GRATITUDE

For All That is Whistlestop
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Whistlestop PERSPECTIVE
By DIANA GRUHL, PROGRAM MANAGER

Gratitude for Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center

Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center hosts over 2,500 participants and members who enjoy our classes, programs, and events regularly. Many members say they feel like a family at the Center and express gratitude for our wide array of services. Gratitude is our theme this month.

Scott and Barbara Stokes, who come to Whistlestop almost every day to enjoy Jackson Café, including monthly special lunch events, share an affection for the Center. They call it “the friendliest place in town to enjoy lunch.” They agree, “A sense of fellowship and community is what Whistlestop is all about.” They also say, “Jackson Café is a 5-star restaurant whose volunteers are very helpful, friendly, and on-the-spot with what you need.”

Edith Strauss visits daily to connect with friends, take exercise classes, enjoy lunch, and participate in social groups. She says, “I love to be here! It’s my favorite place. I love talking with my friends, and we enjoy learning from each other.” Her friend Maria Lopez says, “I love dancing, speaking with friends and having lunch at both the Corazón Latino social group (co-hosted at Pickleweed Community Center) and the Café.”

Whistlestop volunteer and participant Josephina Perez appreciates the purposefulness the Center has given her, stating, “Whistlestop is my life. After retirement Whistlestop gave me a purpose. I meet nice people, help clients in the A.C.A.S.A. program (which provides Spanish-speaking senior peer counseling) and Brown Bag Pantry. I am so happy to help people in need.”

Member Marian Yamate, who comes to the Center daily to be with friends and enjoy lunch, sums it all up by saying, “I appreciate how Whistlestop has everything in a very friendly place.”

These testimonials demonstrate that whether Whistlestop participants are taking language or exercise classes, meeting to socialize, enjoying a meal, or contributing to help others, they are grateful for the Whistlestop community.

NEXT MONTH: Healthy eating becomes more important than ever as we age. The theme of our December issue will be Nutrition. You can find out all the ways that Whistlestop helps to ensure that older adults eat well. You won’t want to miss it.
For one Nicasio couple gratitude was born out of crisis.

The life-changing calamity came for Mike Ingerman and his wife Madeleine Sloane a year ago when Mike began having difficulty walking. A trip to Kaiser Permanente revealed a diagnosis of Transverse Myelitis, a rare inflammatory disease causing injury to the spinal cord. The result for Mike was that he was paralyzed from the waist down.

Today, despite being confined to a wheelchair, Mike, a retired hospital consultant, says he is “extremely grateful” for what Kaiser has done for him both at the Terra Linda facility and at Kaiser Foundation’s world class Rehabilitation Center in Vallejo.

Madeleine, a retired general business and real estate lawyer, also speaks enthusiastically about her gratitude. “Our lives were turned upside-down in that first month after Mike lost the ability to walk. It was a mad pace and we never knew what to expect next.” But, she is especially grateful for all of the support they have received from Kaiser, the community and their churches. Mike is a Quaker and Madeleine a Catholic.

They both are also grateful for West Marin Senior Services. Mike says, “They deserve a lot of recognition for what they do in the area of case management for people like me. They are caregivers and also provide invaluable advice on rehabilitation. They have a smart and savvy staff.”

Mike and Madeleine are Whistlestop members. “We went there one day for lunch at Jackson Café and signed up on the spot,” says Madeleine.

They both love art. Mike makes beaded necklaces. Madeleine has been taking art classes at College of Marin since the fall of 2008. She has taken credit courses in drawing, life drawing and now oil painting. She says, “I am so grateful that Mike and I can do art at home. It’s a real blessing.”
Great sounds, great people, great weather, and great food came together for a wonderful day of music and groovin’ at Rancho Nicasio last month. Whistlestop’s Marty Orgel captured the spirit of that Sunday afternoon in these photographs. To see more, visit Whistlestock.com, or Whistlestop’s Facebook page.

A big call-out of thanks to all of our sponsors, volunteers, staff and all who attended.
Barry Melton does a bit about a guitar pick he used at Woodstock.
SPECIAL EVENTS

Veteran’s Day Lunch & Show
Wed, Nov 11, 11:30am-1:30pm; Lunch: 12:30-1:30pm/Entertainment
$8/10 • Celebrate our veterans in Jackson Café this year with a delicious lunch and live patriotic music performed by instrumentalists Ken Vermes and Si Perkoff. The main entrée will be Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, and a vegetarian option, plus patriotic cake. Tickets required; purchase by Nov 9.

