

RSVP Governor's 2009 Volunteer Service Award nominee: Bertha Fitzgerald

By Julie Bebee, Juanita Elementary School

Each year RSVP is asked to nominate a volunteer for a Governor's Service Award which is presented at the Governor's Mansion in Olympia during National Volunteer Week. This year we were honored to nominate Bertha Fitzgerald who has been an RSVP volunteer since 1991 and has reported 3,282 hours of service. She received a certificate and plaque from Washington's 'first man' Mike Gregoire on April 21.

Bertha Fitzgerald was born in Sesser, Illinois, in 1923. She was a country girl who married a city boy in 1944. Her husband (Charles) was in the US Air

Force. He was part of the first response team after the bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Years later he became ill, and doctors were unable to diagnose his illness or provide an appropriate treatment for him. Bertha cared for him for many years. After his death, an autopsy revealed that all of his internal organs were petrified (literally like rocks), from the radiation he was exposed to in Hiroshima. It was an absolute miracle that he lived as long as he did.

Bertha also helped her divorced daughter raise her son and daughter. Bertha's grandson



Bertha Fitzgerald with Washington 'first man' Mike Gregoire. (Photo courtesy of WA state office of the Corporation for National and Community Service.)

was born with cerebral palsy and is wheelchair-bound. He was the first disabled child to be mainstreamed from special education in the Lake Washington School district, the district in which Bertha now volunteers. Both grandchildren are grown and lead happy, productive lives. Bruce is employed by Costco, and provides the "color" for the radio broadcasts of the Seattle Thunderbirds. Bertha speaks to her granddaughter daily, and now has 2 great grandsons.

When her husband passed away, Bertha was at a loss for what to do with her spare time. Someone suggested she stop in the nearest school to see if she could help out. She did so — stopping in at Juanita Elementary — and has been going strong here ever since! "Grandma Bertha," as she is affectionately called, has been helping at Juanita Elementary for 17 years. Grandma continues to provide vital help in kindergarten at the current age of 86. She is such a gift and pushes herself to get her work done before she leaves each day. She continues to drive herself to and from school as

well. For a time, Bertha worked in the first grade, but seems to like kindergarten best. Her family tells Bertha she will never graduate!

Grandma Bertha has an incredible outlook on life. She continues to keep going, in spite of the pain she faces each day. Bertha had polio as a child, and the disease has exacerbated her arthritis and a degenerating spine. Steroid shots are not as effective as they once were, but she says she has to keep going and "it's just the way it is. Other people have bigger problems ..."

She has tried to inspire other seniors to volunteer in the schools, but finds the people she suggests it to just don't seem to have the confidence to take that first step. She is an amazing example to everyone — young and old — and claims the school does more for her than she does for the school, and that keeps her young. Bertha Fitzgerald is a rare gift and we are so fortunate to have had her help for 18 years at Juanita Elementary! ●

Solid Ground
RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program)
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Speaking Directly

by Robin Knudson, RSVP Coordinator

Sharing the joy through the EIA

As you are reading this issue of the EIA you will see that RSVP volunteers are doing a lot of wonderful things in our community. The stories are inspirational and they only scratch the surface of the hundreds of great stories unfolding everyday. Speaking

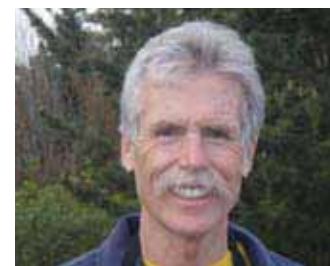
of those stories, I want to send out a special thanks to our EIA staff writers **Peter Langmaid** and **Sandy Howard** (both live on the "eastside") who write our site features and informational articles. It is Peter's great joy to interview volunteers doing great things and then to write

his heartfelt stories. We all look forward to reading his articles. Sandy enjoys doing research and has come up with some great informational articles.

With this issue we also welcome a new committee member, **Marsha Stewart**. I don't have Marsha's picture yet, but she volunteered to work with us and we were delighted to accept. Please check out her articles on Hopelink and Ruth Morley.

