

be.

Show Me the Money

Taking over your parents' financial management

Great Heights

Former flight attendants take off on new adventures

MAGIC MOMENTS

A FAMILY FINDS CONNECTION AND JOY IN EVERY DAY

Petal Pushers

GARDENERS BLOOM IN COMMUNITIES





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“Changing times demand that we constantly require ourselves to do better, to do more, and to have a greater positive impact on those we serve and their families.”
—John H. Cochran III



karandevy/Thinkstock

thebegrp.org

A wealth of information to assist you on your senior living journey.



BRIDGING THE GAP
INMEMORY CARE



PLANNING FOR
LONG-TERM CARE



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What a difference a year makes. This time last year, we were be.group, a Southern California organization of 1,200 team members serving nearly 4,000 residents throughout California. In May 2016, we celebrated the close of a successful affiliation with American Baptist Homes of the West, another leading nonprofit provider of senior housing and services, based in Pleasanton, California.

With this affiliation, we have become one organization operating, for the moment, as Cornerstone Affiliates—the largest nonprofit provider of senior living communities in California and the sixth-largest in the U.S. We now serve nearly 10,000 older adults across California, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Washington and Oklahoma.

What does this mean for those we serve? As a unified organization, we now have greater strength and stability, as well as the scale and resources to do more for more people. That is our goal with this affiliation: to amplify our mission and assist more older adults in living as they want to live.

As we look at the many challenges facing the senior living industry today, I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to lead an outstanding group of people who are dedicated to changing the conversation about what it means today for older adults to live rich, purposeful, engaged lives. Changing times demand that we constantly require ourselves to do better, to do more, and to have a greater positive impact on those we serve and their families. We enthusiastically embrace this challenge.

If you haven't yet visited one of our communities—now more than 80 strong and growing—I encourage you to do so. Meet our team members. Talk to our residents. Don't be afraid to ask us tough questions about how we can help you achieve your lifestyle aspirations. After all, it's our mission and our great pleasure to serve you.

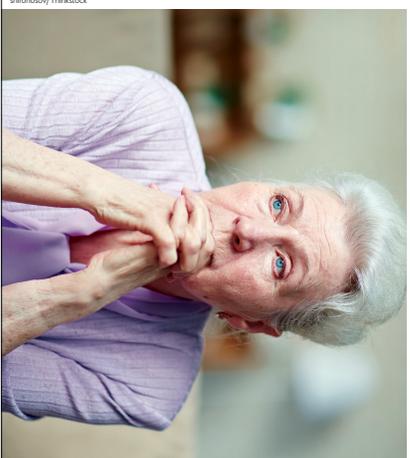
John H. Cochran III
President and CEO
Cornerstone Affiliates

“It is human nature to want to be self-sufficient, and most people are reluctant to ask for help.”
—Lyndy Negi

For more on successful aging and bold senior stories, visit thebegrupp.org.

be.informed

shironosov/Thinkstock



THE RETIREMENT CRISIS
According to a recent study from Bankrate, seniors' incomes just aren't going far enough. In 47 states, seniors do not have the standard 70 percent of income that many financial advisers believe they need for a comfortable retirement. With a low of 48-22 percent in Massachusetts and a national average of 60.27 percent, many seniors are living off of significantly less than they should be, signaling that there is a widespread lack of retirement preparedness across the nation.

How's Your Health?

Here are this year's successes and challenges when it comes to the health of U.S. seniors, according to the United Health Foundation.



Preventable Hospitalizations	↓ 9% in the past year
Home Health Care Availability	↑ 18% in the past 3 years
Hospice Care Use	↑ 40% in the past 3 years
Hospital Deaths	↓ 29% in the past 3 years
Health Status	↑ 7% in the past 3 years
Obesity	↑ 9% in the past three years
Food Insecurity	↑ 5% in the past year
Home-Delivered Meals	↓ 7% in the past year

Watch This:

'When I'm 65'

This entertaining one-hour documentary sheds light on how many seniors struggle with finances in retirement—and offers suggestions on how to make sure you have what you need. "When I'm 65" is available free online anytime at video.dprv.org/video/236550204.



BE FREE



monkey/businessimages/Thinkstock

Studies show that people older than 55 are more likely to participate in sharing platforms than the rest of the population. Enter the Freebird Club, similar to Airbnb, but only open to the over-50 crowd, created with the goal of connecting seniors who travel. Freebird Club allows its members to either host travelers in their own home or rent spare rooms when on a vacation. If you're a member, this can both help you monetize your assets and make connections while traveling. For those exploring alone, this is a fun way to meet locals and travel the world. Sign up for a membership at freebirdclub.net.

