

ABHOW Words

SHARING OUR STORIES

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ABHOW Residents Embrace Learning, Spiritual Growth



Asked last year what improvements she'd like to see at San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, Calif., resident Ellen Cunningham requested more extension courses from Fresno State University.

Besides taking classes—past offerings have covered the Gold Rush, the Near East and World War II—she is also active in a Bible study group there. Her alacrity for lifelong learning and ongoing spiritual growth may be particularly notable because of her age: Cunningham is 101. But she shares that enthusiasm with many residents of her own and other ABHOW communities.

Nera Adams, another San Joaquin Gardens resident, has just finished her first computer class and is currently learning tai chi and studying the Bible. “I enjoy just knowing I’m still learning and still able to learn,” she says.

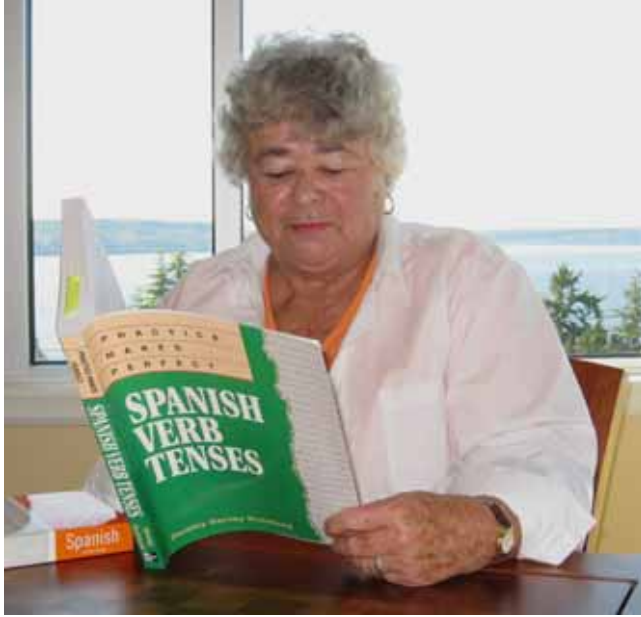
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Photo above: Ellen Cunningham talks with Linda Loorz, director of assisted living services at San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, Calif.



ABHOW

Mature Living Since 1949



Clara Sias of Judson Park is taking Spanish classes.

Clara Sias, a new resident of Judson Park in Des Moines, Wash., is taking Spanish classes and looking forward to a class on meditation. “The older I get, the more I realize I don’t know,” she says. “When you’re younger, you think you know everything. The older you get, the more you see the things you thought were for sure, weren’t.”

Over the last decade, seniors have increasingly made their later years a time both of intellectual discovery and of reflection on the meaning of their lives. Recent research into the brain’s capacity to continue to develop has underscored the potential seniors have for ongoing cognitive and spiritual growth.

“Research consistently shows—and a lot of our residents are eager to read that research—that lifelong learning leads to remaining healthier longer,” says Paul Jepson, ABHOW’s assistant vice president of care services. “When you look at the demographics of our residents, they’ve worked hard and been successful.” Anyone who has pursued a profession has made a commitment to lifelong learning, he notes. “It’s consistent with their lifestyle for them to maintain that commitment regardless of how old they are.”

FOSTERING INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

ABHOW works closely with its residents to develop programs that foster intellectual and spiritual growth, Jepson says. “The more we know them, the better we can respond to what motivates them and what their life-long needs are.” The Masterpiece Living program encourages residents to set individual goals for all aspects of their lives—physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. Classes of all kinds and Posit Science, the computer-based cognitive training program, provide intellectual stimulation. Four ABHOW communities have recently introduced a new version of that program. And some memory support centers are currently piloting a program called Touch the Spirit, a series of activities that promote spiritual growth through meditation, music and inspirational reading.

Nancy Jen, chaplain at San Joaquin Gardens, says that some seniors make spiritual well-being a higher priority in their later years than they did previously. “Some were so caught up in career and making money that the spiritual part was ratcheted down,” she says.

“Research consistently shows that lifelong learning leads to remaining healthier longer.”

—Paul Jepson, Assistant Vice President of Care Services

“For some, [the spiritual] is the part of their life they’re nurturing now, where previously it was their intellectual or social life they nurtured more.”

Bill Painter, who calls himself the Padre of Judson Park, admires the book *From Age-ing to Sage-ing* by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. “Aging,” the rabbi writes, “gives us the panoramic vision from which spiritual wisdom flows.” Painter himself says, “The role of spiritual care is to help elders reflect on the past, celebrate its vitality and meaning, and discover a new or reaffirmed sense of self and meaning in the present.”

