Over the years, Home Instead Senior Care has become an integral part of the Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center holiday celebration by providing beautifully wrapped gifts for each and every person in the program. The gift boxes and bags spill out from under the holiday tree and really lend to the holiday spirit to our Center. It’s a gorgeous sight to behold.

Last year, due to Covid, gifts were sent in by generous community members via Amazon. We were able to receive the gifts at the Center and they were given out at our holiday Drive-Thru at the Center or delivered in person using safety protocols.

This year, Home Instead will continue the Be a Santa to a Senior program, managed by Leslie Kefer, and have community members donate gifts through Amazon. We are currently making a list and checking it twice to make sure nobody is left out. We (or more accurately, Santa) will be able to distribute these gifts to our participants in person this December, because Santa and his elves are aware of our safety protocols and will be vaccinated and masked during the holiday gift-giving celebration.

Preparation for the Lunar New Year starts seven days before Chinese New Year’s Eve. Debts are paid, spring couplets are put up, windows are scrubbed, floors swept, and furniture dusted to wash away the bad luck of the past year and prepare for a new start. It isn’t just the house that gets a new look. New haircuts and new clothes are also part of the holiday preparation.

On New Year’s Eve, the family gathers to eat a sumptuous reunion dinner. People from northern China prepare and eat jiaozi (dumplings) that evening. The dumplings’ resemblance to an antiquated currency suggests good fortune. According to tradition, children should stay up as late as possible. It is believed that the later they stay up, the longer their parents will live.

Learn About Chinese New Year Traditions from our ACCC Instructors!

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For Hanukkah, we can’t forget about the latkes! The recipe is a classic and a must-have for anyone planning a Hanukkah celebration.

**Latke Recipe**

- Salt
- 2 lbs (1 kg) potatoes
- 2 large eggs
- oil for frying

**Directions**

Peel and finely grate the potatoes. Put them straight into cold water, then drain and squeeze them as dry as you can by pressing them with your hands in a colander. This is to remove the starchy liquid, which could make the latkes soggy.

Beat the eggs lightly with salt, add to the potatoes, and stir well. Film the bottom of a frying pan with oil and heat. Take serving-spoonfuls, or as much as 1/4 cup (50 ml), of the mixture and drop into the hot oil. Flatten a little, and lower the heat so that the fritters cook through evenly. When one side is brown, turn over and brown the other. Lift out and serve very hot.

Learn About Chinese New Year Traditions from our ACCC Instructors!

ACCC Instructor, Ingrid Lau

AvenidasNews is published in March, June, Sept. & Dec.
Editor: Kari Martell, (650) 289-5427
Printing & Production: Zoom Media, (916) 939-8025

By Loretta Austin, Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center Activities Manager

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Lessons Learned from “The Giving Tree”

by Paula Wolfsön, Avenidas Care Partners Manager

Children, parents and grandparents are all very familiar with Shel Silverstein’s book “The Giving Tree.” Published in 1964, it was described as the best gift book for teaching children and families about love and giving the gift of self.

However, this is a bit of a tragic love story. The all-nurturing tree depletes itself in the process of giving away its apples, branches and trunk to help a boy eat, build a boat, and build a house. In this relationship, the tree becomes a stump while the child thrives to old age.

As the holiday season approaches, I would offer a reframe on this unique children’s story: what is really the lesson being taught here? All living things are so interconnected that the gift of giving and of nurturing ideally needs to be reciprocal. If you are a solo ager or a family caregiving for a person who is not competent and unable to say thank-you, or give back, remember to take time out during the holidays for yourself.

Take a walk. Call a friend. Listen to music you love. Join a support group. Join Avenidas. Reach out and call us (at (650) 298-5438 for a consult or (650) 289-5433 for resources and information). However, we have a different story. The more you allow us to serve and help nurture you, the more all of us continue to thrive together.

Avenidas is “The Giving Tree” for our local elder community.

We hope to see all of you on Zoom for the newest Avenidas Care Partners Town Hall Series: Aging Wisely! We will continue providing a monthly lecture series in the new year to help our community stay informed, inspired, nurtured and engaged. Topics, speakers and registration process will be found on our website and in our weekly email blasts.

From the President

Dear Avenidas Supporters,

As we approach the holiday season, I am humbled by the hard work of our staff and volunteers. By the generous support of our donors. And by the creative teamwork as we partner with other organizations to make it all happen.

