



# Senior Update

Commission  
on  
Aging

*Published by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging*

May/June 2004

## Older Americans Month

Each year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services acknowledges *Older Americans Month*. This May the theme is "Aging Well, Living Well." A person's health status most often determines one's ability to live a productive life. Staying physically active, eating right, and getting regular health screenings can help prevent or delay many diseases and disease-related disabilities. One way to be active is to *volunteer*. In this issue we wish to acknowledge that volunteer activity.

The Area Agency on Agency *especially* wishes to thank dedicated volunteers who serve on our Advisory Commission on Aging. And we want to pay tribute to all who serve on Commissions and Boards throughout the county. Your guidance and efforts have allowed senior services to continue even in these difficult times, and we say, "thank you."

## Other Special Recognitions in May

The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual *Senior Rally* will be held on Wednesday, May 12, 2004 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Sacramento at the Capitol Building. Check your local senior center for more information – **PLAN TO ATTEND!!**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Older American Month Celebration*, is Thursday, May 27, 11:00-2:00 p.m. at the Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, "Celebrate Aging...Making Oakland a Great Place to Grow Old." For more information, call 510-238-6137.

The *National Senior Center Week*, [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org), as well as the *National Women's Health Week*, [www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov), are recognized May 9-15 .

Don't forget: *Mother's Day, May 9* and  
*Father's Day, June 20.*

Nor in these troubled times should we forget  
*Memorial Day, May 24* and  
*Flag Day, June 14.*

## Spotlight on Volunteer Activities

### Crisis Support Services

by Doug Brown

One of the biggest users of volunteers in the county is Crisis Support Services (CSS). CSS has three programs in which community volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to apply. Most importantly, no prior experience or training is required as CSS provides all training and supervision.

Many volunteers serve on the countywide 24-hour confidential hot line for crisis counseling and suicide prevention, available at 1-800-309-2131.

The Senior In-Home Counseling Program provides emotional support and counseling in central and north Alameda County, serving seniors who may be homebound, socially isolated, lonely or depressed.

The Community Education Program brings information about suicide prevention into middle and high school classrooms.

To volunteer or refer someone to the services, call 1-800-260-0094.

### Lavender Seniors Friendly Visitors

by Frank Howell

The Lavender Seniors of the East Bay emerged in 1994 when a group of about 60 grey gays met in a rented space at the Bayfair Shopping Mall. They soon moved to the San Leandro Community Church and began a monthly potluck and a newsletter, the *Lavender Notes*.

The Friendly Visitor program was implemented several years later in order to reach out to people who were housebound or had limited social contacts. We now have 30 volunteers who reach 22 gay seniors. Most of the folks we reach are in their 70s. The volunteers offer social contact, light housework, shopping assistance and telephone companionship. To volunteer or refer someone for a friendly visit, call Jeff Vessels, MSSW, at 510-667-9655.

## Senior Peer Counseling Program

by Doug Brown

The Senior Peer Counseling Program is provided by the City of Fremont Human Services Department for south county seniors. Currently 25 trained peer counselors serve over 100 clients per year. They help people with life adjustments, changes in health, grief and loss, and other common mental health issues that seniors face.

The peer counselors are ordinary seniors who receive over 50 hours of training in basic counseling skills, identifying abuse, depression, and grief and loss counseling.

One of the more exciting aspects of the program is the use of Farsi-speaking seniors from Afghanistan to counsel their fellow Afghanis. This is the only program of its kind in the United States.

If you are thinking of volunteering as a peer counselor or know someone who could be helped, call Dr. Ray Grimm, at 510-574-2063.



**Friendly Visitor Programs** are active throughout the county. Their common goal is to make life a little richer for those who may not be as active as they used to be. Call any one of these agencies and find out how your ability and desire to give, care and share can be directed to some one just waiting for a friend!

**Family Bridges, Inc.** (north county) 510-763-0558; **New Light Senior Center** (north county) 510-549-2666; **St. Mary's Center** (north county) 510-893-4723; **Life ElderCare** (south county) 510-574-2097; **Senior Support Services** (east county) 925-931-5388; **San Leandro Senior Services**, 577-3462; **City of Oakland, Senior Companions**, 510-238-2987.



