



CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

Summer 2000

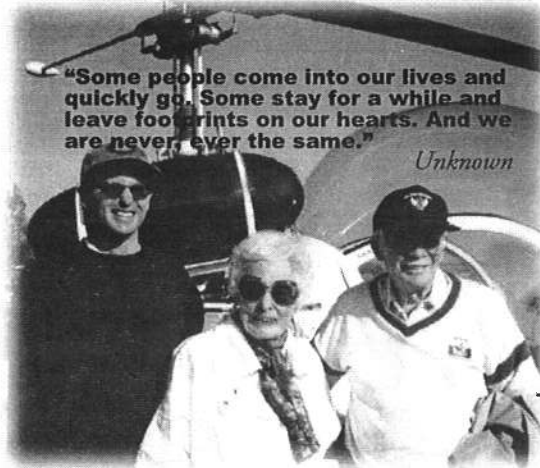
Volume 17, Number 3

Mary Antonia La Rose

by Carol Basralian, Director of Volunteers

Mary Antonia (Toni) La Rose left this world on May 3rd, 2000 at the age of 102, but her spirit will live on in the many people she touched during her long lifetime.

Toni was born on December 1, 1897 in Detroit, Michigan. She was one of 8 children and spent most of her happy childhood in the Canadian border town of Sugar Island near Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. In 1919, she met and married William (Bill) La Rose



and eventually had three daughters. After many years of shoveling snow and putting up with the harsh winters there, Bill, a postal service worker, asked for a transfer to California. In 1939, their dream of moving here was a reality. Toni's life was filled with the love of taking care of her family.

CAREGIVERS' volunteer, Susan Buchter was privileged to have gotten to know Toni when she was widowed in 1991 after 72 years of marriage. In March of 1993, Toni became a client of CAREGIVERS. At that time, she professed to have some sciatica. She just needed

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Volunteer Spotlight: Sherry Lyons

by Barbara Weinberg, Executive Director

In this issue, we shine the spotlight on one of our most valuable volunteers—**Sherry Lyons**. Sherry is an accountant with the firm of Vance, Thrift and Biller—one of Ventura's most prestigious CPA firms. She has been with this company for 23 years. Vance Thrift and Biller is made up of a group of philanthropic partners who believe in giving back to the community. They have been very generous to CAREGIVERS and their generosity is deeply appreciated by everyone in our organization.

Sherry learned firsthand about CAREGIVERS from another employee at Vance, Thrift and Biller who had been a volunteer. When she was no longer able to continue, Sherry took her place. That was seven years ago and Sherry has been giving her time and expertise ever since.

Each month, Sherry gathers all of the financial information she needs from CAREGIVERS and puts together a comprehensive

financial statement. Through this generous donation of her time, Sherry has saved CAREGIVERS many thousands of dollars. Not only does Sherry do the monthly financial statements, but she has set up a new accounting system for us on the computer (donated by Vance, Thrift and Biller) and is available always to answer our questions and to give us advice.

Sherry has been working in accounting since she was a freshman in high school. During this time she did individual tax returns. As a junior, she taught accounting to sophomore high school students. She is a graduate of Buena High School and earned her Accounting Degree from Cal State Northridge.

When asked what prompted her to volunteer for CAREGIVERS, Sherry explained that she took care of her grandmother in her own home for ten years and in a nursing home for six years until she died at the age of 92. This experience made Sherry

aware and sensitive to the needs of the elderly. This, in turn, made her aware of what services are needed to help the elderly in our county. "By volunteering my time for CAREGIVERS on the financial side, I am making many thousands of dollars available to help the elderly in our county" Sherry said. "And that's why I do it." She continued "I have many elderly clients at Vance, Thrift and Biller and being involved in CAREGIVERS helps me to better understand and serve them."

Sherry volunteers in many other organizations, including being on the Board of Directors of the Channel Islands Ballet, where she works to provide opportunities for young up-and-coming ballet dancers. Sherry's caring and concern is for all people, young and old alike—we couldn't be without her. We so deeply appreciate her and salute her for her wonderful generosity. ♥

New Executive Director

Introducing Barbara A. Weinberg

Dear Friends:

I am so delighted to have been selected as the new Executive Director of CAREGIVERS. As you all know, it is such a wonderful, caring program which fulfills a true need in our community. One has only to speak to grateful clients... or to talk to the volunteers who so generously give of their time and friendship...to know what a positive difference CAREGIVERS makes in the lives of so many people.

