

Spring 2018

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Dimensions of Dementia

By Carol Zeller

Susan knows that George left the house to run errands in their local community. The phone rings and much to her surprise, it’s George. He is very distressed and agitated. He says that he does not know where he is or how to get home. This is the third time George has experienced an episode of this nature. He then asks Susan if he is losing his mind. So begins their journey.

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a general term describing a brain illness that causes a long term and gradual loss of memory and mental ability severe enough to interfere with a person’s daily life and activities.

What causes Dementia?

All aging humans will develop some decline in cognitive capacity over time, which can include abilities like conceptual reasoning, memory, and processing speed. This is normal. Dementia is caused by damage to brain cells. This alteration in the cellular structure ultimately creates memory loss, as well as problems with reasoning and judgment. In addition, there is impairment of the ability to focus or pay attention.

Alzheimer’s accounts for 60 – 80% of all dementia cases and, “In the absence of effective prevention and treatment, the prospects for the future are of great concern, with 13 million Americans and 160 million globally projected for 2050 to suffer from this dreaded disease,” says Dr. Rammohan Rao.

How is Dementia diagnosed?

There are no definitive tests to diagnose dementia. Initially, the health care provider completes a through history, physical, and a complete blood count. Other testing may include glucose levels, kidney function, electrolyte, and liver function tests. If an in-depth assessment is indicated, a clinical neuropsychologist may administer a full complement of cognitive tests that require several hours to determine specific patterns of functional decline. The health care provider may interview the spouse or caregiver for information about changes in life activities that the client is experiencing. Sometimes the clients themselves do not report cognitive changes as much as changes in mood or behavior such as anxiety, apathy, or depression.

Is there treatment?

There is currently no treatment to cure most dementias. There are some treatments and interventions that may slow down the process or help to improve the quality of life. The work being done by Dr. Rammohan Rao and his team at Affirmativ Health (www.affirmativhealth.com) provides hope that reversal of symptoms may actually be possible. Ongoing research is needed and you can provide a vital role by volunteering to participate in clinical studies. Go to www.alz.org and look up TrialMatch. The Alzheimer's Association also provides information and support to to the family and the client to cope with this progressive disease.

Carol Zeller is a Commissioner from Corte Madera.

Message from the Commission Chair

By Salamah Locks



Happy Spring AND Summer Great Age readers! Yes, our summer has also come much earlier than expected this year. Just look at all of the blooming flowers and trees throughout our lovely county. If you are a gardener, get your tomato plants in the ground this month.

Marin Year of the Older Adult 2018 was launched in January. Please visit www.marinyearoftheolderadult.org for all of the special events and presentations throughout the year. Commissioner James Monson has a featured article on page 4 about this yearlong celebration.

May is the National Older Americans Month and the Commission has planned a new and different event for you to enjoy. By your popular demand, we will have nationally renowned physician, author, and health and nutrition researcher, Dr. Dean Ornish. This event will be a stimulating breakfast at the Marin Art and Garden Center (MARC) in Ross. You will also get to meet and converse with your appointed Commissioner and California Senior Legislator. The event theme is *Engage at Every Age* and will take place on May 3. The cost is \$20. It is best to register early, as seats are very limited!

Registration for this event is available at www.eventbrite.com. On the page, search for “Engage at Every Age” in Ross, Ca.

If you need assistance with the registration process, please call (415) 473-2689. Registration forms can also be downloaded from the Commission on Aging website at www.marinhhs.org/boards/commission-aging. The form is located under the “Related Materials” section.

If you have suggestions or ideas for our educational

topics, please let us know. We are here to provide education and advocacy for you, especially ways to enhance your longevity.

Updates and specific information can always be obtained by calling 415-457-INFO (4636) or on our website at: www.livelonglivewellmarin.org.

New Commissioner

By James Monson

Diana Bradley: City of Belvedere

Diana Bradley has been sensitive to attitudes arising from ageism for some time. When then State Senator Tom Hayden proposed legislation denying drivers’ licenses to Californians more than 65 years old, she immediately let him know why this was a very bad idea.