**Meals on Wheels (MOW)** programs are not technically Friendly Visitor Programs, but one could argue they are exactly that, inasmuch as each meal recipient receives what is described as a visual "wellness check." Although the stops may be brief, the seniors know they can depend on a caring, friendly face appearing on their doorstep, quite often, five days a week. The MOW program at LIFE ElderCare in Fremont is an exemplary model for utilizing volunteers.

## Angels with cars

by Larry Epstein

Since 1975 LIFE ElderCare's MOW program has been providing hot, nutritious mid-day meals to frail, homebound seniors (60 years of age+) and non-seniors with disabilities living in Fremont, Newark and Union City. During that first year of service, some 350 meals were delivered – now they serve 350 *per day!*

Every day 22 volunteers are needed to pick up the meals prepared and transported from ValleyCare Hospital in Livermore to the LIFE ElderCare parking lot. Each delivers to anywhere from 9-27 persons on their route. They serve both hot and cold meals and cater to nine types of special diets, as well as frozen meals for weekends, if desired. These dedicated volunteers range in age from 16-1/2 to 89 years-old and provide so much more nourishment than is delivered on the tray. Drivers provide a check on the senior's well being and report any problems or concerns to the staff.

The key ingredient to being a driver, says Barbara Proctor, MOW Volunteer Coordinator, is "empathy towards seniors, the willingness to listen and the desire to give something back." Volunteers are from all walks of life...meals can be delivered by you, by husband and wife or by friends. Businesses, service clubs or church groups can sponsor an "Adopt-A-Route" program as well.

A recent letter from a senior expressed, "they are a crew of angels with cars! And without them, my life would be loaded with daily survival problems." Call today and find out how you can volunteer for this MOW program at 510-574-2094.



Other MOW opportunities are with **Alameda** (Alameda only) 510-865-6131; **B.A.C.S.** (Oakland only) 510-986-8900; **Berkeley/Tri-City** (Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville) 510-981-5250; **New Light** (Berkeley) 510-549-2666; **S.O.S.** (Hayward, Castro Valley, San Leandro, San Lorenzo) 510-582-1263; and **Spectrum Community Services** – 510-881-0300 serving (Livermore) 925-373-5764 and (Dublin, Pleasanton) 925-931-5365.

In addition to the MOW opportunities to become involved, there are a number of congregate (senior group dining) sites that might be appealing to you, if

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you are not interested in driving. There are about 50 meal sites, scattered throughout the county. For a complete listing – or to ask about a particular city – call the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Information and Assistance, at 1-800-510-2020.

## HICAP - Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program

by Susan Brady

Since 1985 HICAP has provided objective counseling, advocacy and legal assistance with all manners of health insurance questions, concerns or problems. HICAP volunteers are the backbone of the program, providing countless hours of dedicated service to their communities. The Counselors advocate tirelessly on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries and their families and consistently provide a wealth of knowledge and support.

These dedicated volunteers complete an intensive, 30-hour program, followed by an exam, an internship, and ongoing bi-monthly continuing education training.

Want to join this group? They are especially interested in recruiting bilingual volunteers and those willing to make a long-term commitment. Call 510-832-3040.

**Senior Centers** can offer unlimited volunteer opportunities throughout the county. Senior centers also offer a variety of programs. These programs may include exercise classes, computer classes, ballroom dancing, health screenings, legal services, financial planning sessions, 55 Alive Driving classes, adult education classes, travel trips, help with applying for benefits and programs available to elders (e.g., tax assistance, Renter/Homeowner assistance, etc.) Some centers also host AARP, OWL, Gray Panthers, Congress of CA Seniors, NARFE and SIRS meetings as well. Combine the two – go for a class and stay and volunteer!

Mastick Senior Center (see next) is a good example of the diversity of activities that can be provided by volunteers. Complete listings of the senior centers in Alameda County are also available from the AAA Information and Assistance, 1-800-510-2020.