At RSVP we believe the key to successful volunteering is finding a job you really enjoy doing. The good feelings you get from doing that job will project from you to others around you. Thank you to

our writers for helping to share the joys of volunteering with our EIA readers. ●



EIA lead staff writer,
Peter Langmaid



EIA staff writer,
Sandy Howard

Hopelink helps eastside families

Featured Site: Hopelink, by Marsha Stewart

Not everyone who lives on the eastside is Bill Gates. Sure there are a lot of people who are doing well financially, but unknown to some, there are a lot of people in north and east King County who need a helping hand. According to Denise Stephens, Hopelink's Public Relations Specialist, aside from the upscale neighborhoods, there are still older areas with people who are struggling. Stephens says that there are 11,402 children who are eligible for free or reduced lunches in the school districts served by Hopelink. In the Bellevue School District alone, there are 3,057.

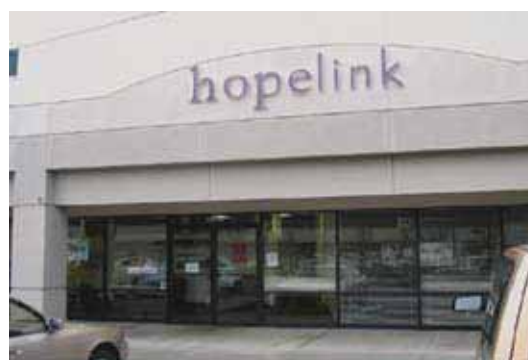


Hopelink's Avondale transitional housing (Photo courtesy of Hopelink)

Hopelink is a multifaceted nonprofit, headquartered in Redmond, providing a variety of services to approximately 50,000 low-income people in Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Carnation, Bothell, and Shoreline. In most situations, people in need can find help at Hopelink. Since its founding in 1971, Hopelink has provided assistance to the communities' low-income residents. In addition to adult basic literacy and employment programs, Hopelink also offers help to those in need of affordable housing.

Energy assistance is another area where Hopelink is helping the eastside community. Through a federally funded program and one through Puget Sound Energy, low-income renters and homeowners can get help with their bills. With the demanding winter and the economic slump, the number of households who approached Hopelink in January 2009, because they were without power or they had a 24-hour shut-off notice, rose 188% compared to January a year ago.

In some instances, Hopelink is able to help with emergency financial assistance. This is for the rare times when a family or an individual is trying to avoid eviction or needs to pay for prescription medications or other critical expenses. In January 2009, requests leapt 24% over last year at the same time.



Hopelink - Bellevue. (Photo courtesy of Hopelink)

For each of the six communities that Hopelink serves, there is an emergency service center with a food bank. Not only are typical staple foods, such as rice or canned goods, given out to clients, but another aspect of the food banks is Emergency Feeding Bags. These are specifically filled with food

that doesn't require cooking, so homeless people receive what works best for them. According to statistics, last year Hopelink's total combined distribution was more than 3 million pounds of food. This year even more people are in need. In January alone, 27% more people visited their food banks than in January 2008.

As more people need help, of course, it takes more resources to accommodate them. Luckily, according to Stephens, "Total donations are up somewhat, but they're still not keeping pace with the increase in need."

As for volunteers, with fewer people working, but still wanting to give back, Hopelink's Volunteer Coordinator, Sheila Sloan-Evans' said that the number of active volunteers in March of this year was almost 100 more than at the same time last year. And in April, 118 people attended the volunteer orientation. ●

Ruth Morley, a Hopelink winner!

by Marsha Stewart

No longer able to lift and manage the heavy pots and pans that go with the trade, at only 50, Ruth Morley was forced to retire from her high-paying career as a chef. For years she tried to find her niche, volunteering at her church for seven years, and finally moving to Seattle with relatives. "I didn't like being retired and didn't like living on next to nothing," she reflects.

Then she found herself needing to ask for assistance with energy bills. "I needed to be humbled," she says.

"I think I was led to Hopelink because I needed them and they needed me." Hopelink offered cooking classes, so Morley volunteered to teach. It wasn't long before she also fed food bank volunteers and catered some of the agency's staff meetings. She began to transport

Continued on page 3



Wit & Wisdom

by author Henry Wiener

Do-gooders doing good

The press often gives the impression that humans are more apt to be “bad-doers” than “do-gooders” who are thought to be naïve and idealistic and involved in philanthropic or humanitarian causes.

Being one of them, I rise to their defense, having found that “do-gooders” tend to be passionately realistic, rather than naïve about their activity.

Consequently I was impressed by the nimble thinking that was the basis for the action of Wesley Autrey who was standing on a subway platform when a young man near him had a seizure, fell off the platform and landed on the train tracks.