Without substantially more buses, taxi subsidies, and other transportation support, seniors would lose their independence and ability to move freely about their greater communities. Books, movies, and television shows that depict senior citizens as old, slow, incapable of decisions, and worse annoy Diana.



When she learned of the opening for a Commissioner to represent Belvedere, she felt that it was a good opportunity to learn about what was being done for seniors in Marin County and to help in those efforts. Diana is interested in working on transportation issues and other programs where she can contribute.

Diana is a very accomplished artist. She is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society. She has exhibited her work internationally through the U.S. Embassy Arts program. Many people have enjoyed the Diana Bradley Watercolor Calendar, which she has painted and printed for 30 years.

James Monson is a Commissioner from District 4.

Meet Jenay Cottrell, Program Manager, Area Agency on Aging

By Amy Dietz



A native Marinite, Jenay Cottrell is happy to be working in Marin again. “I’m honored to be working with the Marin Commission on Aging and local community based organizations that serve older adults,” she said. “Despite much affluence here, there is a growing need for services for older adults and persons with disabilities from all socioeconomic backgrounds.”

While caring for her father during the last two years of his life and growing close to her niece who has Cerebral Palsy, Jenay developed a strong interest in the wellbeing of older adults, persons with disabilities, and the families that care for them.

Before joining the Marin County Area Agency on Aging, she was an analyst with Sonoma County’s Adult and Aging Services Division where she worked across the division, including for the Area Agency on Aging. Prior to that, Jenay was Executive Director of LITA of Marin, which serves residents of long-term care. Previously, she was a consultant with clients including The Redwoods, Marin General Hospital, and Kaiser Permanente’s Northern California Region.

Jenay holds a bachelor’s degree in Journalism/Public Relations with a minor in Business Administration and a certificate in Human Resources Management. She is also a graduate of Leadership Novato and the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership’s Emerging Leaders program.

A resident of Novato, she grew up in Terra Linda and later lived in Corte Madera. Jenay and her husband have three grown children, who attended schools in Novato and Kentfield, and a German Shepherd. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, exploring Northern California, and visiting family in other states.

Amy Dietz is a Senior Project Coordinator in Aging and Adult Services.

Budgetarians

By Natalie Krelle-Zepponi

A “budgetarian” is one who makes food choices that offer both cost and nutritional value. Beyond savings on your food bill, consider the possibilities—lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and triglycerides, loss of weight (if recommended), and improved blood sugar control. These benefits can lead to fewer doctor visits, potential decrease in medications, improved ability to exercise, better emotional state, etc. It’s cyclical, and saves even more money!

Our individual grocery bills can take a large chunk of our monthly income, and we feel the pinch when food prices rise while our incomes do not. With a mission to reduce food costs and food waste, changing the way we shop and eat could result in more healthful dietary practices. Thankfully, some of the most nutritious foods available can be a fantastic value.

Below are a few foods that provide some of the best bang for your buck:

- In-season fruits and vegetables, or plain frozen vegetables.
- Brown rice (often a little more \$ than white, but better nutritional value).
- Whole-wheat pasta and couscous (buy in quantity when on sale).
- Chicken in value-packs (look for sales, freeze in two- or four-piece packs).
- Beans, magical beans. Buy low-sodium canned, or cut costs by cooking dried, which isn’t much work and can be frozen in small batches.
- Canned tuna (buy several water or oil-packed albacore when on sale).
- Eggs—great protein, versatile—scramble, fry, hard-boil, add to hot, just-drained pasta or make a quick version of stir-fried rice (leftover rice and leftover or frozen vegetables). When on sale, buy extra—beaten eggs can be frozen for up to three months (always defrost in the refrigerator; 3 tablespoons=1 egg).
- London Broil or flank steak. If you occasionally enjoy beef, these are very lean cuts, so you’re not paying for fat. Great in sandwiches, salads, and stir-fries.

Natalie Krelle-Zepponi is a Registered Dietician working with the Area Agency on Aging.

Year of the Older Adult

By James Monson

On January 23, 2018, the Marin County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution proclaiming 2018 as the Year of the Older Adult in Marin County. The resolution is well worth reading to learn about the state of Marin County's older adults.

