

ELDER CARE

OF DANE COUNTY

Partnering for Independence

SPRING 2003

Frail Elderly Benefit from Chi Kung Class

It has been a balancing act for six Elder Care East Day Center participants who enrolled in a Chi Kung class, described as a Chinese form of Yoga that combines breathing techniques tied to slow, graceful movement. The three-month pilot program, which ran from October through December, was implemented to determine if Elder Care participants—who are more frail than the average elderly person—could benefit from a modified version of Chi Kung.

High on the list of aging concerns, falls—due to lack of balance—are the leading cause of injury deaths among people 65 years and older. In an effort to help participants improve and/or maintain their level of balance, Medical Director Lora Wiggins, MD, gave the green light to initiate the Chi Kung pilot.

Research has shown that Chi Kung can cut the risk of falls in older adults by enhancing physical alignment while building endurance and stability. “Knowing the devastating consequences of falls—a fractured hip often signals the beginning of a long decline that can lead to loss of independence and even death—our focus is prevention,” says Dr. Wiggins.

Chi Kung is the mother of all Chinese exercise, both therapeutic and martial. Chi Kung is a catchall phrase for hundreds of exercises, including Tai Chi. “Chi Kung moves energy through the body by doing a series of stretches that are coordinated with breathing,” explains certified Chi Kung Instructor Bob Constantine. Bob teaches each exercise in detail with discussion of how it benefits the body. He tailors exercises to meet the needs of individual participants.



Instructor Bob Constantine and class participants striking “Archer Pose.”

Elder Care received a grant from the Cremer Foundation to fund the Chi Kung pilot program. “Knowing the commitment the Cremer Foundation has to our community’s elderly, we were pleased to present the opportunity,” said Laura Stoffel, Elder Care Fund Development Manager, “and we are proud to have their partnership.”

The pilot evaluation results are positive. All participants either maintained or improved their levels of balance and range of motion, according to the pre- and post- testing measurements using the Berg Balance Index and the Confidence Scale assessment. “Knowing the level of frailty and medical conditions of the pilot participants, we are pleased with the findings,” Dr. Wiggins concludes.

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The benefits of Chi Kung go beyond balance, according to the pilot participants. For example, one man had uncomfortable indigestion, so Bob introduced a movement that specifically aids digestion.

“This is an example of Chi Kung working from the outside in,” he explains, “coordinating the work of muscle, tendon and circulation to tone and detoxify the internal organs. It helps participants feel better internally as well as externally.”

One member plagued by chronic pain reports that the exercises helped her experience less pain for several

hours after each class. Another person said he has greater range of motion raising his arms over his head. One participant can tell she has better stamina, while another class member is able to rotate his head further. All class participants report “just feeling better.”

Elder Care is planning to further expand the program by including an additional class per week and expanding enrollment. Seeing as the benefits go beyond balance—loosening joints and muscles, lowering blood pressure, and improving respiration, digestion and circulation—Chi Kung will be available to East Day Center participants, including those confined to wheelchairs. 🏠



We're Here Because of You

As I was looking over the newsletter, it really struck me—each and every program or activity featured in this issue exists only because a

generous spirit in our community stepped forward to fund its roots.

Whether that supporter was a private foundation or a corporation or a philanthropic organization, they all had this in common: confidence

in Elder Care's experience, expertise and innovative approach—and commitment to making a practical difference in the lives of older adults right in their own backyards.

Thanks to these community leaders, Hmong elders are benefiting from regular health screenings. Frail older adults are gaining better physical balance through a Chi Kung exercise program. A job coach will mentor and work closely with our new in-home workers so they can care for our participants longer. And middle-schoolers have a chance to express their feelings about the

beloved elders in their lives through words and art.

We are truly here because—today and in days past—generous parties have stepped forward to make a difference through their vision and their generosity. You are an inspiration to us all. 🏠

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Musser".

Karen Musser
Chief Executive Officer

Everyone's a Winner in Best Time Ever Art & Writing Contest

Elder Care's "Best Time Ever" Art & Writing Contest for Middle-Schoolers attracted over 325 entries from Dane County and beyond. Students were invited to submit entries recalling a treasured visit or activity with a beloved older adult.