Seeing a train oncoming, Autrey instinctively jumped down, rolled with the young man into a drainage trough between the rails and held on until the train was stopped and both were rescued, unharmed.

Although he was awarded the Bronze Medallion for civic achievement by the mayor, plus a year’s worth of free subway rides and appeared on TV shows, his response to his celebrity status was simply, “Good things happen when you do good.”

This moving episode caused me to peek into my “Good Deeds” file, overflowing with feats of which we can all be proud.

Ruth Morley *continued from page 2*

food donations, too, with others providing the muscle to load and unload her car.

But, after using a relatively small but gas-guzzling car with a lot of miles on it to get her back and forth to cooking classes, Morley was becoming financially strapped. .

So, when she was encouraged to enter Extreme Makeover’s contest for volunteers experiencing economic hardship, she submitted her essay – and won! Although very surprised and appreciative to receive the \$5,000 prize, Morley wondered if it would be enough to replace her car with a reliable, fuel-

Among the good deeds cited was the bravery of the Afghan women who cleared out unexploded cluster bombs with their own hands, so that the neighborhood children would not innocently play with them and endanger their lives. Also ensconced in that dark, lonely place was the work of Elissa Montanti of New York who developed the Global Medical Relief Fund to help children maimed by land mines.

In this cluster of do-gooders I found health-care workers Shannon Roosma and Corey Goldstein, who put off their wedding plans after Hurricane Katrina struck. Along with Catholic Social Services, they developed Camp Katrina, a food, hospital and clothing base designed to meet the victims’ basic needs.

Unaware of the extent of homelessness in our country, I was unprepared to learn that in 2005 it was estimated there were at least 744,000 such people in our land, more than half living in shelters and nearly a quarter chronically homeless.

A family that found itself in that situation was Leah and Michael Short and their two children who were forced to live in a motel. Unfortunately Mr. Short lost his job and the family was evicted with only their car



efficient vehicle with adequate cargo space.

Then, she decided to approach Ford of Kirkland, a local dealership that has always supported Hopelink. Eager to help, for \$5,000 they sold her

available for shelter. When the school authorities learned of this, the teachers pooled \$700 to put them up in a hotel over the Christmas holidays and when their story broke in the newspapers, readers donated more than \$9000, enabling the family to pay off their debts and move into a 2-bedroom apartment. Fortunately Mr. Short soon found a job and things settled down.

Nestling in that file also was the intriguing story of John Carbonell, aka “Johnny Five”, who lived below a Bronx train station. Sister Laura Fitzgerald discovered him, arranged for him to have warm clothes and other basic necessities until he was ready to leave his underground nest, and apply for housing assistance.

Another moving tale of opposites bonding was the one in which a young man beaten unconscious by a neo-Nazi skinhead who thought him to be gay, met his abuser two decades later through their mutual interest in the Museum of Tolerance. It was there they recognized each other, reconciled and became friends.

There were more intriguing stories in that folder. The one with which I identified told of a decision in a small Alabama town for 79 grossly overweight residents to help each other get into shape and eventually lose a total of 10,000 pounds.

That mutual do-gooding took quite a load off their shoulders. ●

Henry Wiener is author of the book ‘Wit and Wisdom.’

what she says is the perfect vehicle, a spacious fire engine red CRV that gets 25 – 30 miles per gallon and that would have otherwise cost more than twice her prize money.

Morley is no longer worried that her vehicle and associated expenses will keep her from doing all she can for Hopelink. “I can’t believe how extremely happy I am,” she says of her role as a volunteer and her life in general now. “I’ll volunteer for Hopelink as long as I can.” Acknowledging her physical limitations, she adds, “Even if I wind up in my wheelchair, I can still cook a meal.” ●

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

From transition to transformation

As we age, we often go through times of significant transition. Such changes might involve a decision to retire or a job loss; the death of a loved one; moving to a new location; or a change in our health. In each case, these transitions challenge us, sometimes to the very core of our being. They cause us to ask questions about life; fairness; our dreams for ourselves; our identity as a person; and even the nature of God. Transitions have the capacity to throw us - to put us into a state that is uncomfortable for us. Yet, they can also be a time of spiritual deepening and transformation.

