



Preserving health and financial dignity through education and advocacy since 1973.

Spring 2008

# THE ADVOCATE

## Two Council Programs Make Life Better for Woman in Need

There are 300,000 adults in Orange County reporting barriers impacting their quality of life. These barriers could include debilitating illnesses, problems with finances or prescriptions and others experience loss of independence from aging. Most have no idea where to turn in their time of need. This is where the Council on Aging programs such as Care Management and Health Insurance Counseling can help clients like Belinda Garcia.



*Belinda Garcia*

Belinda became a client of one of our Care Managers in January of 2007. At that time, she was homeless and sleeping on a mattress on the floor of a garage. For almost eight years Belinda had been waiting on a Worker's Compensation settlement for an at-work injury that had left her with debilitating back pain. Because she could not afford it, she had not seen a doctor in over a year, was in constant pain and without medication.

Belinda's Council on Aging Care Manager, Sharon Smith, was able to help in several ways. First, she referred Belinda to the Senior Outreach and Prevention Program (SHOPP) where she was treated for unsolved medical problems. Second, Sharon advocated for Belinda, time and time again, with her Workman's Compensation attorney for resolution of her case. Third, Sharon helped Belinda file the appropriate papers for Social Security Disability.

With the Council's support, life started to get better for Belinda. Her Worker's Compensation case was

settled, her Social Security Disability application was approved and she moved into her first apartment in many years.

Although her life had begun to turn around, Belinda called her Care Manager again in July 2007. She had had successful back surgery but eventually required knee surgery. She needed help again because she had depleted all of her settlement money paying rent and other bills.

Again the Council found the help she needed.

To deal with her medical insurance and medical payment issues, this time Sharon referred Belinda to the Council's Health Insurance Counseling Program which helped Belinda apply and receive medical insurance retroactively from May 2007. Thus Belinda was able to pay outstanding bills and undergo knee surgery in June 2007.

The Council on Aging was able to assist Belinda with several other issues but most importantly, we were able to alleviate Belinda's financial stress. Belinda says, "Things are coming together now and thanks to the Council on Aging my life is the best I have experienced in many years." But most of all, I appreciate the compassion that Sharon gave to me in my time of need.

Belinda Garcia is one of thousands of Orange County adults whose life was improved by the volunteers and staff of the Council on Aging. If you would like to offer your time or financial resources to continue this work for the county's most vulnerable adults please visit our website [www.coaoc.org](http://www.coaoc.org) or use the enclosed envelope.



*Cheryl Meronk  
CEO, Council on Aging*

**V**olunteers are the life blood of the Council on Aging. These are the people that fan out across Orange County everyday to advocate for disabled and older adults at risk. Recently four of our volunteers were among the 250 volunteers honored with the Spirit of Volunteerism Awards by the Volunteer Center Orange County, and at our Volunteer Luncheon Celebration, the Council named Keith Wisbaum, Esq. as our Volunteer of the Year. In this issue we want to add our thanks for their commitment to the Council and recognize their outstanding work.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Meronk, CEO

## ***Spirit of Volunteerism Honorees***



**Cathy Johnston,  
*SmileMakers***

Cathy Johnston seamlessly and joyfully chaired our 2007 SmileMaker holiday project which provided more than 2000 gifts to needy older adults.



**George Smyth,  
*Caring Connections  
Friendly Visitor***

George Smyth brightens peoples lives as a Friendly Visitor as well as an advocate for residents living in assisted living facilities.



**Peter Christie,  
*HICAP***

Peter Christie has been a Medicare beneficiary counselor at three separate community centers for over nine years in our Health Insurance Counseling Program.



**Betty Romero,  
*Ombudsman***

Betty Romero has been a caring, diligent and persistent advocate for residents of long-term care facilities for more than five years.



***Keith Wisbaum, Esq.,***

## ***Council Names Agency-wide Volunteer of the Year***

At our 2008 Volunteer Luncheon Celebration, the Council named Keith Wisbaum, Esq. long-time advocate for older adults and an elder law attorney as our Volunteer of the Year. Keith has volunteered for more than ten years as a member of our Financial Abuse Specialist Team and his extraordinary efforts have made a great difference for our clients. He is sincerely committed and compassionate about the unique medical, legal and ethical dilemmas presented by nursing home and financial abuse cases.

