



# The Caring Neighbor

From the Caring Neighborhoods Program , City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation  
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**Summer 2005**

## CARING NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER

**Jo Fleming** is a terrific Caring Neighbor from the Capital Estates Mobile Home Park. Her compassion for seniors continues to help many older neighbors live safely and independently at home.



Capital Estates is a senior community with many neighbors 80+ years who face a variety of challenges to living independently. Advanced age, health conditions, and fixed incomes prevent some neighbors from keeping up with yard maintenance regulations, placing them at risk of being cited and even evicted. This causes great alarm to those seniors already struggling to remain living at home.

After learning of these issues, Jo and her neighbors created Neighbor Helping Neighbor (Caring Neighborhood.) Each month, neighbors spend a Saturday pulling weeds, dumping yard debris, trimming bushes, etc. for a senior in need. Neighbors also check in on vulnerable elders, and provide companionship through friendly visits. Other assistance includes helping neighbors apply for SMUD discount programs, sharing information about senior programs, helping an older neighbor pack belongings after having to move from her long time home, providing rides to church or the grocery store.

Also, after learning that senior neighbors limited meals and/or electricity to cut back on expenses, Jo teamed up with a local organization to coordinate a low-cost food box purchase project. In addition to working more than 50 hours a week, Jo collects and distributes food boxes to elderly neighbors, especially helpful to those who no longer drive. Extra food boxes are purchased and donated to senior neighbors who are experiencing hard times.

**THANK YOU Jo**, for your many good works!

## TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS



Encourage an elderly neighbor to register for the National DO NOT CALL Registry to be removed from telemarketing phone lists.



Invite a senior neighbor who no longer drives, to go along on your next trip to the grocery store. Encourage your neighbors to participate, taking turns each month.



Work with your neighbors to conduct home safety assessments for elderly neighbor(s). Contact (916) 566-1594 or [tgray@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:tgray@cityofsacramento.org) for info.



On hot days, work with your neighbors to check in on elderly neighbors. Rotate turns, paying special attention to those who live alone or have health conditions.



Help your older neighbors replace smoke detector batteries and test for proper functioning. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.

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

## SPRING CLEANING FOR SENIORS

Students from the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineering (SHPE)/MESA at Sacramento City College teamed up with the Campus Commons Caring Neighbors (CCCN) for an outstanding day of community service. Students provided assistance with a variety of household tasks for neighborhood seniors through the CCCN Spring Cleaning project.

Caring Neighbors discovered that several neighborhood seniors needed assistance with various one-time and seasonal tasks around the house, such as transporting old furniture to the dumpster or cleaning rain gutters. CCCN wanted to help, but the job was too big for them to tackle because most Caring Neighbors are also seniors. When SHPE students learned of this predicament, they decided to offer a helping hand to CCCN and neighborhood seniors.

SHPE students spent a Saturday assisting 12 seniors with several Spring Cleaning tasks. They cleaned out storage closets, removed TV antennas from a rooftop, arranged video cables to eliminate a home safety hazard, dusted patio furniture, swept porches, raked leaves, potted plants, washed large patio screens, transported items to a neighborhood dumpster, and more.

The seniors were very appreciative of the incredible help as well as the opportunity to share a short visit with the students. One elderly neighbor graciously commented, "They were so helpful. It would have taken me months to do what they did."

**GREAT JOB, and THANK YOU SHPE students!**  
Special thanks to Gloria Harmon and Campus Commons Caring Neighbors.



## HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENTS

**DID YOU KNOW** that a key factor in determining an older person's ability to live independently is the safety of their home environment? Injuries from falling are the #6 cause of death among seniors 65+ years, while bone fractures cause many older neighbors to move to a long-term care facility. Unfortunately, home design is usually at fault.

Oftentimes, items such as throw rugs or a phone cord on the floor are major obstacles to an older neighbor living safely in their own home. For example, a decorative throw rug on a kitchen floor can cause an older person to lose their balance, fall, and sustain serious injuries, such as a broken leg or fractured skull. Seniors are vulnerable to injuries and slower to recover than a younger person.

A simple home safety assessment can help senior neighbors live safely and independently in their own homes. Identifying potential dangers such as poor lighting in a bathroom, then correcting the problem by installing a brighter wattage light bulb, we can help a senior improve their ability to recognize obstacles and avoid falling. **YOU** can make a difference by working with your neighbors and the Caring Neighborhoods to conduct a home safety assessment for an elderly neighbor(s).

