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Residents Train as Emergency Responders



Do the greatest good for the greatest number of people – that’s the motto of the Riverside, Calif., Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. Thirteen residents and six staff members at Riverside’s Mount Rubidoux Manor community absorbed that motto and much more when they took CERT training earlier this year.

They acquired such skills as how to lift a 2,000-pound concrete slab — “It’s all about leverage,” says resident Janet Gilmore — and now stand ready to help themselves and their neighbors if an earthquake, fire or other disaster strikes.

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Mount Rubidoux Manor residents (from left) Janet Gilmore, Barbara Yates and Marilyn Tessier say their CERT training left them feeling empowered, inspired and capable of almost anything.



ABHOW

Mature Living Since 1949

Gilmore learned about the class through her work on the local Commission on Aging and encouraged her neighbors at Mount Rubidoux Manor to attend the intensive weekend class in February. The 16-story community has 179 residents.

“Our building has been retrofitted for earthquakes, and the fire chief considers us the safest high-rise in Riverside,” she says. “And because it’s all masonry, it’s pretty fire resistant too.” Still, she once led Girl and Boy Scout troops and knows the value of being prepared.

She took first aid and CPR courses over the years, but found the CERT program different in that it starts with the basics.



Thirteen Mount Rubidoux Manor residents and team members took part in the two-day intensive CERT program last year.

“We learned to cut off utilities and feel a closed door with the back of our hand in a fire,” she says. “We learned how to look for threatening conditions, how to open an airway, how to control bleeding and how to treat for shock.”

The group also practiced basic search and rescue methods, team organization skills and triage techniques to help them prioritize among injured people. “If you’re looking at hundreds of people needing help, you have to assess them quickly,” says Gilmore. “You have to move

quickly and efficiently.”

The Los Angeles City Fire Department started training civilians in disaster preparedness in 1985. Several federal agencies adopted and expanded the CERT approach, and first responders now conduct the training across the country. Gina Perez, community preparedness coordinator for the Riverside Fire Department, says that when an emergency occurs, CERT members can help others in their immediate vicinity until professional responders arrive.

To date, residents and team members at three other California ABHOW communities have taken part in the CERT program, including Judson Terrace Homes

and Lodge in San Luis Obispo, The Terraces of Los Gatos in the town of Los Gatos, and Kelly Ridge in South Lake Tahoe. The Terraces of Phoenix community in Arizona has its own CERT team, while a group at Plymouth Village in Redlands, Calif., will take the training later this month. Residents at Piedmont Gardens in Oakland, Calif., are considering a similar program modeled after the well-established CERT committee at The Terraces of Los Gatos, which has over 60 members.

Perez recalls that when the Mount Rubidoux group came to the training, they were clear about wanting to be able to take care of themselves and their neighbors. “They wanted to know the basic disaster skills: how to evacuate, how to be prepared, what supplies to have,” she says. “They wanted to be self-sufficient.”

Dale Dobson, a Mount Rubidoux resident and CERT graduate, says the idea is to prepare yourself to be a resource for the people around you. Dobson, a former

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Candalla Receives Mentorship Award



Candalla, executive director of The Terraces of Los Gatos since 1999, says professional mentoring ensures quality for residents at all levels of senior housing.

meeting of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) in Los Angeles.

“It was quite unexpected, actually,” says Candalla. “What’s most important about this, to me, is the opportunity to build excitement and passion for this field of work. It’s not for everybody, but for those who feel that

calling to make a difference, it’s the perfect place to be.”

Candalla received his own calling after a 20-year career as a high-tech professional in the Silicon Valley. He went back to school and received a master’s degree in gerontology from San Francisco State University, where part of his coursework paired him with a mentor who ultimately helped guide his career choices and work in the early days at Los Gatos.

“Without my mentor, I don’t know that I would have been as successful as I’ve been,” he says. “I guess you could say that everything I’ve done since has been about gratitude and paying it forward.”

Candalla’s own mentorship efforts began shortly after graduation. With his nursing home administrator license newly in hand, he encouraged team members at The Terraces to take the same training and become certified.

Next up, he put his own spin on ABHOW’s corporate administrator-in-training program – work that won him high praise from Aging Services of California, which awarded Candalla its Mentor of the Year award in 2006. The following year, he was named one of AAHSA’s first-ever Leadership Fellows.

To his ABHOW colleagues, his name is synonymous with leadership. To his team members at The Terraces of Los Gatos, his guidance inspires innovations in service. And to his peers in senior living, his work makes a difference in attracting and sustaining a new generation of professionals.

