



CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

Spring 2001

Volume 18, Number 1

Enhancing Relationships with Friendship, Forgiveness and Open Communication

by Laine Waggoner, M.A., M.S.

All of my life, I have been interested in communication and what makes close interpersonal relationships tick. Over the past ten years, I have been sharing with others what I have learned as a result of coping rather effectively with my own profound hearing loss. Then, to gain more knowledge, I returned to college and earned another master's degree in marriage and family counseling in 1999 at the age of 66!

Since then, with the collaboration of Rex, my "hearing partner" for 35 eventful years, I have been giving community and professional presentations on enhancing relationships. One of our themes

is "Healing Relationships Hurt by Hearing Loss." But, the attitudes and communication techniques that work well if an individual does not hear well, are equally effective in *any kind of interpersonal contact.*

What Enhances Relationships?

I strongly believe it is a sense of "we-ness," a feeling that "We're in this together. It's you and me against the world." A wise person once said that a good relationship should be a port in a storm, not a storm in a port. Partners and friends need to be jointly supportive and nurturing.

A positive attitude and basic good manners are also vital in any

relationship. People in long-term relationships sometimes fall into negative communication styles and grow further and further apart. They often lose sight of their partner's good qualities. If this sounds like you, it is important to remember what attracted you to one another in the first place.

My personal experience is supported by the teachings of the nationally-recognized psychologist and researcher Dr. John Gottman, who has written many books and trained many therapists on how to build stronger relationships.

A key element of couples

Continued on page 5

Marie and Mildred: "Two For Lunch, Please"

by Carol Basralian

We are thankful that CAREGIVERS volunteer, Marie Carter saw our plea for volunteers in the local newspaper and came forward. Marie had been a volunteer (a pink lady) at Ventura's Community Memorial Hospital and decided that she might donate some of her time doing something a little different.

Marie was born in Manitoba, Canada and has lived in Detroit, Michigan and Erie, Pennsylvania, as her family followed her father, who was a construction contractor. After completing high school, she married Ralph Porter. They had two sons and a daughter and moved to California in 1954. Marie worked 15 years in the personnel department at Sears, Roebuck and Company, a position she thoroughly enjoyed. After



Mildred Rolens
(left) and
Volunteer, Marie
Carter

her marriage broke up, Marie met and married her wonderful husband, Bill in 1966. He had four children and she had three, so with their combined families, they jokingly compared themselves to TV's, "The Brady Bunch"! Bill and Marie enjoyed 34 years together until he passed away about a year and a half ago.

Nowadays, Marie beams when she talks about her seven grand-

children and 6-1/2 great grandchildren (one is expected this spring).

Last fall, my former neighbor, Mildred Rolens called CAREGIVERS because she needed someone who could relate to her and be her friend. She had recently lost her devoted husband, Bob Rolens, after a successful 61-year marriage, which produced three children—a boy and two girls. I immediately thought Marie would be a perfect match for her.

Mildred and Marie are quite a pair! They thoroughly enjoy each other, usually for a lunch date. And, that is where I found them last week in a little French restaurant at Ventura Harbor. After lunch, they are off to Long's Drugs or the supermarket. Marie

Continued on page 2

Golf Tournament Raises \$23,000!

We are delighted to report that this year's golf tournament netted \$23,000 to support our programs for frail, homebound seniors.

Friday, March 16th, was a warm and sunny, fun-filled day enjoyed by 143 golfers and their guests at Buenaventura Golf Course in Ventura. Participants enjoyed many contests and competed for a \$5,000 putting prize and a BMW Z3 Roadster sports car donated by Steve Thomas BMW as a hole-in-one prize. BMW sponsored a total of four hole-in-one prizes. One of them, a \$250 gift certificate, was won by **John Concialdi** of "Tee it Up Golf School." Golf was followed by a delectable Irish buffet at the Wedgewood Banquet Center.

During lunch, professional auctioneers **John Eubanks, Sr.** and **John Jules Eubanks**, his grandson, conducted a live auction. Generously volunteering their time to conduct this exciting event, they helped to raise \$4,615. There were also fun opportunities to win 75 prizes donated by generous local businesses and individuals. **Ed Haas**, professional photographer, also volunteered his time to capture the day on film.

We extend very special thanks to our Title Sponsor, Fair Consulting, Inc., co-sponsors Avenue TV Cable; Pacific Bell; Sterling Hills Golf Club; City National Bank; Santa Barbara Bank and Trust; Advantage Physical Therapy; Andria's Seafood Restaurant; Barber Consulting, Inc.; Wade Co. Property Management; and Steve Thomas BMW. We also thank the many tee sponsors, as well as the

caring individuals and businesses who donated gifts and prizes for the auction, raffle and golfer bags to support this event. They are on page 3.



First Place winners in the A Flight were: (l-r) Scotty Wells, Andy Hanchett, Monroe Washington, Charles Washington

In addition, more heartfelt thank yous go to our hard-working golf committee members: Chair **Ron Ulreich**; **Jack Collings**; **Jim Cunningham, Jr.**; **Leslie Fair**; **Judy Frazier**; **Andy Killion**; **Cecilia Macias**; **Pat Meredith**; **Tommy Slater**; **Shalene Spears**; **Blake Wade**; and **Norm Weitzel**. Other volunteers who worked from the crack of dawn to help make the day a great success were **Tina Killion**, **Lynn McWaters**, **Jerry Mikuls**, **Keith York**, **Mary Yoshioka**, and State Farm employees **Robin Barnes**,

Don Felton, **Jennifer Gilman**, **Anita Lemos**, **Jamie Mazzanti**, **Bob McGuire**, **Mike Nemec**, **Cathy Rummell**, **Joe Vick**, and **Julia Williams**. Our youngest volunteer was 10-year-old **Bennett Collings**. We couldn't have done it without you all.