Now that winter is approaching, a time typically described as dark and cold, I am thinking of light and hope. Hope is knowing that even in darkness, there is a pinchprick of light ahead. It is trusting that, during uncertainty, we can rely on one another to be there, together.

Our dedicated team has been this light and hope for our community. They have worked tirelessly during the pandemic to make sure older adults on the mid-Peninsula are safe, healthy, supported and socially connected. We have started opening our facilities and are so happy to see familiar (and new!) faces at our adult day health care facility in Mountain View, the Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center, as well as at our flagship, Avenidas @450 Bryant.

From the very bottom of my heart: thank you. Thank you for supporting us. We are truly in this together. Your continued support helps us deliver groceries and prescriptions to home-bound seniors, safely transport others to their medical appointments, conduct group exercise for those in our day program, all while offering resources and support to family caregivers.

I continue to hope that the pandemic will soon recede. That we can continue to resume some of our “normal” activities. In the meantime, we at Avenidas create our own light and hope for this coming holiday season, and we wish you all a wonderful wintertime.

Amy Yotopoulos

Making a Difference at Year End

During this time of year, many of you think about supporting the efforts of our community’s non-profits such as Avenidas.

There are some ways other than cash out of your pocket that can have real advantages to you and the organizations you support:

• Donating a vehicle—The great thing about donating your older car to Avenidas is that you receive a tax deduction and don’t need to deal with all the hassle of selling your car. We make it easy and simple by working with our California partner, Donate for Charity. They help with title issues, pick up of car, and all the paperwork in donating a vehicle. They also accept boats and recreational vehicles. So, you turn that old vehicle into a donation that helps deliver rides to seniors, family caregiver sessions, and wonderful classes and activities to keep seniors active and engaged.

• Donating appreciated stock—Do you have stock that has increased greatly in value and want to make a charitable gift to impact your community? Its relatively easy to make a gift of stock by letting your broker know your intentions and having them contact Avenidas for our brokerage number. You receive a tax deduction for the fair market value of the stock on the day you gift it, and you also avoid capital gains taxes that are usually triggered when you sell. It’s a win-win for you and Avenidas!

Qualifying Charitable Distributions—These are gifts made from an IRA directly to a charity if you are 70 ½, through 2021 this benefit has been expanded! You can make a gift from not only an IRA but also from a 401(k) or 403(b) plan. Also, this year, you can use this method to give even if you are under 70 ½ and the amount you can give has also expanded allowing you to make a larger gift than you had planned. Using a QCD can have real benefits to you because it doesn’t increase your income for tax purposes because the gift is made directly to the charity.

Avenidas for our brokerage number. You receive a tax deduction for the fair market value of the stock on the day you gift it, and you also avoid capital gains taxes that are usually triggered when you sell. It’s a win-win for you and Avenidas!

During New Year’s Eve with a family feast and gathering that can be traced back to ancient beliefs of family solidarity against the Nain monster. The New Year starts with wearing new clothes (usually red), visiting relatives, friends and neighbors with greetings and gifts, as well as red envelopes of cash for the children (“Lai See”). Many of these customs originate from traditional beliefs and ancient myths. Rituals include welcoming the god of fortune, thanking the god of gods, and praying for a good year. The celebration concludes with the final celebrations of Shang Yuen.

春節是中國最重要的節日，從臘月開始備妥，它們包括製作糖樁和臘肉等食品；感謝神過去一年的恩賜；孩童用臘肉製成下巴的飾品。慶祝活動從臘月開始，家庭盛宴和聚會可以追溯到家庭團結對抗“年”怪獸的古老信仰。新年伊始，穿上新衣（通常是紅色），走親訪友，送禮，給孩子們發紅包金。許多這些習俗與傳統信仰和古代的神話。儀式包括歡迎迎神、感謝神靈和祈求好年景。慶祝活動以上元節慶祝為燈會、猜燈謎、放天燈、吃湯圓。
Avenidas Village Adds Up for Many Retirees

Drumroll please... Avenidas Village celebrated its 14th Anniversary in October! And another milestone, Avenidas Village surpassed 300 members for the first time in three years! We’ve had a surge in membership with over 90 new members joining this year, resulting in a net membership gain of about 60 people.

Why is 300 important? While we know Avenidas Village can thrive as a community with any number of members, 300 is a comfortable baseline that allows us to meet our operations budget without having to frequently raise fees. More members also means a wider variety of shared interests to explore, greater diversity, more opportunities to support one another and more energy to build and support programs.