For these reasons and more, Alex Candalla was awarded the prestigious Hiram J. Friedsam Mentorship Award for 2011. Given annually by the University of North Texas’ Coalition for Leadership in Aging Services (CLAS), the award recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to professional development in the field of housing and aging services.

Candalla, executive director of The Terraces of Los Gatos since 1999, received his award Nov. 2 at the annual

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Hanna, Kiddoo Are ABHOW's Affordable Housing Heroes

In stories from ancient mythology to Harry Potter, the hero must venture into a labyrinth to battle whatever fantastic creatures await.

In the world of affordable housing, the labyrinth most often involves complex regulations handed down from multiple federal, state and local government agencies.

For ABHOW, the heroes dispatched to negotiate the legal and monetary maze are Travis Hanna and Dave Kiddoo, directors of operations and development for affordable housing, respectively. Together they ensure that new and upgraded affordable housing communities are held to ABHOW's high standards.

"With these guys, it's all about the residents," says Ancel Romero, ABHOW's senior vice president for affordable housing. "Everything they do comes from that. They're very interested in resident services and well-being."

Securing funding for construction, acquisition and improvement of these properties is a challenge Hanna and Kiddoo face every day, one that has proved even trickier recently due to expected changes with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 202, which covers low-income housing for older adults.

Kiddoo says that as HUD moves away from its pure loan – or capital financing – model, it will increasingly become more of a gap funder, by which the agency will help make up for shortfalls between the cost of an apartment home and what a resident is able to pay.

"The impact for us is there's a lot more risk involved and financial sophistication required," says Kiddoo.

As a result, ABHOW will have to work more and more with private investors in order to finance the acquisition and construction of affordable housing communi-

ties in the future, he says. Still, there are plenty of projects in the pipeline that are using the older HUD model of financing, so Kiddoo must be well-versed in both.

On the operations side of the coin, Hanna's job is to show – for each community being eyed for acquisition or considered for development – that the need for housing is sufficient to ensure a quick return on investment. Hanna also oversees management upgrades and physical renovations of newly acquired communities.

"I enjoy being in a position where I can affect change in residents' lives," he says. "What I do every day – whether helping to renovate a newly acquired property or pick the colors for the hallways at one of our existing communities – has a positive effect on our residents."



No matter how daunting the challenge, ABHOW's Dave Kiddoo, left, and Travis Hanna keep quality in the equation for affordable housing residents.

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Mount Rubidoux *Continued from page 1*

teacher, liked both the classroom work and the hands-on practice at the fire department's training site. "They set up typical scenarios you would come upon in a rescue situation," he says. "They had an area where you can learn to use a fire extinguisher, and they had dummy cars they set on fire so people could learn how to put out a car fire."

And there were those 2,000-pound concrete slabs. The firefighters placed manikins under debris similar to what an earthquake might produce, then taught participants how to remove a slab using a pipe or board as a lever.

"They told us they once had a woman in a wheelchair do it in class," Gilmore says. "We had very slight women and men do it safely working in teams of two. One would lift it and the other one would put chocks under

the slab and pull the person out from under."

They also took turns carrying victims safely on a chair or a blanket, she says. "I have a bad knee and it's sometimes hard to walk, but with a male partner, I was able to lift a very heavy person and get her from one blanket to another."

Mount Rubidoux's CERT graduates can now assist Riverside first responders in several ways, says Perez. "They can help us promote preparedness through special events. They can help us out by giving food and water to firefighters on the scene or work at shelters registering people. If an emergency happens at a shopping center, at work, in a park or wherever they may be, they have the skills to put into play to help and hopefully save lives."

Candalla *Continued from page 3*

Today, Candalla is helping establish the work of Leadership ABHOW, a company-wide course that prepares select team members for management-level positions within the company as they become available. The yearlong program is set to graduate its first 10 team members in early 2011.

Kay Kallander, ABHOW's senior vice president for stra-

tegic planning, says Candalla's own brand of mentorship is one that seeks out and nurtures opportunities for growth.

"Alex sees possibilities – both within his team members at The Terraces of Los Gatos as well as in university programs – for leaders within the field of aging services," says Kallander. "He makes the commitment necessary and then sticks with it."

Hanna, Kiddoo *Continued from page 4*

At the same time, Hanna vigilantly pursues national industry designations such as Communities of Quality, presented each year by the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA). Fifteen ABHOW communities have earned this distinction – an impressive feat that led NAHMA to bestow ABHOW with its prestigious Communities of Quality Corporate Partner designation.

Hanna represents ABHOW as a newly seated board member of the Affordable Housing Management As-

sociation of Northern California, Nevada and Hawaii.

