



CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

Winter 1995

Volume 12, Number 1

Why I Volunteer

by Eugenie Wheeler

My reason for getting involved in volunteer work was to give balance to my life. If I waited until I had the time, of course it never would have happened. I felt a need for something in addition to family, work, and leisure. With Hillary Clinton, I believe the key is balance between family, work, and service.

I picked CAREGIVERS because as I grow older I become more and more intrigued with creative solutions to the problems of the aged: how to keep self-esteem high in an ageist culture, how to prevent unnecessary institutionalization, how to counter the isolation that some older adults endure, etc. CAREGIVERS appeared to hold those values, and share those goals.

Solutions, it seems to me, have to be worked out on a large, legislative scale, but also on a one-to-one basis. The latter is more appealing to me. The two people I have been visiting have been interesting and have become firm

friends. I provide transportation and do errands for them.

Why do I volunteer? Perhaps, as some wag once said, "It's guilt that makes the world go around," and I'm atoning for self-centeredness and other sources of guilt. Perhaps it's because I know intellectually that it's good for the soul. Maybe. But I suspect it's just because I enjoy it. It's more satisfying than shopping, playing bridge, or just sitting around. Sometimes it's a pain in the neck to have to keep appointments with my "ladies" but I have never, NEVER regretted going. And I've acquired some role models and learned a few things.

What have I learned? I've learned more from them than they've learned from me. I've incorporated role models of courage, endurance, patience, wit, and verve. Rose faced death with courage and knew what she wanted right to the end. While enduring the downside, she found things in life to be proud of and

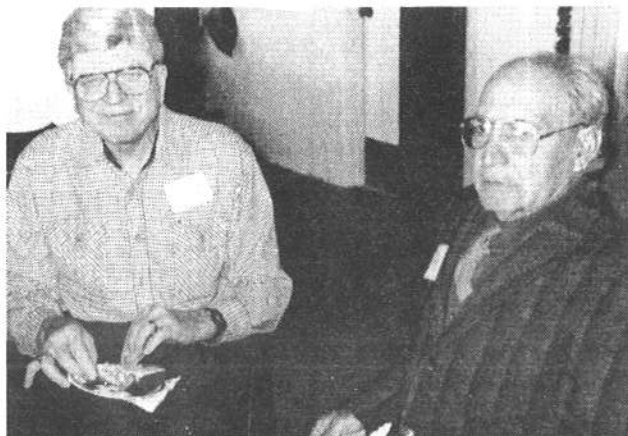


to enjoy to the last. Elsie, a proud, bright, witty Scotswoman, stands up to her perceived adversaries (I, sometimes among them) and to her infirmities, with spirited frankness tempered with humor.

"A human being cannot live a life without meaning," wrote renowned psychiatrist Victor Frankl. "If the meaning is trivial, the life will be trivial; if the meaning is exalted, the life will be exalted—one is free to choose. Not to choose results in an existential vacuum which is life destroying." Volunteering with CAREGIVERS won't guarantee

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Holiday Party Fun



George Appel, George Espinoza, Louise Miller, and Roxie Graves enjoy hot cider and goodies at CAREGIVERS' annual Holiday Party.

The Latest on Vitamins

Supplements can prevent disease

by Laine Waggoner

Have your doctors scoffed at the idea that taking vitamins might lead to a healthier life?

Many physicians have been in the habit of joking that "taking supplements just gives you expensive urine." They say that we get all the vitamins we need from our diets.

Well, since the 1970's more scientists are realizing that traditional medical views of vitamins and minerals have been too limited, reported Anastasia Toufexis in *Time Magazine* (4/6/92).

Researchers are uncovering a consistent link between diet and health indicating that vitamins and minerals play a more complex role in assuring optimal health than previously thought.

It's true that eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, spinach, squash and the like should meet everyone's basic nutrient needs. But most people don't even come close to the USDA's dietary guidelines of 3-5 servings daily of vegetables, 2-4 servings of fruit, 6-11 servings of breads, rice, pasta and cereals, 2-3 servings of meat, eggs, poultry, fish, nuts and dried beans or peas.

In addition, pollutants, stress and aging take their toll on your body and you may not be absorbing all the nutrients you need from the foods you eat. So, taking supplements can provide a kind of nutritional insurance.

Our rapidly aging population has forced a shift of medical focus away from treating acute illness to caring for chronic maladies such as heart disease and cancer - a shift that has sent health-care costs skyrocketing.