Some of its key "Whereas" state that –

- Older adults contribute significantly to the social, cultural, and civic fabric of life in Marin. They are a vital source of experience, wisdom, and energy.
- Marin is one of the oldest counties in California with a projected 34% of its residents older than 60 years by 2030.
- One in four older adults in Marin County is living below economic self-sufficiency, as measured by the Elder Economic Security Index. Financial Security is a pervasive, widely-shared concern of older adults in Marin, regardless of income.
- More than 125 agencies and service providers are collaborating through the Aging Action Initiative to help older adults thrive.
- Throughout the county, cities are working hard to get the World Health Organization's "Age Friendly" designation

To help implement the Resolution, a coordinating committee has been working to set goals and to plan program events and activities. To learn the details of these projects by month, please visit the website www.marinyearoftheolderadult.org.

The committee has representatives from the Board of Supervisors, County departments, Aging Action Initiative, Commission on Aging, and Age Friendly Novato.

Two important goals for the year are:

1. To bring all ages together to understand and celebrate the social, cultural, and economic contributions of Marin's



older adults.

2. Raise community awareness of ageism to create more open opportunities for older adults.

An undergirding activity for the Year of the Older Adult is to make all of Marin County an Age-Friendly community. This effort will build on the successes of Sausalito, Fairfax, Corte Madera, Novato, and San Rafael in planning and implementing the World Health Organization and AARP rubric for making communities great places to grow old. Unincorporated areas of the county face challenges of remoteness and sparse infrastructure. There is additional work to be done to instill the Age-Friendly concept throughout the County administration. Cynthia Seymour, Project Manager, has started working on these tasks.

The Supervisors have said it best. "As we go about this year, let us each resolve to take the time to see and

acknowledge the older adults living here, and to pause and say hello or share a kind word of encouragement and appreciation."



From left to right: Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, Joe O'Hehir, Lee Pullen, Linda Jackson, Salamah Locks, James Monson, and Supervisor Kate Sears.

James Monson is a Commissioner from District 4.

Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI)

By Sybil Boutilier

GHHI is a partnership of local agencies including non-profit services, government agencies, utility providers, and funders working together to enhance the quality of life for older adults and families of modest means in Marin by improving the healthiness, safety, and energy efficiency of their homes. Any older adult or family of moderate means can apply for services, whether home owners or renters, and free or subsidized services are available to residents who meet certain eligibility criteria. Criteria may include income level or a household member living with a disability.

GHHI Marin coordinates the partners to deliver multiple services that help residents grow, flourish, and age in place. For example, they may upgrade furnace and HVAC units, lighting, and water systems, and replace weather stripping to make homes more energy efficient, reducing the environmental impacts from energy consumption while enabling long-term savings through lower utility bills.

Falls at home are one of the primary causes of injuries among older adults in Marin according to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS). To mitigate risks, GHHI Partners review health and safety hazards with the home owner or renter and arrange for appropriate home modifications to reduce risks. Modifications may include installing grab bars and ramps, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, or repairing uneven floors and broken stairs.

GHHI Marin acts to improve the lives of Marin residents by improving the health and safety of our homes: reducing environmental causes of asthma and in-home falls; enhancing overall comfort, independence and accessibility; increasing energy and water efficiency in homes to reduce the impact on our natural resources; and assisting us to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses and waste generation. For more information or to receive an intake form, please contact GHHIMarin@mcecleanenergy.org or call (415) 464-6688.

Sybil Boutilier is a Commissioner from the City of Sausalito.

How to Fall Safely

By Carol Zeller

Falls are a major cause of disability and/or death for individuals 65 and older. It is important not only to educate on how to prevent falls but also techniques in how to manage falls to incur the least possible injury.