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Nera Adams (at left in photo above) practices tai chi with instructor Tina Smith at San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, Calif. (Photo below) Residents of Pilgrim Haven in Los Altos, Calif., participate in a Bible study.

While many seniors have long reflected about the significance of their lives, he often sees a heightened awareness of the issue as residents age. “Now in their 80s and 90s, they are trying to make or discover a new sense of meaning as they address medical problems and life changes. The question ‘Who

am I now?’ is fresh in their minds.”

ABHOW communities facilitate finding answers to that question both through regular worship services for several faiths and through a range of specialized programs. At San Joaquin Gardens, for instance, residents can meet for prayer circles or an in-depth, interactive Bible study group, attend classes on world religions, and take part in the annual Spiritual Emphasis Week. This year, Jen says, that event will include a guest speaker who ministers to families of disabled children and a mission offering to send wheelchairs to children in foreign countries.

‘IT’S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER’

Adams and Sias make both learning and reflection central parts of their lives these days.

For many years a program coordinator at a shelter for homeless women and their children, Adams herself has experience providing programs that help people change and grow. Now, besides attending classes at San Joaquin Gardens, she takes part in plays, finds myriad ways to continue the service work that means so much to her, and remains active with her church. “Everything I have done has enlightened me in so many ways,” she says.

Sias, who moved recently to Judson Park, has never let age stand in the way of her education—at the age of 62, she enrolled in massage school and went on to become a massage therapist. She has taught adult education classes at her church for many years. She continues that work today, helps tutor ESL students and plans to take part in Posit Science and Masterpiece Living programs in her new community.

Meditative prayer, she finds, has only become more important to her in recent years. “It’s quieting your mind and becoming still and listening. You’re just bombarded on every side with noise and advertisements, everywhere you go. It’s more important than ever to get still and listen to that voice within.”

Adams has found that reflecting on her life can lead to a sense of satisfaction. “Sometimes I sit by myself in a thinking mood and think what have I done with my life that could be of value to someone else,” she says. Often she pulls out of her purse a photograph of a poor young woman who very much wanted to go to college. Adams was able to serve as a role model for her and encourage her even when she wanted to quit. In the photograph, the young woman is in her cap and gown, and on the back she wrote, “No one can take this away from me.”

“I look back and think I may not have done much good, but I was able to help her,” Adams says. “Every time I feel down, I think of that, and every time I cry. I think of that little sentence and think, you have done something.”



Grove Residents Reveal Selves Through Art Therapy Program

An ABHOW community's center for adults with dementia and Alzheimer's disease has found a bridge to residents' inner lives through the world of art.

Plymouth Village in Redlands, Calif., had already established progressive methods of working with residents with dementia. So when Keith Kasin, the



community's executive director, read of the benefits of art therapy, he thought such a program would be a natural fit for The Grove, Plymouth Village's memory support center.

He approached the Riverside Arts Council in nearby Riverside for support. After the

organization agreed to provide instructors and materials, Kasin took a proposal for an initial 10-week program to the ABHOW Foundation, which agreed to cover the costs.

Residents spent the first phase of the program, which ran from mid-April through June, working in tempura paints, drawing and creating collages.

In keeping with The Grove's philosophy of focusing on residents' abilities rather than their disabilities, residents were challenged to genuinely express themselves through their art.

"People with dementia are more open to art, particularly if it's in more of an adult context," says David Troxel, consultant on dementia care to ABHOW. "The



Maria Davis (photo above) and Olive Ward (at left) enjoy The Grove's art program.

art show is a great example of aiming higher to an activity that you or I would enjoy."

What emerged surprised Kasin. "I was really blown away by the quality of the art," he says. "It was interesting to watch how over the 10 weeks, what they created improved. And some of the people who had careers in their lives, you could kind of see that starting to emerge."

Family members responded well to the program, too, he says. "During the first 10 weeks we had more involvement from residents' family members than we've had in a long while, and I'm hoping that's going to continue through the next two programs." The second phase began Sept. 2 and features clay sculpture. A third phase incorporating theater will begin in November.

Plymouth Village celebrated the end of the first session July 31 with an art show at Kendall Place, a Victorian mansion that sits at the edge of the campus. The pride residents took in their work was obvious.

