



# CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

Winter 2000

Volume 17, Number 1

## Pets Gladden Hearts

by Laine Waggoner

**B**oomer loves applause. He knows tricks and is eager to play games such as balloon volley ball with his audience.

Boomer is a four-year-old Australian shepherd. He gladly accompanies his mistress, Ellen Covella, 39, of Camarillo on her regular visits to cheer up senior members of Club Camarillo at the Camarillo Health Care District, patients in St. John's Pleasant



Valley Hospital Extended Care facility, children at Casa Pacifica and other locations in the county.

The clients of Club Camarillo get a kick out of the dogs who perform, said Sharon Tatelman, the district's assistant coordinator of adult day support services.

"Our clients really relate to the animals because they are so gentle and well-behaved," said Tatelman. "Even uncommunicative clients respond when the dogs or cats stimulate happy memories of pets they have had in the past."

When the therapy dogs visited Club Camarillo recently, they were greeted with excitement by Louise Reich, 97, who told Boomer, "You're an old sweet-

heart, that's what you are. I love you." Annie Talbott, 88, said, "What a sweet face. You're a nice doggie." Barbara Schoenberger, 62, and Frances Fischer, 88, both agreed that "the dogs are so smart because they know they're going to get a treat."

Covella became involved with Therapy Dogs International (TDI) several years ago when she and her husband, Rick moved to Camarillo from Valencia.

"I read about dogs who do good deeds, and I was looking for a volunteer activity that would include my children Eric and Caryn, she explained. Covella's other shepherd and a collie also take part in the

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## Volunteer Spotlight: Doryce Sackett & Virginia Whelan-Dimmick

By Carol Basralian, Director of Volunteers

**D**oryce Sackett, 82, contacted CAREGIVERS last Fall after hearing about our program from a neighbor. She is losing her vision due to macular degeneration and had recently sold her car and needed transportation to her doctor and possibly to the Braille classes in Santa Paula. Doryce lived in Santa Paula before moving to the east end of Ventura to the Buenaventura Mobile Estates. Doryce and her sister came to California from Oregon in 1937. Her most recent employment was with the Navy at the Naval Civil Engineer Laboratory in Pt. Hueneme.

Volunteer, Virginia Whelan-Dimmick joined CAREGIVERS about the same time as Doryce. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, she and her husband Roy had two children. She had read about our program in her church bulletin

and thought she could help in some way. That was an understatement. Her personality was so lively, I immediately thought of pairing her with Doryce. Virginia says, "We got acquainted very quickly and our friendship has just grown. We have a standing date every Wednesday to go to the Braille class and then we generally go out to lunch. We enjoy each other so much. It's a real joy. I

also have learned so much attending these classes and can be an encourager to other people who are visually challenged.

Doryce concurs, "The classes are very important to someone

like me who wants to stay in their own home and continue to be independent. The most important thing they teach you is how to



*(l-r) Doryce Sackett & Virginia Whelan-Dimmick*

cope. There are creative ways to identify money, write a check or sew on a button. In a recent class, we were taught how to develop our other senses in order to

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visitation program, along with Rebecca Cheek of Moorpark who takes her four shelties. Anna Green of Ventura takes her two German shepherds, and CAREGIVERS board member, Lylian Pressel, takes her golden retriever, Lashka.

"This is a very rewarding experience because we make people happy, the dogs enjoy it and I always come home feeling good," said Covella.

For centuries, it has been acknowledged worldwide by health care providers that animal affection has a beneficial effect on psychological and physical well-being. "Pet love encourages reminiscence and social interaction and reduces human stress and anxiety," said Diane Stovall, activity director at St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital Extended Care.

"Pets make patients feel less lonely and depressed and reduces the amount of medication needed. In addition, hospital stays are often shortened when patients have

access to pets. Because of this, many Camarillo physicians prescribe pet therapy for their patients."

Before a local pet shop closed, Stovall used to borrow puppies to visit patients "because if they have had pets all their lives, it's a real loss not to have that connection," she said. "Like nothing else, the dogs bring smiles of joy and the sharing of stories.

"This is because pets provide unconditional love and accept people the way they are. They satisfy a person's need to be needed. They offer entertainment and a welcome distraction from pain and infirmity."

In America in the 1960's, the pet therapy movement was validated by Boris Levinson who pioneered the use of pet-facilitated psychotherapy to develop his clients' affection and unconditional acceptance. He noted that, "Many elderly and lonely people have discovered that pets satisfy emotional needs."

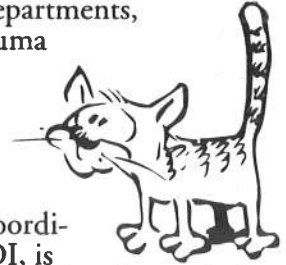
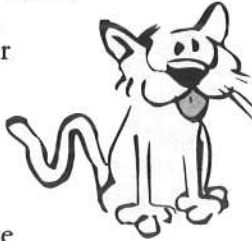
Research by another leader in the field of animal-assisted therapy, Dr. Alan Beck, director of the Center for Human-Animal Bonding at Purdue University, has shown that pets provide feelings of comfort and safety in most people. He discovered that patients' blood pressure

is lowered, stress is relieved and depression is eased when playing with pets.

Nowadays, animal-assisted therapy programs have blossomed in retirement homes, long term care facilities, hospitals, psychiatric units, physical rehabilitation departments, prisons, trauma centers and with AIDS patients.

Joanie Shugar, the volunteer coordinator of TDI, is Ventura County's only certified evaluator of therapy dogs. She tests several dogs a month to make sure they meet TDI's standards for health, temperament and obedience to become Registered Service Dogs. Shugar takes Nugget, her own Labrador Retriever, to visit nursing homes and hospitals. She also represents Love on a Leash, supported by the Foundation for Pet-provided Therapy, which provides cats, rabbits, tortoises and birds.

