

# Experience *in Action!*

## ACRS: Just getting the job done!

By Peter Langmaid

The sign on the building read Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Food Bank. It seemed impossible that such a small, inconspicuous trailer neatly nestled under I-5 in Seattle's International District could house the second busiest food bank in King County, distributing over 126,000 pounds of culturally appropriate food to 4,500 households per month.

Inside the small office, John Malcomson, ACRS Volunteer Coordinator, greeted me and quickly introduced me to Yiem Mean, an unassuming Cambodian woman with a quick smile and calm manner. Because

Yiem isn't fluent in English—though she understands more than she can convey—our interview was a patchwork of interpreters.

Yiem has worked at the ACRS Food Bank for 18 years, logging over 8,000 RSVP volunteer hours in the process. Retired from her job at a local produce company, Yiem works four days a week, six hours per day at the Food Bank. As the undisputed produce expert, Yiem inspects all the donated produce, separates and bags it for distribution, and cleans up afterward.

Close your eyes at the ACRS Food Bank and you'll think



Food bank volunteer Yiem Mean and ACRS Volunteer Coordinator John Malcomson (Photo by Peter Langmaid.)

you're at the United Nations: everyone's talking and they're all speaking different languages. In addition to myriad Asian languages and dialects, two men wrestling huge sacks of rice up the wheelchair accessible ramp were exhorting each other in an unmistakable Eastern European language. I asked Yiem how such a diverse group communicated. She smiled and said they find ways other than language to communicate: they mime, point, demonstrate, and even give a gentle push when necessary. In the end, they all speak getting the job done!

Yiem left Cambodia in 1979, to escape the Khmer Rouge, and lived in a refugee camp in Thailand until her brother sponsored her to come to the U.S., where she has lived for 21 years. Yiem shares a house with her sister and uses her RSVP bus pass to travel back and forth to the Food Bank. When not volunteering, Yiem laughs and says she's either gardening, sleeping, or occasionally volunteering at the South Park Buddhist Temple for special events. Her home garden supplies produce for herself and her sister, their extended family, and the neighborhood. She even maintains a small decorative flower garden in the front of the house.

Asked why she volunteers at the ACRS Food Bank, Yiem begins simply by saying she just likes to work. Expanding, she talks about enjoying her co-

workers who feel like family to her. Digging deeper, Yiem likes giving back to the community and encountering people with more needs than she has. She says the work makes her feel more content with what she has and inspires her to work harder. And finally, volunteering makes her so happy she forgets about problems at home.

After taking Yiem's picture and thanking her for allowing me to get to know her, John spent a few minutes expanding on the work of the ACRS Food Bank and ACRS in general. Recently, the number of visits by families or individuals receiving assistance from the Food Bank has dramatically increased, likely linked to the rising cost of food and the economic downturn. People come to the Food Bank because they are made to feel welcome, and the Food Bank serves anyone, not just Asians. The ACRS Food Bank has 60-80 volunteers, with a core group of 20-30. And, volunteers don't have to speak English to get involved. Because of the fulfilling and rewarding work, volunteers tend to stay around for a long time. And finally, food is also distributed through five lunch programs around the county. Founded in 1973, ACRS operates thirteen programs covering a wide range of services, employs 200 people, and utilizes 700 volunteers to service 22,000 people a year.

Paraphrasing Yiem, ACRS gets the job done! ●

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## Speaking Directly

by Sonya Couch, RSVP Director

# Good news and funding challenges

Current economic conditions have caused two important changes for RSVP. The first is very encouraging. As a community we are answering the call to service by volunteering more than ever! As a result RSVP is seeing an increase in new volunteers. We ended 2008 with a total of 2,292 RSVP volunteers compared to 2,106 in 2007 and are on our way to more volunteers and increased hours for 2009. We are currently on track to end the year at around 330,000 hours!

This has been so inspiring to see! Most everyone has been affected by the financial crisis and yet even those who are struggling are finding true satisfaction and meaning in giving to others. This idea is at the heart of the RSVP program-

service to others benefits both the person being served as well as the person serving! Thank you RSVP volunteers for leading with an example of service and a reminder of what is truly important right now! This is the kind of news we all need to hear more of.

The other reality RSVP is facing is one of less funding. I'm sure this does not come as a surprise to you as we have all been affected by the economic downturn. This is, however, especially challenging for those of us in the non-profit sector as the need for our services is growing.

Historically, RSVP has relied on government grants to sustain most of the program. We now need to diversify our funding sources in order to broaden the

support for the program. This is where you come in! In October we will be sending a letter to all RSVP volunteers and supporters that lays out this need in more detail, and we will ask each of you to consider contributing financially to RSVP.