I have worked in the non-profit world, both in Los Angeles and Ventura County, for over 18 years, and couldn't imagine working in any other.

For the past year and a half I have worked in Los Angeles, and must say that it is wonderful to be back in our beautiful Ventura County again.

I realize that I have some big shoes to fill by taking over from your dedicated and highly respected Executive Director, **Pat Meredith**. I know that Pat has done so much for this organization as it struggled to survive and grow over the past 8 years. I will put all of my efforts into making sure that CAREGIVERS contin-

...many people in our community believe that CAREGIVERS is a public agency supported by state and/or federal funds.... We are not tax supported.

ues along the path of growth that Pat and the Board of Directors have set for it. Pat has made my transition so much easier by giving her time and expertise whenever I need it to help me get acquainted with the work and by leaving everything in such an organized condition. I so appreciate Pat's thoughtfulness.

I also greatly appreciate the warm welcome I have received from the Board of Directors and others and I am enjoying getting



to know these very dedicated and caring people.

Another aspect of the job that I am grateful for is that I have the good fortune to work with **Carol Basralian**, Director of Volunteers at CAREGIVERS - the heart of our program. Carol is much loved by clients and volunteers alike for her dedication, caring, and wonderful sense of humor. She is a pleasure to work with and has a wealth of knowledge about the program which is so helpful to me.

Now that I have settled into my new position, my top priority will be to work closely with the Board of Directors to ensure that CAREGIVERS has the financial resources to continue its important and much needed work in Ventura and Santa Paula/Fillmore and to expand into other areas of great need in our County. To accomplish this, we must increase our donor base, involve more of the business community and continue with our grant writing and special events.

I have learned, however, that we have some obstacles to overcome as far as fundraising is concerned. For instance, I was

surprised to learn that many people in our community believe that CAREGIVERS is a public agency supported by state and/or federal funds. I would like to set the record straight on this point. We are not tax supported. In fact, each year CAREGIVERS must raise every dollar it receives from generous individuals in our County, as well as from foundations and corporations. Foundations and corporations are essential components in the total support of a non profit. However, 85 percent of financial support for non-profits comes from the generosity of individuals. So, as you can see, financial support from individuals is crucial to continuing the work of CAREGIVERS. We are so grateful to the many caring people in our community who make our work with frail elders possible. If you have the opportunity to tell a friend about us and let them know their support is needed, it would be greatly appreciated by all of us at CAREGIVERS.

CAREGIVERS programs are, of course, dependent upon many wonderful community volunteers. Although we are fortunate to have over 200 volunteers, we need many more to fulfill the overwhelming number of requests for assistance that we receive. Each one of these requests is for someone who desperately needs transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, help with paperwork, etc. and, most important of all, to know that someone cares about them.

Therefore, I am taking this opportunity to ask for your help in our search for volunteers. We would greatly appreciate referrals from you or your friends who are interested in giving 2 to 4 hours per week to help an elderly, homebound person. This small amount of time per week makes a huge impact on the life of an isolated elder, making it possible for the person to live independently in his or her own home,

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Executive Director – from page 2

improving the quality of life and avoiding premature placement in a board and care facility. Please call our office (805) 658-8530 for more information about volunteering.

Since joining CAREGIVERS in May, 2000, I have had the rewarding experience of speaking with some of our clients and volunteers on the telephone. I would love to meet as many of the CAREGIVERS "family" as possible. Our doors are always open and we welcome your visits and telephone calls to the

office and/or any suggestions or comments you may have.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming months toward our mutual goal of making it possible for CAREGIVERS to continue to assist those who are currently in our program and to expand our services to the many homebound elders in our County who are isolated from society and desperately need some basic assistance. ♥

Welcome to Thava Merrett, our new administrative assistant.