"We could save billions of dollars if we could delay the onset of chronic diseases by as little as ten years," says Jeffrey Blumberg, associate director of the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

Scientists have identified 13 important vitamins that regulate the chemical reactions that protect cells and convert food into energy and living tissue.

Although Vitamins D and K and biotin and pantothenic acid are produced by the body, most vitamins must be ingested.

The biggest excitement, for a public hungry for life-extension products, has been the discovery of anti-oxidants which neutralize the chemicals that cause disease and premature aging. Proponents of food supplementation believe we can guard against chronic degenerative diseases by ingesting generous amounts of antioxidants.

Score Box on Important Vitamins and Minerals

Anti-oxidants: Vitamins C, E and beta carotene appear to boost our immune systems by defusing toxic molecular fragments known as oxygen-free radicals, or free radicals, which are by-products of normal cell metabolism.

Free radicals are created in the body by exposure to sunlight, X rays, ozone, tobacco smoke, car exhaust and other environmental pollutants. Many researchers believe that free radicals create

havoc within the body and play a major role in the development of cancer, heart or lung disease and cataracts. They also believe that the cumulative effects of free radicals also cause the gradual deterioration of aging.

Biochemist Bruce Ames at the University of California at Berkeley believes that with anti-oxidant supplementation, "we're going to be able to get people to live a lot longer than anyone thinks."

Beta carotene is abundant in sweet potatoes, yams, carrots and cantaloupes and is turned into vitamin A in the body as needed. That makes it impossible to overdose on beta carotene.

Doctors at Harvard Medical School and other hospitals have found that patients with a history of cardiac disease who took beta carotene supplements suffered fewer heart attacks, strokes and deaths due to cardiovascular causes. Scientists speculate that this is because beta carotene helps prevent free radicals from LDL, the bad form of cholesterol, from developing into a menacing artery clogger.

Vitamin B-6 has been found to relieve premenstrual syndrome. People over 60 need more vitamin B-6 than young adults.

Vitamin D should also be increased with age.

Vitamin E helps reduce the risk of heart attack and boosts the immune system in healthy older people. It may hold special promise for patients with Parkinson's disease by delaying the appearance of tremors, rigidity and loss of balance. Early animal studies indicate that vitamin E reduces kidney damage caused by the immune system, infection or exposure to toxic chemicals.

Vitamin K promotes blood clotting and helps bones retain calcium. Rapid bone loss is a major plague among post-menopausal women, giving rise to osteoporosis.

Calcium, best found in milk and yogurt products, is also

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Pat Meredith, Executive Director

America has always been a land of volunteers—and nowhere is there greater evidence of this than in the vitality of the United Way movement.

United Way was established over one hundred years ago to help the less fortunate. It operates on the conviction that, by working together, people can improve the quality of life in the communities where they live. By combining volunteer services and dollars, United Way sees to it that vitally needed support is given to youth and senior services, health care

Give to United Way Campaign—You Can Make a Difference

agencies, disaster preparedness and response programs, and services to the needy. It addresses many important issues in our society, including child abuse, homelessness, and substance abuse.

United Way of Ventura County is providing over \$14,000 to CAREGIVERS this year, a significant percentage of our budget. The money that is raised here in Ventura County stays right here to assist local people. It is estimated that 250,000 Ventura Countians receive services from United Way funded agencies each year.

Please call the United Way office at 485-6288 for more information and a brochure listing the 59 local agencies it supports. Your contribution to this year's campaign can make a difference!

Board Profile – Ginny Camarillo

Ginny Camarillo was first elected to the CAREGIVERS Board in 1989. She served a term as Chairperson, and is now leading the activities of the Fund Development Committee.

Born in Ohio, Ginny has lived in Ventura since 1973. She is employed by the County's Chief Administrative Office as an analyst in the Government Affairs division, reviewing state and federal legislation which has an impact on the County and its residents.

Ginny and husband Bob, an instructor in the criminal justice program at Ventura College, have had first-hand experience as caregivers in the last three years, providing assistance to both sets of parents as their health declined. "The experience has motivated me even more to make certain that CAREGIVERS survives and



thrives. There is such a need in our communities for this wonderful service," she says.

Ginny extends a request (and a challenge) to all those who are concerned about CAREGIVERS' future to join in the efforts of the Fund Development Committee to raise the public's awareness of CAREGIVERS and to raise the necessary resources to sustain the program in future years.