We recently held a focus group with our RSVP Ambassadors to ask about the organizations they donated to and why. We particularly wanted to hear what we should avoid as we prepared for this giving campaign. One message we heard loud and clear (and agreed with ourselves) was to not inundate people with mail or calls and to be respectful.

We respect the fact that you have many pressing demands on your finances. We also respect the fact that you likely already give to other worthy organizations or causes and that choosing where to spend limited resources is a difficult and important decision. We believe that those of you who see value in RSVP and have the ability to donate even a small amount will do so, and that this will add up to enough to sustain and increase our efforts at a time when it's needed most. We are working toward a modest 2009

goal of \$2,000.

The work of RSVP (to support and encourage volunteerism in King County) is vitally important now more than ever. Continuing to provide high quality volunteers to local non-profits that meet critical community needs is one of the keys to not just sustain, but to grow through these hard times. That is why President Barack Obama has made a call to service and is working along with RSVP and many other organizations to mobilize volunteers to respond to the economic crisis.

In October, please watch for your RSVP letter where you will have the opportunity to help ensure the continuation of the program. We also encourage you to call our office with questions and suggestions, or you can join our group of dedicated RSVP Ambassadors to give us input on a regular basis!

Thank you for your continued volunteer work, and thank you for your membership in RSVP. The work you do is an inspiration to others and truly makes a difference in our community. ●

# Charla Sullivan: RSVP helped her find 'serious' volunteer jobs

by Sandy Howard

When I first spoke to Charla Sullivan she was on her cell phone at the Seattle Visitor's Bureau getting ready to close up for the day. About 9,000 dentists were in town for a convention, and some hadn't made hotel reservations before they came. Some had turned for last minute help to the Citywide Concierge and Visitor Center, located in the Convention Center. It had been a busy day, but Charla was used to being busy.

Before she lost her job of 20 years in the export business due to a downturn in the market, she had been a logistic manager, spending time on the phone arranging for movement of products. She worked with vendors, truckers, and others in the shipping industry to finalize details for her customers from Japan, China, Korea, Indonesia, South America and Mexico.

At 62 yrs of age, Charla found herself with a severance package, but no job. So, for 2 years, she worked part-time job as a property manager.

Then, in November of 2007, after being ill for a year, Charla's husband died of melanoma. Providence Hospice had assisted her with home care and also

provided some helpful grief counseling. In the counseling sessions Charla heard stories about how to survive being left behind and how "it was very easy to become a recluse and end up talking to the cat." So Charla decided to do some research into how she could get out and volunteer. Because she was resourceful, patient, and yet determined, she found not one volunteer job, but three!

Charla "discovered" RSVP when she picked up a brochure

at her local library and called for information. "RSVP sounded like it had such a variety available, that I was very interested," she said. When she talked with Jennifer in the RSVP office, she was first asked about her preferences in jobs. This helped to narrow down her choices. Jennifer called the sites to verify what volunteer jobs were available, and to let them know Charla would be calling.

Then Charla took it from there. She set up appointments to go visit three sites. "Volunteering is a 'serious job', and "shouldn't be taken lightly," she says. She now volunteers for the WA Wilderness Coalition and for City-Wide Concierge, the Visitor's



L to R: Ann Peavey, Senior Manager, and Charla Sullivan at the Seattle Citywide Concierge Center. (Photo credit: Sandy Howard.)

Continued on page 3



## Wit & Wisdom

by author Henry Wiener

### Life's firsts

**Note to readers:** Our dear Henry is now residing at the Kline Galland home and would welcome any thoughts or good wishes.

One exciting aspect of aging is revisiting the many "firsts" we have enjoyed. A recent news item captioned, "My First Job," reminded me of my significant "firsts."

I entered the working community in the early days of the Depression. In an effort to boost our family's waning income, I found a job delivering parcels of pharmaceuticals from the warehouse to neighborhood pharmacies through New York's heavy traffic.

After graduating from high school I faced another first – the halls of higher learning. I enrolled in the closest community college that offered night courses in order to be free to work during the daytime.

The continuing need for increasing our family income led me to a job as a shipping clerk in a lamp factory. It was another new and challenging experience. We had to pack lamps of all sizes in cardboard boxes knowing our job security depended on how fast we worked. It was my first experience working with one eye on the clock, as we were made aware that when business slackened, the slowest person's

tenure was in jeopardy. This led to a Chaplinesque situation as each one did his best to outdo the others. In addition, we never knew when a notice would be posted informing us we had to work overtime. I had to devise clever ways of exiting the building unnoticed, sometimes through the elevator shaft, in order to make it to my evening classes on time.