Thava is a wonderful addition to our CAREGIVERS family and in one week, has proven herself to be a hardworking, caring and supportive member of our team. ♥



Toni La Rose – from page 1

some help with grocery shopping and transportation to the doctors. What she thought was sciatica turned out to be a broken hip and Susan gladly helped her during this time. Susan remarked, "We became very close. Toni's wonderful smile, sense of humor, understanding and her great faith were just part of the many gifts that she gave away to everyone she met."

Around this same time, our CAREGIVERS' volunteer **Mary Yoshioka** was also introduced to Toni and an immediate bond developed between them. While Mary did not assist her for a very


long time, she also fell in love with her and said recently, "Toni was the personification of our goals in life. She was gracious, kind, non-judgmental, and always interested in others. She was an avid reader, adored her family, and had that very special zest for life to which we all aspire. Though she had many health problems typical for someone her age, she never complained. It was a subject not readily discussed."

In 1994, Toni contracted pneumonia, was admitted to Community Memorial Hospital, and from there to the Californian Nursing Home in Ventura. After this episode, her family decided it was time to move her closer to family members in Sacramento.

Our volunteers, Mary and Susan, continued to stay in touch with her. During this time, her loving family planned to do some special and fun things for her birthday every year.

On her 100th birthday, Toni was given a sweatshirt that read "The first 100 yrs. I owe to Pizza and Beer!" She wore it proudly to dinner. At age 101, her family rented a limousine and took her shopping at the local mall. But at the ripe old age of 102, she got the ride of a lifetime when she climbed into a three-passenger helicopter. After that thrilling ride was over, she was asked how she liked it and she replied with much enthusiasm, "I'll go up again, if I get a chance! This was the best birthday I ever had."

On May 3rd, of this year, God reached out to her and took her higher than any helicopter could fly, and we were all left with the inspiring legacy that Toni bestowed on us. The legacy of LOVE. ♥


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YOUR DONATIONS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO GIVE A HELPING HAND TO THOSE WHO NEED IT. THANK YOU! (April - June, 2000)

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 By Norman Weitzel
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 By Leslie and Judith Vielbig

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.

CAREGIVERS Benefactors

(Gifts of \$1,000 or more, donated during the past year)

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A Client Writes:

"As a blind couple, there are no words to express just how much CAREGIVERS means to us. CAREGIVERS has made it possible for us to remain active in the community all of these years."

Please help to ensure that this program will continue to help others in the future by remembering **CAREGIVERS** in your will or trust.

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind from the recital of endless details - give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others, but help me to endure them with patience. I dare not ask for improved memory, but a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memory of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. Give me the grace to tell them so.

Amen.

Help Desperately Needed

Would you like to...

- Give service to your community?
 - Have a rewarding volunteer experience?
 - Use your talents and abilities to help an elderly person?
 - Make a new friend?
 - Be free to set your own hours of service?
 - Work independently but with plenty of support?
 - Be challenged and greatly appreciated?
 - Feel good about yourself?
- Call CAREGIVERS at 658-8530 to find out about volunteer opportunities. We need you!



Our Heartfelt Thanks for These Grants Recently Received

Swift Memorial Health Care Foundation - \$5,200
Carrie Estelle Doheny - \$8,000
Wells Fargo Bank - \$1,000

A Client Writes:

"I live alone and do not drive—CAREGIVERS is a godsend for me."

Coming Events:

Board Meetings

Every fourth Thursday of the month - 7:30 a.m.

Volunteer Recognition

October 29, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Ventura County Fair

August 2 through 13, 2000

Come visit us at the Area Agency on Aging booth

CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

2021 Sperry Avenue, Suite 47
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED.



CAREGIVERS' MISSION - To provide a reliable personal relationship between one volunteer and one elder in need of assistance. Without the kind of neighborhoodly services we offer, frail elders may find themselves living in unfamiliar, impersonal institutions, with a debilitating sense of having lost both independence and dignity. CAREGIVERS, an interfaith effort, matches volunteers with elders who need non-medical assistance, thereby permitting many of them to remain in the familiar and cherished surroundings of their own homes longer than would otherwise be possible.

CAREGIVERS was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in collaboration with 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 Sciences; and the Aid Association for Lutherans.

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