Retirement Facts

<p>64% of retirees have moved (or anticipate moving) for retirement.</p> <p>Evgenii Bobrov/Thinkstock</p>	<p>64% of Americans plan to continue working past the age of 65.</p> <p>reynr2006/Thinkstock</p>	<p>Top reasons for moving include being close to family (29%) and reducing home-related costs (26%).</p> <p>MicovOne/Thinkstock</p>
<p>Fewer than half of workers have tried to calculate how much they need to save for retirement.</p> <p>_human/Thinkstock</p>	<p>Only 21% of workers are "very confident" about having enough money for a comfortable retirement."</p> <p>Volodymyr Podosenko/Thinkstock</p>	

THE NEXT WAVE

The U.S. senior population is projected to grow 49.5% by 2030. This future wave of seniors:

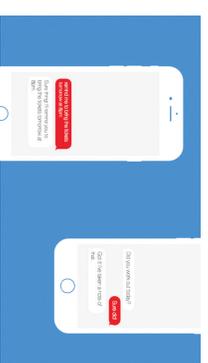
- SMOKES 50% LESS.
- HAS A 55% HIGHER PREVALENCE OF DIABETES.
- HAS A 25% HIGHER PREVALENCE OF OBESITY.
- HAS A 9% LOWER PREVALENCE OF VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT HEALTH STATUS.

IPGGutenbergUKLtd/Thinkstock

READ THIS:

'Old Heart'
Peter Ferry, Unabridged Books
June 9, 2015, \$16

Tom Johnson is a sharp 85-year-old whose two sons want him to move into a retirement home. Tom has other ideas. He wants to find the only woman he's ever loved, and heads to the Netherlands. This is a story about finding, and the trials and tribulations that come with memory loss.



Meet Carla

Reminder tool, \$9 per year (free for the first month)
By texting Carla at (213) 465-7640, you can set weekly or daily reminders to make sure you won't forget appointments or activities. She can even help you meet long-term goals by compiling your step counts to give you a weekly summary. If you prefer a male personal assistant, just swap your settings on the website: carla.io.

be:social
"A friend is someone who knows
all about you and still loves you."
—Elbert Hubbard



Wikipedia/Wikipedia

The People in Your Neighborhood

be:group neighbors are committed to welcoming new friends and maintaining connections.

By Dana Price

WHEN MARCE HULLINGER moved into her home in Westminster Gardens, a be:group senior living community in Duarte, California, she knew a few of the community's residents, but says she "still felt like the new kid on the block." The feeling didn't last long.

Getting to Know You

Within days, Hullinger met her neighbor as he washed his car in the driveway, striking up an easy friendship; other neighbors invited her to tea and to visit on their patios and a "deacon"—one of 25 community volunteers who welcome new residents in the various neighborhoods peppered across the 30-acre campus—offered practical insight by showing her around the grounds and answering questions.

All of these early interactions helped Hullinger feel connected and offered a glimpse into the warm nature of her new neighborhood. "It's a very inclusive community," she says.

Six years later, Hullinger, a former nurse who now serves as a deacon herself, is connecting with new neighbors to ensure they benefit from all the community has to offer and feel as at home as she did in those first days.

"We help answer questions and show them around—especially to the dining hall, which is our social hub, and to the library, where there's a really comprehensive resource book describing local services—and tell them about activities," Hullinger says.

Shirley McCulloch, who, with her husband, Larry, has lived at Westminster Gardens for 18 years and is also a deacon, says these early connections are important. "The deacon becomes a buddy and makes the new community member feel informed and cared about," she says, "and it's a great way for those of us who serve as deacons and have lived here for some time to get to know our new neighbors."

Circle of Friends

Getting to know her neighbors has been a highlight for Karol Evans, who moved to White Sands La Jolla, a be:group senior living community in La Jolla, California, two years ago. "The people here are phenomenal—interesting, fun and truly lovely people—and we're good friends; it's a village."

Evans is one of 15 White Sands La Jolla residents who helps maintain connections between neighbors through the

Photo: Monde Fields/White



Westminster Gardens deacon Shirley McCulloch, left, gathers with neighbors in the library.

Visit thebeigroup.org/gettingin to see other ways new residents make the transition.

Circle of Friends committee, a group created to involve and integrate residents receiving higher levels of care, making sure they too can fully experience White Sands.

Dr. Natasha Josefowitz, a resident and retired business professor, started the committee when she noticed assisted living residents weren't participating in the many social and other activities available in the community. "I thought, 'Why don't we visit residents and say, 'I want to go to this event, why don't you come with me?' It worked amazingly,'" she says, "because they were being invited by a friend."