The next new experience was working in a men's clothing factory. Piled on long wide tables were thick layers of cloth with white chalk outlining the areas to be cut. This was the job of an elite group, the "cutters", skilled craftsmen who carefully moved a small electric saw with an up-and-down blade through the chalked outlines.

My task, a new "first", was bundling the cut sections and sending them on to the next step in the production line.

Still residing in my file of "firsts" is the memory of seeing my newly born, freckle-faced, redheaded daughter. But even before that overwhelming experience I was heir to a seemingly endless variety of firsts – my sisters' weddings and the train rides to the states to which they moved. And as nieces and nephews arrived, I relished witnessing their first attempts at

defying gravity and hearing the undefined sounds of their voices.

All this reminiscing took me back to the experiences my oldest sister initiated. Sometimes it was being taken to dinner and a play. On special occasions it was an exciting journey to the ice-cream parlor for the banana split I cherished. The highlight of our contact was visiting a movie house that also featured vaudeville acts. It often felt like a new experience seeing clever little birds and dogs doing unbelievable tricks.

There are other memories I treasure – the contacts with my boyhood friends, especially my bosom buddy, with whom I had such a warm and close friendship until he left us for a journey to another world.

The special firsts come in no special order. But flashing on the screen of my memory and inscribed on my life's calendar are a medley of these precious moments – my first stumbling attempt at dating, the first painting I sold, the first professional presentation I made, the first article that was printed, and especially my start in the Journals where my verbal meandering still appears.

But of all the first memories I cherish, the most poignant is meeting my wife at a conference in Carmel, California, and courting her over 400 miles.

Since that time I have enjoyed a host of new experiences, "firsts" which I could not let go – not even for a second. ●

*Henry Wiener is author of the book 'Wit and Wisdom.'*

### Charla Sullivan *continued from page 2*

Bureau at the Convention Center. She also volunteers once a month for the Seattle Parks Board.

WA Wilderness Coalition appealed to Charla because she is "a believer in the environment" and enjoys the outdoors as a day hiker. She started volunteering with WWC in the midst of their annual auction and had a lot of success getting donation items for the auction over the phone. While she claims she is "not good in a crowd," she admits she is "very good on the phone" and that "her voice often conveys a lot of enthusiasm." As time went by, she became a member of the Auction Committee, and then

attended vendor events.

"The Seattle Visitors Center also sounded like it would give me the opportunity to be out in front of folks, which I needed," said Charla. "And, when I spoke with the supervisor, Ann Peavy, she was so enthusiastic and informative, that I felt very comfortable." "Though you are usually on your feet for the shift (its difficult to point out things on a map and talk to folks when you're sitting down), the number of visitors from other countries is quite large and very rewarding to talk to." "Not only are we letting people know what there is to see and do in Seattle, we also make reservations for dinner,

some trips and sites." Charla says she also receives some very nice benefits: staff members and volunteers of SVC get invited to attend events and new openings of restaurants and hotels.

Charla is an example of someone who worked hard to find the appropriate volunteer jobs for herself and RSVP helped her to do it.

If you would like help finding a volunteer job that is just right for YOU, please call Jennifer Gahagan at 206-957-4779 x 122. ●

# 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

# Memories: windows to our lives

I remember with great fondness begging my father to tell us stories from the “olden days” as he tucked us into bed at night. He was in his 30s at the time and I’m sure that he didn’t feel very old, but the stories of his childhood were magical to us – growing up in Ritzville, working the wheat fields in the fall, and driving teams of horses to haul the grain. Those stories have stayed with me and are a part of the legacy that my father gave me. They help me to feel deeply rooted as part of a long line of people in my family.

As we age, we truly become repositories of stories. We’ve lived long enough to have had many experiences of life that have taught us important lessons about this human journey. Some of our stories may be about the challenges we’ve faced and, hopefully, overcome. Many are probably stories about special times of great joy and celebration or humor. Whatever the story, retelling them and reminiscing about them provide windows to our lives and a sense of connection. They help us to feel

less alone. And, they can become gifts for those who come behind us – children, grandchildren, and others who are a deep part of our lives.

Reflecting on dimensions of our journey through our stories also helps us to perform an important spiritual task as we age, creating a sense of integrity. Another way to describe that task is that we are integrating various aspects of our lives, thereby creating a sense of wholeness in knowing who we are and an acceptance that this is the one life we’ve been given to live. We can re-enter the details of our lives and reflect on their meaning from the broad perspective of age. We can see that something that was once a challenge for us helped us to become stronger or sent us down another path and, ultimately, became a gift for us. We can also re-examine places where we still hold pain, sorrow, or anger and make a commitment to do healing work as a part of our seeking of wholeness.

