



CAREGIVER PROFILE

HELEN BRILLIANT Petaluma, CA



Helen has been a professional caregiver for over 20 years, 13 of which were spent working in a Skilled Nursing Facility. She received her C.N.A. license in 1983 but also holds a B.A. in English which she received from Immaculate Heart in Los Angeles.

Prior to becoming a caregiver she was a teacher in Southern California and in Cotati. Other training includes CPR & First Aid. She likes caregiving because of the wonderful people she meets, and because of the flexible hours. Raising 11 children, she found those flexible hours important!

Special interests: cooking, listening to the stories that her clients tell, and watching her children grow up to be responsible adults.

What Helen likes most about working with seniors: "They have great stories to tell. Helping to keep them as independent as possible, for as long as possible, and keeping them in their home, is extremely gratifying."

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Welcome to the Winter 2003-2004 *Sequoia Senior Sentinel*. We hope you find the articles in this issue informative.

Fall Prevention Program

In this issue we will highlight the serious problem of senior falls. Falls are the number one cause of fatal injuries for older people. In this issue we outline what steps can be taken to avoid this potentially life-threatening but all too common type of accident.

A critical consideration for both fall prevention and the long-term ability for seniors to stay in their homes is assessing how well seniors' homes meet their needs as they age.

Fewer than 10 percent of the roughly 100 million housing units in America are outfitted for universally accessible usage such as wide doorways, entrances without steps, stairwell handrails, grab bars in bathtubs, and light switches at the top and bottom of stairs. Commonly recommended products include bathroom-wall grab bars; portable wheelchair ramps for navigating a single step; bath lifts to ease someone in and out of water; and electric or battery-powered stair lifts.

Although the technology is evolving, the typical person over age 65 is not likely to have an array of high-tech equipment. However it is important to assess each individual's needs and address them where possible.

Equipment vendors say navigating stairs and bathrooms are by far the top two problems the elderly face at home.

For those on a budget, here are the five simplest modifications older people can make to help ease their lives:

- + Night lights
- + Non-skid bathtub strips
- + High-wattage light bulbs
- + Larger numbers on telephone
- + Levers to replace faucet knobs

Seniors and their families may want to take the opportunity to review these simple additions to the home as an important first step to fall prevention.

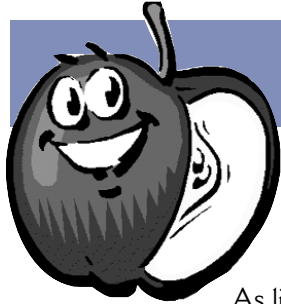
Gabriella Ambrosi
President & CEO
*Sequoia Senior
Solutions, Inc.*



IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Welcome	1
Caregiver Profile	1
Successful Aging	2
Fall Prevention	2-3
Financing for Long-Term Care	3
Winter Events Calendar	4





SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

SUCCESSFUL AGING

As life expectancy in the United States continues to move higher, the number of people over age 65 will grow dramatically in the coming decades. Likewise, the “oldest old,” those individuals age 85 or older, are the fastest growing segment of the population. These men and women are pioneers in the country of extended old age.

This group is exploring new territory, proving that the post-retirement years do not have to be a period of loss and inexorable decline. Instead, these later years provide powerful opportunities for continued growth—for affirming or reconsidering one’s priorities, taking on new challenges, exploring uncharted paths.

“Successful aging is best understood as a process, rather than an outcome—a way of doing and being,” says Betsy Sprouse, Ph.D., program manager of the AARP Foundation.

“It is about our ongoing, day-to-day efforts to live as well as possible during the latter part of our lives.

It is not confined to the most vital and vibrant among us.”

While good health is important to successful aging, it is not the whole story. Factors such as a positive outlook on life, financial security, staying involved in the outside world, and strong relationships, particularly close family relationships, are all as important in the “successful” aging process as good health.

Researchers looking at the issue of successful aging have identified the

following 10 behaviors and attitudes that provide older adults with the best chance of aging well:

1. Don’t smoke—if you still do, it’s never too late to quit.
2. If you drink, drink moderately—one alcoholic drink a day doesn’t hurt, and may even reduce your chances of heart disease. But a lcohol abuse can lead to disability and early death.
3. Stay physically active—find something you love to do and do it regularly. Exercise is associated with a variety of good outcomes, from increased memory to reduced rates of heart disease, depression and cancer.
4. Eat a balanced diet—limit the fats in your diet and try to include five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

5. Avoid obesity—being significantly overweight is associated with a variety of bad health outcomes including heart disease and diabetes.

6. Protect your vision and hearing—your eyes and ears are critical to functions such as driving and reading. They also help you remain engaged in conversations and relationships.