From that beginning, Circle of Friends member Joan Lenke says, the committee has worked to ensure their neighbors feel like valued members of the community. "We want to make sure all the residents in the assisted living and memory care communities feel included," she says.

To this end, the group creates welcome packs which include some essentials new residents may need when they move in. They also visit regularly with residents, deliver weekly newsletters and calendars, involve them in activities, and spend time together in the assisted living library.

Fran Morse, another Circle of Friends member and co-chair, says that the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of other residents is really fulfilling. "It makes me feel good to help others," she says. ●

Spicing Up Mealtime

Celebrity chef Bal Arneson shows how a pinch of flavor can benefit your health.

By Monroe Fields/White

WOULD YOU RATHER pop a pill or add some turmeric to your dinner? OK, good health may not be quite that easy, but a study published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* shows that some spices, like cloves, ginger, rosemary and turmeric, have been linked to reducing inflammation and may help prevent heart disease, cancer and strokes.

While spices and fresh herbs have been boosting flavors cross-culturally for centuries, people today are paying more attention to how they might benefit more than a flavor profile. Cinnamon, oregano, sage and thyme—all known for bringing bold flavors to a dish—are also able to prevent glycation and hinder the formation of AGE compounds. This means that they can help prevent heart disease and premature aging, according to a study published in the *Journal of Medicinal Foods*.

Celebrity chef Bal Arneson, host of the *Cooking Channel* and *Food Network* Canada's "Spice Goddess" program, shared spicy health tips with residents at Regents Point and White Sands La Jolla, be:group senior living communities in Irvine and La Jolla, as part of Morrison Community Living's Celebrity Chef Series.

"The interactive elements of the show made it fun," said Bunny Spanier, a resident

Photo: Rick Mendosa



Chef Bal chats with residents at Regents Point.

at Regents Point. "Our chef's enthusiasm and participation, the pars of spices that were passed around, and of course, the samples ready for tasting, made it a truly sensational experience."

Bal featured her popular recipes for no-butter chicken, lentil cookies and chai iced tea during her presentation and cooking demo.

"One of the things I've learned from the residents in the communities I have visited is that they want to live longer and that they don't want to rely on just pharmaceuticals," Bal says.

She recommends purchasing spices in their natural state—be it seeds or the root—and then grinding what you need for recipes. Grinding your own spices releases the essential oils and scents that produce a fresher and more potent flavor.

Lipping your spice game allows you to easily cut salt. Bal adds that only a dash of salt is necessary when using fresh spices. "You don't need to add salt to get the flavor," she says. "You get that flavor from the amazing profile of spices." ●

be:well
"No one is born a great cook,
one learns by doing."
—Julia Child



Jim Wallace/Smithsonian Institution

Super Spices

Chef Bal's top recommendations:

Turmeric: Turmeric root, which belongs to the ginger family, has a mild fragrance reminiscent of ginger and orange. It is commonly used in Indian cuisine but can also be used to spruce up vegetables, soups and scrambles. Turmeric can help fight infections and some cancers, reduce inflammation and aid in digestion.

Cumin: Cumin seed has a nutty and spicy taste that brings a warm, earthy flavor to a dish. Cumin goes especially well with beans, bread, chicken, eggplant and squash. Additionally, it is likely that cumin has anti-diabetic properties.

Coriander: Coriander seed has a citrus aroma and is often used in making curries, spice blends and pickling. Coriander is also a source of powerful antioxidants and may be able to help treat cancer.



FINANCIAL FLIP

Your parents may have handled the finances for decades, but as they age, it's often your turn to balance the books.

By Matt Alderton

You've probably thought a lot about who will care for your parents' health as they age. But it's just as important to think about who will care for their finances. For many families, the answer is adult children, a growing number of whom are concerned about their parents' financial acuity, according to the Investor Protection Trust, a nonprofit organization dedicated to investor education and protection. In March 2016, it surveyed 703 Americans with at least one parent age 65 or older and found that nearly half (47 percent) are "very" or "somewhat" worried that their parents "have already become or will become less able to handle their personal finances over time," up from 40 percent in 2010. Only 25 percent are "not worried at all."

When fiscal fitness is in doubt, families often experience a "financial flip" wherein the children who once were supported by their parents' checkbook step in to manage it for them. Although the transition can be fraught with logistical and emotional challenges, it also can be the foundation for a retirement that is less stressful and more secure for parents and children alike.