Director of Volunteers, Carol Basralian, with Gale Hartman, who took Third Place in the B Flight.



Board Chair, Judy Frazier presenting raffle prize to Charles Wade.

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Two FOR LUNCH – Continued from page 1

also telephones Mildred frequently during the week, which is mutually beneficial to them both. If Mildred has a doctor's appointment, it is Marie who safely provides her transportation.

Marie says, "We just have the greatest fun together! I really look forward to seeing her." And Mildred adds, "We've had a lot of good times together. Marie is a

godsend. She is so thoughtful and considerate and such good company. She's exactly what I needed!"

Without the very exceptional volunteers who give of themselves, we could not accommodate seniors like Mildred, who need a 'special' friend. "Thank You" to Marie Carter and all of CAREGIVERS' many volunteers who extend their loving hands and hearts to make our program so successful.

Executive Director's Message

by Barbara Weinberg

This past year has been challenging and exciting for me. It was a year ago that I joined CAREGIVERS and the time has just flown by. I have survived my first "Wearin' o' the Green" Golf Tournament and have met some wonderful people, including the energetic, dedicated and fun people on the Golf Tournament Committee who made the event such a rousing success.

I also have met many compassionate and inspiring volunteers and courageous seniors who, with help from our CAREGIVERS volunteers, struggle to live independently, with dignity, in the comfort and security of their own homes.

Please know that when you generously donate to CAREGIVERS, you are making life-changing differences in the lives of so many of our isolated seniors, because you are helping to save them from placement in an impersonal institution. We deeply appreciate your financial support, as it is essential to providing our greatly needed services.



Advertising Director, Bud Arosteguy and Executive Director, Barbara Weinberg with the BMW Z3 Sports Roadster.



A Heartfelt "THANK YOU"

to all of the following individuals, corporations and businesses that made our "Ninth Annual Wearin' o' the Green" Golf Tournament a great success. We are especially grateful to:

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We are able to provide this vital help to the frail elderly in Ventura County only because of the generosity of people like you. Contributions, gifts to our Endowment Fund, memorial gifts and gifts in honor of a special person or occasion may be sent to our Ventura office. Every gift will be promptly acknowledged. All donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to CAREGIVERS. Call us at 658-8530 for more details.

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New Board Member: Kay Wilson-Bolton

We are delighted to welcome **Kay Wilson-Bolton** to our Board of Directors. Kay is a leader in her community: the owner of Century 21 Buena Vista in Santa Paula and a former mayor of that city. She is on the Board of Directors of the Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA) and has been a volunteer with Hospice in Santa Paula. She brings to CAREGIVERS not only her experience and expertise in the business world, but also her deep concern and caring about the plight of our frail, homebound elderly. We are most fortunate that Kay is part of our CAREGIVERS family.

RELATIONSHIPS – Continued from page 1

counseling stresses helping the partners to recapture friendship, respect, admiration, love and commitment. We all need to constantly work on being patient, compassionate, tolerant and accepting. We need to recapture a sense of humor and adventurousness.

In addition, “all sustained relationships depend to some extent on forgiveness.” So writes New York psychologist Robert Karen in his new book, “The Forgiving Self.” He points out that in most relationships, so much good and bad is going back and forth that it is not always

clear who needs to apologize and who needs to forgive.

Open Communication:

This involves a willingness to share intimate feelings, thoughts and concerns and to learn from one another. All feelings are 100-percent valid. We just need to learn how to express them assertively, not aggressively, without making our partners the bad guys.

Criticism, contempt and blaming are corrosive to a relationship and put partners on the defensive. Silence, and not sharing, also make people feel rejected and neglected. Disengagement and withdrawal lead to isolation.

Effective Conflict Resolution is Needed:

Partners frequently reach a stalemate because they haven't learned how to fight fair. Neither one should be the loser. More trouble brews when their conflicts are over perpetual, unsolvable problems. Partners need to learn when to agree to disagree. If you find yourself gridlocked in disagreements, it might be a good idea to seek counseling.

Rules for effective communication (especially if a hearing loss is involved)

- Be patient, helpful and nonjudgmental.
- Get the listener's attention first.
- State the topic at the outset
- Use short, simple sentences.
- Move away from noise and other distractions.
- Face them directly and don't stand with your face in the shadow.
- Speak slowly and clearly, but don't shout.
- Don't cover your mouth or speak with anything in it.
- Repeat or rephrase a misunderstood statement.
- Be alert to fatigue or illness. These may affect the ability of the listener to concentrate on what you are saying.
- Practice active listening techniques, which involve providing feedback to be certain you understand what is said.

Kudos to Amie Duran our Administrative Assistant

Happy Mothers Day, Amie, from all of us at CAREGIVERS! It was certainly our lucky day, when **Amie Duran** joined our CAREGIVERS' team as Administrative Assistant last August 19. Amie



is a real pleasure and a dedicated, hardworking and caring member of our CAREGIVERS family, who also has a great sensitivity to the problems of the elderly. She is a Mom to **Jessica**, her lovely six-year-old daughter.



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CAREGIVERS is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and is grateful for the support of Trinity Lutheran Church, Ventura; First United Methodist Church, Ventura; Sisters of the Holy Cross; National Council of Jewish Women; First United Methodist Women, Ventura; First Presbyterian Church, Santa Paula; Ventura County Church of Religious Science; and the Aid Association for Lutherans.

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