7. Get regular health care and vaccinations—can prevent many problems before they require more serious treatment.

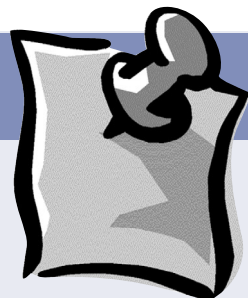
8. Maintain a vibrant social network and strong personal relationships—it’s good for your health and for how you experience your later years.

9. Stay active in professional, community or other activities—feeling useful is positively associated with good outcomes as people age.

10. Plan for your financial well-being—having the money to meet your material needs can increase your chances of successful aging.

To receive a copy of “Aging Successfully,” contact AARP at (800) 424-3410 and request pub. #D17507. Article reprinted with permission from the AARP:

www.aarp.org



ROTATING TOPIC

FALL PREVENTION

One of the greatest fears among senior citizens is the fear of falling—with good reason. Fully 70% of accidental deaths in people over age 75 are caused by falls. Falling is a primary catalyst for hospital admissions among seniors, and for over 40% of nursing home

admissions. Fear of falling leads to lost confidence and increased inactivity. Falling can be caused by many factors. Internal factors include slowed reflexes, balance disorders, low blood pressure, visual deficits, etc. Other causes are external factors such as poor lighting or the effects of medications.

FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES



FINANCING SOURCES FOR LONG-TERM CARE

Many seniors still do not realize that there is little coverage available from Medicare for long-term care. Long-term care is defined as the need for assistance with activities of daily living at home and skilled nursing facilities. Once the Medicare myth is explained, the senior is left with three alternatives for financing long-term care: 1. private payments from personal assets (including retirement accounts) and income, 2. Long-Term Care Insurance, or 3. Medicaid.

The cost of long-term care is increasing at an alarming rate. The cost of nursing homes average \$41,000 per year. The cost of home care averages \$12,000 per year, with skilled home care costing even more.

Today 1 in 4 Americans aged 65 or

older will need long-term care. The elderly need to understand how to access quality long-term care in an affordable manner.

The Medicaid program was introduced in 1965 as a health care "safety net" for people who were in poverty, but these days more and more people with average incomes are forced to access Medicaid support due to the enormous costs involved in this care.

Medicaid rules are complex and irrational. Many seniors will have to spend down their assets or divest themselves before being eligible for Medicaid. In many situations, divestiture (with a 36 month lookback rule) will result in a Medicaid transfer penalty, and will delay eligibility for care. However certain assets receive

special treatment under the Medicaid rules such as primary residence, certain types of annuities, life estates and IRA accounts that are taking age 70-1/2 Required Minimum Distributions (does not apply to ROTH-IRA accounts).

Planning is vitally important, not only in understanding and managing finances, but identifying quality care in advance of need.

Contributed by **Harry Rubins**
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Reducing the Risk of a Fall

There is much that can be done to prevent debilitating falls. The first step is to make a thorough risk assessment. We have literature that can help you to do a self-assessment, or you can have us conduct a FREE Risk Assessment Interview and Home Safety Inspection as well as outline ways to minimize your risk. Based on the assessment we will recommend a course of action.

EXERCISE! Exercise can reverse many of the negative forces of aging. It promotes healthy bones, increases strength and power, improves balance and postural stability and improves agility.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have fallen in the last year and describe how you fell.

Discuss your medications with your

doctor and pharmacist if they cause dizziness.

Tell your healthcare provider if you feel weak in your legs or have other problems with your legs or feet.

Tell your doctor if you are experiencing vision or hearing loss.

What to Do If You Fall

Don't Panic! Remain calm and assess the situation. Overreaction to a fall may cause more injury than the fall itself. Take time to determine if you are hurt. Do not attempt to get up if you feel you are injured.

1. Try falling on the padded areas of your side or buttocks if you are able to anticipate a fall. The soft tissue of these areas may prevent injury.

2. If you have fallen, assessed the situation and have determined that you are not hurt, roll over on your stom-

ach and attempt to get to your hands and knees. Crawl to a stable piece of furniture such as a bed, stool, or a chair without rollers or casters.

3. Approach the support from the front and place both hands on the surface.

4. With both hands on the support, place the foot of the stronger leg flat on the floor. Lean forward as you begin to push yourself up with your hands while bringing your feet side-by-side.

5. Slowly turn and sit in the support. Collect yourself before attempting to get up again.

We are committed to educating our clients on the issues of senior falls and fall prevention. Please contact us for further literature or other assistance on this very important topic.