## Bitten By the Volunteer Bug?

by Jackie Krause

Mastick Senior Center, located in Alameda, is no exception. For example, volunteers represent the 15 member Advisory Board, which is supported by 10 active committees, with a “worker bee” population of 170 individuals dedicated to serving the community seven days a week. Last year they contributed nearly 25,000 hours toward making Mastick Fantastick and a “home away from home” for so many!

Volunteers assist in all aspects of Mastick’s operation including answering the phones, taking lunch reservations, serving lunches, after lunch clean-up, teaching many classes, maintaining the computer lab, preparing Federal and State taxes, making endless pots of coffee, organizing and maintaining the library, staffing the snack bar, facilitating Saturday fundraising bingo, staffing the Thrift Shop, tending the community garden, escorting travelers, special projects, and many, many, many other tasks that contribute to the quality of life enjoyed by many in Alameda.

We should all recognize volunteers *every day* for their commitment to making volunteerism a part of their lives and for sharing their most valuable commodity -- their time -- with us.

Want to volunteer at Mastick? Contact Jackie Krause, at 747-7510.

NEVER DOUBT  
That A Small Group Of  
Thoughtful  
Committed Citizens  
Can Change  
The World

Indeed  
It's The Only Thing  
That Ever Has.

Margaret Mead

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## ***Senior Update***

Alameda County Area Agency on Aging &  
Advisory Commission on Aging  
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Oakland, CA 94605

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## ***Senior Update***

**May/June 2004**

***SENIOR INFORMATION*** by **Mary Kaufmann**  
**Health Access/Life Span** offers these free sessions.  
For info or to RSVP, contact Ellen at 510-869-6737.

**Monday, May 10** – Yamuna® Body Rolling, 1:00 to 3:00 pm. By Angelina Spector, Mind-Body Connection Studio. Use of a large ball can improve posture, flexibility, strength, range of motion and circulation. Merritt Pavilion, Cafeteria Annex C, 350 Hawthorne Avenue, Oakland.

**Monday, May 10** – “Diet and Dietary Supplements: What Works, What's Worthless?” - 5:30 pm. By Mark Moyad, MD, MPH. Suggested donation is \$20, reception following. For info and reservations, call (510) 204-4178.

**Friday, May 14** – “Yoga For Your Back,” 11:45 am to 1:00 pm. By Nikki Jordan, registered Yoga teacher. Merritt Pavilion, Cafeteria Annex C, 350 Hawthorne Avenue, Oakland.

**Monday, May 17** – “Dementia, Alzheimer's or Normal Aging?” 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm. By Chris Foley, Director of the Geriatric and Medical Psychiatry Programs, Alta Bates. Merritt Pavilion, Cafeteria Annex B, 350 Hawthorne Avenue, Oakland.

**Thursday, May 27 and Thursday, June 24**  
Blood Pressure Screenings, 12:00 noon-1:00 pm  
**New location** - Providence South Cafeteria Conference Room, 3100 Summit Street, Oakland.

**Thursday, June 10** – “Controlling Your Cholesterol” 9:30 to 11:30 am. Merritt Pavilion, Cafeteria Annex B, 350 Hawthorne Avenue, Oakland. For info and reservations, call 510-450-1500.

**Monday, June 14** – “Managing Falls - Prevention and Safe Recovery,” 2:00 to 4:00 pm. By Colleen Campbell, Senior Injury Prevention Project. Maffly Auditorium, Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight Way, Berkeley.

**Thursday, June 24** – “Hypertension Management Workshop,” 11:00 am to 12:00 noon. By Bessanderson McNeil, MPH. Providence Pavilion, Cafeteria Conference Room, 3100 Summit Street, Oakland. *NOTE: Free blood pressure screening immediately follows the presentation.*

**Free Community Skin Cancer Screenings!** Call the Markstein Cancer Education Center to schedule an appointment at one of the spring or summer screenings. 510-869-8833.

**Bay Area Alzheimer's Association** offers these free sessions. Call 800-660-1993 for detailed addresses.

**May 10** – “Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter,” Video and Discussion. 1:00-2:30 pm. Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., Pleasanton.

**May 11** – “Legal and Financial Planning 11:00-12:30 pm, Kaiser Hospital, Fabiola Bldg. Oakland.