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Newsletter

JANUARY 2017

Volunteerism: Good for your Health & Spirit!

Years ago I directed an Alzheimer's Respite program and my most dedicated volunteer was a retired nurse with the patience of a saint. Ester was volunteering well into her 90's and always took the most anxious participant to companion with for the entire afternoon. When I asked her why she volunteered she said it gave her life a sense of purpose, learning new skills, and since volunteering she has less pain from arthritis and feels healthier. She told me she was getting far more than she was giving.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, a Federal agency says that a quarter of those over the age of 55 volunteer. AARP's Experience Corps reports that 97% of the volunteers they surveyed said that volunteering gives them a sense of purpose.

I have volunteered since I was a teenager (which reminds me to encourage children to do such as it builds character, empathy and opens doors to future careers). I am not sure how I stepped into this being a life value; however, my parents were both involved

in Scouting and church activities. I can tell you that from personal experiences as an adult working with homeless organizations and mission trips (both domestic and international), that they have added to my sense of gratitude and expanded my awareness of how much "love" is valued in cultures and in people that have far less than most of us.

Recent research is showing the health benefits of volunteering; it has been proven to lower mortality, depression, blood pressure, and heart disease while increasing greater functional abilities. Some of this can be attributed to being more active – which is one of the highest contributors to good health and positive aging. Additionally, volunteering also lowers stress which is a large factor in disease.

Another benefit of volunteering is increased social connections which are important as we age and friends and family move away or die. Social isolation increases mortality and health-related problems. Many volunteers report that these activities are fulfilling and increase a



About Our Founder

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management (now called aging life care) since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989, which now employs over 200 caring people. Eldercare Services has been providing Bay Area families with care management, home care services (caregiving), advocacy, counseling, support groups and education for 27 years.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION: *"I connect to those in need with my time and resources."*

sense of happiness. Others say they have learned new skills and some have gone on to take part-time paying positions within the organization they had assignments.

International opportunities give you a purpose in your travel – it can be a vacation with a purpose. My husband went to Nicaragua with other Rotary Club members this past October to put mechanical hands on those in need and was moved by the beauty and the culture of that country. His heart was touched by the lives changed with the new ability to write, draw or hold jobs.

A recent article in the Harvard Business Review reported that volunteering your time makes you feel like you have more time. They also said that those who donate to charity feel wealthier than those who don't.

If you are not connected and looking for a place to volunteer there are hundreds of organizations in desperate needs for your time and skills. It is important to find a placement that gives you joy and a sense of purpose. Check out national websites that will match your skills with the needs in your local community. Two of those are www.VolunteerMatch.org and www.MovingWorlds.org (international opportunities). Belonging to a service club, like Rotary, is a way to expand your touch both locally and internationally – click here to find a club near you <https://www.rotary.org/en/search/club-finder>.

The Village to Village Network (a grassroots organization created by seniors to assist all in continuing to live in their communities as they age), is developing in Contra Costa, Alameda and San Francisco counties. To find a Village nearby try the national search www.vtvnetwork.org or call our office and we can connect you to local Villages.

You will be enriched as you reach out to help others in the smallest ways. What a better world we would have if we all volunteered just four hours a week!

Happy Healthy New Year!

Location of Events:

Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd.,
Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Upcoming Events

Dementia Road Map: From Diagnosis to Family Care

WEDNESDAY JAN. 18th, 2017 • 5:30PM-7:00PM

**Presented by Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA,
MFT, CMC**

Join Linda Fodrini-Johnson as she discusses what you need to know, what you need to plan, and what you and your family can do when faced with the challenges of dementia.

- What is dementia? Where is it diagnosed?
- Understanding the progression
- What does a family need to do to prepare for the journey?
- Protecting dignity and reducing stress in all family members

**No fee, but advanced registration is required. Visit EldercareAnswers.com for registration information.*

The Elephant in the Room: Difficult Conversations We All Should Have

FRIDAY JAN. 20th, 2017 • 2:00PM-3:30PM

**Presented by Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA,
MFT, CMC**

A workshop to empower family caregivers with the right tools for sensitive topics.

How to have the “difficult” conversations with ourselves, our children and our spouses regarding real and imagined challenges we may encounter in later years. Topics include: keeping or selling the family home, future health considerations and when it's time to stop driving.

**No fee, but advanced registration is required. Visit EldercareAnswers.com for registration information.*

TO REGISTER

Call: **866.760.1808** or

Email: info@EldercareAnswers.com