This process of entering our stories reflectively is called “Life Review.” Life Review can be

accomplished in a number of ways. Perhaps the simplest is to group the years of our lives into seven year segments, then examine each of those periods in terms of the following questions:

- What were the significant moments of events of this life phase?
- Who were the people that guided and influenced you?
- What did this phase of your life contribute to the continuum of your life?

We can also reflect on some more specific questions that will help to reveal important parts of our story to others. This is different from writing our autobiography, which tends to be historical in nature, rather than reflective. That can be a valuable process, but answering some of the following questions may be another route to recalling important decisions of your life and your values.

- What was your most important accomplishment?
- What has been your biggest setback and how did you overcome or solve the problem?
- Who was your favorite school teacher and the one you liked the least? Why? What was your favorite subject and the one you liked the least? Why were you drawn to that favorite subject? Did you pursue that in other parts of your life? Why did you dislike the other subject? Did you eventually change your mind? What do you think was your most important lesson in school?

•Did you have any goals or dreams as a young person? Did you accomplish any of those?

•Did your family have strong ideas about what you should do with your life?

•What is a long-held dream for yourself that you would still like to accomplish?

•Who was the most influential person in your life? What did they do? What lessons did they teach you?

Another approach to storytelling that people in my workshops have enjoyed doing is to reflect on a time in their life when they learned a lesson and to write a short one-page story around that memory. The Italian writer, Cesare Pavese, said, “We do not remember days . . . we remember moments.” Reflect on moments that had deep meaning for you, write a short story about them, and gather those stories together to give to loved ones to keep special memories of you alive long after you are no longer here. May your process of remembering be blessed with laughter and tears. May your remembering bring you closer to people that you love. May remembering bring you to greater wholeness and healing. ●

*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).*

## Travels with Doris by Frank King: a book review

by Elaine Bishop, printed and edited with permission

*“I was damaged goods in my mid-sixties when, for fun, I began flirting with Doris on a trip to Italy [with the Seattle Mountaineers]. She was an older woman by one year. But I had fun despite our great age difference: hiking, climbing, and talking - lots of talking...That was the start of my travels with Doris.”*

So begins Frank King’s delightful memoir, *Travels with Doris*, which recounts his fifteen years of adventures around the world (starting from their home base in Sammamish) with Doris.

Frank and Doris are not your typical tourists. They travel without reservations and miraculously find food to eat,

places to sleep, and means of transport. Their itineraries look like ones chosen by a twenty-something wanting to see the world: Switzerland, India, Paraguay, Romania and more.

Doris is the star of *Travels*. She makes friends everywhere, language being no barrier. “I always agreed with her assessment of people she terms as angels,” Frank concedes.

Doris’s travel angels lead them to a hidden train track in the Czech Republic, find them places to sleep in many countries when park benches appear to be the only alternative, and teach her to fasten and unfasten her Indian

ankle bracelets so she need not again suffer connected ankles.

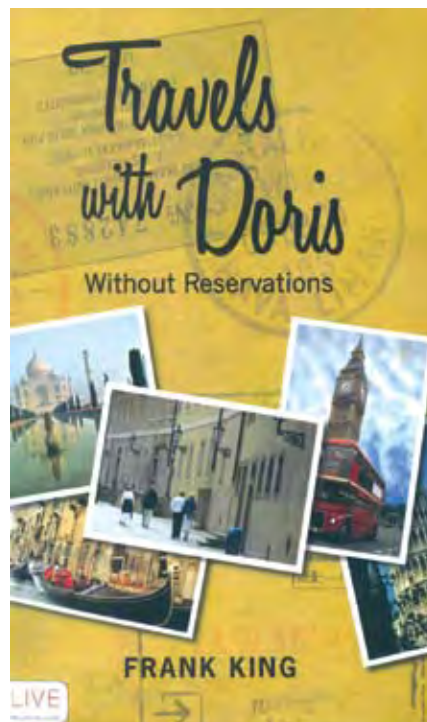
Frank renders natural landscapes with opulent description. From their Swiss hostel they could see mountaintops that “glistened in

their snowy white mantel, which contrasted sharply with the dark gray cliffs and rocky crags thrusting out of the snowfields and glaciers.”

But more than a travelogue and an interesting set of tales, *Travels* reminds us that we are never too old for adventure, that taking chances can pay big dividends, and that people everywhere help each other in wondrous ways.

Though I probably would not book my flights then hope for the best in out-of-the-way places that Frank and Doris have chosen, *Travels with Doris* reminds me that perhaps I can. ●

*Frank King will sign books at Borders Books in the Federal Way Commons from 12:00 to 3:00 on November 21. His book can be ordered at your local bookstore and is available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).*



## The joy of sharing a helping hand

Featured Site: Valley Medical Center, Renton *by Anita Warmflash*

As I approached the Information Desk at Valley Medical Center in Renton, I saw a mother with her young child in friendly conversation with two persons sitting behind the desk. The mother was clearly pleased and flattered that they took time to admire her child after giving her the information she needed. I immediately guessed that I was seeing Anne Goodfellow at work, helping people as they enter the hospital lobby.