How we respond to transition will depend on whether it was planned or unplanned, chosen or forced, or usual or unusual. William Bridges has done significant research and work in the area of transitions and has much to teach us about this process. He sees this process as occurring in three stages. From a spiritual perspective, it is important to spend time at each stage, to honor the rhythm of our body and soul, and not to try to rush through a stage simply because we feel uncomfortable.

The first stage he calls Endings. This involves accepting what is finished and finding the energy to move into an uncertain or unknown future. Often there are ambivalent feelings: grief, anger, anxiety, hope, and/or excitement. Regardless of the cause of the transition, this is a time of letting go. Loss is difficult and often uncomfortable, but we need to stay with the feelings that come up for us in this time. T.S. Eliot said, "What we call the beginning is often an ending. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."

There are many helpful things you can do during the ending time. Write about what happened, including writing about your feelings and what you are hoping for. Share your story with someone with whom you are comfortable. Such a person needs to be a good listener who won't

try to tell you how you should feel or how soon you should "get over" it and "move on." Practice relaxation techniques including deep breathing, meditation and prayer. Have a ritual either alone or with trusted friends and relatives, to mark the ending that is occurring for you. Bring in flowers and candles. Make a scrapbook of memories if that would be helpful.

The second stage he calls the Empty Zone. This may be the hardest place of all for us existentially. We are not yet ready to begin anew. We still have inner work to do. Sometimes this feels like being in limbo - an in-between place where nothing is happening. If we do our work, however, a lot can be happening inside of us. Sometimes this is a time of pain - we may still be grieving our loss. It is essential not to rush ahead into something new to try to avoid that pain. A friend whose adult daughter was killed in a tragic accident found that this period was about two years in length. She was in deep grief during this time - clearly inconsolable. After that she said, "The grief went away and sorrow took its place. That sorrow will never go away." We may lose productivity during this time. That is normal and natural. We can also be taking stock of the past and imagining the future. Eventually we'll begin to feel a sense of hope for the future.

During this time you can write down stories of other transitions you've been through and notice what you've learned from them. Give yourself a respite from your strong feelings by going to a ballgame or a show. Listen to wonderful music. Spend some time in nature really noticing the patterns and colors and textures. Note the qualities of the season you are experiencing. Visualize your ideal outcomes. Go away on a retreat. There are many wonderful retreat centers where you can go for a silent retreat. Be sure to take a journal and note what is happening for you. If you want some spiritual

companionship during your retreat, ask the retreat center if such direction is available.

The final stage is New Beginnings. You will know when you are ready for this stage. You will suddenly have energy for a recommitment, for putting down new roots. Life doesn't seem provisional any more. You are ready for normal, even though the old wounds are still there and will continue to inform you. What you step into next requires careful consideration. It is not surprising that 80% of second marriages end in divorce, because people rush into marriage without having gone through this extended process of learning from the three stages of loss and transition.

In the New Beginnings stage it is important to tell your story to others. Create a positive future for yourself. Imagine good things. Invite them into your life. Name the lessons that you've learned from this challenging process and share those with others. Learn from the stories of other people who've gone through transition and loss. Create a symbol that reminds you of what you've been

through and place it where you'll see it on a regular basis. Be gentle with yourself if you find the old grief re-emerging. Notice it, name it, and embrace it.

Herbert Anderson, a minister and therapist said, "All of life is caught up in motion and change. And because God is still creating, nothing that lives is finished or complete. To believe in a living God is to recognize change as an inevitable dimension of life. Adapting to change is therefore a creative act as well as a necessity for survival."

May you give yourself the gift of engaging deeply in the stages of transition as you go through whatever losses you encounter. May you learn from this process and be transformed into a stronger and healthier person. ●

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 or agingwithwisdom@msn.com.

SeniorNet PS recognized as Exemplary Learning Center

by Helen Hesketh

On November 18, 2008 SeniorNet national officers awarded an Exemplary Learning Center Award for 2008 to SeniorNet PS (Puget Sound). In passing along this award to local members, President Ken

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SeniorNet past presidents (L to R): Lois Farris, Helen Hesketh, Delores Davis, Ken Crandall (current president), and Adella Granger. (Photo courtesy of SeniorNet PS)

Just look into their faces

Featured Site: First Place School by Peter Langmaid

Early for my appointment with Donna, I sat in the comfortable, well-lit lobby of First Place School — walls tastefully decorated with colorful student artwork — and watched as groups of students filed out of their busses and into the school. Each student was greeted by name and given a warm smile. The children seemed happy to be there, and the staff seemed happy to have them there. When Donna arrived, she greeted me with a warm smile, too.