Annual Whistlestop Thanksgiving Feast
Thurs, Nov 26, 12:30-1:30pm
$7/10 • Join us for a traditional Thanksgiving feast with all the trimmings in Jackson Café, with a piano concert provided by the talented Nancy Fox. Tickets required; purchase by Nov 23.

NEW/HIGHLIGHTED CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Beginning/Intermediate Conversational Spanish
Tuesdays, 1-3pm
$1/3 per class • Instructors: Joe Cillo & Carol Costa. Join Spanish teachers for one hour of beginning, then one hour of intermediate conversational Spanish. Drop-ins welcome.

Intergenerational Arts & Crafts
Tues, Nov 3 & 17, 3:30-5pm
No Fee/Donations Appreciated. Join Latino Multicultural Program Coordinator Marta Villela and San Rafael High School students for holiday craft-making at Whistlestop. We will make Thanksgiving and Christmas crafts for all levels and abilities. Supplies provided. Sign up in advance.

Intermediate Italian
Ten Thursdays starting Nov 5, from 1-2:30pm
$20/25 per series • Instructor: Karen Raccanello/Pre-requisite: Basic Italian instruction. Improve your speaking and conversation skills and have fun with this exciting Italian class.

Crafts/Knitting Group
Wednesdays starting Nov 11, 9:30-10:30am
$3/5 • Bring your knitting, weaving, and crocheting projects to Whistlestop to enjoy with fellow crafters. Supplies provided.

Home Energy Savings Presentation
Wed, Nov 4, 11-11:30am
No Fee/Donations Appreciated. Presenter: Charles Mason, Community Action Marin. Learn tips to conserve energy and money. Energy Upgrade California is a statewide initiative to motivate and educate residents and small businesses about energy management concepts, programs and actions that can help better manage energy use and save money on utility bills. Community Action Marin is the Energy Outreach Ambassador for Marin County.

Beginning Bridge
Thursdays, starting Nov 12 for 6 weeks, 3-4:30pm
$20/22 • Instructor: Allan Nichol. Learn basic bridge from an experienced teacher. No experience required. Sign up in advance as space is limited to 12 participants. Overfl ow students will be wait-listed.

Intergenerational Social Time & Lunch
Wed, Nov 18, 10:30am-11pm
No Fee/Donations Appreciated. Join Marin Country Day School students for socializing, interviews and an art project at the Active Aging Center. Bring a bag lunch to eat with the children and Whistlestop will provide dessert.

Zentangle
Thurs, Nov 19, 1:30-3pm
$3/5 • Instructor: Paula Egan, certified Zentangle teacher. Zentangle is a relaxing, fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. This easy-to-learn method of relaxed focus can be done almost anywhere, alone or in groups, without any special abilities or costly equipment.

NEW/HIGHLIGHTED HEALTH PROGRAMS

Mind Training Practices for Stress Management
Tues, Nov 10, 3:30-4:40pm
No Fee/Donations Appreciated. Instructor: Larry Berkelhammer, PhD. Learn techniques in mindfulness to cultivate resilience, self-empowerment, and self-efficacy. Taught by creator and instructor of In Your Own Hands: A Course in Self-Empowerment at College of Marin, and author of In Your Own Hands: New Hope for People with Chronic Medical Conditions – Mindfulness-Based Practices for Mastery and Wellbeing.

Flu Shot Clinics
Tues, Nov 3, 1-4pm
Medical Center of Marin will provide 50 free flu shots at Whistlestop to our members. Tues, Nov 10, 1-4pm No Fee/Bring your insurance card. Rite Aid will provide free flu shots at Whistlestop for participants who have Medicare, Medi-Cal, or other insurance, except Kaiser. Drop-in with insurance card.

Weekly Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Screenings, & Medication Reviews
Mondays starting Nov 2 (excluding Nov. 9), 1-3pm
No Fee/Donations Appreciated. Free weekly blood pressure and cholesterol screenings provided by Bright Star Care. Please bring your medications and medication lists for medication reviews. Information and referrals provided. Drop-in.