Ann Goodfellow, long-time Valley Medical Center volunteer. (Photo credit: Robin Knudson.)

Anne and I sat down with Royanne Weber, Supervisor of the volunteer program for the hospital, to talk about the hospital and its history. Anne's association with its history is unique as it goes back to 1945! Like many citizens of that time Anne voted in favor of its founding as a non-profit, public hospital

with 100 beds. In those years, she was a busy homemaker raising her children but in 1968 a friend invited her to join the Ladies Auxiliary of the hospital, that later became the Volunteers in Action program. She has volunteered 4 hours a morning of each week, a schedule she maintains to this day. She has been so reliable that she is often called on to substitute for someone who can't make it in. Anne has an unbroken record of service which now totals 11,978 hours!

I was fascinated by the changes Anne has witnessed over the years of service. In the early days, she provided information services but sometimes also fed patients and made their beds. In 1969, the hospital moved to its present location on a 35 acre site, became a 300 bed facility with 2500 employees and still is expanding. The Volunteer program also grew to 330 people, all of whom have specific assignments. The Information Desk where Anne works

is always covered by two volunteers whose task it is to provide information on the location of hospital services. They also provide an escort whenever needed. Anne recalled the pleasure it gave her to help a woman who as a new immigrant, unable yet to speak English, needed help to find her way to a physician. The woman was profusely grateful for the extra help Anne gave her.

As I listened to Anne, she struck me as someone with a strong sense of responsibility, self-disciplined and conscientious, and by nature tactful and sensitive to other peoples needs. She has a sparkle in her eyes which made me think that she is curious about the world and still eager to learn. Anne also likes to have fun and so I was only partly surprised when I learned that she reads mystery novels often late into the night.

Anne told me that her parents emigrated from Slovenia. Their native language was the only one she knew until her first year in public school. Her father's first jobs were in the copper and coal mines but he had a dream to own a farm which he finally achieved though it proved to be a life of hard work for the entire family. As a very young person, Anne milked the cows, worked in the fields gathering hay, walked a mile to school and 7 miles on errands for her parents in town. While her father became proficient in English, her mother did not, which made me think of the empathy she now shows immigrants who come to the hospital.

Anne married, reared a family, and lived her adult life in a nearby suburban community. Her extensive homemaking skills benefited family and friends for whom she would cook wonderful and wholesome meals. Now, she lives in a neat, small apartment which she fixed up to suit her taste. She spoke with pleasure of her family which includes a great granddaughter. Anne still knits about 15 caps a month for the needy even while she continues her hospital volunteer work.

The self-discipline and work ethic that Anne learned early in life have been a constant for her and they have helped her to appreciate the need for a helping hand in times of difficulty. ●

## The wonderful impact of tutoring a child

Featured Site: Communities in Schools

*by Janeal Stevens, Volunteer Coordinator*

Volunteers are an integral aspect of the academic programs run through Communities in Schools. One volunteer went above and beyond this past school year. Her name is Mary Ellen Flannigan, and she volunteers every Thursday Graham Hill Elementary School. for 2 different programs! She is a reading buddy for a 2nd grader during the day and then stays after school to distribute snacks to our Math All Stars students and stays for another 2 hours to provide math support for those 4th and 5th graders.

In order to best serve the Math All Stars program, Mary Ellen attended training provided

by the Seattle Tutoring Coalition on her own time and brought back a binder full of math games that she readily shared with the Program Coordinator. Due to these added resources the Math program has been restructured and is better designed to support students who struggle with math. Thank You, Mary Ellen!

When asked how her experience has been volunteering at Graham Hill, she shares a story of her reading buddy. The little girl started off so shy, she hardly spoke, but now when Mary Ellen picks her up in her classroom she skips down the hallway. Her reading buddy's teacher, Rebecca Bland, had this to say about the

impact Mary Ellen has had: "When Mary Ellen came to Graham Hill her reading buddy read at a kindergarten level, had low pronunciation skills and would not talk or read aloud in class. Mary Ellen has been a consistent support to this student. She is punctual, ready with learning supplies and always greets her with a smile. Mary Ellen has taught her about phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension. As a direct result, this student's confidence has increased dramatically and she is reading at a 1st grade level. Furthermore she enjoys reading aloud in class. Mary Ellen's dedication and positive encouragement have made a wonderful impact in this child's life!"