Celebrating 20 years of service, the mission of First Place “... is to educate and nurture children whose families struggle with the risk or reality of homelessness, where we offer housing, culturally relevant education and support services enabling families to achieve permanent stability.” As with all service agencies, First Place cannot operate without volunteers. Donna Shattuck has been a volunteer teacher’s assistant at First Place for over 10 years. Volunteer Coordinator Joyce Scoggins says this about Donna: “...we are so happy that she is a part of our First Place family...We LOVE Ms. Donna.”

Ms. Donna — as students, teachers, and staff all affectionately refer to her — first learned about First Place in the summer of 1990 when, while working as an administrative assistant in the University of Washington (UW) Health Sciences Department, she heard a First Place co-founder speak as part of a “brown sack lunch” speaker series sponsored by the university. What excited her was the opportunity to “get back with kids,” she says, and Donna added volunteering at First Place to her list of things to do when she retired.

Born and raised in Spokane, Donna married a career Army man at age 18. Typical of military families, they lived all over the U.S. and also spent time in Turkey and Germany. At each stop Donna would get involved in volunteering through the officers’ wives’ club. Wide-ranging, her volunteer activities included work with the Red Cross,

fund raising, and teaching crafts to wounded Vietnam vets. Military is family, says Donna, and family helps family. Donna also found time to raise three daughters.

Donna spends her Tuesday mornings at First Place working as a teacher’s assistant for the 1st / 2nd grades. She does “whatever the teacher needs,” which often involves small groups working on math or reading comprehension. “Children are our future,” declares

Donna cheerfully, and First Place establishes confidence and gives students “the stability [they need] to learn and to cope.”

Always active, Donna keeps a busy schedule. On Monday and Wednesday she can be found working out at the UW gym. Tuesdays take her to First Place. Normally, she spends Thursdays guiding interested high school students through the UW Health Sciences facilities, but she is taking a break from that volunteer activity to take a class on the Civil War. On Fridays, Donna enjoys long walks with friends through Seattle with lively discussions on politics, current events, and books and articles they’ve read. Donna

believes it’s important to study history. That’s why she taking the course on the Civil War. She has also studied the Vietnam War in detail and plans to scrutinize the Iraq War, as well. To round out her busy schedule, Donna enjoys reading fiction — Barry Unsworth and Salman Rushdie are favorite authors — attending book readings, and listening to opera.

Recently, writes Joyce Scoggins, “The 1st / 2nd grade class helped Donna celebrate her 10 years of volunteering at First Place. The students made her cards letting her know how much they love and appreciate her and gave Ms. Donna hugs!!!”

Asked why she volunteers at First Place, Donna smiles and says, “You can’t look into their [the students’] faces and not fall in love with them.” ●



Donna Shattuck in her First Place school room (Photo by Peter Langmaid)

SeniorNet award *continued from page 4*

Crandall recognized the many past leadership teams and thanked past presidents. for making this award possible.

A letter from SeniorNet national stated, “The field of 130 SeniorNet Learning Centers was highly competitive, but Puget Sound was a Center that exceeded our expectations in every category and is to be commended for its outstanding service, dedication and loyalty to the SeniorNet mission.

The staff and Board of Directors of SeniorNet were especially impressed with the organized and dedicated leadership team at the SeniorNet Learning Center of Puget Sound and its high level of professionalism. Your Center has been nationally recognized for

its excellence in marketing and public relations to the greater Seattle community and it shows in your consistently high membership numbers.

We are honored to present you with this commemorative plaque as a token of our recognition and gratitude for all of the work that you and your amazing team of volunteers are putting forth at the SeniorNet Learning Center of Puget Sound. Congratulations again, and thank you for all that you do to support the SeniorNet mission.” ●

SeniorNet of Puget Sound is a non-profit membership organization for people over 50 interested in using computers. Contact Robin Knudson at 206-957-4779 x 116 for more

Five easy ways to save money

by Marsha Stewart

1. Check with the museums, theaters, and other public venues you would like to attend BEFORE you go. Ask if they have senior prices or a specific day of the week or month when admission is free. If not, ask if it’s possible to volunteer — as an usher, perhaps — and get in free.
2. Keep your long distance costs down by writing more letters, instead. It’s a dying art and always appreciated. It’s a little slower, but cheaper. And in this electronic age, who doesn’t enjoy getting personal letters?
3. Save money and energy. Consider hang drying as much of your laundry as possible instead of using a gas or electric clothes

dryer.