Here are some tips on how to reduce injury from a fall:

- Protect your head. Ways to accomplish this include tucking your chin down and lowering your head. If you are falling face down, turn your head to the side. For additional protection, bring your arms up to head level and if falling forward put them in front of your head. If falling backward, place your arms behind your head.
- Turn to your side as you fall. Do this whether you are falling forward or backward. This will prevent injury to your spine. Avoid landing directly on your hip.
- Keep your arms and legs bent. You may try to catch yourself with your arms/wrists, but this may lead to injury. It is better to bend your arms and hit the ground using your forearms to spread the load. Also squatting gets you closer to the ground, which will decrease the velocity of the fall.
- Relax. If you tense your muscles, you will increase the chance for injury. If you are relaxed, the force of the fall will be spread over the relaxed part of the body. Tense areas of your body are more likely to break.
- Roll out of the impact. This is a good technique and does require training to accomplish. Plan to go to a gym with mats and supervision to help you practice. The impact of the fall dissipates into the roll which helps prevent injury. You start in a squat position, place your palms flat on the ground in front of you and push off with your legs. Your legs should go over your head. Relax and follow through with the roll.
- Try to spread out the impact of the force of the fall. Try not to fall on a single aspect of your body. This reduces the likelihood of an injury.
- Step into a forward fall.
- Visit www.wikihow.com/Fall-Safely.

While these tips are being implemented in various settings, it is important to attend a class and practice with supervision. Discuss options with your doctor that may be available. Therapy departments at health care facilities may also offer training on how to fall safely.

Carol Zeller is a Commissioner from Corte Madera.

Looking for Information and Assistance in Marin? ¿Busca Información y Ayuda en Marin?

Look no further! Reach the Senior Information and Assistance Line (I&A) at Marin County Aging and Adult Services at (415) 457-INFO (4636), or via email at 457INFO@marincounty.org. Social workers on the team answer calls live, providing resources and referrals to social services and other community resources. I&A social workers speak English and Spanish and use interpreters to assist speakers in other languages.

These social workers provide information about appropriate resources from County and non-profit service providers. For more complex referrals, telephonic and face-to-face meetings are possible. Services provided include, but are not limited to, intakes for In-Home Support Service and Meals on Wheels, and connection to Adult Protective Services, and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Common inquiries from residents of all ages related to homelessness, transportation, food insecurities, socialization, and recreation activities are handled daily. On average, I&A handles about 1,400 calls per month.

Recently, I&A participated in Dr. Marisol Muñoz-Kiehne's Spanish-language radio broadcast *Cuerpo, Corazón, Comunidad*, titled, "Support and Help for Healthy Seniors." The broadcast provided suggestions and solutions regarding health, safety, satisfaction, and serenity for the Spanish-speaking community. This program broadcasts live at 11:00 a.m. on KBBF 89.1 FM and KWMR 90.5, 89.9, and 92.3 FM, and can be found on the radio, the Internet, and in the press.

HOURS: Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Marin County's Online Community Resource Guide can be found at www.marinhhs.org/community-resource-guide.

¡No busque más! Comuníquese con la Línea de información y ayuda para adultos mayores (I&A, por sus siglas en inglés) del Departamento de Servicios para Adultos Mayores del Condado de Marin al (415) 457-INFO (4636), o por correo electrónico a 457INFO@marincounty.org. Los trabajadores sociales del equipo responden llamadas en vivo, ofrecen recursos y referencias a servicios sociales y otros recursos de la comunidad. Los trabajadores sociales de la línea I&A hablan inglés y español y usan intérpretes para ayudar a los que hablan otros idiomas.



Marin Information and Assistance Team

Estos trabajadores sociales brindan información sobre los recursos apropiados de proveedores de servicios del Condado y sin fines de lucro. Para obtener referencias más complejas, se pueden tener reuniones telefónicas y en persona. Los servicios que se ofrecen incluyen, entre otros, admisión para Servicios de apoyo en el hogar y *Meals on Wheels*, y conexión con los Servicios

de protección para adultos mayores, y el programa de Ombudsman para la atención a largo plazo. Se responden consultas comunes a diario de residentes de todas las edades relacionadas con el problema de las personas sin hogar, el transporte, el acceso a suficiente comida, la socialización, y las actividades recreativas. En promedio, la línea I&A recibe aproximadamente 1,400 llamadas por mes.

