October 17th was a very special day for Caring Hands as one of our volunteers, Carolyn Schick, was among the top six winners to be awarded “Volunteer of the Year” by the Culture to Culture Foundation. The third annual event was held at The Kensington in Walnut Creek. More than 100 people were in attendance including friends and family members of the 27 nominees. Caring Hands has been well-represented in the past, with previous award winners: John Gardella, Harry Jayasingha, and Ray Zenoni.

Carolyn has been volunteering at Caring Hands Caregivers Program for the past 11 years, volunteering more than 2,300 hours assisting seniors and providing program support in Contra Costa County. She is currently seeing her fourth long-term care receiver. The seniors she has assisted are individuals living independently. With her support they were able to get to doctors’ appointments, pick up medications, and most importantly, had a friend who visited them weekly, religiously!

Carolyn also hosts fundraisers and is actively involved with Philanthropic Educational Organization, a nonprofit group advancing women through providing better access to higher education. For the past three years, she has also served as the financial manager at Hope Lutheran Church in Rossmoor.

As you can see, Carolyn lives a life of service and is committed to serving the young and the young at heart.
Grief can arise from any loss, not just from a death of a close loved one. Other losses that can trigger grief are:

• Loss of a cherished relationship or dream
• Loss of a job or of financial security
• Loss of health for yourself or a dear family member
• Loss of independence
• Loss of contentment
• Loss of a home

Losses, whether minimal or life-altering, whether loosing someone or something, require a grief process that can be extensive and burdensome for many people. This support group will explore the grieving process following a loss. Participants will share their feelings and experiences in a supportive environment. They will learn the art of understanding their pain, letting go, self-care and moving forward to fulfill their lives and achieve happiness again. All disclosures are treated with confidence and respect.

The group will run for eight (8) sessions and it will meet on Wednesdays from 2-4 pm, twice a month, starting January 12, 2011. It is open to the Caring Hands community: our seniors, volunteers and their families. Participants must commit to all of the 8 sessions of the program. Maria Behera, Licensed Clinical Social Worker will be the facilitator of this support group.

Capacity: 25 people. Call 925-952-2999 to sign up.
I am a California native, born and raised in a small town in Northern California. I moved to Los Angeles for school, and later lived in Argentina and in Spain to study for a few semesters as part of my Spanish major at Pepperdine University. My education allowed me the unique opportunity to translate for medical professionals offering free surgeries in developing countries. These experiences prepared me for my career in health outreach in medically underserved communities, especially those that are Spanish-speaking.

As Latino Outreach Coordinator I will be responsible for conducting outreach throughout Central, South and East Contra Costa County, in collaboration with the Caring Hands staff, to recruit Spanish-speaking volunteers and identifying Spanish-speaking seniors to participate in the Caring Hands Volunteer Caregivers Program as well as the Senior Transportation Program.

I look forward to being a part of this great team.

At this time of Thanksgiving words cannot express how grateful we are for our giving and caring volunteers.

The words we often hear from our seniors are: “You sent me an angel.” “I don’t know what I would do without him.” “She always has a smile on her face and is happy to see me.”

There is a growing need for volunteers who can provide a couple of hours a week to lend a hand with a ride to an appointment, shopping, giving a caregiver a break or just being a friend who can listen to an interesting life story. We are looking for bi-lingual volunteers for the Latino community as well.

If you are already a Caring Hands volunteer, would you consider helping another care receiver? Please also ask a friend or neighbor if they might be able to help. We have volunteer opportunities for weekly matches and for occasional rides providers as well.

We all feel like we could use a little assistance now and then. Imagine how you might make someone feel who has stopped driving, whose family may be out of the area or might be too busy to help as often as they would like. You have the potential to make a huge difference in someone’s life.

Caring Hands has volunteer trainings throughout the year. Our first one for the new year is January 21, 2011 in Walnut Creek. We will have a Spanish-speaking training April 8, 2011 in Brentwood. A pre-registration, orientation interview and a background screening need to be completed by January 14 in order to attend the Walnut Creek class.

Consider making this a New Year’s resolution! Contact Linda Groobin or Jacie Jones at 925-952-2999 or visit our website at www.johnmuirhealth.com/caring_hands.
Caring Hands Advisory Committee

Joe Bettencourt        Interim Healthcare Staffing, Chair
Bob Fairbanks          Walnut Creek Community, Vice Chair
Nancy Lewis, LCSW       Senior Alternatives, Secretary
Angelica Ariza         St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
Rita Clancy            Jewish Family & Children’s Services of the East Bay
Sue Fordon             Hospice of the East Bay
Roxanne Foster         Director, Volunteer Services, John Muir Health
John Gardella          Walnut Creek Community
Harry Jayasingha       Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dwane Michael     Pastoral Care, John Muir Medical Center-Walnut Creek Campus
Cathie Ramey           Walnut Creek Senior Club
Mary Roberts           Saint John Vianney Catholic Church
Joan Schommer          Saint John Vianney Catholic Church
Ray Zenoni             Pleasant Hill Community

2011 Upcoming Events

2011 Volunteer Training Sessions (For new volunteers on a one-time only basis)

January 21  Mandatory Volunteer Training .................................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............8:45 – 13:00
March 25    Mandatory Volunteer Training .................................................JMOC-Brentwood............................8:45 – 13:00
April 8     Mandatory Volunteer Training (Spanish-speaking) ..............JMOC-Brentwood............................8:45 – 13:00
May 13      Mandatory Volunteer Training .................................................JMMC-Concord Campus .............8:45 – 13:00
July 22     Mandatory Volunteer Training .................................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............8:45 – 13:00
September 9 Mandatory Volunteer Training (Spanish-speaking) ...........JMOC-Concord.................................8:45 – 13:00
September 23 Mandatory Volunteer Training (Spanish-speaking) ........JMOC-Brentwood............................8:45 – 13:00
November 18 Mandatory Volunteer Training .............................................JMMC-Concord Campus .............8:45 – 13:00

2011 Wheel Chair Training

January 21  Wheelchair Training .................................................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............3:15 – 14:30
March 25    Wheelchair Training .................................................................JMOC-Brentwood............................3:15 – 14:30
May 13      Wheelchair Training .................................................................JMOC-Concord Campus .............3:15 – 14:30
July 22     Wheelchair Training .................................................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............3:15 – 14:30
September 23 Wheelchair Training ...............................................................JMOC-Brentwood............................3:15 – 14:30
November 18 Wheelchair Training ...............................................................JMMC-Concord Campus .............3:15 – 15:00

2011 Continuing Education Sessions

January 11  Let’s Talk About Your Match* ....................................................JMOC-Brentwood............................10:00 –12:00
February 3  Senior Fraud Prevention ............................................................JMOC-Brentwood............................1:00 – 3:00
April 21    Let’s Talk About Your Match* ....................................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............10:00 –12:00
June 7      Fall Prevention .................................................................JMMC-Concord Campus ................2:00 – 4:00
August 4    Activities for Seniors .................................................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............2:00 – 4:00
October 14  Losses, Transitions, and Moving .............................................JMMC-Concord Campus ................10:00 –12:00

Special Events

March 3     12th Annual Appreciation Dinner ...........................................JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus .............6:00 – 8:30
May 20      Spring Tea .................................................................The Kensington/Walnut Creek ........2:00 – 4:00

*Please join our Caring Hands social workers and to discuss your match. Attend both if you would like.

Caring Hands is a program of John Muir Health