4. Plan ahead. Before you rent that movie, remember that local libraries lend them at no cost. If your library doesn’t have anything that interests you, ask if they can request what you want via interlibrary loan. Also, see if a nearby community or senior center shows movies.

5. If you just must go to the theatre, eat before you get there and try to catch a matinee They are usually less pricey. And before you pay, be sure to ask for the senior discount! ●



The Garden Lady

by Linda Urbaniak

Welcome to the Bellevue Botanical Garden

Bellevue Botanical Garden is fairly young as botanical gardens go, opening in 1992, but it is already in its first major renovation. The largest mixed border west of the Mississippi had become so lush that it needed to be opened up. The Northwest Perennial Association has maintained that portion of the garden and contracted, with the City of Bellevue and the BBG, a new design with better access to the plants. The first phase of the renovation is done and the new plantings are being monitored as the second phase gets underway.

Although the mixed border is a very prominent feature, there are many other gardens within the borders of the BBG. The entry garden features the textural delights of grasses. The Dahlia

Society has just planted out the dahlias. By the Visitor Center, the Eastside Fuchsia Society maintains the impressive Fuchsia Garden. The Alpine Garden showcases the profusion of plants that can be grown in scree, the rocky material that makes up the "soil" of high mountain plants. Although requiring specialized conditions for growth in an ordinary garden, it is easy to become captivated by these tenacious trees and flowers.

If you would like to learn more about gardening with minimal water, the Waterwise garden can be your teacher. It is maintained in cooperation with the Bellevue Utilities Department. There are areas of dry shade and areas of sun. The emphasis is on those plants that can thrive under



those conditions, and you will be surprised by the diversity and color.

Perhaps your interest is in groundcovers. The Harriet Shorts Groundcover garden shows how the groundcovers pull the garden together, melding the trees, bushes and low-growers together. Here you can rest and enjoy the peaceful overview from the Tateuchi Pavilion and listen to the birds. This lovely covered rest stop is a wonderful place to enjoy the garden on a rainy day. From the lower garden, you can look back on the waterfall and bog garden from the viewing bridge, also donated by the Tateuchi foundation.

Just beyond the groundcover garden is the new Rhododendron Glen. Filled not only with rhododendrons, here you will find a large collection of unusual ferns, maintained by the Hardy Fern Society. If you want to know what "that" plant is, try using the computerized kiosk located here by just touching the screen.

Further along the path you will come to the Yao Japanese stroll garden. The placement of the rocks, the curve of the paths, the positioning of the bridges are all carefully designed. Note the lovely Japanese lanterns and marvel at their contemporary design, yet be aware that they are centuries old. Observe how the placement of plants and the curve of paths gives the impression of great distance in a small space. Both the garden and the lanterns are the gift of Bellevue's sister city, Yao, Japan.

As you continue along, you will come to the Northwest Native garden. This small garden contains private benches to contemplate the beauty here. Maintained by the Lake Washington Federated Garden Clubs you can find how natives might grow in your garden.

Look under the leaves of the wild ginger to find its intriguing flowers. Be sure and check out the statue "Staring Owl."

The quarter mile Lost Meadow trail will lead you to the largest trees in the garden. These native firs and madrones are being left as a 19-acre biological preserve. Here too, you will find the path leading to the Ravine Bridge when it is completed.

This wonderful garden is free and the parking is free from dawn to dusk. There is a visitor center with a gift shop open from 12-4 most days. Unless volunteers are not available to staff it. Volunteers also offer free, guided tours each Saturday and Sunday at 2 PM from April through October. Most of the garden is accessible by Americans with Disabilities, but the paths are crushed gravel and there are hills. No pets are allowed in the garden.

To get to the garden, take the NE 8th Street exit off I-405. Go east to 120th Avenue SE and turn right. Follow along 120th to Main Street, the first stoplight. Turn left. Look for the garden on your right at 12001 Main. Bus service is available on routes 271 and 921, but the closest bus stop is at SE 1st and 116th Avenue SE and is about a half mile uphill from the garden.