It is because of the dedication and commitment



Mary Ellen Flannigan with her reading buddy (Photo credit: Janeal Stevens)

of volunteers like Mary Ellen that Communities in Schools of Seattle can continue to provide academic support to students throughout Seattle schools. Thank you to all of our volunteers! We couldn't do it without you. ●

*If you are interested in working with Communities in School, or tutoring children, please call Jennifer Gabagan at 206-957-4779 x 122*



## The Garden Lady

by Linda Urbaniak

# See the beautiful vegetables at the Federal Way Senior Center!



When the Federal Way Senior Center looked for a project to help engage seniors with grade school children in their Roots and Wings program, they considered many things, but the winner all around is the community garden that sits on 10,000 square feet just across the parking lot from the center. It includes six plots specifically for groups of children and helps seniors and children connect with a joint venture in raising healthy food.

This beautiful garden was built with support from over 100 volunteers who helped build the beds. Local businesses donated money and in-kind materials such as the lumber for the beds, fertilizer and organic bedding soil to promote good growth for the plants as well as plant supports and irrigation supplies. Mike Stanley, a Master Gardener, was instrumental in getting it started and local volunteers, especially with the help from the Ameri-Corps, made it happen.

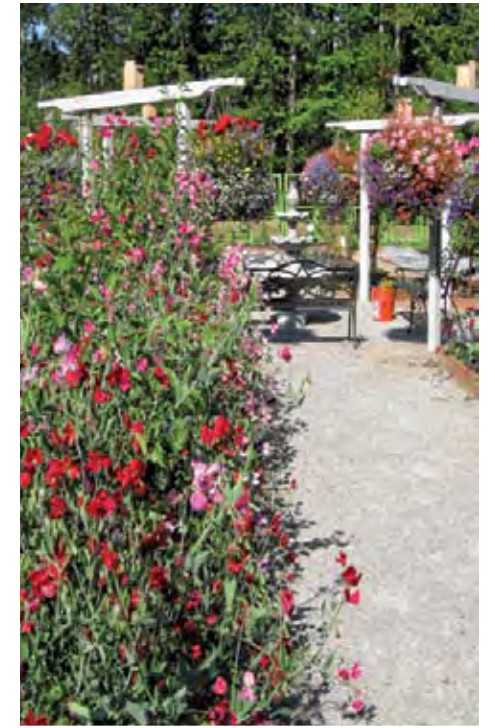
The garden is organic, and the water is provided by the Center. The raised beds are arranged in an attractive pattern and there are several built to wheelchair height to accommodate the chair-bound. The food in many of the plots is grown with volunteer labor from several local businesses. It contributes to the health and welfare of Federal Way

Senior Center Community by providing fresh produce for the senior center and to the food bank program. The Community Pantry serves over 900 seniors and their family members. It is planned that produce will be delivered to seniors in need at senior housing locations and homes through the Meals On Wheels program.

This isn't a garden only for food for the table, however. There is also food for the soul. The wide paths are lined with sweet peas and other attractive flowers. There is a central gazebo centered by a splashing fountain and benches to

appreciate the surrounding. Even the individual beds, planted with so many succulent vegetables are still life paintings in themselves.

It's not just vegetables, though. There are espaliered fruit trees, raspberry vines and strawberry patches. There is even a beehive,



carefully set in the back. The wide paths make strolling easy, even for the wheelchair bound.

To see this lovely garden exit I-5 at 320th street and go east. Turn right on Military Road, then turn right again on South 352nd. About a half mile further at 4016 S. 352nd St. you will see a sign for the Senior Center. Turn right and enjoy strolling through a bountiful and beautiful garden. ●

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



## Free Web site helps older adults stay active in King County

Older adults in King County know that getting exercise will help preserve their independence. But until now, locating an appropriate and affordable physical activity close to home hasn't been easy.

A new, free, user-friendly Web resource

to help local seniors stay active simplifies that search.

**ActiveOptions.org** is an online guide with information for more than 200 physical activity providers in King County.

To find activities such as water exercise, yoga, or even Wii bowling in King

County, seniors, can go to **www.ActiveOptions.org**, type in a zip code, and the site will offer a printable list of all physical activity providers in or close to that zip code. The site is also

searchable by type of activity.

For more information, please call Andrea

Meewes at Senior Services, 206-268-6736.

Active Options is sponsored by the Healthy Aging Partnership. HAP is a coalition of 30+ nonprofit and public organizations dedicated to the well-being of older adults. ●



### 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).

## Shape UP campaign starts in mid-September

from Public Health Seattle/King County

The goal of Shape Up is to reduce falls in older populations and through physical activity. Exercizing three to five times a week can help reduce the risk for a fall. According to the Emergency Medical Services Division at Public Health-Seattle & King County, falls have a significant impact on older populations:

- Fall-related events comprised 17.4% of King County Emergency Medical Services responses among persons 65 years and older in 2008.