Assessments include reviewing a checklist of possible dangers throughout a senior's home. Alterations may include taping a phone cord to a bedroom floor or identifying the need for grab bars in a bathroom. Neighbors can be matched with elderly neighbors, and/or conduct safety assessments for senior neighbors that you are already helping. Ultimately, a simple home assessment can improve the living environment and help your elderly neighbors live safely and independently in their own homes.

For more information, call (916) 566-1594 or email [tgray@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:tgray@cityofsacramento.org).

## TEENS HELPING SENIORS

This summer, nearly 40 teens from the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) in Phoenix, Arizona joined Caring Neighborhoods to make a difference for neighborhood seniors.

Volunteers participated in an intensive two-week community service tour. Providing a helping hand to non-profit organizations and agencies in several West Coast cities. Their one day stop in Sacramento provided over 150 hours of community service to Caring Neighborhoods, touching the lives of more than 20 elderly neighbors.

These special teens worked diligently on a very hot day, helping with outdoor chores and visiting several elderly neighbors. Volunteers washed windows, pulled weeds, trimmed bushes, swept porches, and corrected safety hazards such as replacing porch light bulbs and tightening porch railings.

One group of volunteers helped Mrs. A., an elderly neighbor in her late nineties, by removing leaves and debris from the walkways around her house. She was very appreciative for their help as she can once again enjoy outdoor walks, using her walker, without the fear of falling.

It was such a joy to hear the stories shared between the seniors and their helpers. Likewise, the teens were delighted to offer a helping hand, knowing that they made a difference.

**THANK YOU BJE volunteers** for a wonderful day of service!



## AARP VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In honor of Older Americans Month, volunteers from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Sacramento office joined Caring Neighborhoods and Hands on Sacramento to help several elderly neighbors in a local Caring Neighborhood. More than 20 volunteers provided over 100 hours of community service, offering a helping hand with yard work and making home visits to very special seniors.

Volunteers spent the day helping neighbors such as Mrs. S. who recently suffered two serious strokes, by removing weeds, carting in several pounds of yard rock, landscaping her yard, and scrubbing dusty walls in her covered porch. They also helped Mr. R., a frail elderly man who lives alone, by removing large, dry shrubbery around his home that caused a fire hazard. Volunteers were featured on Channel 3 news and Channel 31 Good Day Sacramento.

At the end of the project, volunteers enjoyed a cold drink while visiting with senior neighbors. This opportunity for companionship and building friendships meant a great deal to these elderly neighbors who were already very appreciative of their kindness. **THANK YOU AARP Volunteers and Hands On Sacramento** for an outstanding day of service to a special Caring Neighborhood.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people age 50 and over, dedicated to enhancing the experience of aging through advocacy, information, and services.

Hands On Sacramento, is part of the Community Services Planning Council (CSPC), and connects volunteers with community service opportunities including one-time, group projects, longer-term endeavors and volunteer leadership.



Caring Neighborhoods Program  
South Natomas Community Center  
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## TELEMARKETING AND YOUR RIGHTS

Seniors are a major target for telemarketing solicitors. Older neighbors are oftentimes misled, not to mention pressured, bullied, and annoyed by daily calls from telemarketers. However, seniors (and the rest of us) have privacy rights regarding telephone solicitors.

Encourage your neighbors to register with the National DO NOT CALL Registry, by calling 1-888-382-1222 from their phone number or visit [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov). This will remove their phone number from the phone lists sold to and used by **legitimate** telemarketing companies. For more information about your rights, contact:

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)  
1-888-225-5322,  
[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/tcpa/html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/tcpa/html)  
Or

CA Department of Consumer Affairs  
(916) 445 1254 or (800) 952-5210  
[www.dca.ca.gov/r\\_r/telemarket.htm](http://www.dca.ca.gov/r_r/telemarket.htm)

## FREE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE 411

Do you know an elderly neighbor who has severe vision impairment or is losing their vision due to conditions such as from Macular Degeneration or Diabetes? They may be eligible for **FREE** Local Directory Assistance (411), especially if the impairment makes it difficult to use a phone book.

If you know an elderly neighbor who could benefit from this service, or want more info, contact SBC at 800-310-2355 or [www.sbc.com](http://www.sbc.com).

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