

# Experience *in Action!*

## Aging Your Way... Reinventing communities

By Peter Langmaid

It's been well publicized that 10,000 Baby Boomers will turn 65 every day...for the next 20 years! That's over 72,000,000 people, and as the last group turns 65, many in the first groups will still be alive and in their mid-80s.

For many—those enjoying good health, financial security, mobility, surrounded by family and friends, and busy with hobbies and interests—turning 65 is just another day. But what happens when 65 turns into 85 and your health begins to deteriorate, friends die, family moves away, inflation shrinks your nest egg, and you can no

longer operate a car safely?

While we all look forward to the freedoms 65 promises, few of us actively plan for the future it augurs—as individuals or as communities. What if you want a place to meet and congregate and no such place exists in your neighborhood? What if you have limited mobility and there's no shopping near where you live? What if you want to take a class that is not offered at your local senior center?

Fortunately, Senior Services—the most comprehensive nonprofit agency in the state serving older adults, with over 40 years experience—has



Graphic illustration of ideas generated at the Northeast Seattle *Aging Your Way* gathering (Drawing by Anne Jesse)

anticipated the tsunami of Boomers hitting their doorstep and is actively planning to meet their needs through an initiative called *Aging Your Way*.

*Aging Your Way* emerged from three realizations: one, many Boomers (and the communities they live in) haven't anticipated their future (either too busy or in denial); two, existing community services are not sufficient to handle the projected ever-increasing needs; and three, we can't expect government funding to save the day. Ultimately, it all comes down to community: How do we design communities in which residents support each other?

The long-range vision of this program is to create communities that are consciously designed to meet the needs of seniors. This can only be accomplished through a collaboration of stakeholders—business, government, religious organizations, cultural organizations, nonprofits, civic leaders, community organizers, and, of course, seniors. To begin

the process, the Seattle area was divided into 'neighborhoods,' and a gathering was scheduled in each neighborhood to "... develop a vision of a community that would support you as you age." Leveraging 40 years worth of contacts, Senior Services reached out to all aspects of each community and asked them to join the gathering and bring other interested parties with them. These visioning gatherings are free, open to all, and professionally facilitated. Six gatherings have already taken place, and 3 more are scheduled:

- Wednesday, April 6 in Snoqualmie Valley (Carnation Elementary)
- Wednesday, May 18 on the Eastside (Overlake Christian Church)
- Tuesday, June 7 for the LGBT community (Mercer View Community Center).

All gatherings are from 5:30 to 8:30 PM.

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Graphic illustration of ideas generated at the Duwamish *Aging Your Way* gathering (Drawing by Anne Jesse)



## Speaking Directly

by Sonya Couch, RSVP Director

# Reinvention... What it may mean to a volunteer

The theme for this issue of *Experience in Action!* is Reinvention. Webster's definition of reinvention is, "to make as if for the first time something already invented." I liked this definition as I thought about applying this concept to the aging process. We hear from many of you that the next phase of life is holding more than traditional retirement and leisure. Whether it is volunteering, time with family and friends, or a

second career, for most it is new and hopefully meaningful. The freshness of this new chapter is what can be exciting and daunting at the same time. The reinvention of yourself once the job title has changed is both a challenge and opportunity.

As a volunteer you get many tries at reinvention! You can try out different volunteer jobs at different sites and decide where the best fit is. You can also be on our email list, to be

notified when there is need for episodic volunteers to help out an organization on a one-time only or as-needed basis. As a volunteer you have the power to determine where you will bestow your talents, energy and time! What a wonderful way to think about a reinvention.

Many of us feel reinvented every time we connect with someone that we have helped. I know that I feel as if I've been refreshed and made new again when I know that my daily work has a real impact on people. I imagine many of you also get energized by connecting the work you do with the outcome it has in the community.

For example, did you know that in 2010, 556 volunteers worked in over 20 different congregate meal and Meals on Wheels sites around King

County? An example of the impact these volunteers have had is found in the responses to a survey administered by Senior Services to the recipients of these services. 91% of clients reported that receiving Meals on Wheels made it easier for them to have enough food in their house and to get enough to eat. And 95% of the clients surveyed reported that receiving Meals on Wheels helped them to remain living at home independently. I consider this impact to be incredibly inspiring!