Hanna and Kiddoo agree that at the end of the day, their job is to create homes that provide residents with the best possible quality of life.

"You get to the grand opening of a community and inevitably you'll have residents get up and talk about how much it means to them," Kiddoo says. "Hearing stories about folks who were out on the street or didn't know where they were going and now have a safe, affordable place to live – really, that's what this is all about."

My Choice Expansion Offers Dining Freedom at 10 CCRCs

Among the wide variety of activities offered to residents of ABHOW continuing care retirement communities, dining certainly has the highest participation. No wonder, then, that residents are giving the thumbs-up to a new and enhanced meal plan that gives them a host of options beyond the standard fare.

With the My Choice program, residents are allotted a certain number of points per month they can use at their discretion. The program, which was launched in 2008 at The Terraces at San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, Calif., proved so popular there that it is now being offered at 10 ABHOW CCRCs. Yannick Himber, director of dining services for ABHOW partner Sodexo Senior Services, says My Choice is changing the way residents think about food in general and meal planning in particular.

“Eating patterns have definitely changed, with people eating smaller meals more often,” says Himber. “They’re

also really enjoying showcasing the community’s dining services to family and friends.”

Ruth Buneman, a five-year resident of The Terraces at Los Altos in Los Altos, Calif., agrees that the flexibility My Choice offers has positively changed her own eating habits.

“Quite often now, depending on what else I’m doing, I’ll go for lunch and have two lunch courses and then two dinner courses,” she says. “It’s cut back on the shopping I needed to do for food.”

Residents may accumulate extra points to allow for splurges on new premium menus, Himber said. They can also enjoy the experience of eating at grill events offered at each community, which give them the experience of a fine dining restaurant, he said.

“The grill events allow residents who used to go out to eat off campus once a week or once a month, to get dressed up and enjoy some fine dining with a great atmosphere,” says Himber.

Points are also available for use at other dining venues specific to each community, such as farmers markets and newly added bistros.

“It definitely has given residents a greater amount of flexibility,” says Himber. “They just love it.”

The feedback has indeed been positive everywhere My Choice has been added, says Jeff Glaze, ABHOW’s senior vice president and chief operations manager.

“It’s been a great program for the residents,” says Glaze. “We’ve added a lot of new services over the years for our residents, but what they all do every day is eat. I think this is the most significant new program we’ve brought to the residents in decades.”

Residents can use their allotted meal points at grill events held regularly at 10 participating ABHOW CCRCs.



Valle Verde Recognized for Setting a New Standard of Green

With two new environmental stewardship awards lining his desk, Ron Schaefer had a lot to be thankful for over the holidays.

Thankful that as executive director of ABHOW's Valle Verde community, the awards give him an opportunity to trumpet the dedication and innovative thinking of residents and team members in making their Santa Barbara campus a green leader among continuing care retirement communities. And hopeful, too, that Valle Verde can inspire other communities to take on green initiatives of their own.

"It's not hard and it doesn't cost a lot to go green — that's what I hope we can show people by example at Valle Verde, that you start with the simple things, the inexpensive recycling and composting projects, and you work toward the larger items over time," says Schaefer.

The community's growing list of environmental accolades now includes a first-ever Green Award from the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), as well as the fourth consecutive Waste Reduction Award from California's Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery. An inaugural winner of the ICAA award, Valle Verde was chosen for setting new standards in the creation of eco-friendly programs, products and services for its residents.

For Valle Verde residents, eco-friendly begins with knowing the paint and carpet selections they will choose for their apartment homes are as non-toxic as they are aesthetically pleasing. With a focus on sustainability, the community's most recent eco-friendly programs include buying up to 80 percent of its produce



Ron Schaefer, executive director of Valle Verde, says environmental stewardship is part of the fabric of Santa Barbara.

from local farms and taking part in the city of Santa Barbara's food scrap composting program. Long-established initiatives include drought-resistant landscaping, reclaimed water for irrigation and energy-efficient remodeling of vacant apartments.

Big-ticket items like solar paneled walkways and high-efficiency boilers are making a substantial dent in Valle Verde's energy consumption. The panels, for instance, feed a photovoltaic system with a 52 kilowatt capacity that has saved the community an estimated \$150,000 in utility bills to date, according to Schaefer.

"We've been really focused on environmental stewardship since 2004, and now we're starting to see the financial impact of that," he says. "It's a nice affirmation that we're on the right track."