For beauty, for contemplation, for ideas for your garden, the Bellevue Botanical Garden will fill your needs. It is constantly changing, just like any garden. If you haven't visited for a while, this is the time to go and enjoy the profusion of flowers and see "what's new at the 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.



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.



Health Matters

by Mary Harvey, MD

Mr. Smith does some medical research

Last Thursday, Mr. Smith went to Dr. Jones for his annual physical exam. When it was over, Dr. Jones told Mr. Smith that he had high blood pressure (hypertension). He said that this was a chronic condition that couldn't be cured but could be treated. Dr. Jones said that untreated high blood pressure could lead to heart attacks, strokes and heart failure. Dr. Jones also told Mr. Smith he would have to be on medication for the rest of his life.

Mr. Smith was stunned and very upset. Furthermore, the only medication he had ever taken in his life was a multivitamin. He had a deep distrust of medication, preferring natural solutions for his aches, pains and bodily distress.

Dr. Jones prescribed "LowBP", which he said was a new drug he thought was very good. He briefly discussed side effects, which included headache, fatigue, nausea, and dizziness. Later that night, Dr. Jane told her father that many, many drugs initially cause these side effects but they usually go away in a week or so. She told him that these side effects are probably caused by the body's adjustments to a new chemical in its system.

Because he was so upset by the day's events, Mr. Smith decided to "Google" hypertension and treatments for this condition. He immediately found that the current first-line treatment for high blood pressure is a reduced sodium diet, weight loss, and exercise. Mr. Smith learned that a person should restrict his sodium intake to 1500 milligrams (mg) a day. Using a table he found on the Internet, he realized he had been eating 3600-4000 mg of sodium a day! He was surprised to learn that a single frozen dinner could contain as much as 1000 mg of sodium. The same was true of canned soups and other canned foods. Fresh foods were obviously the way to go. Mr. Smith was also 20 pounds overweight and didn't exercise.

The front-line, non-medication treatment seemed much more appealing to Mr. Smith and he wondered why Dr. Jones had not suggested it to him.

Mr. Smith also found that, although uncommon, "LowBP" could cause kidney and liver damage. He read about some other drugs that did not have such potentially severe side effects. Again he wondered why Dr. Jones had immediately selected "LowBP."

Dr. Jane explained that some physicians failed to keep up with current treatments and continued to practice the way they did when they were interns. Others simply used samples provided by drug companies without bothering to learn much about the drug. Still others were influenced by drug companies that gave those gifts or trips to nice resorts, even though this was considered unethical.

Mr. Smith decided he wanted to try the diet and exercise treatment first. If that failed, he would take medication but would try a drug with fewer side effects than LowBP. He decided to discuss his concerns with Dr. Jones. If Dr. Jones was unreceptive, Mr. Smith would know he needed to find a doctor who would discuss more options with him. ●

Mary Harvey is a retired physician and an RSVP ambassador.

A little humor

This bit of humor was submitted as a response to our request for recipes, humor or story ideas in the last ELA.

We're still looking for good ideas, so please call Robin Knudson at 206-957-4779 x 116 if you have any.

Interview with Paul Newman:

Interviewer: Mr. Newman is it true that you are 80 and still driving racecars?

PN: Yes.

Interviewer: Isn't that hard to do?

PN: No, the hardest part is getting in and out of the car!



Senior on the Street

by Peter Langmaid

What's the best thing about summer?

"Freedom to walk around and see our beautiful city."

~Donna Shattuck



"Fishing for salmon, crab, and shrimp."

~Glen Kobata



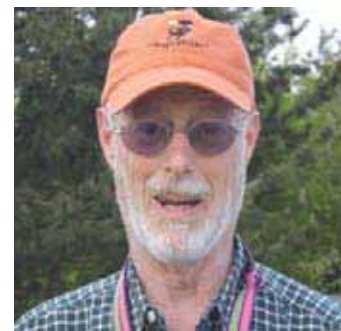
"Corona [beer] and lime!"

~Q Glaze



"Playing with Toby [his dog] at the beach."

~Wil Clausame



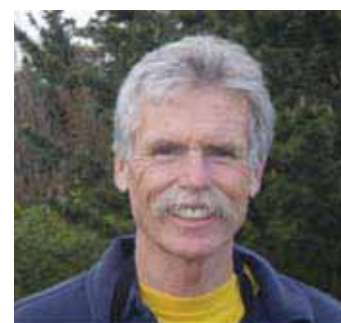
"Sitting on my deck enjoying a glass of wine."