If you are in the process of some reinvention, please don't hesitate to call us at RSVP. We should be able to help—whether by offering our services of placement or by helping connect you with the outcome of your service. We want to partner with you on your journey! ●

# RSVP collaboration with Seattle Pacific University Nursing School

by Anita Warmflash

One of the many ways in which RSVP serves the senior community is by collaborating with community agencies providing services to seniors. An opportunity for collaboration came up several months ago when Robin Knudson, RSVP Coordinator, received a call from Carol Redfield, an Instructor at the School of Nursing at Seattle Pacific University. Carol was developing a program for 50 first year nursing students to promote their understanding of well-functioning older adults. The project needed 25 senior volunteers to meet with two students for five one-hour interviews over the course of two semesters. I am one of the volunteers who just completed two interviews, and I also had a conversation with Carol, who provided me with some documents to understand the background of this curriculum project.

The program's official title is "Older Adult Partnership Project." It was developed from recommendations made by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing to improve nursing training curriculums in order to provide quality care to the nation's aging population. The SPU Nursing School decided to implement these recommendations with a project focused on well-functioning adults. The goal is to help nursing students develop an ease in relating to older adults and to better understanding how attitudes and values affect healthy aging. The premise of this curriculum is that to relate effectively to an individual, it is necessary to communicate an interest and respect for the individual's life experience and then to determine how that person's attitudes and values may affect their aging. This knowledge would then lead to better individualized care. Another goal is that the students become self-aware of their attitude and style of communicating in order to maintain focus on the older adult.

Each senior volunteer meets with two nursing students at a time



Carol Redfield (center) and SPU Nursing students (Photo from SPU)

and place comfortable for the volunteer. At my suggestion, our first meeting was at a nearby Starbucks. Each hour-long meeting has its defined objectives, the first of which was a get-acquainted session, largely unstructured, with the goal of achieving an ease and comfort level with one another. My students were two lovely young women who clearly seemed eager despite some understandable slight trepidation. Like most of the volunteers, as I later found out, I found myself reaching out to them by offering some information about myself and frankly asking about them. My life experience has taught me that an interviewer can also be uneasy on meeting a stranger, and I wanted to make it as comfortable for them as they tried to make it for me.

By the end of our first session, all around ease was achieved, and I was ready to suggest that we meet for our second session at my nearby home; this would give them an opportunity to know me better just by viewing the artifacts of my home. At the second session, they were very interested in what they saw but limited their inquiries appropriately, and then we settled into the formal interview structured around specific biographical information developed in their classroom.

Until a few weeks ago, I hadn't met the other senior volunteers, but a recent RSVP Ambassador meeting brought us together. We had a spontaneous sharing of experiences with "our" students. One and all enjoyed the opportunity even as some recounted the humor in initial awkwardness. Everyone expressed pleasure in the opportunity to contribute to the education of a younger generation. All of us were looking forward to the next several interviews coming up in the spring quarter. ●



Robin Knudson and "her" students, Sydney Aldrich and Alyssa Singh (Photo by Jen Gabagan)



## It Seems to Me...

by Peter Langmaid

### The power of love

I am the proud father of twin daughters in their early twenties. Both are in college—away from each other and away from home. They are good students, fun to be around, and positive about their futures—just about everything proud parents could hope for.

And both have boyfriends.

We have met and spent time with these young men, and both are intelligent, courteous, healthy, well-groomed (no visible piercings or tattoos), and looking forward with purpose. Model citizens.

The only problem with this otherwise perfect picture is the curious feeling my wife and I secretly share: We like one boyfriend better than the other. I'm ashamed to admit it, but it's true.

As a literature major, I've read a lot of poems about love, comparing it to everything from a fragrant rose to a hairy carbuncle. And, Bartlett's Familiar Quotations lists over

1,000 entries in the category of love. But, even with all my reading and all that has been written about love, it's still a remote concept—a feeling. Until recently.

Our dog either gets exercised twice a day or eats the furniture out of frustration. When my wife and I walk the dog together, it's a time to catch up, discuss things, and plan. During one evening's walk, the subject of why we prefer one boyfriend to the other came up. My wife—who is way more thoughtful on such matters than I am—stopped me in my tracks with the observation that the boyfriend we favor makes our daughter better, whereas the other boyfriend doesn't have the same impact.

Suddenly, it all made sense: Love is a relationship that makes you better.

Applying this concept to my relationship, it's clear that the presence of my wife in my life has made me better—far better. She urges me to do better when

I would settle for good enough. She does this because she loves me, and I do it (often reluctantly) because I love her (and because I know she's right).

And it's easy to see in our daughters. When the daughter in the loving relationship is with her beau, she comes alive with energy, vitality, and enthusiasm. When he's not around, she retreats to the couch and watches TV. The other daughter remains pretty much the same, boyfriend around or not.

Better, of course, is not always easy or convenient. It's hard, for example, to do homework instead of twittering. Or maybe you need to lose weight or stop smoking or start exercising. All of these activities make us better, and often we need help and encouragement to accomplish these things.