- About one-third of persons older than 65 who live in a community dwelling experience a fall each year, and most of these falls are in the home setting. Furthermore, 10 to 15% of these events result in serious injury, and half of these serious injuries are fractures.

- For elderly persons who suffer hip fracture, half require hospital discharge to a nursing home and more than a quarter die in the year following the injury.

The Shape-Up campaign is organized by the Emergency Medical Services Division of Public Health -Seattle & King County and sponsored by Soundview Medical Supplies and the Healthy Aging Partnership.

For more information about the Shape Up campaign, call Alan Abe at 206-296-0202, or visit [www.4elders.org](http://www.4elders.org). ●

## Happiness improves with age!

by Jim Evans

**DEAR JIM:** I'm a spry 83-year-old gal with no serious medical issues, but I'm concerned because I'm so happy all the time. Well, maybe "happy" isn't the right word, but I feel really at ease with things compared to when I was younger. When I look at the world around me, it just doesn't seem "normal." Oh, I've had my share of troubles like everyone else, and many of my friends have passed away, but overall I feel pretty good about everything. I exercise regularly, I eat whatever I want in moderation, and I have an active social life. Still, in the back of my mind, I think there must be something wrong with me. Should I be troubled by this or just let it go? ~ *Troubled in Topeka*

**DEAR TROUBLED:** Let it go, my dear. You are perfectly normal. It's O.K. to be happy.

According to a recent study reported by Susan Turk Charles, PhD, of the University of California, Irvine, at the 117th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, emotional happiness improves with age. "We know that older people are increasingly aware that the time they have left in life is growing shorter," said Charles. "They want to make the best of it, so they avoid engaging in situations that will make them unhappy. They have also had more time to learn and understand the intentions of others which help them to avoid these stressful situations."

Charles also commented how research shows that older adults exert greater emotional control than younger adults, meaning that older adults are more likely to actively avoid or limit negative, stressful situations than do younger adults. Maybe it's just part of growing up.

However, these age-related benefits may not appear when older adults are faced with prolonged, distressful situations with no way to escape. "Older adults may have more difficulty with these situations because distressing events require both psychological and physical resources," she said.

The bottom line is that older people in general DO tend to become happier with age, so your first choice was probably the right one. Keep doing what you are doing and enjoy every minute of it. And, yes, "happy" is the right word. ●

*Jim Evans is a 41-year veteran of the health and fitness industry and internationally recognized fitness consultant specializing in fitness for seniors.*

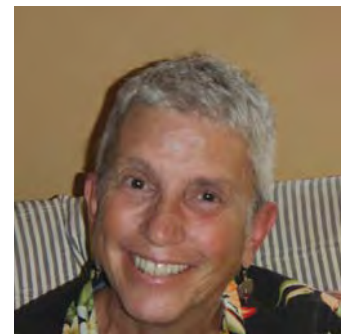


## Senior on the Street

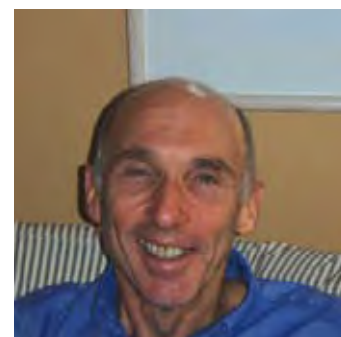
by Peter Langmaid

## An unforgettable school memory

"Horror of math flash cards!"  
~Shirley Bishop



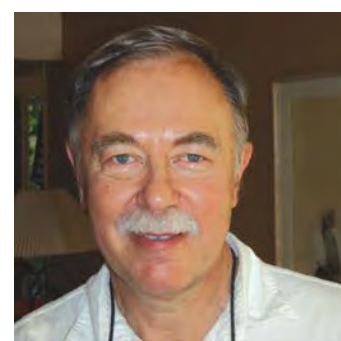
"Being sent to the principal's office for playing poker with Buddy."  
~Mike Bishop



"Second grade. Caught talking in church. Nun made me kneel in center aisle as the whole school passed by me."  
~Kelly Nelson



"They said I was in the wrong kindergarten class; I disagreed."  
~Greg Liptont



"Sixth Grade. I was moving an upright piano from room to room along an outside concrete walkway. To avoid interrupting a 4-square game I detoured through the dirt and tipped the piano over."  
~Paul Glaze



# 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

**Baby Boutique:** New South Seattle location! Support homeless children and families by volunteering at our store which provides essential items to homeless children at no cost!

