Fast Friends

Cheryl volunteers for SeniorServ’s Friendly Visitor program and looks forward to her weekly visits with Dianne, a SeniorServ Meals on Wheels recipient. They were matched earlier this year and have become fast friends. “Dianne is very sweet and funny and brings such joy to me,” said Cheryl. “I feel like I get more out of the visits than she does. Dianne has had so many difficult journeys in her life and yet she tries very hard to keep a positive attitude,” Cheryl added.

Dianne shares Cheryl’s enthusiasm about the pairing. “I appreciate everything she does for me,” chimed Dianne. The pair like to take Dianne’s dog “Twinkie” for slow walks and eat meals together, but mostly they enjoy sharing stories. Complications from a life-changing car accident resulted in 11 surgeries and ended Dianne’s career at Wells Fargo Bank where she enjoyed daily social interaction. She no longer drives and her husband currently lives in a VA facility, so she feels especially lonely and isolated. Despite it all, Dianne maintains a good outlook. “I’m a people person,” Dianne said. “This program is wonderful. I’m blessed to have SeniorServ and Cheryl in my life. I don’t know what I’d do without you guys!”

Intern Inspired to Help Aging

Meet Jessika, a CSF Psychology/Sociology major and an intern this past semester for SeniorServ’s Social Services department.

Jessika has grown up living with her 95-year-old grandmother, who is the inspiration for Jessika’s decision to intern with older adults. “She helped raise me and now I take care of her,” said the 24-year-old.

While interning, Jessika has enjoyed delivering meals, providing seniors with resources, and assisting case managers with their caseloads. She has seen the challenges limited funding brings to senior programs and finds it heartbreaking. Her experience has inspired her to continue working with the senior population after she graduates. “It’s been great working with the clients and SeniorServ staff. I love it!” said Jessika.

SeniorServ’s college internship program provides students like Jessika with a wonderful hands-on experience working with the aging population. The program also enables increased communication with SeniorServ clients who enjoy the benefits of an additional cheerful phone or in-person “check-in.” Case Manager, Dana Tull said, “Jessika is a very caring person and has a passion for helping our seniors. She was always willing to learn new things and help with whatever the case managers needed.” Thank you, Jessika, for making a difference for SeniorServ clients!
A Message from Our CEO

Each Spring, SeniorServ joins our nation in recognizing National Volunteer Appreciation Week. As we reflect on the difference volunteerism makes to our country’s communities, organizations, programs and individuals, it is mindboggling. Here at SeniorServ, we cannot begin to imagine life without our volunteers. In 2016, an estimated 600 volunteers worked a combined total of over 87,600 hours to support our Meals on Wheels, Senior Center Lunch program, Adult Day Services, Care Circle Network and Friendly Visitor program.

It is nearly impossible to describe or quantify the true value of such support. Although the value of volunteerism is often assessed by assigning an hourly rate to each hour worked, the most impactful benefits volunteers bestow on SeniorServ’s clients cannot be measured by dollars. How do you measure the value of a friendly phone call or home visit to an isolated and lonely homebound senior? What is a listening ear worth to someone who needs to be heard? What is the dollar amount you would place on a warm smile, soft touch, or compassionate hug? To our seniors, every moment matters and each one is priceless.

The time our volunteers give lifts spirits and makes our seniors feel valued and special. We see it in each cheerful “hello” as meals are delivered... or in the eyes of Adult Day Service participants when volunteers listen to their concerns and join them for an activity. It is evident in the warm embrace from a friendly visitor... or when a volunteer is serving lunch or welcoming a shy newcomer at our Senior Center Lunch programs.

Time is our most precious commodity and becomes more valuable as we age. On behalf of thousands of clients, SeniorServ extends a heartfelt “thank you” to all of our volunteers who so generously share their time and talent to enhance the lives of others. Your gift is priceless!

Holly Hagler, CEO

Volunteering May Be Good For Mind and Body

Studies have shown that volunteering helps people who donate their time feel more socially connected, thus warding off loneliness and depression. A growing body of evidence suggests that people who give their time to others might also be rewarded with better physical health—including lower blood pressure and a longer lifespan.

Evidence of volunteerism’s physical effects can be found in a recent study from Carnegie Mellon University, published in Psychology and Aging. Adults over age 50 who volunteered on a regular basis were less likely to develop high blood pressure than non-volunteers. High blood pressure is an important indicator of health because it contributes to heart disease, stroke and premature death.

It’s impossible for this study to prove that volunteering was directly responsible for the lower blood pressure readings. People who volunteer may be more likely to do other things that lower blood pressure, like eat a healthy diet or exercise, but the results are in line with other findings on the topic.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle once surmised that the essence of life is “To serve others and do good.” If recent research is any indication, serving others might also be the essence of good health.

Stephanie Watson, Executive Editor, Harvard Women’s Health Watch
Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Medical School
LEADERSHIP PROFILE: Dick Atnip

Dick Atnip was introduced to SeniorServ through a friendship with one of its’ directors. He had been caring for his wife Joan, an Alzheimer’s sufferer and had come to the point where he needed more help. Through a resource given to him by SeniorServ, he found the perfect board and care home for his wife. He loved the care providers so much that he nominated the owner for one of SeniorServ’s Senior Care Hero Awards for last October’s gala. Through the many touchpoints with SeniorServ, he came to know and appreciate the support that the organization provides to at-risk seniors and became a valued Advisory Board Member. He will also be appointed to SeniorServ’s Board of Directors this Spring.