Volunteering makes us better people, too, because it reinforces the idea that we're all in this together—a community—and that part of being a responsible member of a community is helping those who need help. Volunteering is not always easy, fun, convenient, or deeply rewarding, but it makes us better, which in turn makes us feel better. What a deal! ●

### Aging Your Way *continued from page 1*

But the program isn't just about visioning. It also makes connections between constituents and forms action teams among participants to begin the work of making the vision a reality. For example, an action team was developed at the Southwest Seattle Gathering to expand Block Watches to go beyond crime to looking out for each other as we age.

Though each gathering has their own vision of what services they'll need as they age, some common themes are arising. Seniors envision a community that has a central area with 'bumping places' (where people bump into other people, like a park or a coffee shop); safe, integrated, senior-friendly transportation; intergenerational and inter-cultural opportunities; a local economy; learning places; and places to exercise. I, myself, can imagine a community where pharmacies offer home delivery service and doctors/nurses make house calls.

The vision of each gathering is captured and summarized in colorful murals created by Anne Jesse. The murals bring the visioning sessions to life, and help capture the ideas and energy that make each session unique.

After the gatherings are complete, a half day 'Summit' will bring together participants from all areas to discuss and organize around issues that reach beyond local communities (e.g. transportation). The Summit

is scheduled for September 23 at the Brockey Center at South Seattle Community College from 9AM - 2 PM. This meeting will also create a network of neighborhoods that can share information and experiences into the future—a kind of community of communities.

RSVP encourages you to share your visions of community. Visit [www.seniorservices.org](http://www.seniorservices.org) and click on *Aging Your Way* to sign up for an upcoming gathering. ●



Graphic illustration of ideas generated at the Northwest Seattle *Aging Your Way* gathering (Drawing by Anne Jesse)

# RSVP



The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a nonprofit National Senior Corps program sponsored locally by Solid Ground. RSVP encourages and supports volunteerism in King County for people 55 and older.



Solid Ground is dedicated to achieving a just and caring community free from poverty, prejudice and neglect. Our 30 programs give nearly 33,000 families a year the services, resources and support they need to overcome homelessness, hunger, domestic violence and other poverty-related traumas.

# EIA

*Experience in Action!* (EIA) is published quarterly by King County RSVP and distributed to 4,000 RSVP volunteers and friends. EIA is dedicated to providing news and information to RSVP volunteers. Articles express writers' opinions which are not necessarily the views of RSVP or EIA. We reserve the right to refuse any material deemed unsuitable. Articles may be edited in accordance with technical and editorial policy guidelines.

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## Aging with Wisdom

by Carol Scott-Kassner

### What's in a name?

This is the year that the baby boomers turn 65. I know that personally as my brother and my husband are both in that category. Although they may each enjoy "senior" discounts, it is clear that neither of them would be drawn to a senior center at this point in their lives and perhaps they never will. Both of them typify what is emerging as common in today's new retirees. They are more likely to go kayaking or build something than play bingo or cards.

In our parents' generation and preceding generations, people did not always live long and healthy lives after retirement. Often this stage was looked upon as a time to relax, rest, travel and not "do" any more. Many of you may remember when 65 was the mandatory retirement age. It was a kind of cut-off point to a whole new stage called "old age," and many went reluctantly into that time. There weren't a lot of options offered by society for meaningful engagement. Senior centers often provided important places for people to gather and be connected socially. All of that is shifting as our knowledge of the aging process changes and as people take care of their bodies through exercise and healthy

eating. As the new retirees step into this phase of life, much is happening to redefine expectations around aging and much needs to change in terms of the services and opportunities we offer people as they age.

So how do we begin to define or name this phase of life when the old images are no longer serving us? What kinds of activities and opportunities for meaningful engagement do we provide? New terms such as "vital aging," "conscious aging," "Sage-ing," "creative aging," and "positive aging" are now being applied to what some are calling the third stage of life. We are seeing the establishment of places such as the Geezer Gallery: A Whole New Old, in Portland, Oregon. Sixty artists from the age of 65 or older are sharing their creative work, and many other people come to take classes in art therapy, discovering their own hidden artist. The gallery "envisions a future where physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health are achieved through creative artistic expression, where 'elderhood' is viewed as a process of positive changes and a realm of new possibilities." Rent the film *Young at Heart* to hear an amazing choir

made up of people in the second half of life. It will lift your spirits.

A project called "beautiful minds" recognizes people who are living healthy lifestyles that encourage brain health as they age. They are building on the latest brain research about aging and identify four characteristics of the healthiest minds: a nourished mind [healthy eating]; a physically active mind [regular exercise and physical activity]; a socially connected mind [being engaged with others]; and a mentally engaged mind [continuing to learn and create].

