



The Caring Neighbor

From the Caring Neighborhoods Program, City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation
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www.caringneighborhoods.org

Spring 2006

CARING NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER

Jean O'Sullivan and the Sacramento Breakfast Rotary Club are a spectacular group of neighbors who continue to make a difference in the lives of neighborhood seniors. Jean has spearheaded a series of Caring Neighborhoods' projects where Rotarians have contributed more than 100 hours of selfless service to this endeavor.

First, Rotary Club volunteers helped more than 20 elderly neighbors live safely and independently through Home Safety Assessments. Volunteers identified safety hazards and made corrections such as securing a loose throw rug to a kitchen floor, or referred the senior to organizations for special needs. Going the extra mile, volunteers also repaired a wheelchair brake for an elderly neighbor, tightened bolts on an older neighbor's walker, installed a toilet seat to replace a broken one, and much more.

In addition, Rotarians donated and delivered gifts to several elderly neighbors in downtown, midtown, and East Sacramento neighborhoods through the Eskaton TLC Giving Tree Project. Volunteers assembled packages including the item requested, and added goodies such as hot chocolate packets, bubble bath, snacks, food items, candy and much more. The delight and appreciation displayed by each senior truly transcended the holiday spirit as well as a rewarding experience for Rotary volunteers.

The Sacramento Breakfast Rotary Club volunteers' cheerful personalities, commitment to serving others continues to touch the lives of neighborhood seniors. Thank you for your efforts! MANY THANKS, Jean for your encouragement and support of these projects.

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) 808-1594 or tgray@cityofsacramento.org and let us know how you are making a difference in your neighborhood!

SENIORS, WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

The City of Sacramento is updating the General Plan to accommodate the next 25 years of growth. We need input from senior neighbors to determine issues facing the older population, in hopes of improving the City of Sacramento as a senior friendly, ideal place to retire. In addition, the City is also updating the South Area Community Plan, and the input of neighborhood seniors and longtime residents is greatly needed.

We hope that you will join us during May and June at a series of Town Hall Forums in your neighborhood where neighbors can comment on three development scenarios for Sacramento. We hope that many seniors will join us as we develop the General Plan that will take us to 2030. Please share this information with your senior neighbors and encourage them to participate. For more information, please call 808-7500 or visit www.sacgp.org. For the South Area Community Plan, contact 808-5357.

TOWN HALL FORUMS SCHEDULE

May:

31-Natomas Charter School, 4600 Blackrock Dr.

June:

- 1- McClatchy High School, 3066 Freeport Blvd.
- 5- Fremont Presbyterian Church, 5770 Carlson Dr.
- 7- George Sim CC, 6207 Logan St.
- 10- Clunie CC*, 601 Alhambra Blvd.
- 12- Kennedy High School, 6715 Gloria Dr.
- 14- Sam Pannell CC, 2450 Meadowview Rd.
- 15- Oak Park CC, 3425 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
- 19- Ben Ali Shriners Center, 3262 Marysville Blvd.
- 21- Barbara Comstock Elementary,
7000 Cranleigh Ave.
- 22- Natomas High School, 3301 Fong Ranch Rd.
- 26- Robertson CC, 3525 Norwood Ave.
- 28- Charles Mack Elementary, 4701 Brookfield Dr.

All Town Hall Forums are 6-8:30pm except for 6/10 at the Clunie Community Center which is from 11am-1pm.

VOLUNTEERS HELP THEIR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS LIVE SAFELY IN THEIR HOMES



This winter, Caring Neighbors helped more than 60 elderly neighbors and clients of the Eskaton TLC Program live safely and independently in their own homes. Through Home Safety Assessments, volunteers identified safety hazards and obstacles that could cause an older neighbor to sustain serious injuries due to falling.

Falling injuries are the 6th leading cause of death for neighbors 60+ years, and a common factor causing an older person to move from their longtime home. Oftentimes, the home environment is at fault, but small changes such as installing a night light in a dark hallway or securing a bathroom throw rug to the floor can severely reduce the risk of falling injuries.

Caring Neighborhoods groups and other volunteers have contributed more than 300 hours of service through this worthwhile project. Volunteers installed smoke detectors or tested existing ones, applied anti-skid strips to shower/bathtub, added night lights to dark rooms, assisted seniors in completing emergency contact lists, secured throw rugs to the floor, installed peepholes and deadbolts, and more.

Sacramento Breakfast Rotary Club

Volunteers provided two days of safety assessments for neighborhood seniors, many who lived alone. As meaningful, however, were the friendly visits volunteers shared with neighborhood seniors. One volunteer chatted with a World War II veteran, another learned of the challenges faced by an elderly wife caring for her spouse with Alzheimer's disease, and many others ultimately touched the hearts of neighborhood seniors.

Home Depot of Elk Grove

In addition to providing home safety assessments for neighborhood seniors in Elk Grove, volunteers from Team Depot, the volunteer club for Home Depot employees, families, and friends, donated \$250 of supplies and equipment for the project. Volunteers visited an elderly neighbor who lived alone and did not want them to leave. Another volunteer team offered to help an older senior with yard work, including removal of a tree stump, so that she would not have to pay for services.

Hands On Sacramento

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Caring Neighborhoods participated in the Hands On Sacramento Day of Service, where nearly 1,000 volunteers worked together with local non-profit agencies to help others in the community. 50 volunteers, including AmeriCorps* NCCC members, provided 200 hours of service through Home Safety Assessments to several elderly neighbors in South Sacramento neighborhoods.

