



The Caring Neighbor

Caring Neighborhoods Program , City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation
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CARING NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER

Ben Perry is a lively and compassionate Caring Neighbor at the Eskaton Jefferson Manor senior residence. His concern for isolated and lonely neighbors has inspired him to make a difference.



Always outgoing, Ben works diligently to reach out to those in need while inspiring friendliness among neighbors. Ben can oftentimes be found chatting with older neighbors or lending a hand with tasks such as picking up weekly bread donations to his neighbors in need.

Ben spearheaded a group effort, "Senior Day in the Park," to reduce isolation among elderly neighbors and promote friendships in his community. In Ben's words, "I want the seniors to enjoy themselves and get to know each other." Ben and a team of volunteers solicited donations from several businesses, which provided food and prizes, including a bus trip for 4 to Reno, which made a world difference for many older neighbors who do not have the opportunity to leave the community very often.

Nearly 80 neighbors enjoyed a barbecue lunch, musical entertainment, and an exhibition by the **Sacramento Police Department's K-9 Unit**, which was a big hit. **Paratransit, Inc.** provided transportation for elderly neighbors with walkers and wheelchairs who could not drive to the park. Going the extra mile, Ben made sure that leftovers went home with each senior. Everyone enjoyed such a fantastic day that neighbors continue to chat about it. Senior, **Mrs. D.**, who uses a wheelchair remarked "I haven't been to the park in years. I rarely get out to have fun."

Aside from the day of fun, a greater effort emerged as Ben's ultimate goal. Older neighbors built friendships that continued after the Park Day. Working together to help each other with small challenges as they get older was the theme of the day, and an effort that Ben exemplifies.

Thank you, Ben, for making a difference in your neighborhood!



SUMMER TIPS TO HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS!

- ◆ During hot weather spells, work with your neighbors to check on older neighbors during the day. See our heat brochure online in our "Publications" section at www.caringneighborhoods.org.
- ◆ Share information about classes offered at the Hart Senior Center or senior program at a nearby community center. Encourage an older neighbor to take an art class, join an exercise group, or participate in a computer seminar.
- ◆ Help an older neighbor participate in the "Books by Mail" program with the Sacramento Library. Check out books from home and receive them in the mail. This is a great resource for those who no longer drive. Call 575-3450.
- ◆ Work with your neighbors to inform older neighbors about preventing falling injuries in their homes. Small obstacles such as a throw rug or long phone cord can cause an older person to fall and sustain grave injuries. You can make the difference.
- ◆ Assist an older neighbor in setting up online or automatic bill payments. Help organize an electronic filing system to maintain personal records. Save paper while helping an older neighbor and protect our environment. Contact payment vendors or your financial institution to learn more.

For information to help your elderly neighbors with any of these tips, please call 808-1594 or email tgray@cityofsacramento.org.

ECO-FRIENDLY TIP OF THE SEASON

Conserve our environment while helping an older neighbor!



Help an elderly neighbor go paperless! Assist him or her in scheduling automatic bill payments or paying bills online, and establish an accessible personal filing system to keep track of personal records. For more information, contact your financial institution or payment vendors.



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AS CARING NEIGHBORS

Students from the **Public Services Small Learning Community at Luther Burbank High School** are making a world of difference for neighborhood seniors. During the school year, students contributed nearly 600 hours of service, and continue to touch the lives of elderly neighbors.

Specifically, students planned two large projects for neighborhood seniors, a “Senior Prom” and “Disaster Preparedness Kits and Training.” For each project, students sought in-kind donations from local businesses, planned details, and executed each task with enthusiasm and compassion.

The “Senior Prom” was hosted at a low-income senior residence near LBHS. As student **Choon Her** shared, “We want the seniors to remember their senior prom and have fun with us.” Students planned the “Exotic Summer” theme, decorated the room with tropical props, provided live musical entertainment with students performing a variety of dances, selected a “Prom King and Queen,” took “Prom” photos of the seniors, and truly made it an enjoyable day for their elderly neighbors.

During the finale dance, some seniors joined in to dance with a group of students. Senior, **Mrs. B.** told volunteers “This Prom meant a lot to us. We will always remember it.”

Also, students helped 50 elderly neighbors prepare for a major disaster by distributing 72-hour emergency kits and sharing information about disaster preparedness. As students completed **Neighborhood Emergency Training (NET)** through the **Sacramento Region Corps Council**, students needed to utilize acquired skills through a culminating experience. After hearing the stories of helpless elderly victims during Hurricane Katrina, students chose to provide disaster kits to neighborhood seniors who are the most vulnerable during a major emergency.

Through a grant from **Gifts to Share, Inc.**, and donations from **Wal-Mart, Walgreens, and Home Depot**, students assembled disaster kits, including items such as blankets, long-burning candles, flashlights, and others. Students encouraged senior recipients to identify medications and store them in one location, select a third-party friend or relative out of state to notify in case phone lines are tied up during an emergency, and identify two possible evacuation locations such as a church or friend’s house where loved ones can find them should a disaster strike our area.

The PSSLC encourages students to pursue careers in public service. Students are required to complete community service hours and have participated in CN efforts since 2006. GREAT JOB LBHS students, and thank you for making a difference!



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.