So what happened? Back in 2018, as we observed membership declining, we looked into the reasons. One important one was that many members, after joining Avenidas Village with enthusiasm 10 years earlier, were simply “aging out” -- transitioning to needing more care, moving to be near family, etc. At the same time, we surveyed our members and learned that many of them weren’t really engaged or using the existing services. So we decided to focus on improving communication with members and increasing benefits.

These efforts included our improved newsletter, completely updated Avenidas Village website, and a renewed emphasis on social opportunities and neighborhood clusters. We also added benefits such as transportation, handyman help and tech support. More people now view their Avenidas Village membership as a meaningful part of their daily lives rather than just an “insurance policy” in case of a specific need. And they began talking about it to friends and neighbors.

“Before, I didn’t talk about Avenidas Village with my friends because I couldn’t really explain it,” said one member. “Now, it’s easy to tell them about benefits I’ve used or fun activities.”

And then came COVID... Since we had already been enhancing communication with our website and email groups, when the pandemic lockdowns came, we were well positioned to assure members that Avenidas Village support was still available to them. Our interest groups continued to meet and grow, and new ones were added. With Zoom, members could connect with Avenidas Village or cluster activities in spite of being isolated, and of course wherever possible we maintained safe in-person activities.

At the same time, we re-activated our Membership and Marketing Committee to pursue a variety of new outreach projects. Special email blasts, a webinar presentation on “Aging in Place” and Zoom Coffee Chat sessions were all used to spread the word about Avenidas Village. We also benefited recently from a wonderful news article in the Palo Alto Weekly! All these efforts helped many people who had not heard about the Village realize that it could be a way for them to re-connect after so many months of isolation. Most importantly, as more people learn about Avenidas Village and see the many ways it offers support and friendship, they realize now is the time to join!

What now? We’re delighted with the energy and excitement our new members bring to Avenidas Village and your eagerness to get involved! Likewise, we thank our long-term members for supporting the changes we’ve made to build up Avenidas Village, and for welcoming new arrivals with such warmth and openness. And so much credit goes to our Membership and Marketing Committee which has driven so many creative and effective outreach strategies in the past year.

Why Transitional Care is Critical While Recovering from Hip or Knee Surgery

By Vanessa Valerio, RN, CMC, VP & COO of Patient Care

Did you know that the majority of hospital readmissions after knee or hip surgery are preventable? These surgeries often require extra care and support during the recovery period at home so individuals can safely maintain independence and continue healing in the environment they prefer most. Transitional support administered by professionals can help ensure the safety of the client while promoting healthy recovery.

What Is Transitional Care?

Transitional support is provided by qualified caregivers such as private duty nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), and home caregivers. Professional care teams are experts in coordinating care, communicating with healthcare providers, and significantly speeding up the recovery process with patient-focused support.

Transitional care nurses also help the flow of communication between the medical team and family caregivers. Sometimes the discharge instructions are relayed to the patient but not the family caregiver. It’s vital for everyone involved to understand the home recovery plan and work together as a coordinated team.

Proper rest, physical therapy, and returning to the activities of daily living are necessary for a safe environment during recovery.

What Are Dangers During the Home Transitional Recovery Time?

When a patient returns home, mobility is limited. Many patients have challenges with balance, muscle strength, and coordination. And, without care and supervision, individuals are also at a greater risk of falling. Other risk factors also include:

• Complications from surgery or infection at the surgical site
• The development of a new illness
• Wound deterioration
• Confusion about medicine dosage

Depending on the complexity of the operation, some may also need specialized equipment such as grab bars, walkers, beds, rail, or shower chairs to help with mobility. We recommend speaking with your provider about your situation to help create a safe environment during recovery.

What Services Are Provided with Transitional Care?

The exact services included under transitional care will depend on the plan of care recommended by the hospital. After knee replacement surgery or hip surgery, improving range of motion with physical therapy is essential for recovery. Transitional care nurses and therapists work together to ensure adherence to the prescribed exercise regimens. Medication will also assist in pain management so that physical healing can occur.

Caregivers also offer companionship, social support and keep clients active with appropriate activities. Because qualified care teams are trained to monitor and communicate any changes in health status and watch for signs of infection, complications can be caught quickly and addressed.

