

Spring 2014

Caring Hands

A Program of John Muir Health



Carol and Gerry: A Special Relationship

By Carol Riley, Caring Hands Volunteer

Ten years ago, I was missing my mother. She was 95 and just beginning to need someone to care for her in her home. Connecticut, where she lived was a long way from California, and although I visited as often as I could, it didn't feel as if I was doing enough. I was grateful for my sisters who lived closer and for the wonderful woman who helped them care for my mother. I decided I needed to find a way to care for an aging senior here to compensate for not being able to do more for my mother.

And that was my introduction to *Caring Hands* — the perfect opportunity to meet and help a local senior. I was matched with Gerry, age 80, living on her own and coping with macular degeneration. The condition was making it increasingly difficult for her to read and manage her affairs. We began our weekly visits. We would spend one afternoon each week keeping her accounts in order, reading the directions on her medications, labels, and newsletters. We shared the stories of our weeks, our families, our favorite recipes. We discussed the books we loved and our favorite authors.

We compared notes on movies, rooted for the A's, and discussed current events. We denounced politicians, wondered what celebs could possibly have been thinking, and managed the world events from her dining room table. When her family couldn't visit, we enjoyed Mother's Day brunch together. And when her granddaughter comes to visit, we enjoy cookouts at my house and shopping trips. Gerry just celebrated her 90th — what a milestone! It was a lovely celebration of life attended by family and friends. And it also marked our 10-year anniversary of being friends. I'm supposed to be helping her, but she has helped me more. I'm in awe of her indomitable spirit, sense of humor, intelligence and courage. She is fearless and just keeps going despite her failing eyesight and some health challenges. What a joy and blessing to be part of her life.

April is Volunteer Month Words from our thankful care receivers:

"She has helped me immensely. She is cheerful, helpful, energetic and very companionable. Thank you for this essential service".

"He is a wonderful man, reliable, considerate, caring, and trustworthy. I have been blessed. My life was very empty before associating with him"

"When you come, I don't look any different on the outside. You can't see inside me, but when you come to see me, I feel much better on the inside!"

That's what *Caring Hands* does; it helps seniors "feel better on the inside!" *Caring Hands'* purpose is to provide care which promotes continued independence and to help combat loneliness. Volunteer hours are flexible.

All of us at *Caring Hands* and John Muir Health want to send a sincere thank you for your gift of caring. You have touched so many lives in the process.

For additional information watch the video at: www.johnmuirhealth.com/caringhands.

Caring Hands Volunteers and Seniors...

Save the date!

Friday, June 6, 2014

Afternoon Tea

Time: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

JMMC – Walnut Creek

Details to follow

Caring Hands Celebrates 15 Years



The *15th Annual Caring Hands Volunteer Appreciation Dinner* was held on Monday, February 24, 2014 in the Ball Auditorium at the John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek. This was a major milestone for the program. Fifteen years ago the mission of helping seniors to remain independent and in their own homes was only an idea in the minds of a few, very strong and devoted people. In 1999, the program had no volunteers or seniors. Today 340 volunteers are helping over 360 seniors!



Since the program began in 1999, 1,703 seniors have been helped, 1,360 volunteers have been trained, 77,732 rides have been given and over 240,000 volunteer hours have been reported!



Linda Groobin, Program Manager, thanked all who were in attendance. A special acknowledgement was given to the members of the John Muir Health leadership team and to the volunteers who in 1998 and 1999 created and believed in this special program. Three members of the 1999 John Muir Health team returned to celebrate with us; Reverend Dwane Michael, Ken Meehan, and Alice Villanueva.

Also in attendance were 12 volunteers who were among the first caregivers in 1999. Remarkably, eight present are still actively serving in the program today! One dedicated volunteer, Carolyn Schick, was recognized as the one volunteer who started in 1999 and has reported the most volunteer hours, 3,342! She continues to serve in the office every Wednesday.