**Senior Center of West Seattle:** New Partner Site! Help to support seniors in a beautiful and vibrant setting in the West Seattle Junction. Volunteers are needed to serve as front desk receptionists, coffee bar assistants, stop & shop helpers and meal servers.

**Senior Services:** Volunteer drivers needed to transport seniors to medical appointments during the weekdays. The transportation program is flexible. Drive your own car and choose the times and areas you'd like to drive!

**Tutors & Mentors Needed:** Volunteer tutors, mentors and classroom assistance are in high demand across the county. Activities include reading with students, practicing math and writing skills, sharing special skills and interests and being a friend and role model.

**VA Puget Sound Health Care System:** Home Respite Care volunteers are needed county-wide! This important volunteer position provides friendship and companionship to homebound veterans while also providing support and respite for caregivers.

**Volunteer Chore Services Phone Buddies Program:** Would you like to bring joy and companionship to an isolated elder or disabled adult? Do you have time each week for one phone conversation? Would you like to volunteer through friendly outreach? If so, the phone buddies program is a great way to contribute to the community!

**West Seattle American Cancer Society:** New Partner Site! Help fight to eliminate cancer. Meet new friends and share the joy of giving of yourself and your talents. Volunteer jobs include cashiers, sorters, pricers, woodworkers and an art coordinator! Invest only 4 hours a week of your time. Please join our team!

**American Red Cross:** Disaster Health Services - Provide emergency and preventive health services to those affected by disasters. All Health Services volunteers must have current license or certificate in their professional field. and must be available following major community emergencies. Training provided.

**Multifaith Works:** Care Team - A Care Team is a group of 4-7 volunteers who provide practical, and spiritual support to a person or household affected by HIV/AIDS or addiction. Care Teams build supportive relationships with their Care Partners by listening, offering encouragement, renewing interest in life and establishing meaningful connections. Potential volunteers attend a one-day training on HIV/AIDS education and the values of compassionate care. The next training will be held Saturday, Oct. 10th from 8:45 - 4:45 at the First AME Church.

**Habitat for Humanity:** 1) Volunteer Supervisors to lead a team of of volunteers for short term construction projects. Supervisors need to be available at least 2 or 3 days/week. The work week runs Tuesday - Saturday. 2) Construction volunteers, and 3) Warehouse team volunteers to staff the constuction warehouse.

## In Our Community

### Fall Prevention Awareness Day is Thursday, Sept. 17th!:

Falls are a leading cause of injury in the US. Annually, there are more hospitalizations from fall-related injuries than for automobile accidents! Find out about a Matter of Balance or EnhanceFitness classes at you local Senior Center, or check out the Shape Up! program at the Open House at Bitter Lake Community Center on Sat., Sept. 26. Call 206-233-7138 for more information.

### African American Museum Quilt Exhibition - "The Stories That Cover Us" :

Through Oct. 4 at the Northwest African American Museum, 2300 S Massachusetts St., Seattle. Free admission on the 1st Thursday of each month. Regular admission is \$4.00 for seniors. Call 206-518-6000.

### Aging and Disability Services is seeking new Advisory Council members:

Are you interested in in issues affecting older people and adults with disabilities? Time commitment is 4 to 6 hours per month including a monthly meeting on 2nd Fridays. Visit [www.agingkingcounty.org/advisory-council/join.htm](http://www.agingkingcounty.org/advisory-council/join.htm) or call 206-684-0652.

**Give a Day, Get a Night:** Give 8 hours of community service and get a complimentary night stay or 50% discount on hotel rooms at all 53 Sage hotels across the country. Visit [sagehospitality.com/specials/giveadaygetanight.htm](http://sagehospitality.com/specials/giveadaygetanight.htm) for details. Offer ends Dec. 20, 2009.

### Senior Citizens' Lobby 2009 Annual Fall Conference:

Friday, Oct. 30 and 7:30 am to 4:00 pm at the Radisson Hotel, SeaTac. Visit [www.wasriorlobby.org](http://www.wasriorlobby.org) for more details.

### American Lung Association - Master Home

**Environmentalists:** The American Lung Association is accepting applications for fall volunteer training classes to be held in Sept. and Nov. Master Home Environmentalists learn to recognize indoor health hazards that contribute to disease, find low cost solutions to the problems, teach others about home hazards and conduct home assesments. Free 35 hour training. Call 206-441-5100 x 35.

### Washington Wilderness Coalition's 30th Anniversary and

**Auction:** Thursday, Nov. 12th at the Shilshole Bay Beach Club. For \$75.00 you can enjoy a NW themed buffet dinner, silent auction and opportunity to support the on-going work of the coalition. Call 206-633-1992 or visit [lisa@wawild.org](mailto:lisa@wawild.org).

- 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