“Elder Care launched the ‘Best Time Ever’ Contest as part of its 25th anniversary celebration in 2001,” explained Kristin Jeffries, chair of the Best Time Ever Committee. “With such a great response from youngsters and teachers alike, we decided to make the contest an annual event.”

The entries in our second annual event came in a number of creative forms from drawings to paintings to poems to short stories. Appreciation goes to the sponsors of the contest, with special thanks to American Family Insurance Group. Allie Phillips was chosen in a drawing from the top 25 winners for the grand prize, a two-night family stay for four, donated by the Great Wolf Lodge, WI Dells. All entrants received a meal coupon, given by Pedro's Mexican Restaurante. The top 25 entries are featured in a printed booklet, and a traveling display is rotating to various public venues.

“Thank you for making this contest a priority,” wrote seventh grade educator, Loren Glasbrenner of Patrick Marsh Middle School in Sun Prairie. “The awareness among middle school students of their relationships with elders can only be increased with fortunate opportunities such as this. On behalf of my students, thank you for the opportunity to reflect on this important subject area. We hope you find the essays entertaining and meaningful.” 🏠

Best Time Ever

Top 25 Winners

Meagan Adams, 12
Liz Alar, 14
Nick Anderson, 13
Katie Anderson, 11
Emily Andrews, 11
Ariella Asher, 13
Hannah Boeck, 12
Ella Bratz, 12
Marielle Brenner, 12
Melody Elifritz, 12
Emma Fenner, 11
Kenzie Heuser, 11
Camilla Jones, 12
Karinna Klute, 12
Jordan Kreitinger, 12
Genna Kuypers, 14
Brittany Lean, 12
Michelle Marion, 13
Nichole Marty, 14
Stephanie Maze, 14
Agustina Perez, 13
Allie Phillips, 12
Tirzah Rinzel, 12
Andy Schittone, 11
Katie Schmitt, 13

For a free copy of the "Top 25" booklet,
call Linda Wells at 245-3025.

The Smell of 'Old'

"No, like this. You put the left side of your tongue against the roof of your mouth and breathe in."

Kneeling on the soft, orange carpet, in the living room of my grandparent's house in Colorado, I had many feelings. At the age, of five I didn't think I could understand the house, but then again, my Grandpa Jake always brought out the best in people. I could hear my mother and grandmother arguing in the kitchen about what to make for dinner. I could smell 'old.' The 'old' smell was neither good, nor bad, it was just 'old.' I was so busy watching, listening, and smelling I could hardly concentrate on what my grandpa was saying.

"What?" I asked, turning to Grandpa Jake. I began to giggle.

My grandpa's voice began to speak again, "Now, you'll never learn if you giggle yourself to death." His wrinkled face seemed beautiful.

Grandpa Jake was trying to teach me how to make strange duck-like noises.

Once again, I tried to make the right noise, but I still couldn't get it quite right. "I can't do it." I got frustrated.

Yet he stayed calm. He was the kind of grandpa that you could talk to for hours, and he would just listen, smile and comfort you for as long as you needed.

Two years later, I sat on my bed, feeling lonely. My grandpa had passed away on June 16, 1995. I looked at my watch, my eyes empty of all emotions. 1:14 a.m. was the display. I stayed up all night to learn his technique. I eventually got the hang of it and was making duck noises for two hours straight. Now, the only thing on my mind was the soft, orange carpet and the 'old' smell of the house in Colorado.