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SONOMA COUNTY WINTER EVENTS

Now through Dec. 6—Lecture Series at The California Indian Museum and Cultural Center
The 2003 Tillie Hardwick Lecture Series honors Ms. Hardwick's dedication and contributions to all California Indians. Monthly lectures are held at the museum 5250 Aero Drive, Santa Rosa. No Admission Fee; 1:30 PM-3:30 PM; Call for dates; 707-579-3004

Nov. 3 - 24—Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair & Farmer's Market
All original art & crafts. Farm-fresh produce. On Vine and North Streets, Healdsburg. 9-12; 707-431-1956

Nov. 20 - Jan. 4—SCA Show & Art Sale
Sebastopol Center for the Arts presents a exhibition of work by current SCA members. 6780 Depot Street, Sebastopol, CA Fee/Time: call 707-829-4797

Nov. 24 - Dec. 23—Alive After Five
Historic downtown Petaluma offers live entertainment with strolling carolers, jug bands, fire dancers, and much more. Businesses will be open late. Downtown Petaluma. Call for Times; 707-762-9348

Nov. 29—17th Annual Festival of Lights
Sonoma Valley's Community Favorite - a dazzling burst of sparkling lights, music, gourmet food & wine pairings at five Kenwood wineries Fee: \$25 / \$15 Designated Drivers; 6-9 PM; 707-539-6262

Nov. 29—Antique Wagon and Horse Procession
Collection of antique wagons, decorated horse teams and fairy-tale characters on horseback form a spectacular procession through Historic Downtown Petaluma. 1 PM ; 707-769-0429

Nov. 29 - Dec. 15—The 1940's Radio Show
The spirit of that bygone era when the world was at war and pop music meant "The chattanooga Choo-Choo" is accurately captured in this winning show. 5409 Snyder Lane in Rohnert Park. Adults \$22 Youth/Senior's \$18; Fri./Sat. 8 PM Sun. 2:30 PM; 707-558-3400

Nov. 29 - Dec. 14—27th Spirit of Christmas Crafts Faire
The Spirit of Christmas Faire with over 250 booths of top quality arts & crafts and unique gifts; all-day entertainment, Santa Claus, choirs, puppets, magicians & popular bands. Sonoma County Fairground, Santa Rosa. Fee: \$2 - \$4; Fri-Sun, 3 weekends, till 9 PM; 707-547-9355

Dec. 1 - Feb. 28—Sonoma Valley Olive Festival
Celebrate the season of the olive with wine, food, art, & special events at various locations throughout Sonoma Valley. Fee: Varies by event; Time: call; 707-996-1090

Dec. 5 - 26—City of Lights Driving Tour Map
Take a self-guided tour of decorated homes and businesses. Please call for more information. Fee: None; 707-769-0429

Dec. 6 - 8—Santa Rosa Symphony
From MacDowell's beautiful Concerto No. 2 to Shostakovich's sparkling 9th Symphony, this concert is a tremendous hit with audiences. Fee: \$42; Sat. & Mon. at 8 PM, Sun. at 3 PM. 707-54-TICKETS

Dec. 6 - 7—Luther Burbank Home & Gardens Holiday Open House
Start the holiday season with a return in time to the Victorian era. Traditional decorations will beautify the Burbank Home and Greenhouse. Popcorn and cranberry stringing and other holiday craft activities for the chil-

dren. Interesting gift items and stocking stuffers will be available. Santa Rosa Avenue at Sonoma Avenue, Santa Rosa. Fee: none; 10 AM - 4 PM; 707-524-5445

Dec. 7—Annual Museum Benefit Victorian Tea
Visit the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum, to enjoy a proper Victorian-style tea in a Victorian Holiday setting. Please call for more information. 20 Fourth St, Petaluma. Fee: \$30; 11 AM-2PM & 5 PM; 707-778-4398

Dec. 19 - 21—Ballet Califia-The Nutcracker
Tchaikovsky's immortal classic brought to the stage with all its splendor and magic. At Spreckels Performing Arts Center, Rohnert Park. Snyder Lane and RP Expressway. Box Office open Tues - Sat, 12 to 5PM Fee: \$16 General Admission; \$12 Youth/Senior; Fri 8PM, Sat 2:30 & 8PM, Sun 2:30PM; 707-588-3400

Continuous—Cooking in the Vineyard
An on-going series of cooking and culinary arts sessions conducted by caterer, Bea Beasley. Classes are held in Chef Beasley's professional catering kitchen overlooking the Rodney Strong Vineyards located in Healdsburg. Fee: \$35- \$45 per person per class ; Call for class schedule; 707-544-3059

About Our Organization...

At Sequoia Senior Solutions we choose to make a positive difference in the aging experience. Our staff will perform their collective duties with confidence, concern, commitment, cheerfulness and care.

Our mission is to help seniors remain independent in their own homes as long as possible. We seek to improve the quality of senior life through dependable, caring service. We further commit ourselves to assist families of seniors who struggle with their complex responsibilities while caring for elder parents.

This list was edited. For complete calendar listings go to : www.sonomacounty.org/events.html