~Bev Mauser



"It's not winter!"

~Peter Langmaid



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 for regional volunteer opportunity listings.

Volunteering

Group Health Cooperative: Two great locations-Capitol Hill and Bellevue. Front desk greeters are needed!

Elder and Adult Day Services: Three locations-Bellevue, Issaquah & Des Moines. Do you have a hobby that you would like to share on a regular basis? Come share your joy and interest with elders and disabled adults. Other tasks to support the program include administrative help and meal pick-up and delivery.

Hopelink: Hopelink's mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all members of our community. There are a wide range of volunteer opportunities and monthly volunteer orientations scheduled for volunteers to get started. Emergency service centers are located in Bellevue, Kirkland, Northshore, Redmond, Shoreline and Sno-Valley.

Kidsquest Childrens Museum (Factoria Mall): New Partner Site! Come explore, play and learn together at this innovative hands-on museum for children and families! Volunteers are needed to do crafts with kids as well as interact with families and kids through hands-on play!

Overlake Hospital: New Partner Site! Clinical Unit volunteers are needed to provide support to the clinical team by answering patient call lights, assisting patient families and guests. Volunteer shifts are typically four hours. Training is provided.

Center for Wooden Boats: New Partner Site! Summer is a great time to volunteer at the Center for Wooden Boats! Volunteer positions include helping at the front desk/gift shop, in the livery, library or boatshop. Positions range from helping large work parties on the 3rd Saturday of the month with no minimum time commitment to teaching a sailing class if you have sailing experience. Come join the fun.

Experience Music Project/Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame: New Partner Site! Summer is an exciting time at Seattle Center so if you enjoy interacting with the public this is a great time to get involved. Current volunteer opportunities include a position within the Jim Henson's Fantastic World puppet theater/tv studio interactive and a position at the museum's information desk.

Pacific Science Center: There are many ways to make a difference in the community and volunteering at Pacific Science Center is a great way to start. Interact with visitors in the Tropical Butterfly House, explain the mysteries of the Salt Water Tide Pool and show kids how to play virtual soccer as an Exhibit Assistant. Or, take a more behind the scenes role as an Office Assistant or Horticulture Assistant.

Starlight Children's Foundation: Starlight-WA seeks a volunteer with a professional background and strong marketing and business development skills to assist in the creation and execution of our marketing strategy, including assisting in developing cause marketing opportunities with area businesses.

In Our Community

GenerationBIG: You can make a BIG difference in the life of a child! Becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister is a fun and easy way to benefit your community. You'll meet with your little Brother or little Sister once a week for one hour at a nearby elementary school and talk, have fun and work on academics together. After you've met with your Little, you'll get to meet with other members of your GenerationBIG group to share stories about your experience and get support. This project is a partnership of Senior Services and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound.

Senior Day at the Seattle Aquarium:

Date: Sunday, June 21

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Place: Pier 59, 1483 Alaskan Way

Information: 206-684-4851

Sponsored by the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens, Senior Services, and Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Admission and box lunches are free. Registration starts May 27 and ends when full. **Advance registration is required.**

North East Seattle Together (NEST): The Village Concept is a new approach to "aging in place" that is inspiring neighbors to "organize, incorporate, and take charge." Please attend an upcoming informational meeting at the NE Library, 6801 35th Ave., Seattle:

Monday, July 13th at 5:30

Thursday, August 20th at 5:30.

Visit www.nestseattle.org or call 206-525-NEST.

*See the article in the Spring 2009 EIA!

19th Annual Walk for Rice benefitting the ACRS Food Bank:

Saturday, June 20th from 8:00 am to noon at Seward Park.

Shuttle service at ACRS from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Visit www.walkforrice.org or call 206-695-7551 for more information.

King County Library System:

Come and hear **Helen Thayer**, Tuesday, June 30 at 7:00 pm at Valley View library in SeaTac. She will talk about her book *Polar Dream*.

For more information visit blogs.kcls.org/librarytalk, and www.kcls.org, or contact your local King County library.

Free Tai chi classes for age 55+:

Issaquah Valley Senior Center

Mondays fro 9:00 to 10:00 am

Call 425-392-2381 for information.

- 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: _____