***Thanks again*** to the more than 250 volunteers that support the work of the Council on Aging. The generosity of your time and your efforts everyday make this organization one of the best in the state but more importantly disabled and older adults have a support system they can count on when needed. Kudos to all!

## Volunteer Corner

Patricia Moran-Johnson assumes a new position of Director of Volunteer Development, as the Council prepares to meet the rapid increase in the aging population of Orange County. Just imagine the importance of new volunteers as the 460,000 older adults aged 60+ living in the County today grows to 720,000 in about 10 years.



*Patricia Moran-Johnson, Director of Volunteer Development*

One of the targeted groups of prospective volunteers will be the 77 million “Baby Boomers”, Americans born between 1946 and 1964. As this group retires or looks to give back to the community, the Council will be prepared to provide a multitude of opportunities to which they can apply their free time.

How can volunteers help us as we grow? Easily, by visiting a new “friend” who can no longer get out of their home or by becoming an advocate for residents living in assisted living facilities. Others will counsel new recipients of Medicare as they try to find the right medical and prescription drug plans for their retirement years. There are many ways to help improve the quality of life for disabled and older adults and often our volunteers feel they are rewarded many times over for what they do.

**One of the targeted groups of prospective volunteers will be the 77 million “Baby Boomers”...**

### Volunteer Directory

**If you are interested in more information about our Volunteer Opportunities, call (714) 479-0107 and ask for:**

**General volunteer information, Patricia Moran-Johnson, Extension 216**

**Ombudsman Program Coordinator, Bob Haddock, Extension 226**

**Friendly Visitor Coordinator, Patrice Emenaker, Extension 273**

**Health Insurance Counseling Coordinator, Mary Ozorvich, Extension 225**



*Kim Hubbard dressed as Carmen Miranda*

## Annual Volunteer Luncheon Celebrates with a 1930's theme



*Parade of Stars winners were Ombudsman Dan Stroba and his wife, Darlene.*



*Volunteers enjoying the celebration*

# Fundraising Luncheon Draws Largest Attendance in Council's 35-year History



*Large turnout for our May event*



*Keith Wisbaum, Elder Law Attorney and COA volunteer speaks with Anna Bryson, (Assistant to Street) and Chriss Street, County Treasurer and Tax Collector about working with our FAST program to save senior homes from being auctioned off.*

## The Last Gardenia Captures Everyone's Heart

At this year's fundraising luncheon one of our Friendly Visitors, Tricia, who visits with Bob Exum and the woman who lovingly does so much for him, his wife of 64-years, Bonnie, shared an endearing story with our guests.

Bob has Alzheimer's Disease and could not attend our luncheon but Tricia told the story of how Bob and Bonnie met in the early 1940's. Bob was in the navy and out on the town one night when a woman selling gardenias asked him to buy her last one. Bob obliged and within a few minutes, the future Mrs. Exum came walking down the street. Bob approached Bonnie and asked her if she would like the gardenia; Bonnie said yes. The rest is history!

Today, Tricia, Bob and Bonnie all are friends, each benefiting in their own unique and special way from our Friendly Visitor Program.



*Mrs. Bonnie Exum with Friendly Visitor Tricia Homrighausen at fundraising luncheon.*

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If we inadvertently omitted your gift please let us know immediately and accept our apology.

# Council Honors Angels Among Us

DEFT-the Wood Finish People, an Irvine corporation, was one of two Orange County businesses to receive the first-annual Angel with a Heart Award from the SmileMakers Guild of the Council on Aging-Orange County at our volunteer recognition luncheon in April. DEFT is a wood stain manufacturing corporation with facilities in Irvine and Ohio. The second award was given to Annie Nguyen, owner/operator of Modern Nail Salon in Orange.



Accepting the Angel With a Heart award for the DEFT Corporation, Irvine, were Jackie Selcek, receptionist (left) and Cori Garrett, production coordinator.



Accepting the Angel With a Heart award was Annie Nguyen, owner/operator of Modern Nail salon in Orange (left), with salon employee Tina Pham (center) and Hedy Kirsh, president, SmileMakers Guild of the Council on Aging-Orange County.