A Daughter's Duty

Lyndy Negi saw her parents just once or twice a year. Because they lived in Arizona, six hours from her home in Lomita, California, she stayed in touch mostly by phone. Although she hadn't seen them in some time, everything sounded normal when they spoke. When her mother died unexpectedly in January 2015, she found out quickly that it wasn't.

"Apparently, she had double pneumonia and my parents didn't know it," says Negi, a part-time teacher and full-time parent of three. "Her legs, down close to her ankles, were swelling. They thought it was a circulation problem, so my dad took her to see a podiatrist late in the afternoon. The podiatrist saw that her legs were weeping, which is an indication of pneumonia, and told my dad to get her to the emergency room early the next morning."

Because he's hard of hearing and wasn't wearing his hearing aids that day, Negi's 92-year-old father, Nels Jansen, did not understand the diagnosis. After returning home that night, his wife was transferred to hospice, and passed away shortly after midnight.

"It all happened very quickly," Negi says. "It was a bit of a shock." So were the events that transpired afterward.

Although he originally wanted to continue living in his home in Arizona, which he'd designed and built with his wife, Jansen ultimately found the house too lonely and decided along with his children that he should move into a senior living community in Southern California, near Negi and her sister. They toured several communities and chose Westminster Gardens in Duarte, California.

"When we had my dad medically assessed to go into Westminster Gardens, they told us he has MCI, which is mild cognitive impairment—meaning he doesn't remember all the little things," Negi says. "We hadn't known at the time, but my parents had settled into a comfortable routine and were living on autopilot."

The transition to Westminster Gardens took place gradually over the course of several months, during which time Negi stepped in to help manage her father's

“We hadn’t known at the time, but my parents had settled into a comfortable routine and were living on autopilot.”
—Lyndy Negi

WHAT ABOUT TAXES?

Any time parents and children are engaged in financial decision-making, they should consider the tax implications. The decision to move into a senior living community is no exception, according to Ravi Ramnarain, a CPA with offices in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Bentonville, Arkansas. In some cases, he says, moving to a senior living community may entitle parents or their children to certain tax breaks. The two most common that families should be aware of are:

- **The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit:** If their parents qualify under IRS rules, adult children may be able to claim their parents as dependents on their tax returns, according to Ramnarain, who says parents only qualify as dependents if they make less than \$4,050 in earned income a year (Social Security income does not count, but investment income does) and receive more than 50 percent of their support—for food, housing, clothing, medical care, etc.—from their child. Because parents don't have to live with their children to qualify as their dependents, this can be an attractive benefit for adult children who are funding their parents' senior living expenses with their own income.
- **Medical deductions:** The IRS allows you to deduct qualified medical expenses that exceed 7.5 percent of your adjusted gross income for the year, according to Ramnarain. He adds that the entry and monthly maintenance fees paid to a senior living community—not to mention moving costs and other associated expenses—may be tax-deductible if seniors obtain documentation from their doctor indicating that their residence in the community is "primarily for and essential to necessary medical care. The community also should be able to provide documentation if it has promised that a portion of residents' fees will go toward medical care."

finances, including selling his house and settling his bills. That's when she realized that household management, which had not been a part of his daily routine, had fallen through the cracks. When she went to sell his house, she had to look everywhere before she eventually found the deed and property insurance information. When she began going through his mail, she discovered he was still paying for auto insurance two years after he'd surrendered his driver's license and still owned a timeshare he swore he'd canceled, the outstanding maintenance fees for which had gone into collections.

The hardest task can be managing the emotions associated with the role reversal. "My father is very appreciative of the assistance I've been able to offer and sometimes feels guilty that he can't manage everything and apologizes," she says. "It is human nature to want to be self-sufficient, and most people are reluctant to ask for help. But honestly, I didn't see any other way to do it," recalls Negi, who felt she had a fiduciary duty as the only one of four siblings within a 50-mile radius with an MBA.

A Necessary Transition

After her ill father died in 2014, Jane Ho began to worry about her mother, Marian, who was newly diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's.

"It was a really tough time," recalls Ho, an accountant who lives in Glendale, California. "My sisters and I had been trying to get my parents to move closer to us, and when my dad passed away we decided it was the perfect time for my mom to [sell her house in] Torrance, California. So we began looking at senior living communities."

See how other families have dealt with finances as their parents age at thebegrupp.org/familyfinance

Although her mom didn't want to move, she didn't like living alone and appreciated the benefits of living closer to her children. She agreed to look at communities with her daughters and moved into Windsor, a be-group senior living community in Glendale, shortly thereafter.

"When she moved into Windsor I took control of the checkbook," says Ho, who had begun managing her parents' finances casually when her father became ill. "My mother handled the finances years ago, but at some point she handed

everything off to my dad. When he was no longer doing well, I ended up stepping in to help them out."