As more and more people live into their desire to stay active and engaged as they age, they are naming this time of their lives in new terms. My business partner and I often say we are not retired, we are "refired." Another person has coined the term "returnment" to describe the fact that many from midlife and beyond are now engaging in what he calls "encore careers." These careers are often careers at lower paying jobs in the nonprofit sector where people are living out their dreams of changing the world by working for causes they care deeply about rather than at the jobs where they made a living. Senior Corps, which includes RSVP, and Experience Corps, whose goal is to "engage older adults as tutors and mentors for children," are examples of tapping into our energy and wisdom to make a positive difference in the world.

Finally, you might prefer to

embrace the name of "mystic" or "wise elder" as you age. It may be that your calling at this stage is more of an inward journey as reflected in this poem by Toyohiko Kagawa:

#### A Prayer

*I want to be ever a child.*

*I want to feel an eternal  
friendship for the  
raindrops, the flowers, the  
insects, the snowflakes.*

*I want to be keenly  
interested in everything,  
with mind and muscle  
ever alert, forgetting my  
troubles in the next moment.*

*The stars and the sea,  
the ponds and the trees,  
the birds and the animals,  
are my comrades.*

*Though my muscles may  
stiffen, though my skin may  
wrinkle, may I never find  
myself yawning at life.*

Regardless what you name yourself or the path you follow as you age, may it be one that helps your body, mind and spirit to sing. May it be one of deep satisfaction for you and may it be a blessing for those whose lives you touch. ●

*Carol Scott-Kassner is co-founder with Pat Lewis of 'Aging with Wisdom.' Pat and Carol are available to do workshops on various aspects of the spiritual journey of aging. They can be contacted at: [www.agingwithwisdom.com](http://www.agingwithwisdom.com) or [agingwithwisdom@msn.com](mailto:agingwithwisdom@msn.com).*

## Reinventing senior centers

**Featured Sites: North Bellevue, Greenwood & West Seattle** by Linda Urbaniak

At local senior centers, you can find anything from art classes to Zen meditation, but you'll find the emphasis is more involved with the whole community and more than likely, intergenerational. Would you like to dance, play pinochle, learn a language, discuss a book or learn to knit? You can do so at your local or nearby senior center. Do you need legal assistance, exercise or health management information? They have that too. You can even learn how to tweet or interact on Facebook.

One of the challenges the centers face is how to connect with those over 50 who, while

they love to use the "senior discounts," are reluctant to consider themselves as seniors. Different centers are approaching the challenge in different ways.

Take for example the **North Bellevue Community Center**. Once known as the Senior Center, it now embraces any age with no membership requirement. As part of Parks and Services through the City of Bellevue, each address in Bellevue receives a notification of the many classes and other services available at the Center.

"We have a large Indian community, and the Asian

community has ESL classes for those who speak Mandarin. And we are partnered with Sea Mar for Spanish speaking classes on Monday and Friday and CISC on Wednesday and Thursday, as well as our many other classes. We are trying to add more evening hours, too," said Jill Green, administrative assistant. The center also has a gift shop. Find out more at [www.MyParksAndRecreation.com](http://www.MyParksAndRecreation.com) and click on North Bellevue Community Center.

A different approach is being taken by the **Greenwood Senior Center** as it institutes its Senior Center Without Walls. Classes and discussion groups are scheduled at different locations as part of the Phinney Neighborhood Association's aim of creating a community that

meets the needs of all ages. The aim is to keep people in their own homes as long as possible while providing engagement with the community for older adults.

Cecily Kaplan, director of the center, urged, "Don't have

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**Greenwood Karaoke-Bingo Night**  
(Photo courtesy of the Greenwood Senior Center)

# RSVP 2011 Governor's Service Award nominee: Whoever thought a slug could become a bumblebee?

**Featured Site: Federal Way Senior Center** by Nora Tabler

*Ruth Cole is the RSVP King County nominee for the Governor's Service Award for 2011. Approximately 50 nonprofit agencies from across the state are asked to nominate a person who they think deserves special recognition. The nominees are feted with a reception at the Governor's Mansion in Olympia and a plaque presented by the Governor. Congratulations Ruth!*

Meet Ruth Cole, a 71-year-old self-proclaimed former "slug"—depressed, sad, isolated and feeling pain in her knees—who morphed into a happy, active, pain free and very busy "bumble bee."