If all goes as planned, that track will lead Valle Verde to complete carbon neutrality by 2021. What that means is within 10 years' time, the community will emit no net carbon dioxide into the environment. To help

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Happy Feet Fly at Grand Lake Gardens

When Debz Zeff moved to Grand Lake Gardens a year ago, she discovered that the Oakland, Calif., community offered several exercise classes. But the former dance teacher thought something was missing

“None of them had music and I wanted to have that beat,” she says. “I saw these people with walkers, and I thought it would be great if they could sit down and move their feet.”

She floated the idea of a weekly dance class for residents who use walkers, and another resident came up with the name: Happy Feet.

“Happy feet, happy feet, get your body moving to that glorious beat,” Zeff, 82, chants by way of explanation. Up to a dozen residents attend each Wednesday session in the community’s Grand Assembly Room.

“Some come with walkers, some can stand,” she says. “It gets to be like a modern dance class because you have the beat, but you can do as you wish with your body. If someone is sitting down, I’ll go to them, we’ll hold our hands across and we’ll dance together. It’s a big help for people recuperating from accidents and learning to walk again.”

Zeff studied dance at the University of Wisconsin, Madison under several notable teachers, including some who had danced in Martha Graham’s group. After graduation, she taught folk, modern and social dance at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Ill.

Several moves and three children later, she earned a master’s in education at California State University, Northridge and began working as a substitute teacher in Los Angeles. She taught Israeli folk dancing at various synagogues, but that ended many years before she moved to Oakland.

Sharing the joy of dance with her fellow Grand Lake Gardens residents is one sign of the “transformation” Zeff says occurred since she and her husband, Jack, arrived. When moving from Los Angeles, she decided to leave behind both the “stay-at-home” life she had and her old name, Debbie.

“It came to me that I was moving into a whole new aspect of my life,” she says. “The first day I was here, they asked me my name and I said Debz.”



Debz Zeff leads fellow Grand Lake Gardens residents in the class’s most popular dance – the waltz.

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Valle Verde

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The community's investment in photovoltaic panels is starting to pay off big: Valle Verde saved an estimated \$150,000 in utility costs in 2010.

the community reach that goal, graduate students at the University of California, Santa Barbara are drawing up a road map with identifiable goals Valle Verde will have to meet at points along the way.

If that seems a bit ambitious, consider for a moment Schaefer's take on what sets Valle Verde apart from other CCRCs.

"We're a very forward-thinking community, which is owed to our location," says Schaefer. "Environmental stewardship is not a fringe issue here in Santa Barbara; it's actually very mainstream. There's a culture among our residents that reflects the surrounding community."

Happy Feet

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Those who attend Happy Feet are also experiencing transformations. One woman who uses a walker now feels safe dancing without it. A man who had broken his hip moved from a walker to a cane.

"He just loves the class," says Zeff. "He was a dancer before and his body is starting to pick up the rhythm and he's dancing."

Staff members sometimes join the class too, at least for a few minutes. "I leave exhilarated and energized from dancing with the residents or just 'free dancing' on my own," says Scott Sebastian, director of programs and activities. "It really is a pick-me-up for the day."

Zeff has taught the class the two-step and the waltz and provides a wide selection of music. "Sometimes we go into folk dance mode. We get into a circle and circle around, walking together, coming to the middle and saying 'Hey.' People feel secure enough because they're holding hands."

Waltzing is particularly popular. "With their walkers, they go down the whole length of the room, one-two-three, one-two-three, and come back. The waltz — they love that because it's like flying.

"They're responding to the beat and the energy of the rhythm is very encouraging," she says. "Class is only supposed to go a half hour, but most of the people want to stay on for an hour. So I keep the music going."



Zeff's weekly dance classes are transforming lives, including her own.

Judson Terrace Celebrates 40 years of Affordable Housing in San Luis Obispo



Turning the big 4-0 warrants a party. For residents and team members at ABHOW's Judson Terrace in San Luis Obispo, Calif., it proved to be a milestone worthy of communion, reflection and gratitude.

"I honestly believe we're just the luckiest people walking," longtime resident Anne Hedwall told the crowd of 250 that gathered to celebrate the event on Oct. 23. "Where else could we get this kind of accommodation and all the amenities that Judson Terrace offers for what we're able to pay? I've lived here 15 years, and I still feel just as lucky as the day I moved in."

The afternoon celebration was capped off with a speech by founding pastor Dr. Paul Ray, who related his experiences getting ABHOW's first senior housing community up and running during the late 1960s.

(top left) Judson Terrace residents gather outside for a reception to kick off the afternoon celebration.

(top right) San Luis Obispo Mayor Dave Romero told attendees how much the community has meant to his central California town and its 43,000 residents.

(bottom right) ABHOW President and CEO David Ferguson addresses attendees.



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