Ho's assistance began with routine bill payment but gradually escalated as she became more concerned for her mother's well-being, culminating in her assuming full control of her mother's finances after the sale of her house. "There are a lot of people out there prying on seniors, and we were very

concerned about those people trying to scam her," Ho says. "Plus, my mom just couldn't remember what was going on as well as she used to. It was the perfect time to take over."

What sounds like an easy transition was anything but. "It was a difficult thing for my mom because she's used to being independent and taking care of things," Ho says. "But it had to happen." ●

TIPS FOR FLIPPING

Negi and Ho agree: Financial flips are often necessary but rarely easy. To make the transition as smooth as possible on both parents and children, they recommend the following:

- **Plan ahead:** Acting before there's a health event, when parents and children are thinking with their minds not their hearts, can prevent a lot of headaches later, says Ho. Her parents added her as an authorized user on their bank accounts well before they actually needed her assistance. "Years ago, my parents added me to their checking account as another signer so that it would be an easy transition for me should a situation like this arise," Ho says. "It was a good thing they did, because it made things a lot easier."
- **Seek power of attorney:** Although they'd planned for the future—they had a will and a living trust—Negi's parents neglected to give her power of attorney, which would have allowed her to act legally on their behalf. When she attempted to take over their finances, she encountered roadblocks from banks that were legally required to seek her father's signature every time she attempted to request information or complete a transaction. "Looking back, it would have definitely been worth the time and money to find an attorney, get my dad there and get power of attorney," Negi says. "Not having that created a lot of headaches and delays."
- **Find the files:** "My parents weren't expecting to move, so while they had all the documents they needed in the house, they couldn't remember where they were," recalls Negi, who says children should know where their parents keep important financial records and documents. Knowing their login credentials for accessing online accounts also can be helpful.
- **Seek support from siblings:** Although financial responsibility usually falls to one child, it's important that siblings look for common ground. "I know siblings don't always agree, but it was really important for me to be able to discuss things with my sisters and make any decisions together, because we all have my mom's best interest at heart," Ho says. "Emotionally, it was good to have other people to lean on."
- **Be grateful:** "It is important to be thankful for each day we have with our parents, even when feeling pressured with elder care in addition to everything else," says Negi. "I have been talking about elder care more with friends, and we agree that one key to sanity is keeping a sense of humor," she says. "We're all in the same boat. We're all aging, and someday we'll be in the same situation our parents are in. My children tease me whenever I forget something! Laughter is truly the best medicine—it is free and provides numerous positive side effects."

Coming Up ROSES

(and Lemons and Succulents)

Community support makes maintaining a flourishing garden easy.

By Annie Zaleski

There's nothing quite like the sights and smells of a garden in full bloom: beautiful flowers, chirping birds and breezes rustling leaves. While some might worry that moving to a community means the end of a hobby, it can actually be the start of a flourishing garden.

Mary Lou Jacoby embraced that notion when she and her husband moved from New Hampshire to Westminster Gardens—a be-group senior living community in Duarte, California. She saw it as an opportunity to fulfill a gardening dream. "I said to the kids, 'When we move to California, I want to put in a rose garden,'" she says. "We were very lucky to get this corner space. I thought, 'That's a perfect space to have my rose garden.'"

Jacoby found the milder West Coast climate perfect to cultivate the plants. And, luckily enough, their lot offered plenty of room to grow. After seeding the garden with two long rows of rose bushes, the couple inherited a neighbor's six plants when he moved. Jacoby estimates she has about 39 roses of various types—bushes, tree roses and climbers—along the length of their house, in a rainbow of colors: white, yellow, apricot, pink, deep purple, lavender, red. The climbers, nicknamed "Dream Weaver," are "a lovely bright pink, so that you can see it all the way across the space of the garden," she explains. "It stands up high above everything, when it's in season."

The flourishing roses have special meaning to Jacoby. Her mother adored the flower. "My parents, who also lived at Westminster Gardens, were missionaries in West Africa—I grew up in Africa. They had the jungle all around, but it was also nice to be able to grow flowers. [My mother] loved roses. They weren't as beautiful as they are here, because the jungle is really a little too much. But I began to love them."

The landscaping staff at Westminster Gardens is as dedicated to Jacoby's roses as she is; they help the couple care for the garden and will preserve it for years to come. "We're very grateful that be-group has allowed us to ask the gardeners to do it, because it's a beautiful spot," Jacoby says. "It's the largest rose garden anywhere here. It is a great joy to us."