For details on TDI's program or to establish chapters in Camarillo or Thousand Oaks, phone Shugar at 644-3834. ♥



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given simply as a thank you to a beloved organization or to ensure the continued vitality of the community for generations to come. Tax benefits may be derived from these gifts. An attorney, accountant or financial advisor can help determine the type of gift that is right for you.

CAREGIVERS is joining scores of other Ventura County residents to help promote the *Leave a Legacy* educational campaign. For more information about the campaign, contact Pat Meredith at 658-8530. ♥

## Executive Director's Message



Pat Meredith



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## A new year...A new century...A time to reflect on the past...and to look forward to the future.

**C**AREGIVERS completed its 15th year of service in 1999. Each year, our volunteers give many thousands of hours of service and donate many thousands of miles of transportation, making it possible for local seniors to maintain a reasonably independent lifestyle. Since the program began in 1984, nearly 1,800 elderly people have received assistance from volunteers—some for as long as 10 years.

This program was begun with visionary dedication before the challenges of an aging society were recognized and acknowledged. Frail, homebound seniors were largely ignored. The meager services available to them were seen as only “do-gooder” activities that were nice but certainly not vital.

During the past decade, the implications of the “graying of America” have begun to be taken seriously by everyone from economists to social workers to legislators. Senior services, while by no means adequate yet, are at last being encouraged and supported by a growing segment of the general population.

CAREGIVERS was struggling for existence in the early 90s and survived only because of a \$100,000 bequest in 1992 that financed several years of budgetary deficits. During the past 3 years, we have seen a great improvement in public support for our program and our fund-raising efforts.

Our golf tournament now sells out and last year raised \$18,000. Each year our direct mail appeals have brought an increase in donations. And, this year, two generous bequests, totaling \$53,500, have given us the boost we need to finally see future program expansion as an achievable goal.

Many people deserve credit for this progress—too many to list in this space. First and foremost are our volunteers who give the service that is so appreciated by our elderly friends. Director of Volunteers, Carol Basralian, and her predecessor, Sister Jane Kelly, were the catalysts that raised community awareness of our program as a viable service. Members of the board of directors from the very beginning have contributed time, energy and money to further develop our image and expand our visibility. Donors of large amounts and small, some of them for the full 16 years of our existence, have encouraged and validated our efforts.

I salute all of these people with heartfelt thanks and look forward to the day when the CAREGIVERS program can be expanded to serve many more elders who need the caring touch and kindness of a friend. ♥

### A Client Writes:

*“Joan and her husband have been wonderful friends and caregivers. I don't know how I would manage without their help and kindness.”*

**YOUR DONATIONS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO GIVE A HELPING HAND TO THOSE WHO NEED IT. THANK YOU! (October - December, 1999)**

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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.

**A Client Writes:**  
*"Her sons thank you also. She is wonderful with our mother and is helping us to keep her in her home and independent."*

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*Continued from page 1 – "VOLUNTEER"*

compensate for vision loss. The next two classes are on adaptive cooking and Ventura County history and I want to take them both!" On a side trip one day to a local drug store, Doryce saw the outline of a bird house and just had to buy it. She's hoping for a family of birds to inhabit it this Spring.

Their smiling faces tell it all. Doryce continues, "I'm so thankful to CAREGIVERS for sending Virginia to me. I'm so lucky!" Virginia interjects, "She has such a positive attitude and that's what is needed."

In sharing ourselves, we can impact lives in such a positive way. How could anything be more satisfying?" ♥

**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!

**We are very grateful for these grants recently received:**  
 Swift Memorial Health Care Foundation: \$5,000  
 Martin V. and Martha K. Smith Foundation: \$2,000  
 Wood-Claeyssens Foundation: \$8,500



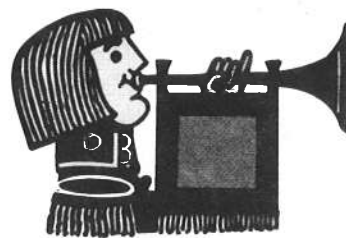
**"Wearin' o' the Green"  
Golf Tournament**

We are thrilled to announce that AT&T Wireless Services will be the Title Sponsor for CAREGIVERS' 8th Annual "Wearin' o' the Green" Golf Tournament, coming up on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. We are very grateful for their generous donation of \$5,000.

Other tournament sponsor who have come forward by press time include:

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We are looking forward to a successful tournament, thanks to these generous gifts. Sponsorship opportunities for this popular event are still available-for information, call Pat Meredith at 658-8530. ♥



**Special Thanks to  
Special People**

...to mailing volunteers **Peggy Murphy, Doloris Patrie, Rosemary Rooney, Mildred Fletcher, Agnes Sylvester, Bertie Gartner, Betty Patterson and Joyce Cantrell.**

...to **Bob Rust** of VCNet, Camarillo, for hooking us up to the internet at no charge. ♥

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

# Coming Events:

## Board Meetings

Thursdays 7:30 A.M.  
Feb. 24, Mar. 23, Apr. 27



**Save the Date!**  
8th Annual "Wearin' o' the Green" Golf Tournament  
Friday, March 17, 2000  
Buena Ventura Golf Course  
Wedgewood Banquet Center  
AT&T Wireless Services Signs on as Title Sponsor!  
(see inside, page 5)

# CAREGIVERS

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE ELDERLY

2021 Sperry Avenue, Suite 47  
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**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 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, Ventura; Santa Paula; Ventura County Church of Religious Science; and the Aid Association for Lutherans.

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