"You could see them showing it off," Kasin says. "We brought all the residents over and most sought out their own work. Most sat next to their work, and many went out of their way to point it out."

Rather than cashing in on its prime real estate, Good Shepherd Baptist Church is using its property for even greater impact in the community of Lynnwood, Wash.

Good Shepherd will break ground in March 2009 on a 40-apartment affordable senior housing community that will be built, in conjunction with ABHOW, on an acre of the church's 4.5-acre campus 25 miles north of Seattle.

The church originally purchased the site, a former orchard, in 1961. Five years ago, it began exploring options for what had become valuable real estate, says Lynn Melby, head of the committee formed to seek out suitable uses for the land.

Given the growing number of seniors living on fixed incomes and facing rising housing costs in and around the Seattle area, senior housing made perfect sense to the congregation, Melby says. The introduction into the mix of ABHOW, which will handle management of the community, only made it more appealing.

"It was a fairly easy decision to make after that because working with ABHOW was a relatively easy process," he says.

Estimates are that the community will be able to accommodate a maximum of 80 people, with the actual number closer to 60. Residents will be chosen by a lottery.

The community will be financed through a \$5.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as support from Snohomish County and the state of Washington.

"In teaming with Good Shepherd, ABHOW will enable the congregation to offer the housing support this community so badly needs," says Ancel Romero, senior vice president of affordable housing for ABHOW.

The three-story building will sit nearly adjacent to the church building and will benefit from the other community-oriented features of the property, including communal vegetable gardens and an arboretum.



It's all part of the church's continuing outreach, part of a constant effort to connect with neighbors in one of the least churched areas of the U.S., says the Rev. M. Christopher Boyer, Good Shepherd's pastor.

"We really believe that by extending ourselves in this way, what we're saying to the community is, 'Take a look at this church. This is a group of people really interested in helping other people in the community who need help and reaching out and making friends in the community.'"

By Camille Gavin

A hint of the creative activity going on at Rosewood can be seen in the brightly painted birdhouses that have popped up here and there on our lovely, park-like campus.

Even so, visitors are often surprised to learn that the Bakersfield, Calif., community, has a wood-carving shop for residents that's filled with electrical equipment and hand tools of every size. Their surprise increases when they learn the shop's history.

It began three years ago when Ed Bue and his wife, Betty, decided to become residents of Rosewood. Ed, a retired aeronautical engineer, is an award-winning realistic bird carver well-schooled in the study of bird biology. In the past 25 years he has carved 140 birds, accurately and finely detailed right down to the individual feathers. Several years ago his carving of a wood duck won first place in its division at the Orange County Fair.

Bue, age 79, hoped to continue his hobby and provide instruction for others. Before he and his wife moved in, he asked if there might be space available at Rosewood to house at least a portion of his equipment and materials.

The response from Executive Director Ted Burgess was a definite "Yes!"

To say that Bue was delighted is an

understatement.

"Actually, I was flabbergasted," he says now.

"First because they did what they did and flabbergasted again when they provided all the other things I asked for."

Of course, none of this happened overnight.

In fact, it took two years before the shop was up and running. The site is a 500-square-foot garage that formerly was used mainly as a storage area. Robin Rocha, who then was facilities manager, coordinated the project.

Bue's equipment included a band saw, whet stone, sander, carving bench, a painting bench with a series of cupboards above and below, and thousands of hand tools, a dozen wood burning pens, as well as diamond,

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Rosewood's wood shop regulars include (from left) Harrison Burton, Chet Troudy and Ed Bue.

sapphire and ruby bits in all shapes and sizes. Rosewood provided a table saw, which was rebuilt by Bue and shop-mate Harrison Burton, 87, a retired mechanical engineer. The community also supplied a workbench for small power tools, a saber saw, and installed a system that collects dust and filters the air inside the shop.

Chet Troudy, Bue's first student, proudly displays his first carving, a red head woodpecker perched on a stick of wood. The 85-year-old retired educator refers to himself now as an "apprentice carver." His first experience in using wood shop equipment was during military service in World War II.

All three men have worked on the birdhouses. Members of a local church's women's group and several of Rosewood's assisted living residents painted the colorful structures. Thus far, 17 have been completed and seven of those have been placed on the Rosewood campus.

The shop team's next project is to build bird feeders, which will be mounted on tall poles. They hope to persuade residents to act as volunteers to keep the feeders filled with seeds. Our lovely campus is filled with hundreds of very tall trees that are home to many different bird species, so the feeders are sure to attract plenty of feathered "customers."