Jacoby's colorful, cheerful rose displays also bring happiness and pleasure to her neighbors. "Our house is a wonderful corner for people who go for walks, or come and get pushed around in their wheelchairs," she says. "We're right up along the wall, so that it's a natural place that people walk. It's an uplift."

Flower Power

Follow flower fanatic Nancy Abernethy as she dedicates her life to recognizing and creating natural beauty. Not only was she a flower show judge with The Garden Club of America for 20 years, but she also has a degree in garden design, worked as a consultant and has traveled all over the world as a student of landscape design. Naturally, when she moved to Redwood Terrace, a be-group senior living community

Photo: Rick Mendoza



Lynnell Nelson-Hyman enjoys her garden at Redwood Terrace.



Nancy Abernethy shares the produce she grows in her garden with the community.

in Escondido, California—into a corner lot with a backyard that was empty except for a massive tree—she went to work planning a beautiful, lush space.

“I’m making it into a jungle, but there was nothing here,” she says. “I brought a whole bunch of stuff by the truckload. I belong to a garden club that furnished a lot of experimental trees and plants. Now, six years later, you should see the yard! It’s just full of stuff.”

Abernethy uprooted some of her prized plants from her former home in Pauma Valley and replanted them. These gems included an unusual palm tree called an elephant foot, a bunch of unique cacti and more than a dozen fruit trees. To this she added butterfly bushes that are now 10 to 12 feet high; a garden with blackberries, tomatoes and peppers; and various types of flowers, including forsythia, hibiscus and roses.

She also recently donated a big bag of intriguing lemons to her community after a robust harvest. “This is an unusual variety that I ran into judging a flower show,” she says of the green-stripped fruit that is pink inside. “We went

to a market later and bought the tree. It’s pink lemonade. It’s much sweeter than a lemon, but it’s just wonderful. They’re in bloom year-round.”

All of this takes work to maintain, of course, although Abernethy says the Redwood Terrace staff keeps residential yards in tip-top shape. “They work very hard. I have all kinds of respect for them.” And she can’t help but get the itch to go outside and tend to the garden herself, whether it’s adding more fertilizer or knocking down coveys. “I sit there and think of all the things I didn’t get done,” she laughs. “You’re never through if you’re a gardener.”

Sharing the Joy

Abernethy’s neighbor, Lynnell Nelson-Hyman, also has an abundance of citrus crops. She says she recently brought three baskets of Meyer lemons to the Redwood Terrace reception desk to share with fellow residents. She’s had so many oranges that a gleaner organization came to pick extras to give to those in need. She also gives loquats and guava from her fruit trees to interested neighbors.

Nelson-Hyman, who grew up in Oklahoma and spent 29 years living in Indianapolis, takes great joy in being able to share extra produce with others in the community. “All of the citrus fruits are just marvelous,” she says. “The oranges and tangerine and tangelos are so sweet and juicy, and the lemons are, too. I feel I have more than I can possibly use, and I share them. It gives me pleasure.”

The dancer, pianist and former choir director—who recently co-founded and co-directs a senior performing company—takes similar pride in the rest of the flora and fauna on her grassy, spacious corner lot. Peach, fig, tangerine, apricot and tangelo trees are a part of the landscape, as are flowers such as begonias, ajysum, astromerita, geraniums, penta, agapanthus, calla lily, canna, roses, lobelia and bird of paradise. Nelson-Hyman keeps two hummingbird feeders outside her kitchen window, and delights in the mockingbirds who also often visit. “When I’m outside, and I hear a mockingbird, my face just lights up—I’m smiling from ear to ear,” she says. “It’s such beautiful music to my ears.”

Nelson-Hyman says Redwood Terrace’s on-site gardeners take “excellent care” of her greenery. “They do a wonderful job. I don’t have to do anything, but I can if I want to. I love to garden, so sometimes I just can’t stand it—I’ve got to get out there and get my hands in stuff,” she laughs.

“It’s like heaven,” she says of her garden. “It’s just delightful. I’m just very thankful and happy that I found this place.”

Visit thebegrupp.org/gardens to see how other residents spruce up their outdoor spaces.

Celebrations, Big and Small

A family’s Alzheimer’s journey

by Sam Tong





Photos: Rick Mendez

Peggy Woelke, center, spends time with her daughter Debi, right, and family friend Candy, who helped her decide on a move to Kirkwood Orange.

Just as Cinco de Mayo, Peggy Woelke took a number of joyful whirls at a pinto, eager to get to the goodies inside. She also joined fellow residents and a staff member, who was in a traditional Mexican outfit, for a dance. Celebrations are a big deal at Kirkwood Orange, an assisted living and memory care community in Orange, California. They're also a good opportunity for loved ones to stay involved in their family members' lives.