Born in Oregon in 1940, Ruth moved to Washington with her family in 1953. At the age of 17 she married her 18-year-old husband and they moved to Tacoma where she graduated from Lincoln High School a year later. In 1966 she and her husband adopted a baby boy—but then in 1967, her husband died. This was Ruth's first very difficult challenge: She was a 26-year-old single mother with an infant and no college education. Her family had moved to California and she needed to find a job. Fortunately, her late husband's parents offered to care for the baby and she found a position as a phone operator. Ruth later remarried and had a second child but was wise enough to keep her job at the phone company. In 1984, at age 51, she divorced and retired.

Ruth went on to purchase a wholesale fabric business and renamed it Ruth Cole Fabric Group. She was the sole owner and happily supported herself until she turned 60.

At that time her sons encouraged her to sell the business and enjoy "retirement."

Unbeknownst to her, this decision to retire would become her second very difficult challenge. She found that with nothing to do she was bored and started focusing inwardly on problems that magnified out of proportion. She developed knee pain and didn't go out of her apartment. She was becoming a "slug." Her sons asked her doctor to prescribe antidepressants for her, but the pills didn't really help.



Ruth Cole at the Federal Way Senior Center  
(Photo by Nora Tabler)

Then one day a woman from the Federal Way Senior Center stopped by with a loaf of bread and welcomed her to the neighborhood. Ruth was skeptical of the Center and its motives, but money was tight, so she stopped by the Center a few days later to visit the Food Bank. She was welcomed by the people there and accepted an invitation to play a game of cards. She had a good time but did not stay long. A few days later she found herself driving by the Center and again stopped in to see what was going on. Over a period of many months, she began to shed her "sluggish" outlook and her knee pain—which today is virtually gone. She started volunteering at the Center's Food Bank and Thrift Store.

She was befriended by Harry Schreiber, the Center's manager, who became her mentor. He encouraged Ruth to "stretch" beyond her comfort zone. He nourished her low self-confidence and invited her to committee meetings. He encouraged her to consider a Board position, which overwhelmed her, but she put her name in and was accepted.

Today Ruth is the "Queen Bee" of the Senior Center, arriving each day at 6am to help with breakfast, work in the Thrift Shop and help with fundraising through the Women's Tea, Penny Sale and the Wounded Warrior Golf Classic. She also registered with RSVP and has become an ambassador so she can share her positive volunteer experiences with others.

Now 71, Ruth—wearing her mobile phone ear clip for her many calls—is more active than ever. I asked her to share advice for others who may be feeling sluggish in their lives. She said, "If you're bored or depressed, get out and volunteer. If that seems too hard, then start by just forcing yourself to talk to the cashier at the food store. Baby steps lead to bigger steps." She added, "When you volunteer for an hour, you get 10 hours back. You don't even have to like who you're with, but if you can make them smile, it's worth it." ●

## Reinventing senior centers *continued from page 4*

preconceived ideas on what a senior center provides. If a person is interested in connecting to community with an emphasis on age, give us a try." Recent classes presented ideas on how food affects our lives, learning about discounts for seniors, learning Excel, jewelry making, creative writing, photo editing with Adobe, line dancing and even an evening of Bingo-Karaoke.

Greenwood is also changing their marketing. They are working hard to provide cutting edge programs and have a section in *The Review*, the Phinney area newsletter, blogs, and on Facebook and Twitter. Check them out at [www.greenwoodseniorcenter.org](http://www.greenwoodseniorcenter.org).

**West Seattle Senior Center** operates somewhat differently. The center is self-supporting and receives no governmental help from city, state or federal funds. To participate in the many classes and activities one must purchase a \$25 membership. The membership provides basic support to the center and entitles members to discounts on any of the classes that have fees. There are fellowships available for those who could not afford to participate otherwise.

In addition to daily lunches Monday through Friday, the center operates The Café, open to the public and serving great homemade soup, sandwiches and cookies at a very reasonable price. A well-equipped computer

lab is available for anyone in the community, and many classes are given to keep up to date on new technology. They offer a large variety of activities including short trips and great classes, and they operate a senior van service for the West Seattle area

Because they are self-funded, West Seattle has some great fundraisers including Dinner Theater, Waffle Dinners, Rainbow Bingo. In April they will sponsor "Hooters and Hypnosteria," featuring happy hour with the Hooter girls, the Kevin Collins Comedy Hypnosis show, and a great chicken dinner. In addition the center operates the West Seattle Senior Thrift Shop on California Avenue. "Come and join us," invited Activities Coordinator, Carol Johnston.

You can check out what is in the works at [www.sc-ws.org](http://www.sc-ws.org).