Recientemente, I&A participó en la transmisión radiofónica en español de la Dra. Marisol Muñoz-Kiehne, *Cuerpo, Corazón, Comunidad*, titulada "Apoyo y ayuda para una tercera edad sana." La transmisión dio sugerencias y soluciones con respecto a la salud, seguridad, satisfacción y serenidad de la comunidad de habla hispana. Este programa se transmite en vivo a las 11:00 a.m. en KBBF 89.1 FM y KWMR 90.5, 89.9, y 92.3 FM, y se puede encontrar en la radio, en internet, y en la prensa.

HORARIO: Lunes a viernes, de 8:30 a.m. a 4:30 p.m. La Guía de recursos comunitarios en línea del Condado de Marin se puede encontrar en www.marinhhs.org/community-resource-guide.

Art at the Civic Center

By Libby Garrison

Forbes magazine reports that the arts make people's lives better as they grow older and deal with the challenges of aging. In the aging communities, artists have lower rates of loneliness and depression, higher morale, and improved hand dexterity. In addition, they have improved mood and confidence, better family relationships and, in some cases, even increased income. In *Today's Geriatric Medicine*, Barbara Bagan, PhD, ATR-BC says, "Making art or even viewing art causes the brain to continue to reshape, adapt, and restructure, thus expanding the potential to increase brain reserve capacity." The Civic Center is delighted to be portraying the artistic works of older adults this Spring.

80 /over 80

April 18 - June 1, 2018
Bartolini Gallery

This exhibit will showcase some eighty works of art by Marin County artists over the age of 80. Marin County is a hub of creativity and this special exhibit showcases the incredible artistic talent we have in our own senior community. The exhibit will feature landscapes, still lifes, portraits, abstracts, photographs, and more by some of Marin's most artistic seniors. Works for the exhibit will be selected by a panel of judges including artists Kathleen Lipinski and Steve Emery, art gallery owner Donna Seager Liberatore, and Department of Cultural Services staff.

Women Over 80, Photographs by Lea Del Pomo

April 19 – June 1, 2018
Board of Supervisors Chambers Gallery

Twenty-five years ago, Lea Del Pomo began the photography project *Women over 80* to confront what she observed: that growing old, especially for women, meant growing invisible. She started by photographing her mother and other Great Depression era mothers of her friends and acquaintances. She used her own fear of isolation and concern that social justice for the older adult is constrained by income as her starting point. Her photographs are of women who have survived at least eight decades and challenge us as a society not to dismiss them. They are rich in skills and experiences, and their faces need to be spotlighted.

Libby Garrison is the Media Manager for the Marin County Department of Cultural Services.

Encore

By Jim Emerman

Gen2Gen is a national campaign to bring more adults over 50 into the lives of young people who need champions. It's powered by Encore.org, a nonprofit organization that believes the growing 50+ population can become a powerful force for good. Encore.org grew out of a desire to transform the aging of America – one of the most significant demographic shifts of the 21st century – into a powerful, positive source of individual and social renewal.

Here's a taste of Gen2Gen. A student needs support in her college applications. Karen Sughrue, a long-time journalist, was eager to use her experience to help young people tell their stories. She became a mentor with Strive for College, a nonprofit that trains volunteer mentors to guide young people through the college application process. Over 90% of the young people helped go on to four-year institutions, usually with little to no debt.

Younger people need more caring adults in their lives - to help them get (and stay) on a path to adult success. People over 50 often have time, talent, and experience to share, and are developmentally disposed to "pass it on." And the benefits flow in both directions, as young people enrich the lives of older adults in countless ways.

Gen2Gen is piloting and expanding efforts to connect experienced talent with youth-serving initiatives. After its first year, the campaign already has more than 125 partner organizations, including AARP, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and others. In these divisive and polarized times, Gen2Gen is a touchpoint where people from different ages, backgrounds, and social classes can come together around a common goal: supporting all of our kids, and creating a better future for future generations.

Take the first step to become a volunteer with Marin (www.ec4marin.org), and change a young person's life forever.

Interested in becoming a Gen2Gen partner? Get in touch here:

www.action.generationtogenation.org.

Jim Emerman is the Vice President of Encore.org.