In addition, volunteers brought smiles to the faces of the elderly neighbors visited, such as a 90 year old neighbor who insisted volunteers join her again for tea and an elderly man who shared many humorous life experiences. Volunteers also discovered an older neighbor who was using tape to lock a patio door and another who was using a stove to heat her home. Many thanks to Sue Veith and Janice Jett of the South Natomas Community Center.

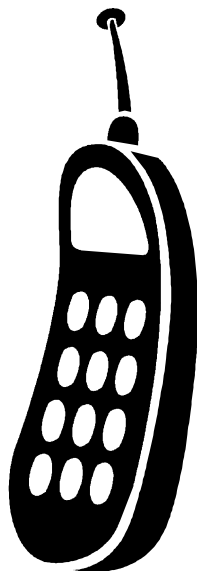
AmeriCorps* NCCC

Volunteers from the City's VITA tax assistance program teamed up with Caring Neighborhoods to make a difference for neighborhood seniors on Valentine's Day. In addition to providing home safety assessments, volunteers created friendly greeting cards, assembled red roses, and prepared bags of candy for each client. Volunteers realized the importance of their service after visiting a 98 year old senior who expressed heartfelt gratitude and was close to tears at their departure. Volunteers were also featured in the Sacramento Bee. Special thanks to Mary Lynn Perry and Dee Dee Cornelius of the Oak Park Community Center.

Thank you all Caring Neighborhoods volunteers for your compassion and willingness to make a difference. You made this project a success!

SPECIALIZED PHONES FOR SENIORS

Do you know an elderly neighbor who has difficulty using the phone? Perhaps she/he has trouble speaking clearly, hearing the phone ring, or remembering a Caring Neighbor's phone number. Your senior may be eligible for a **FREE** telephone and/or specialized equipment, especially helpful to those who experience vision or hearing loss, limited mobility and even speech impairments, through the California Telephone Access Program (CTAP), a program of the CA Public Utilities Commission.



For many seniors who live alone or have health conditions, maintaining phone contact is imperative to living safely and independently. A link to loved ones, neighbors, or emergency personnel can limit isolation and even save an older person's life. Phone equipment tailored to aging needs can improve safety or use, including a cordless phone for a neighbor who uses a walker or a large buttoned phone or audio prompt for a senior who has diabetic vision loss. Devices are available that increase phone volume, feature conversation in text with use of a keyboard, flash lights to indicate incoming calls, and more.

To qualify, applicants must be a California resident, and have an impairment, such as hearing loss that is certified by a doctor or authorized professional, such as a licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser. To request an application, please call (800) 806-1191 or visit www.ddtp.org.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR SENIORS

Caring Neighborhoods volunteers made it a Merry Christmas for several elderly seniors this holiday season through the Eskaton TLC Program's annual Giving Tree project. Volunteers donated nearly 150 Christmas gifts and delivered more than 200 presents to elderly neighbors and clients of the program. Due to the overwhelming support and contributions by Caring Neighbors, gifts were given to an additional 100 low-income elderly neighbors.



In addition to generous donations, Caring Neighbors of all ages spread holiday cheer in their neighborhoods when delivering gifts. Volunteers sang Christmas carols, shared friendly stories, and made new friends with elderly neighbors. It was truly heartwarming for some seniors who spent the holidays alone as their families lived far away.

Many acts of kindness truly touched the lives of these seniors. One elderly neighbor mentioned her wish for a large television set, and having an extra one, a volunteer returned with a big screen TV and set it up for her enjoyment. Another group visited an elderly man who had little food, so they purchased several bags of groceries for him. One family baked Christmas cookies for elderly neighbors. After volunteers from one Caring Neighborhood sang Christmas carols, an elderly man tearfully smiled and thanked them for their kindness. When volunteers delivered a food basket to a 98 year old neighbor who lived alone, he replied "I don't know what I did to deserve this gift."

Special Thanks to the California Highway Patrol, Sacramento County Child Support Services, Sacramento Breakfast Rotary Club, Sacramento City College SHPE/MESA Club, Luther Burbank High School, Filipino-American Evangelical Baptist Church, Sacramento 2nd Ward LDS Church, Joann Narramore, Aleecia Macias, Jean O'Sullivan, Irene Tellez, and all Caring Neighbors who made this project a success.

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.





Caring Neighborhoods Program
South Natomas Community Center
2921 Truxel Road
Sacramento, CA 95833



VOLUNTEER PAINT PROJECT

Hands On Sacramento and AmeriCorps* NCCC volunteers worked together to make a difference for an older neighbor in Fair Oaks, Mrs. M. who suffers from severe arthritis and has difficulty climbing steps into her home. The condition of the house, built by her father more than 60 years ago, was a great concern as her savings were insufficient to pay for desperately needed improvements. Volunteers wanted to help by painting her home.

First, Hands on Sacramento volunteers worked diligently in hot temperatures to remove old paint and apply primer. Later, AmeriCorps* NCCC volunteers completed the project by painting the house and trim with materials donated by Rebuilding Together.

Neighbors thanked volunteers for their efforts and contribution to their neighborhood, while Mrs. M. was very appreciative of their kindness and helping hand. Thank you Hands On Sacramento and AmeriCorps* NCCC for making a difference!

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBORS THIS SPRING!



Invite an older neighbor to join you for a neighborhood walk.



Help an elderly neighbor apply for FREE accessible phone equipment through CTAP. For more information, call (800) 806-1191.



Work with your neighbors to host a Spring Cleaning day for elderly neighbors. Sweep porches, clean rain gutters, wash windows, remove weeds, plant flowers etc.



Create a friendly visitor program with your neighbors. Take turns visiting an elderly relative each week.



Share information with a caregiver about the City of Sacramento's Triple R program, providing respite care for loved ones with memory loss. To learn more, call 808-1591.