smaller or personal emergencies
- ♥ Nominate your senior neighbor for the Adopt-A-Senior project or other community service endeavor with the Caring Neighborhoods Program.

A SPECIAL "THANK YOU..."

Kimberley Gray, John Parino, and Aaron Gray are a few unsung heroes of the Caring Neighborhoods Program. Their dedication to help others and support Caring Neighborhoods throughout Sacramento County has made a difference for several elderly neighbors.

These three energetic volunteers contributed over 100 individual hours of community service in 2004, and have assisted in a variety of projects in the past few years. They have volunteered for anything from providing volunteer leadership and pitching in with projects such as Adopt-A-Senior, to stuffing envelopes for the Caring Neighbor newsletter mail out to over 500 neighborhood groups and Caring Neighbors.

Recently, Kim, John, and Aaron volunteered nearly 60 hours to a house-painting project for an elderly widow, with volunteers from the Sacramento City College SHEP/MESA Club and Americorps Red Team 1. When a few unforeseen obstacles extended the length of the project, these fabulous volunteers filled in to help prime and paint the house until its completion. Their outstanding commitment to serving others certainly made a world of difference for project volunteers and especially this special elderly neighbor.

THANK YOU, Kim, John, and Aaron for your invaluable service to the Caring Neighborhoods Program!



FREE REFRIGERATORS AND MORE...

DID YOU KNOW that SMUD has a variety of programs that can help your senior neighbors lower energy bills?

First, through the Low Income Refrigerator Replacement Program, neighbors can exchange an old refrigerator for a new, energy-efficient model. To qualify, neighbors must be eligible for the Energy Assistance Program Rate (EAPR), own an operating refrigerator that is at least 10 years old, and allow a weatherization energy audit. This valuable program is available from January 1 through December 31, 2005, or until refrigerator supply runs out. For info, call 732-5085.

Also, the EAPR is a discount rate that can save qualifying neighbors over 32% on their monthly electric bill. Neighbors may be eligible for free weatherization of their house or apartment, where SMUD will check insulation, weather stripping, faucet aerators, compact fluorescent light bulbs and complete some minor home repairs to improve energy efficiency and costs.

Finally, the Senior Citizen/Third Party Notification and Medical Equipment Discount Rate Programs are available. Third Party Notification allows SMUD to contact a relative or friend to prevent unnecessary service interruption. The Medical Equipment Discount Rate provides energy bill savings of over 30% for full-time residents who require an electrically powered device for mobility or medical conditions. For more information about any of these worthwhile programs, contact (888) 742-7683.



SERVICE AND VOLUNTEER STAR

Judy Hodges, from the South Gate Meadows Neighborhood Association, was recognized as a Service and Volunteer Star for her contributions to the Caring Neighborhoods Program, also featured in a recent issue of *Caring Neighbor*.

The Service and Volunteer Stars program, through the California Service Corps, Office of the Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, spotlights Californians who have made a difference in their communities through volunteer efforts. Please visit www.scs.ca.gov to see what contributions Judy has made in her neighborhood and to learn more about the California Service Corps.

CONGRATULATIONS, JUDY!

PAINT PROJECT

Caring Neighborhoods Program volunteers made a difference this holiday season, for an elderly neighbor in the Colonial Village neighborhood.

On ten separate days, donating over 218 hours of community service, volunteers from the **Sacramento City College Society of Hispanic Engineering Professionals (SHEP/MESA)** and **Americorps Corporation for National and Community Service - Red Team 1**, teamed up to paint the house and improve the backyard for Mrs. F., a 96-year-old elderly neighbor.

For several years, the aging house was in dire need of new paint, as deteriorating areas left the wooden house bare to weathering elements. Volunteers worked together to prepare the yellow and green house for a fresh coat of white and blue paint. They scraped chipped and flaking paint, sanded uneven edges, power washed the structure, applied two coats of primer/sealer and paint to the house and trim, and removed old paint from windows, masonry, and sidewalks. Volunteers also removed debris from the back yard, raked leaves, landscaped planter areas, clipped overgrown shrubbery, pulled weeds, arranged yard furniture, and swept walkways.

Mrs. F. was astonished at how beautiful her house looked, and for the diligent efforts of these dedicated volunteers to help her live safely and independently at home. What a nice holiday surprise!

THANK YOU SHEP/MESA and Americorps Red Team 1 for your GREAT WORK, and **Rebuilding Together** for the generous donation of paint and supplies. A special thanks to **Art Hernandez, Aaron and Kimberley Gray, and John Parino** for making this project a success!



ESKATON TLC GIVING TREE

Caring Neighborhoods volunteers made this holiday season a special one for many homebound and frail elderly neighbors, by participating in the Eskaton TLC Giving Tree project.

The Giving Tree is an annual project where individuals and organizations can donate a Christmas gift to over 450 elderly Eskaton TLC clients. Volunteers choose a mitten displaying a senior's name, age, and Christmas "wish" or desired gift, purchase the item, wrap and return it to Eskaton TLC. Then, other individual volunteers and groups select a neighborhood route and deliver the Christmas gifts. Each senior is overjoyed upon receiving a Christmas present and friendly visit, as sometimes, this gift is all that a senior may receive for the holidays.

Caring Neighbors donated over 50 presents and made deliveries to over 100 neighborhood seniors, a contribution of more than 131 hours of community service. Volunteers went above and beyond the call of duty, donating extra goodies, assembling gorgeous packages, and recruiting friends and family to participate. Delivery groups visited and/or sang Christmas Carols, to make it a Happy Holiday for these special seniors. What a treat to see the faces of neighborhood seniors upon receiving their gift, and very rewarding for volunteers to share the holiday spirit.

THANK YOU Caring Neighborhoods volunteers for your generosity and touching the hearts of these seniors. Special thanks to **Aleecia Macias, Diane Rust, Janel Shaw, Andrea Christensen, Sacramento Second Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,** and the **W.I.A. Youth Program!**

Eskaton TLC is a telephone reassurance program where volunteers contact over 450 senior clients daily to check on their well-being. By maintaining a daily line of communication, volunteers are helping senior clients live safely and independently in their own homes. For information, contact Terri Becker at 334-1072 or Tracey Gray at 566-1594.

Caring Neighborhoods Program

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