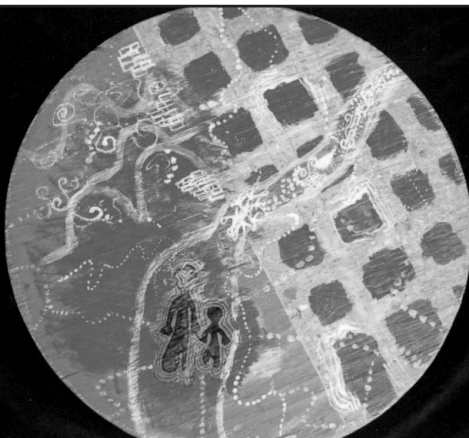
Liz Alar, 14—Winnequah Middle School
Parent - Nancy Alar

The Card Game

One summer, when I was visiting my grandma and grandpa's house, I was watching T.V. when my grandma asked me if I wanted to play the card game, Golf. I didn't want to, but I didn't want to hurt her feelings by saying no, so I said yes. We played one game, and there was no talking, just the shuffling of cards between rounds. In the second game, we talked a little about school, and that expanded into a deep conversation. Pretty soon, we were in the middle of our fourth game, and it felt like I was in a time machine. My grandma was telling me a story of her life, and it was so real, I felt as if I were there. She was talking about her childhood, living in Golva, North Dakota, how she was raised in her house, and how she and grandpa raised their family there.

Then, she talked about her old friends. I could see her with her friends hanging out at the school I've seen so many times, but had never thought much of it until then. After listening intently for five games her story was done, and I didn't want to stop talking. We had become so close, so I told her about my life. As I was talking I saw she was just as interested as I was with her story, and I had never talked to her like this. When I was done, she got up to make supper, and I went to the park to think about what I learned. Whenever I miss her, I think about that magical moment when we connected like true friends.

Jordan Kreitinger, 12—Patrick Marsh Middle School
Parents - Jean & Jerry Kreitinger



Painting on piece of wood

This is a picture of my grandfather and I walking the streets of Israel. This is an abstract painting, but I think through the colors and design you can tell what it means to me. My grandfather is now deceased. He could only speak Hebrew and I could only speak English. But we still had lovely communication.

Ariella Asher, 13—Mt. Horeb Middle School
Parent - Diane Donner



Celia Lamper-Linden, RN, listens to Bay Her Yang as she takes the Hmong elder's blood pressure reading. Yia Xiong of the URS helps translate and takes notes.

Joint Effort Brings Health Screenings to Hmong

Elderly Southeast Asians in Dane County are now benefiting from a collaborative partnership between Elder Care and United Refugee Service (URS) of Wisconsin. Starting in January, special twice-monthly clinics offer a variety of health services, all as a result of grant monies URS received from the recent Wisconsin Vitamin Settlement. The Vitamin Advisory Council awarded grants to several agencies in the state to improve health care and access for underserved groups.

Under the grant, an Elder Care registered nurse provides URS clients age 50 and older with a variety of services, including blood pressure screenings, pulse rate checks, brief health assessments/discussion, and referrals to their own physicians or other health care providers as necessary.

"It's been a good partnership," said Yia Xiong, Senior Program Case Manager for URS. Currently, 122 Southeast Asian elders in the Senior Program are eligible to use the clinic. So far, around 40 Hmong elders have met with an Elder Care nurse, have had their blood pressure checked, and are becoming familiar with what the clinic has to offer them.

Celia Lamper-Linden, RN, Clinical Nurse Specialist for Elder Care, said, "By working closely with URS, I'm attempting to build a bridge between Hmong health beliefs and Western medicine. The Hmong elderly feel lost when they go to a Western physician."

Yia explained that the Hmong health care emphasis is on restoring balance between the spirit and the body. "A lot of Hmong people mistrust Western medicine because they're afraid it will throw off their balance," he said.

Celia conducts the three-hour clinic at a community center in East Madison. Initially, she held the clinics in conjunction with the meal program. "I felt it would be a good idea to establish a relationship by eating with them. The Hmong elderly wanted to offer hospitality and share their table with me. I'm continuing to build trust so if they do develop a health complication, they know they can count on us."

Between 1975 and 1994, more than 110,000 Hmong refugees resettled in the United States. The largest Hmong-American populations now reside in California, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Hmong families have faced considerable challenges in adapting to American life. Lack of English language fluency and mistrust in Western medicine have been challenges, especially for the older generation.