Transitional Care Services frequently include:

• Patient and family education
• Family caregiver training
• Equipment set-up for home safety and transitional wellness
• Nutritional and dietary recommendations
• Medication management reconciliation

Hospital discharge planning begins while the patient is still in the hospital and continues at home. Transitional care services may begin up to two days before discharge and extend through post-discharge, covering any transitional needs that arise during that time.

A Valuable Tool In the Recovery Process

Transitional care will focus on encouraging individuals to resume:

• Bathing, showering and dressing independently
• Toileting and continence
• Personal Hygiene
• Mobility and ambulation

Studies suggest that most patients readmitted to hospitals did not have adequate care and support when returning home after discharge. When transitional care is a part of the short and long-term recovery plans, the patient and their entire health team can achieve their common goal - a full recovery to independence. If you or a loved one are interested in speaking about transitional support, we’d love to chat at (650) 770-2994.
Mandarin-Speaking Technology Support
Every Friday from 9:00am to 10:00am PDT

A new class taught by Jing (Sally) Lu from Senior Planet will be held each Friday from 9:00am to 10:00am PDT. The class will be taught by Verizon employees who are fluent in Mandarin. The class is open to everyone and is a great opportunity for those who want to learn Mandarin or improve their skills. To register, email SeniorPlanet@Avenidas.org or call (650) 289-5411.

For more information, visit: www.seniorplanet.org/avenidas-mandarin

Serving Mid-Peninsula Communities:
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- Menlo Park • Atherton • East Palo Alto • Portola Valley • Los Altos Hills

Facebook.com/Avenidas Twitter.com/Avenidas4u

Groceries, Rides & More from Door to Door!

—Jyllian Halliburton, Director of Community Engagement & the Door to Door Transportation/Delivery Program

When the pandemic hit in March of last year, Gloria Mason had to make the tough decision to stop working at the Gazelle Creative Learning School, a non-profit she and her husband of 55 years, Jon Barkhurst, founded 48 years ago, now run by their son JP. She immediately found herself limited to the confines of her home, like many other older adults needing to shelter in place and limit activities. Jon had been an active student of Senior Planet technology classes at Avenidas, which had to cease along with all the other in-person activities at that time. This sudden change in their normally active lives led to what Gloria described as a funk and left them feeling very isolated. It was at this time they learned that in addition to giving rides to seniors, the Avenidas Door to Door Program would also deliver groceries.

Jon immediately signed up to protect his wife’s health by limiting their outings, as Gloria has a compromised immune system. What they weren’t expecting was how important the connection was. “Hearing the warm, kind voices of Trina and Mackenzie on the phone calling us each week and getting to engage with the drivers, Margaret and Lisa, during the deliveries helped us combat the isolation and made us feel more connected,” Gloria says. The Barkhurs ended up developing a relationship with one of their regular volunteers, former Avenidas CEO Lisa Hendrickson, who stepped up at the beginning of the pandemic to help meet the needs of clients.

What makes this such a special program is the personalized attention from staff and volunteers who get to know the clients and their likes and dislikes. “I always shop for the best produce, the way I would if I was shopping for myself, and I find it such a pleasure to be able to provide something so essential to people like the Barkhurs,” Lisa notes. “I even got to shop for a couple having an anniversary dinner during the lockdown and that kind of special moment is what volunteering is all about, right?” she queries.

Re-opened this July, the Door to Door program has 13 volunteer drivers and also schedules Lyft rides, but now offers even more services, such as PPE (personal protective equipment), prescriptions, and even library book deliveries. Clients are even encouraged to suggest special requests for other services.

The program’s mission is to keep clients healthy by providing them with groceries or giving them rides to appointments and social engagements. If you or someone you know would like to receive this kind of supportive service, please contact our Door to Door staff at (650) 289-5411 or at rides@avenidas.org.

Avenidas Adventurers!
If you haven’t participated in an Avenidas activity yet, one of our hikes might be just what you’re looking for! The Avenidas Hikers began meeting again for hikes together in July. Since then, they have been all over the peninsula and San Francisco, including hikes locally at Foothill Preserve, on the coast at Half Moon Bay, deep in the Redwoods at Purisima Creek, and even over the Golden Gate Bridge! Beginner and experienced hikers are welcome. We offer choices for longer, more challenging hikes or shorter, more relaxed walks on each hike. Hikes are followed by an optional lunch at a close-by restaurant.

For more information on the hikes, carpool options, or to join the steering committee and help with planning, email tmccloud@avenidas.org.

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