Peggy spent her first Christmas at Kirkwood Orange last December, and her daughter, Debi Woelke, was there for the holiday dinner and events. Then the pair spent a day at Debi's where they baked their traditional holiday cookies. Debi was sure to bring extras to share with her mom's new Kirkwood family, including the two ladies who Peggy has lunch with every day.

Sharing is something that comes naturally to Peggy. When it was time to find a memory care community for her mom, Debi knew she wanted a place where Peggy would feel at home. She considered several factors including cleanliness, assisted living options, proximity to where she lives and overall atmosphere. In the end, she found that the homey environment and personalized touch of the caregivers that she observed at Kirkwood Orange

made it a place that she felt her mother could call home—and be herself.

"Peggy brings the joy out in all of us. If you see her and you are having a bad day, you just talk to her, and she can get you to change your entire day around," says Jessica Morales, administrator at Kirkwood Orange.

Celebrating the Individual

Peggy does a lot of quilting and likes to be included in all the events and activities at Kirkwood Orange. She's very outgoing and is always meticulous in her appearance—probably a result of her years doing sales in the makeup and beauty industry. She is always in full makeup, with her nails painted pink and her hair done up, says Morales. She is fun and spry and, because she participates in all the activities, her photos seem to appear in every issue of the community newsletter.

On the rare occasion she has anxiety—common among those with dementia—Morales says that they will talk about subjects Peggy likes, like Dr Pepper, her and Morales' favorite soda. Debi says that Peggy often feels that the people at Kirkwood do special things just for her. And

“So many people are at risk of isolation and lack of engagement as they grow older, and even more so for those who have Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia as they progress through the illness.”
—Cordula Dick-Muehlike

many residents feel the same way. Every person on staff knows each resident's past and uses a person-centered care approach to help patients with cognitive recall—for example, they will mention hometowns and favorite pastimes when they are chatting, playing bingo or trivia, personalizing every experience and interaction.

Individual likes and dislikes are respected. If someone doesn't want to quilt, for example, she's free to read or garden. Cordula Dick-Muehlike, a licensed psychologist and memory care consultant at Kirkwood Orange, helps design engaging, relationship-building activities that cater to personal interests. She helps craft a rich environment where residents have meaningful days and feel they are truly part of the community. Dick-Muehlike notes, “While individuals with Alzheimer’s disease may not remember what activities they have participated in, the positive emotional experience of engaging with others stays with them.”

Kirkwood Orange is dedicated to providing avenues for residents to express themselves and find joy in their everyday lives. “So many people are at risk of isolation and lack of engagement as they grow older, and even more so for those who have Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia as they progress through the illness,” says Dick-Muehlike.

Activities at Kirkwood Orange provide stimulation for residents and include exercise, free-form arts, crafts, group games, trivia and spiritual practices for physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and sensory stimulation. Most people would not have access to this variety of activities if they lived alone or with their children, who usually have busy lives.

Family Affair

Debi is very involved in her mother's community, says Morales. “I can't say enough good things,” she says. Debi and her family, including the family's longtime friend Candy, and Debi's dog, Lucy, visit regularly at Peggy. They also attend a monthly caregiver and educational support group where families can talk about what they are going through with their loved ones.

In addition to spending time in the community, they join trips and outings. A group of nearly a dozen people took the train to San Clemente and, upon arrival, Debi had arranged for a friend who is a volunteer police officer to hold a sign up welcoming the participants. It made all the residents feel special. Either Debi or

Candy visits Peggy every day.

The community also organizes regular local lunch outings three to four times a month to places like El Torio, or morning doughnut runs. There are also barbecues and other special meals prepared by Chef William Scalse. When Debi was visiting different communities as she researched a home for her mom, she remembers thinking that they must have scheduled a meeting during mealtime so that they could show how nicely the chef prepares the food.

See what kinds of activities residents enjoy in memory care at thebegrup.org/memopractices

While fully ensconced in her community, Peggy often wears T-shirts that showcase her passions and past affiliations, like one from her alma mater, Baylor College, where she graduated with a degree in music. She also has a T-shirt that says “Yellow Rose of Texas,” reflecting Home-state pride. A big sports fan (of the Angels and the Hornets, the women's basketball team that Debi coached for 17 years at Fullerton College), Peggy joined her family for a Mother's Day trip to an Angels game. The team didn't win, but the family got to spend the afternoon together.