The outreach to the entire community with emphasis on seniors is a better way of looking at senior centers. Check out the activities and classes at your local center. There's a lot more there than you think. ●



West Seattle Rainbow Bingo Night  
(Photo courtesy of W Seattle Senior Center)



## The Garden Lady

by Linda Urbaniak

### Ah hyacinths!

Hyacinths! The scent! The colors! Oh, the wonderful flowers of spring! Saadi, the Persian Sufi poet, wrote in 1258 in his poem Gulistan (The Rose Garden):

*“If of thy mortal goods  
thou art bereft,  
and of thy meager store  
two loaves alone to thee  
are left, sell one,  
and with the dole buy  
hyacinths to feed thy soul.”*

Since that time the delightful perfume and the bright, early blossoms of hyacinths have helped create colorful landscapes filled with flowers that should be in every garden.

Originally from Turkey and the middle east, at one time in the late 1700s there were over 2000 varieties, but today, alas, there are fewer than 50 varieties. Dutch Hyacinth flower stalks are covered with white, pink, blue, dark blue, crimson, yellow or orange tubular flowers. Their large bulbs produce flowers for several years, but unless regularly fertilized will gradually fade away.



Another type, referred to as Roman Hyacinths are, if you can imagine, even more powerfully scented—though the flowers are more openly spaced and smaller than the Dutch types. They are blue, white or pink and they will gradually naturalize, forming clumps with several bulbs. Luckily, they are not attractive to rodents or squirrels.

Although the Roman types have been cultivated in gardens since before written history, the Dutch types were first introduced in the early 1700s. Some of these ancient cultivars are still available through dealers of antique bulbs. Recent interest in the development of newer cultivars in the past 20 years or so have added new colors like the vivid magenta of Woodstock or the bright yellow of Yellow Queen. You can enjoy these wonderful bulbs now in bloom in pots as well as in gardens, but you will need to plant them in the fall. You can find hyacinth bulbs at local nurseries, home and garden stores and box stores, but the best ones are available online or from catalogs. Some of the best sources of quality bulbs are:

- Brent and Becky's Bulbs at [www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com](http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com)
- Dutch Gardens at [www.dutchgardens.com](http://www.dutchgardens.com)
- Holland Bulb Farms at [www.hollandbulbfarms.com](http://www.hollandbulbfarms.com)
- Van Borgondien at [www.dutchbulbs.com](http://www.dutchbulbs.com)



(Photos courtesy of Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center)

And for rare or antique bulbs, Old House Gardens at [www.oldhousegardens.com](http://www.oldhousegardens.com) has a great selection.

Hyacinths are hardy bulbs, easily surviving to 30 degrees below zero! Plant them in the fall with additional bulb fertilizer in well-drained, fertile soil in dappled sunlight to light shade. You should dig the soil about a foot deep and plant the bulbs about six to eight inches deep. They should be topped again with bulb fertilizer just after the blossoms are removed. The leaves should be allowed to yellow naturally and not be cut, but they can be removed

once they have collapsed. The bulbs should not receive an overabundance of water during the summer and should dry out completely before winter to give them the dormancy they need.

So celebrate spring! On the first warm day, grab a loaf of bread, perhaps a glass of wine, and—for your soul—surround yourself with the delightful fragrance of hyacinths. ●

*Linda Urbaniak is a docent at the Bellevue Botanical Garden and an RSVP Ambassador. She will gladly take your gardening questions at [lindagardenlady@speakeasy.net](mailto:lindagardenlady@speakeasy.net).*

### Performing arts discounts!

by Sandy Howard

Every day, I give thanks for all that I have living here in the Pacific Northwest: beautiful woods, mountains, lakes and... as I have reached retirement age... discounts!

As you can see below, the offers vary, as do the rules associated with them; be sure to call and ask for details and updates. When you purchase tickets, it is cash or check only. You must go in person an hour or two before the actual performance and wait in line. To get an idea of how many seats are still available try calling the box office before you go.

Here are a just a few examples I discovered:

**Bellevue Philharmonic Orchestra:** Check in a day or two before each concert to see if the orchestra is offering a “rush ticket” price (depending on how well the concert is selling). Call Brown Paper Tickets at 1-800-838-3006.

**Seattle Repertory Theater:** Senior Discounts for age 65 or older, tickets start at \$15. Rush Tickets: 1/2 hour before each performance, all available tickets

are \$22, but must be purchased in person with cash. To be notified about upcoming Pay What You Can performances, sign up for their email list at [www.seattlerep.org](http://www.seattlerep.org) and check the “Discounted Ticket Offers” box.