Farewell 1994—Hello 1995

by Carol Basralian

Six months ago, it was with some apprehension and giddiness that I took over the job of Director of Volunteers from Sister Jane Kelly. She was a hard act to follow, but with each month I've gained new confidence. It's been easy because of the love and support I've received from both the elders we serve and our dear volunteers.

I would like to personally thank the Los Angeles Times and reporter Constance Sommer, who really captured the essence of two successful caregiver relationships in her article published on January 3rd.

Also, a big thank you to the "mighty" Santa Paula Times for their consistent publishing of requests for volunteers thereby allowing the program to flourish in that city.

It's my dream for the new year to be able to give to each elder who calls CAREGIVERS for help new hope in their lives in the package of a joyful, enthusiastic, volunteer to help them face the challenges that lie ahead.

Happy New Year to you all!!!



Volunteers Needed

It seems as though the calls for help always come in faster than the volunteers! So many good people need just a little extra assistance to raise their quality of life. Remember, CAREGIVERS volunteers are never put in a position beyond their capabilities. NO nursing care is ever involved. And you set the hours and the tasks you're willing to help with. If you can consider 2 to 8 hours a month to help an elder in need, please call us at 652-0566 for more information.

YOUR DONATIONS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO GIVE A HELPING HAND TO THOSE WHO NEED IT. THANK YOU! (October 1 – December 31, 1994)

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Vitamins – Continued from page 2

readily absorbable from soybeans and greens such as broccoli, kale and bok choy and from breads, according to Robert Heaney, M.D., chief investigator of osteoporosis and calcium at Omaha's Creighton University.

Folic acid (folate), found in fruits and vegetables, especially spinach, appears to play a role in the prevention of cervical cancer. It provides protection to women who are exposed to the virus that causes this cancer.

In the long run, taking food supplements will never be a substitute for good health habits: eat a healthy, low-fat diet, get moving, cut down on alcohol and cut out smoking.



Volunteer – Continued from page 1

exaltation, but it will go a long way toward filling that "existential vacuum" and making you feel better about the meaning of your life.

Being a caregiver has added unforeseen dimensions to my rather full life. I'll be a caregiver as long as I can, and then, if I'm lucky, a volunteer caregiver will be assigned to me.



For Your Information

Care for the CAREGIVERS

2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.
Pacific Shores Center
2530 Financial Sq., Ste. 102
Oxnard; 981-8671

"Heart Disease: Reducing Your Risk"

Wed., Feb. 15, 10-11:30 a.m.
Community Memorial Hospital
Reservations required: 652-5095

Youth is not entirely a time of life, it is a state of mind. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old by deserting their ideals. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fears; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

—Douglas MacArthur



Happiness is not a destination. It is a way of traveling.

We've Got "Friends"

Besides the holiday happiness there was much enthusiasm in the group that met December 19th to discuss some ideas about starting a Friends of CAREGIVERS Auxiliary.

The brainstorming eventually led to the decision to focus first on ways to publicize the CAREGIVERS program. Some volunteered to make contacts and procure ideas from other auxiliary groups. All were asked to bring one other person to the next meeting on **Wednesday, February 1, 1995 at 7 p.m. at CAREGIVERS.**

You come too! RSVP: 652-0566.

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, and every gift will be promptly acknowledged. All donations are tax-deductible.

Please make checks payable to CAREGIVERS. Call us at 652-0566 for more details.

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- The Latest on Vitamins
- United Way Appeal
- Board Profile—Ginny Camarillo
- Thanks to Donors

INSIDE FEATURES

CAREGIVERS' MISSION – To provide a reliable personal relationship between one volunteer and one elder in need of assistance. Without the kind of services we offer, frail elders may find themselves living in unfamiliar, impersonal institutions, with a debilitating sense of having lost both independence and dignity. By matching such elders with volunteers who provide basic assistance, CAREGIVERS permits many of them to remain in the familiar and cherished surroundings of their own homes.

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Coming Events:

"Friends of CAREGIVERS"
Wed., Feb 1, 7:00 p.m.
at CAREGIVERS

Board Meetings
Thursdays 7:00 a.m.
Feb. 16, Mar. 16

3rd Annual Golf Tournament
Fri., Mar. 17, 8:00 a.m.
Buenaventura Golf Course