Each was honored because they have demonstrated significant support for the Guild's annual Angel Tree project over the last four years. This project supplies holiday gifts for persons in residential facilities, isolated or alone at home, and without families. Since 1997, our SmileMakers Guild has solicited and distributed gifts, providing more than 2000 gifts during the holiday season last year alone, thanks in great part to nearly twenty partnering companies and agencies and more than 100 volunteers.

If your company would be willing to help sponsor our Angel Tree Project for seniors this holiday season and bring joy to many overlooked elders in our community, please call (714) 479-0107, ext 269 to discuss the next steps in partnering with us in this important program.



The SmileMakers Guild of the Council on Aging-Orange County  
Invites you to join us for *Laughs & Lunch* at our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual

## *Afternoon at the Improv*

Sunday, September 7, 2008

IRVINE SPECTRUM IMPROV

71 Fortune #841, Irvine, CA 92618

11:30 am—Doors Open    12:30 pm—Lunch    1:30 pm—Showtime

Tickets—\$40.00

Admission includes lunch (sales tax and gratuity included).  
Must be 18+ with proper I.D.

Opportunity Drawing tickets  
are available for \$5 each or 5 for \$20.  
Fundraising proceeds support Holiday gifts for  
Orange County's frail and disabled adults.

### *Afternoon at the Improv Ticket Order Form*

No. of Tickets @ \$40.00

No. of Tickets @ \$ 5.00

Order total:

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Method of Payment

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Visa /Amount

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**FAX Credit Card  
Orders to:  
714-479-0234**

Credit Card #

Exp. date

Signature

Please make checks payable and return along with this form to: Council On Aging-Orange County,  
1971 East 4th Street, Suite 200 Santa Ana, CA 92705. Attention: SmileMakers  
For Information Please call (714) 479-0107 Ext. 269

**Tickets purchased after August 28, 2008 will be held at Will Call.  
The Council is not responsible for the content of the show.**



## ***Board President Mission Statement***

**C**urrent Board President, Mike Steiger has volunteered for the Council on Aging for the last four years in various capacities. “Assisting such a quality organization in an important mission is a great life experience”, says Mike. As board president for the last year Mike has embraced the real challenges that the Council now faces and the increasing demands of the future. As Mike points out, ***“We have all been entrusted with the legacy of the good work of the Council and working together we will ensure the Council is there for individuals in the future.”***

***If You Would Like to Learn More  
About the Council on Aging’s  
Five Programs Helping Seniors And Disabled Adults***

***Please join us for a JUST IMAGINE TOUR***

**The 2008 schedule for our Just Imagine Tours is**

Wednesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m

Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m

Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m

Wednesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m

Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m

**FOR RESERVATIONS FOR THIS INFORMATIVE EVENT,**

**PLEASE CALL 714-479-0107 EXT. 223.**

We’ll have a seat and a nametag waiting for you!

We hope to see you here!



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*Visit our website, [www.coaoc.org](http://www.coaoc.org), for more stories and facts about all of our services.*

## Save the Date

### Roadmap to Medicare *Seminar for individuals nearing 65*

Council on Aging-Orange County  
1971 East 4th Street, Suite 200,  
Santa Ana, 92705

**Time: 10:00am – 11:30am**

#### Upcoming dates:

- July 26, 2008**
- August 23, 2008**
- September 27, 2008**
- October 25, 2008**
- November 22, 2008**

Please call (714) 560-0424, ext. 276 to RSVP  
A \$15 donation will be appreciated but all are welcome!

#### Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory, UCI

#### Cognitive Neuroscience of Aging Research Study

Volunteers are needed for studies that investigate brain activity and memory. The studies involve monitoring activity of the brain while performing simple tasks.

In this project, you will have your brain activity monitored either through the recording of electrical activity (EEG) or through an imaging method called functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

Studies involve either one or two visits to the laboratory, each taking between one and two and a half hours. You will be reimbursed for all travel expenses and receive compensation for your participation.

In order to take part, you must:

- be between 63-77 years of age.
- be right-handed.
- be a fluent English speaker.
- be in good general health.

If you would like to take part or receive further information about the study, then phone or email the research group.

Phone: 949-824-8861, eMail: [fnim@uci.edu](mailto:fnim@uci.edu)  
DATES and TIMES for participating are FLEXIBLE.