**Seattle Symphony:** Student and senior rush discount tickets, subject to availability, go on sale in person at the Seattle Symphony Ticket Office at 6 PM prior to evening performances and two hours prior to afternoon performances. Call the Seattle Symphony Ticket Office at 206-215-4747.

**Seattle Opera:** Seniors (65+) with valid ID can get \$40 Senior Rush tickets at McCaw Hall starting two hours prior to curtain (5:30 PM for 7 PM performances, and noon for 2 PM matinees). A computer automatically assigns the best house seats. Box Office: 206-389-7676.

**Pacific NW Ballet:** Half price rush tickets are available to students and seniors (65+) beginning 90 minutes prior to curtain time at the McCaw Hall Box Office: 206-441-2424. ●

### WHAT IS AN RSVP AMBASSADOR?

An RSVP Ambassador is an RSVP Volunteer who is willing to help us spread the word about the benefits of volunteering. Because of our small staff, we have assembled a wonderful group of volunteers who help us share the mission of RSVP with other seniors. If you would be willing to represent RSVP at events around King County, we would like to talk to you.

We do not ask for a specific time commitment, only that you occasionally share your enthusiasm for volunteering and help us encourage others by relating your own experiences and telling about RSVP. We provide a fun, interactive training and give you the opportunity to meet another group of active, enthusiastic people.

**To sign up or ask more questions:** Contact Robin Knudson, 206-957-4779 x116 or [robink@solid-ground.org](mailto:robink@solid-ground.org).



## Health Matters

by Mary Harvey, MD

### The stiff & creaky Mr. Smith

One day this winter, Mr. Smith got out of bed and found he could barely walk. His legs felt stiff and when he tried to walk, he shuffled along feeling creaky all over. As he moved about doing his morning activities, the stiffness and creakiness eased away. Mr. Smith wasn't entirely surprised by this turn of events. When his knees started aching he consulted his daughter, Dr. Jane, who told him he probably had arthritis.

Of the many types of arthritis, osteoarthritis is by far the most common, affecting 68% of people 65 and older. It is the number one cause of disability in older people. The affects of this arthritis range from moderate to severe. Often the first sign of "arthritis" is a deep achiness in a joint or joints. There may be localized tenderness to the touch around the affected joint and perhaps some redness or swelling.

There are several risk factors for arthritis. These include age over 45, gender (women are affected more than men), race (Caucasian people are affected more than other groups) and obesity. Obesity raises the odds of getting arthritis three times in women and two times in men. A loss of 10 to 15 pounds is associated with a 50% decrease in the odds of getting arthritis. Previous joint trauma or repetitive joint movement, common in certain occupations, may also cause arthritis. Several smaller studies have shown no increased risk with jogging or long distance running.

There are many approaches to treatment of arthritis: in mild to moderate cases, patient education and support may be all that is needed. Continuing to move affected joints is very important, so Physical Therapy is also often recommended. Pharmaceutical treatments many include acetaminophen or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication (NSAID). Steroid injections, debridement of a joint, or joint replacement may be called for in more severe cases. Osteoarthritis is not always progressive; often it stabilizes and, in some cases, may regress on its own.

If you are experiencing more joint pain as you age, you may want to consult your doctor about whether you may have osteoarthritis. He or she will be able to give you the best advice about a plan to ease your pain and keep you most active. ●

*Mary Harvey is a retired physician and an RSVP ambassador.*

### Little bits of humor...

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationary.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana. ●



## Senior on the Street

by Peter Langmaid

### What is your reaction to being labeled a "senior"?

*"I don't ever think about it—too busy."*

~Doug Shaw



*"I'm happy to be that old, given my family history."*

~Shirley Bonney



*"I can now get a senior pass on the ferry, it's fun!"*

~Aden Nardone



*"I kind of like it. I love senior discounts and I work because I want to work."*

~Len Langford



*"I'm excited to know that 60 isn't as old as I thought it was!"*

~Cheryl Cobbs



*"I can't wait until 65 so I can get more discounts!"*

~Dick Miller



*"60 is the new 30!"*

~Jeanette Bliss



# Volunteer & Community Opportunities through RSVP

The following are just a few of the volunteer and community opportunities RSVP has to offer. To talk to a real person about opportunities that are just right for you, call Jennifer Gahagan at 206-957-4779 x122 – or visit our website at [www.solid-ground.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer/RSVP](http://www.solid-ground.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer/RSVP) for regional volunteer opportunity listings.

## Volunteering

**Chris Elliot Fund:** Volunteer with a dynamic and passionate organization dedicated to increasing awareness, funding, care and support for sufferers of Glioblastoma brain cancer and their families. Current volunteer opportunities include fundraising, research, committee work, administrative tasks, event planning and helping at events. They are also currently seeking a part-time, volunteer executive assistant.