Peggy is well-versed in the nature of Alzheimer's, having been the main caregiver for her late husband, a veteran who also suffered from the disease. She understands the toll that the disease takes and used to host support groups and counseled other families as part of her active involvement with the Alzheimer's Association of Orange County. Debi thinks that this helped her mom accept her condition and understand how the disease has affected her.

While caring for her husband, Peggy tried to learn all she could, and after he passed, she continued to give back to the community by participating in fundraising walks and sharing her experiences. She led discussions and reflected with others as part of faith-based meetings. Both Peggy and her husband were also an active part of a study conducted by the UCI Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders, where Dick-Muehlike first met Peggy and her family more than 20 years ago.

Debi says she trusts her mother is receiving good care and emotional support at Kirkwood Orange. She feels at ease about traveling because she knows her social, engaged mom isn't alone. ●

Fly Girls

A history as career jet-setters helps Regents Point's former flight attendants' friendship take off.

By Erin Bereton

beadventurous
 "If you were born without wings, do nothing to prevent them from growing."
 —Coco Chanel



Boris Lipitzki

ON HER FIRST NIGHT

at Regents Point, a be-group community in Irvine, California, former United Airlines flight attendant Colleen Whyre met a helpful neighbor—assisting with a stubborn lock—whose wife turned out to be a fellow former flight attendant, from Northwest Airlines.

Whyre soon found out another flight attendant lived across the hall, and she's since met several others. A number live in the community, she says—many worked in the industry when commercial travel was becoming more popular.

In the process, airlines moved away from the more leisurely trips that Jo King, also a Regents Point resident, who flew with Pan Am in the late 1950s, remembers. That shift, she believes, has changed the nature of the job.

"People think it's a really exciting, glamorous job; we were in the heyday of that," King says. "Now, on an hour flight, attendants are supposed to serve something—it's a different life."

Wanderlust

King became a stewardess—Pan Am's preferred title, she says—following her move from California to New York after college to experience big city life.

"After a year, I said, 'I need to see Europe,'" King says. So she did. Her work took her to London, Paris, Rome and Frankfurt, as well as Tokyo, Scandinavia, Africa, Istanbul and Beirut. Utilizing the airline's employee discount, King also brought her mother, who had emigrated to the U.S. from Italy, back to her village in Sicily.

"I went everywhere," King says. "That was the whole idea." When she got married and left the airline, King and her husband used Pan Am's parting gift—an international ticket—on an extended honeymoon in South America.



Colleen Whyre



Jo King

Francisco area as a nurse, wasn't interested when one of her patients suggested she interview for a flight attendant position.

"But then, just for the heck of it, on my next day off I went and interviewed," she says. "And the following day, I was hired." United, according to Whyre, liked to have nurses on longer trips over water, so she frequently flew from Los Angeles to Hawaii.

After four years, Whyre's in-air career ended in 1962, when she got engaged to a Pasadena lawyer she'd met on a blind date two of her co-workers set up.

Whyre—who went back to school at age 40 to pursue a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, and eventually earned a doctorate—embarked on a new adventure.

"Flying gave us a real education—not only of knowing the scope of the world and its cultures, but the confidence in knowing you could carry on a conversation and handle most situations," she says. ●

Although the couple and their three children journeyed over the years to a number of destinations, King now travels primarily to see family in Florida, Texas and Palo Alto, California. She credits her job with introducing her to countless interesting places and people.

Up In the Air

Whyre, who previously worked in the San

"We found it to be just the ticket. It fit all of our criteria."



Photo: Rick Mendoza

Al and Gayle Guglielmo

Ages: 75 and 68

be.group Community: Redwood Terrace
Time as Residents: 7 months

By Kelley O'Connor

When Al and Gayle Guglielmo decide to downsize and move from their house in Poway, California, nothing seemed to fit. They rejected condos, townhomes, smaller houses—and then they visited Redwood Terrace. "We found it to be just the ticket," says Gayle. "It fit all of our criteria."

It helped that they had friends already residing in the senior living community, including a woman Gayle has known through their church choir for 20 years. The couple spent 40 years in Poway, which is just 16 miles from Redwood Terrace, and still maintain a close connection to the area. "We're still involved in our previous neighborhood, our church and friends," says Gayle.

But the Guglielmos have made new friends, too. Shortly after they moved in, a resident phoned to invite the pair to dinner. Later, they were stopped in the dining room and asked to join another couple at their table. A member of the landscaping committee noticed Al's love of gardening and invited him to join her in maintaining the community's abundance of rose bushes.

"It's been very nice, very welcoming," says Al. "Everybody's very friendly here." ●

Visit thebe.group.org/service to see a few other be.group residents who bonded over their shared experiences.



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