"It's a wonderful start to allow Southeast Asian elders to express concerns and ask questions," said Yia Xiong. "It's an opportunity for the elders to educate us and for Elder Care to educate them." 🏠

Elder Care Wish List

Your in-kind donations are so helpful to us! Please call Linda Wells at (608) 245-3025 to make a donation.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Art supplies (<i>markers, crayons, pencils</i>) | Kitty litter |
| Baby yarn (<i>sports weight</i>) | Kitty treats |
| Bath towels & washcloths | Men's long, heavy coat |
| Beads (<i>for jewelry making</i>) | Men's small sweat pants/shirts |
| Bingo prizes (<i>hard candy, travel size toiletries, pocket tissues, trinkets</i>) | Men's large & extra large t-shirts |
| Blank videotapes | Men's pants (<i>tall, 42-44</i>) |
| Blow dryer | Men's socks |
| Buttons | Mixing bowls & spoons |
| Calendars (<i>picture</i>) | Movies (<i>musicals</i>) |
| Calendars (<i>pocket or purse size</i>) | Nail polish |
| Cat food | Over-the-bed table |
| CDs (<i>country western, easy listening, jazz, oldies</i>) | Picture frames |
| Crochet hooks | Puzzles |
| Dehumidifier | Rubber stamps (<i>for crafts</i>) |
| Easel (<i>lightweight, collapsible</i>) | Smocks |
| Food - non-perishable | Vacuum |
| Hand lotion | Women's or Men's large winter coat |
| Hollywood/Star magazines | Women's large coat |
| Humidifier | Women's large down coat |
| Kitchen towels & washcloths | Women's X-large long coat/cape |
| | Women's tie-up shoes (<i>size 10</i>) |
| | Wrapping paper |

Special Thanks to Donors, October 1st—December 31st, 2002

Memorials and Honorariums

Heartfelt and ever-present tributes to loved ones

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Yes! I want to help older adults live independently at home and in the community.

Enclosed is my check made payable to Elder Care of Dane County Foundation for:

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 other \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

My employer will match my gift (company name) _____

(optional) My gift is: _____ In memory of _____ In honor of _____

(optional) Please send an acknowledgement of my gift to _____ Address _____

Thank you. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law. An acknowledgement of your contribution will be sent to you. Please return to: Elder Care of Dane County Foundation, 2802 International Lane, Madison, WI 53704.



Upcoming Attic Angel Events Benefit Elder Care

Mark your calendars for two incredibly fabulous events sponsored by the Attic Angel Association. These can't miss happenings—**House and Garden Tour** and **Attic Sale**—are particularly significant this year since Elder Care will be awarded the proceeds along with two other local non-profits.

House and Gardens Tour—Held each spring since 1954, Attic Angel sponsors the popular and fashionably chic house and garden tour in Maple Bluff. Held June 16, 2003, the theme for this 50th year celebration is “Maple Bluff Beauty—a return to the tour’s historical beginning.” Reminiscent of the first tour, two of the original tour’s homes will be identified, and tours of six other Maple Bluff homes and gardens—including the Governor’s Executive Residence—will be featured. The ticket price is \$15 in advance and \$17 the day of the tour. For an additional \$15, a buffet luncheon at Maple Bluff Country Club featuring recipes from *The Collection Cookbook—Simple and Elegant Recipes* is available.

Attic Sale—Great deals on antiques and one-of-a-kind collectibles are sure to be had at the Attic Sale at Edgewood High School on June 13 and 14. An advance ticket purchase for the House and Garden Show will get you two hours of shopping before the doors open to the public. Admission is free.



Elder Care was selected by Attic Angel Association’s community grants review committee to be one of three beneficiaries for this year’s events. The grant will support Elder Care’s job coach initiative for direct care worker retention.

For more information, call Attic Angel Association at (608) 662-8900.

MISSION STATEMENT

Elder Care of Dane County provides health care and support services to help older adults live independently at home and in the community.

Elder Care of Dane County
2802 International Lane
Madison, WI 53704

Main: (608) 240-0020
Services: 245-3075
Donations: 245-3037
Job Line: 245-3111
Volunteers: 245-3037

Web site: www.elderc.org

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