**Volunteer Chore Services:** Seeks volunteers to assist low-income elders or adults living with disabilities with housework, yard work, cooking, shopping or transportation. Volunteers choose day/time/location.

**Wellspring Family Services/Baby Boutique:** South Seattle location. Support homeless children and families by volunteering at our store that provides essential items to homeless children at no cost!

**Drivers Needed!:** Drivers are needed for a variety of tasks across King County. Tasks include taking seniors, veterans and people suffering from illness to medical appointments, transporting seniors to programs at senior centers, delivering meals to homebound adults and transporting food for distribution at food banks, senior centers, shelters and other programs.

**Full Life (formerly ElderHealth NW):** ElderHealth has a new name, but is still dedicated to the same mission. In addition to serving elders, they serve younger persons with traumatic brain injury, developmental disabilities, MS and other chronic conditions. Volunteers needed between 9 AM and 2 PM, Monday-Friday.

**Evergreen Hospice & Palliative Care:** Volunteers are needed at the Kirkland hospice center for visiting patients, helping staff, animal-assisted therapy, office help and reception. Volunteers are also needed for in-home visits, respite for primary caregivers, companionship, running errands, light household help, massage, etc. We offer a comprehensive training so volunteers will feel confident in offering hospice assistance.

**American Cancer Society:** Volunteers are needed to provide information and resources to cancer patients and their families in the Cancer resource centers at Valley Medical in Renton and the Highline Cancer Center in Burien. Volunteer drivers are also needed to take cancer patients to medical appointments.

**The Center for Wooden Boats:** What a great place to share and hone your boating skills. Volunteers are needed for all kinds of fun jobs: Front Desk information, Livery Assistant (checking people and boats in and out), Library, the Boat Shop (hands-on sanding and brightwork), Puffin Steam Team (learn to operate a 1906 steam launch and help with public rides), Sailing Instructor (you should have significant experience and love to teach), and much more.

**Cooking Matters (formerly Operation Frontline):** A program of Solid Ground based in the Wallingford area. We are looking for chefs to teach 4- or 6-week cooking and nutrition classes at various Seattle-area locations for individuals living on low incomes. Training provided.

## In Our Community

### Wallingford Community Kitchen: Earth Day Celebration

Friday, April 22, 5:30 - 9 PM  
An opportunity for all ages to come together around food. Share resources, ideas and food prep. Cook, learn and enjoy a meal together in community. \$10-\$15  
Wallingford Community Senior Center (lower level of Good Shepherd Center), 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103  
206-461-7825

### Auburn Senior Center: Senior Savers Pantry

Thursday, April 7, 9 AM - 1 PM  
Friday, April 8, 9 AM - 12 PM  
All seniors, regardless of income level, are welcomed. Each month, Pantry volunteers purchase foods in bulk quantities at low prices and then repackage them into individual sizes and pass along the savings. A wide variety of items are available: cereals, grains, cheese, spices, raisins, juice, soup, etc.  
Auburn Senior Center, 808 Ninth St SE, Auburn, WA 98002  
253-931-3016

### Garfield Community Center: Aerobics Class

Mon/Wed, 10:30-11:30 AM; new session begins in April.  
Low-impact class taught by certified instructors for ages 50+. \$30 per session.  
2323 E Cherry St, Seattle, WA 98122; 206-684-4788

### Solid Ground's Annual Building Community Luncheon:

Friday, May 6, 12 - 1:30 PM  
Guest Speaker: Dan Savage, editor of Seattle's *The Stranger* and cofounder of the *It Gets Better* project, which aims to give hope, strength and support to gay teens who struggle with social isolation, depression and bullying. \$150 suggested donation  
Washington State Convention & Trade Center, 800 Convention Place, 6th Floor, Rooms A & B, Seattle, WA 98101-2350; 206-694-6852

**AARP Tax Aide:** FREE tax assistance and preparation for taxpayers with low- and middle- incomes, with special attention to those age 60 and older, is available from AARP Tax-Aide from February 1 through April 15. You do NOT need to be an AARP member or a retiree to use this service.

Call toll-free: 888-227-7669 or visit our website at [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide) to locate an AARP Tax-Aide site near you.

### Redmond Senior Center: Senior Strength

Tues/Thurs, April 5 through 28, 9 - 9:45 AM  
Designed to improve your balance, strength and muscle tone. Ages 50+. \$26; 425-556-2300

- Please call to help me find a volunteer opportunity suited just for me.
- Please send information about RSVP.
- Please note my new address.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to: RSVP, 464 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98112