Camille Gavin is a resident of Rosewood. She moved to the Bakersfield community in August 2007.



Chet Troudy won third place at the county fair for his carved bird.



Don't Miss the Fun at Golf Classic

There's still time to participate in the 12th Annual ABHOW Foundation Golf Classic, scheduled for October 6 at Round Hill Country Club in Alamo, Calif. Players can sign up online at <http://www.abhow.com/foundation/golf>. If you would like to be a sponsor or donate an item for the auction, contact Suzette Luer at sluer@abhow.com or 925-924-7151.

Each of ABHOW's continuing care retirement communities provides a range of living options all on one campus: residential living, assisted living and skilled nursing care. Memory support centers are also located at a number of ABHOW communities. For residents, there's great peace of mind knowing that one community can meet their changing health needs.

How and when residents move from one level to another is determined by a resident review and assessment process in accordance with statutory guidelines. ABHOW recently updated its process through the company's Level of Care and Assessment Task Force.

"Through a careful review of state statutes and accrediting standards, and through consideration of our experience in level-of-care transfer, we made several changes to improve our assessment tools and transfer process," says David Grant, ABHOW's senior vice president and general counsel.

ABHOW's CCRC Health and Wellness Philosophy, which addresses the physical, spiritual, nutritional,

social, intellectual and mental health of residents, is the starting point for consideration of level-of-care transfer.

That philosophy underscores how ABHOW promotes its mission – "to enhance the independence, well-being and security of older people" – across the continuum of care by using assessments and coordinating the resources and services of each campus. "The promotion of safety, independence, health, and security of residents is a responsibility of those employees providing care and services," the philosophy states.

A resident's ability to practice self-care is key to determining the appropriate level of care. The essential elements of self-care, sometimes called "activities of daily living," include mobility, eating, bathing and dressing.

Other activities that provide a basis for considering the types of services needed to maintain independence include housekeeping, grooming, medication-monitoring, communication and social relationships.

Seventy-five percent of adults over 75 years of age limit their activities due to functional challenges, according to Paul Jepson, ABHOW's assistant vice president of care services.

Residents complete an initial assessment before moving to the CCRC, and they receive an annual assessment thereafter. Functional changes trigger further review, development of service plans, and consideration of transfer if residents require additional care.

"Our goal is for residents to remain at the lowest level of care possible with available services provided to support physical and social success," Jepson says.

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THE ABHOW WAY

How do things work
around here?

ABHOW follows a set
of policies and prac-
tices that shape life in
all of its communities.

These policies and
practices constitute
The ABHOW Way.

Under California law, a provider is required to transfer a resident to assisted living, skilled nursing care, or to an outside center if any of the following occurs:

- The resident becomes non-ambulatory and is unable to leave his or her apartment without the assistance of another person during an emergency and the apartment is not approved for use by a non-ambulatory resident.
- The resident develops a physical or mental condition that endangers the health, safety, or well-being of the resident or another person.
- The resident's condition or needs require that the resident be transferred to the on-site assisted living or skilled nursing center, or to an outside center, because the level of care that the resident requires exceeds that which may be lawfully provided in the resident's current apartment.
- The resident's condition or needs require that the resident be transferred to a hospital or other outside center and there is no facility available at the CCRC to provide that level of care.

Each CCRC has a Resident Review Committee that evaluates the service needs of residents. The committee's

responsibility is to recommend the resident's needed level of care to the executive director based on the assessments and medical reports. As specified in the Care and Residence Agreements, each CCRC executive director makes the final decision.

ABHOW CCRCs follow a transfer procedure which involves residents and their responsible person in the assessment process that forms the basis for the level-of-care transfer decision. Residents may also request that family members, their physician or other professional

“Our goal is for residents to remain at the lowest level of care possible ...”
—Paul Jepson, Assistant Vice President of Care Services

be involved. Care conferences to discuss the assessment process, scoring and evaluation criteria are scheduled by the CCRC.

“What we aim for in the Resident Review Committee is to find creative solutions for residents who require extra assistance in order to remain at their present level of care, or for those in need of a transition to a different level of care,” Jepson says. “We put in place steps to assist residents with transition or additional assistance. And then we monitor and review assessments, change of conditions, and resident safety concerns to be sure that the level of care is appropriate.”



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“American Baptist Homes of the West, as an expression of Christian mission, seeks to enhance the independence, well-being and security of older people through the provision of housing, health care and supportive services.”

