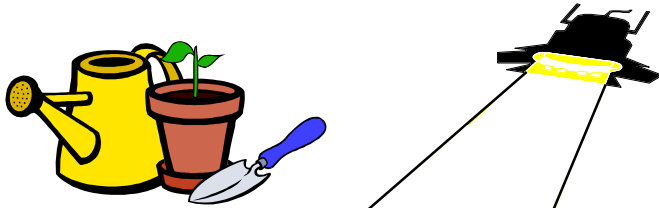




The Caring Neighbor

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

March/April 2003



SUPER VOLUNTEER

SPOTLIGHT

Ray Gloor is an amazing Caring Neighbor from the Lawrence Park neighborhood in South Sacramento. Always willing to offer a helping hand, Ray is making a world of difference in the lives of three special elderly neighbors.

Ray's closest neighbors are Mrs. Ci., Mrs. Co., and Mrs. L., older seniors who live alone and face individual challenges to living safely and independently in their own homes. Mrs. Ci. experiences a variety of physical disabilities that make some daily tasks difficult to complete, and two years ago, her husband and daughter passed away within six months of each other. Mrs. Co. has heart problems recently underwent bypass surgery, and Mrs. L, a retired nurse, is a healthy older neighbor in her mid-eighties. Knowing the circumstances of these seniors, Ray wanted to do anything possible to help his longtime neighbors live safely and happily at home.

Ray, a professional gardener for the State of California, works six days a week yet still takes time to help his elderly neighbors. He assists with daily tasks such as shopping, running errands, and completing minor home repairs and maintenance. Simple tasks such as changing light bulbs for a neighbor who has difficulty grasping certain objects means a great deal to these seniors.

Ensuring that their basic needs are met and their homes are safe and in good repair, Ray is helping his elderly neighbors to remain living safely, happily, and independently in their own homes. THANK YOU, RAY for your wonderful efforts and dedication to your neighborhood seniors!!!

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) 277-6009 or tgray@cityofsacramento.org and let us know how you are making a difference in your neighborhood!

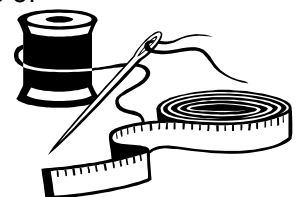
THE ELDER CRAFTSMAN

The Elder Craftsman is for senior artisans 50 to 100 years old to make crafts for sale on consignment at the Old Sacramento store bearing its name. This unique program offers seniors the opportunity to continue using skills they have developed over their lifetimes to create crafts and earn money through sales in a non-profit arts and crafts cooperative.

Senior artisans produce a variety of quality handmade items such as baby clothes, afghans, quilts, jewelry, toys and games, household and novelty items, holiday items and Christmas gifts, and much more. The Elder Craftsman offers classes, workshops, and demonstrations as a way of keeping older artisans' skills alive for new generations. By giving the public the opportunity to appreciate and purchase quality handcrafted items and returning benefits to the community through projects that allow the creation of special gifts for those in need, senior artisans feel productive, involved, and valued members of society.

The Elder Craftsman recently received a Gifts to Share award for donating 59 handmade quilts to local social service agencies and hospitals through the ECHO (Elder Craftsman Helping Others) Program. Seniors are supplied materials and use their special skills to make afghans, quilts, caps, scarfs, and toys for people in crises. The items are then donated to local social service agencies and hospitals such as Sacramento Emergency Housing, Mary House, WEAVE, St. John's Lutheran Services, Mustard Seed School, and several local convalescent homes.

If you know a senior with a crafting talent who would like to become an Elder Craftsman artisan or to donate materials or items to the ECHO Program, please contact 277-7676. The Elder Craftsman store is located at 130 J Street in Old Sacramento, 264-7762.



MOBILITY TRAINING

Transportation is a major factor for seniors in maintaining independence. Accessing affordable transportation to social activities, shopping, medical services, and others can mean the difference between staying connected to the community or becoming isolated and unable to remain living in one's longtime home. Even though public transportation is a low cost option, approximately 86% of non-driving seniors do not use these services. Many seniors are fearful or unfamiliar with how to access Regional Transit (RT) buses and light rail. The Mobility Training Program, a FREE service through Paratransit, Inc., can help your elderly neighbors learn to use RT services, as it has been changing the lives of seniors and disabled adults since 1982.

The Mobility Training Program teaches participants how to use the RT system, based on their individual needs, to maximize travel options and maintain personal independence. Trainees learn to read bus and light rail schedules, travel safely on transit routes to a destination, maneuver wheel chairs and other aids on RT vehicles, communicate their needs to bus or light rail operators, and much more. Training sessions include instruction on the use of lift-equipped buses and special features and one-on-one practice rides with a trainer on RT routes.

The mobility trainers are experienced professionals who create a safe and comfortable environment for each trainee, and assist with route planning and safety procedures. Training is available on an individual or group basis in Sacramento County neighborhoods and others served by RT. Successful trainees can travel independently and at their leisure to senior centers, homes of friends and relatives, shopping malls, and other places they wish to go. As a result, participants feel a greater sense of self-confidence with the freedom of spontaneous and affordable transportation.

The Mobility Training Program is wonderful for seniors new to the community or who have never needed to use public transit. RT is more flexibility and less expensive than Paratransit, as seniors 62+ receive a discounted fare and those 80+ qualify for a FREE lifetime pass. Accessible features serve to make the transit experience easier for seniors, such as priority seating, lift platform, and kneeling feature to help with boarding and exiting

buses for those with physical challenges. Neighborhood Shuttles in Carmichael, Citrus Heights, and Del Paso Heights provide curb-to-curb service for seniors 62+. Shuttles

The Mobility Training Program has helped over 7,500 individuals and can make a world of difference in the lives of your elderly neighbors. Paratransit is a non-profit organization serving seniors and disabled passengers who are unable to access regular RT bus and light rail services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Paratransit can provide transportation to mobility training sessions and can make a presentation about this program to your neighborhood group. For more information, please contact:

Paratransit - Mobility Training

Kevin Welch (916) 429-2009 ext. 352

J.D. Culver (916) 429-2009 ext. 341



HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS THIS SPRING?

- ✓ Invite a senior neighbor to a picnic lunch with you and your family.
- ✓ Share a bouquet of garden flowers with an elderly neighbor.
- ✓ Inform your senior neighbors about Paratransit's Mobility Training, and arrange for a program in your neighborhood.
- ✓ Work with your neighbors to start a neighborhood walking group for seniors as a fun way to exercise and meet new friends.
- ✓ Help an elderly neighbor plant garden vegetables or seasonal yard plants.



Caring Neighborhoods Program

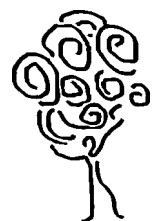
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*"Make **your** neighborhood a **better** place to live!"*