Dick brings over 50 years of respected business knowledge to SeniorServ. He and Joan began building Atnip Co., a premier marketing and brokerage firm for single serve snacks in 1962. Dick feels deep compassion for seniors who do not have the financial resources needed to meet basic needs and has enjoyed helping SeniorServ through his advisory role. He is excited about serving on the Board of Directors. “I’ve been on the planet for almost 80 years and in business over 55. I’ve stored up a certain amount of experience and can offer insights from those experiences,” said Dick. Dick has served as an Advisory Board Member for SeniorServ for 6 months and is looking forward to the years ahead as a Board Member. He said, “My journey here has just begun. I look forward to how I can help in future months and years.”

Doc Delivers

Doc began volunteering in May 2011 shortly following his retirement and at the strong urging of his working wife in an effort to get him out of the house. “I had nothing to do one day, and the very next day I was delivering food in Seal Beach!” chuckled Doc. Since then, Doc has delivered Meals on Wheels for Buena Park, Anaheim, Cypress, Seal Beach, and most recently delivers four days a week in Stanton while serving as a back-up driver in Cypress. Christina, Stanton Site Manager, shared that Doc goes wherever the need is, and sometimes even delivers two routes or more in one day. “He does more than deliver meals,” said Christina. “Doc takes care of our clients. If there is an issue that he thinks we can help with, he is in my office asking questions.” Christina thoughtfully added, “He cares!”

In 2016, Doc volunteered a total of 260 hours. His total volunteer hours for the past two years have surpassed 500.

“I made a good living for 47 years, and now it’s time to help people,” said the retired chiropractor. Doc told of one meal recipient who sits outside waiting for him to arrive each day he delivers. “For many of these people, I am the only person they see all day,” explained Doc. Sometimes, Doc also finds furry friends waiting eagerly for his arrival so he is sure to pack along a few dog biscuits...just in case.

Teena Tomlinson of the Cypress Senior Center said “Doc has an overflowing heart of kindness and continues to give tirelessly. There isn’t a day that he is not willing to contribute to the betterment of the community. This world needs more people working to make a difference after retirement.” Anaheim Meal Coordinator Phyllis Hatosa added, “I know I can call him at a moment’s notice and he’ll be there.”
Walking the Walk

The fact that 85-year-old Mary doesn’t drive anymore doesn’t stop her from volunteering every weekday for the Senior Center Lunch program. Mary is known as the “hip” walking lady by many who see her on her daily trek sporting her uniform of gloves, long sleeves, and a sun protective hat. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, after walking a brisk 30 minutes from her home, Mary often joins the 9:00 am exercise class at the Fountain Valley Senior Center prior to volunteering for the lunch program. Other weekdays, Mary walks an hour each way to volunteer for the lunch program at the Huntington Beach Senior Center. Collectively between the two sites, Mary volunteered a total of 540 hours in 2016. Jessie, Fountain Valley Site Supervisor said, “Mary is definitely an asset and very dependable!”

“I really enjoy volunteering because I feel so good and can share my love,” said Mary, “I enjoy all the senior people.” Mary helps prepare the lunch tables, wraps cutlery, sets up beverages and does whatever is needed, but serving is what she enjoys the most. Mary shared, “I know all the people there. I know where they sit and what they like to eat and drink. I like to say ‘hello’ and serve them.”

Mary began coming to the lunch program following the loss of her husband over 12 years ago. “I needed to leave the house and go help senior people. They are like my family,” she said.
Every Minute Matters

Kathy’s strong connection to seniors began with her close relationship with her father who delivered Meals on Wheels. She admired him as he faithfully delivered meals to homebound seniors for 12 years. She was so inspired by his passion and commitment that she became a donor to support the program that was so dear to him.

When he passed, Kathy missed her father deeply. He was her best friend. She longed for their meaningful conversations and the deep connection she felt from their frequent interactions. Kathy decided that volunteering for SeniorServ was the perfect way to help fill the void and connect with aging adults who would benefit from the companionship she could offer.

Since December, Kathy has enjoyed volunteering weekly at SeniorServ’s Adult Day Health Care Center (ADHC) in Anaheim. “I am a communicator. It’s one of the gifts I’m blessed with,” said Kathy. The retired paralegal enjoys every minute of her three-hour visits. “It’s wonderful to walk in and see the smiles and it warms my heart knowing some of them ask for me,” she said. While at the center, Kathy engages by playing games, visiting with the people, and listening to their stories. “I enjoy giving them a chance to voice their concerns,” she said. Activity Coordinator Demaris looks forward to Kathy’s visits. “She brings a smile and a friendly spirit,” she explained. “The people here enjoy having someone that has time to listen to them. Receiving time and attention makes them feel valuable.”

Are you familiar with the benefits of Planned Giving?

A planned gift is really quite easy — it involves some planning that helps both you and the mission of SeniorServ.

The planning tools on our website can help you create a legacy in your will or trust, increase lifetime income for you and your spouse and pass on property to your heirs through a charitable plan.

To learn more about the benefits of making a planned gift, please visit our website at www.seniorservlegacy.org or contact:

Darla Olson
VP Advancement at
dolson@seniorserv.org or
714-229-3362

PLANNED GIVING?
Volunteer Opportunities

- **Adult Day Health Care (ADHC):** Volunteer assistance is needed at both our Anaheim & Santa Ana ADHC centers to assist with leading fun activities, playing games in large or small groups, helping with social engagement, etc. Bilingual (English/Spanish) preferred.

- **Case Management Summer and Fall Internships:** Opportunities are now available with our Social Services Department. Positions are limited, so please inquire soon.

- **Meals on Wheels:** Drivers needed at various locations in North and Central Orange County.

- **Senior Center Lunch Program:** Kitchen volunteers are needed Mondays and Fridays in Tustin.

- **Care Circle/Friendly Visitors:** Volunteers are needed to provide companionship to homebound and isolated seniors in North and Central Orange County.

For more information contact
Tracy Hall, Director of Volunteer Services
at thall@seniorserv.org or 714-229-3349