Roxanne Foster, Director of Volunteer Services and founding Program Manager, presented each participant from 1999 a personal note and a small gift, but her words of heartfelt thanks are what resonated with everyone. Linda Groobin made a special presentation to Roxanne for her



commitment to *all* volunteers and for her vision of what *Caring Hands* could mean to the many seniors in our community and to John Muir Medical Center as well.



of Heartfelt Care Giving

Several members of the current leadership team were in attendance to help celebrate this milestone anniversary. Jane Willemsen, President and Chief Administrative Officer, Walnut Creek, stated that volunteers might be the unsung heroes, but that they have not gone unnoticed by all at John Muir Health. Michael Cvarich, Vice President, Legacy Planning, thanked all who have been financial contributors. The first Walnut Creek Auxiliary President, Sandy Scott-Jones and the current President, Robin Harrison were thanked by Michael for their continued financial support.

The guests were treated to stories shared by Anna and her volunteer Grala and Elsa and her volunteer Ed. Anna has been part of *Caring Hands* since 1999. She told us her life story and how she came to *Caring Hands*. Over the years she has had 17 different volunteers who have helped her. She thanked them all and shared what a special friendship she has with Grala. Elsa passionately described how much Ed meant to her. He enthusiastically agreed!

Joe Bettencourt, the Chair of the *Caring Hands*

Advisory Committee

presented each attendee with a long stemmed red rose and thanked everyone for coming.



Don Kimura Recognized for Donating 150 Pints of Blood!



Don became a *Caring Hands* volunteer in April of 2007. He has helped several seniors and is currently matched with Catherine where a very special friendship has developed. Recently we learned that Don gives in other ways as well. As a young man in Hawaii, Don began donating blood and set a goal to give 150 pints. In March, he met that goal and has set a new goal of 200! Hopefully we will be motivated by Don's accomplishment and be inspired to do our part as well.

Congratulations Don!

To schedule an appointment call 1-800-Red Cross (800 733-2767).

Caring Hands Advisory Committee

Joe Bettencourt	<i>Interim Healthcare Staffing, Chair</i>
Sue Fordon	<i>Hospice of the East Bay, Vice Chair</i>
Ray Zenoni	<i>Pleasant Hill Community, Secretary</i>
Catherine Chodorow, MSW, LCSW	<i>Lafayette Community, Program Subcommittee</i>
Linda Doll	<i>Christ the King Catholic Church, Caring Hands Outreach Committee Chair</i>
Rita Clancy, LCSW	<i>Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay</i>
Roxanne Foster	<i>Director, Volunteer Services, John Muir Health</i>
Ken Gray	<i>Bay Point Ambrose Park and Recreation</i>
Nancy Lewis, LCSW	<i>Geriatric Care Coordinator, John Muir Health Senior Services</i>
Liz Masten	<i>Martinez Community</i>
Rev. Dwane Michael	<i>Retired, Pastoral Care, John Muir Medical Center-Walnut Creek Campus</i>
Grala Warren	<i>St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek</i>



Caring Hands Staff

Roxanne Foster	<i>Director, Volunteer Services, John Muir Health</i>
Linda Groobin	<i>Program Manager</i>
Maria Behera, LCSW	<i>Intake Coordinator</i>
Kathy Friend, LCSW	<i>Social Services Coordinator</i>
Lilian Kotz	<i>Department Secretary</i>
Bernice Russ	<i>Volunteer Support Assistant</i>



2014 Upcoming Events

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

May 30	New Volunteer Training.....	JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus	8:45 – 2:30
July 25	New Volunteer Training.....	JMOC-Brentwood	8:45 – 2:30
September 26	New Volunteer Training.....	JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus	8:45 – 2:30
November 20	New Volunteer Training.....	JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus	8:45 – 2:30

Special Events

June 6	Afternoon Tea.....	JMMC-Walnut Creek Campus	2:00 – 4:00
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Currently Caring Hands has more than 40 seniors waiting to be matched. Please consider helping. Call 925-952-2999