Monthly Blood Pressure Screening & Medication Review
Tues, Nov 10, 11am-1pm
No Fee/Donations Appreciated. Free monthly blood pressure screenings provided by Dominican University nursing students. Bring your over-the-counter and prescription medications for review with list of medications. Information and referrals provided. Drop-in.

HIGHLIGHTED SUPPORT SERVICES

Need Assistance? Multicultural Consultants
By appointment: 415-456-9062
Spanish/English: Marta Villela, ext. 131; Russian/English: Anna Ladyzhenskaya, ext. 138; Vietnamese/English: Dina Duong, ext. 129. No fee for consultations; small fee may apply for translation service. Assistance to English and non-English speakers in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. Help with healthcare management, citizenship, housing, employment and federal assistance plus referrals.

Free Legal Consultation for Older Adults
San Rafael and Mill Valley
1st & 3rd Thursdays from 12:30-2:30pm at Whistlestop
1st & 3rd Thursdays from 12:30-2:30pm at the Mill Valley Community Center
By appointment only: Call 415-459-6700 for appointments at both locations. Legal Aid of Marin provides a free 30-minute legal consultation for Marin County residents who are 60+. Marin lawyers volunteer to give general advice, offer options, explain rights and, when appropriate, refer to attorneys who have expertise in certain areas of law.

Victim Witness Assistance:
Resources, Outreach, & Assistance
2nd & 4th Thurs, 9am-12pm
Yolanda Johnson, Advocate from the District Attorney’s office, will be available to meet with victims and witnesses of crimes to answer questions, provide information, and share resources. For information, call 415-473-6450.

MARIN COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

HICAP-Medicare Changes for 2016 • Speaker: Outreach Coordinator, HICAP

Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP

For a full list of classes and services, check out the monthly calendar online at whistlestop.org/classes/calendar or pick one up at the Active Aging Center. Fees listed for classes show the member fee, followed by the non-member fee. Join or renew your Whistlestar membership for the 2016 year to continue enjoying valuable Whistlestop discounts and benefits! To register or for information about any class or service, call 415-456-9062. The Jackson Café will be open to all on Thanksgiving, Nov. 26 for an annual feast. Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center (all classes and services) will be closed for the holiday.
Whistlestop Weekly ACTIVITIES
This Month at Whistlestop Please view our most recent class schedule at www.whistlestop.org/classes/calendar/ or call 415-456-9062 for updates to the schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
<th>FEE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAYS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30AM</td>
<td>Zumba</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–1PM</td>
<td>Chair Massage</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–NOON</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>10:30AM–NOON</td>
<td>German Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Persian Social Group</td>
<td>415-472-6020</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>11AM–12PM</td>
<td>Music and Movement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Russian Social Group</td>
<td>415-456-9062 x138</td>
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<td>12:15–1:45PM</td>
<td>Men’s Group</td>
<td>10/5-10/30</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 75 Basic</td>
<td>Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 150 Basic</td>
<td>Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 250 Advanced</td>
<td>Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30 AM</td>
<td>Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–NOON</td>
<td>Mah Jongg</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45–11:45AM</td>
<td>Cardio/Yoga Exercise Class</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>11AM–2PM</td>
<td>Manicurist</td>
<td>Appt. Req.</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30AM–12:30PM</td>
<td>French Class</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>French Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Beg./Int. Conversational Spanish</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAYS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30–10:15AM</td>
<td>Tai Chi</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30AM</td>
<td>Weaving and Knitting Group</td>
<td>Starts 11/4</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–11:30AM</td>
<td>Seniors’ Circle</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Persian Social Group</td>
<td>415-472-6020</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>* 11AM–1PM</td>
<td>Corazón Latino</td>
<td>415-456-9062 x131</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>ESL Pronunciation</td>
<td>Class Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 75 Basic</td>
<td>Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 150 Basic</td>
<td>Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 250 Advanced</td>
<td>Ends 12/16</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30–5PM</td>
<td>Citizenship Class</td>
<td>415-456-9062 x131</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAYS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30AM</td>
<td>Zumba</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–1PM</td>
<td>Chair Massage</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11AM–NOON</td>
<td>Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15–3PM</td>
<td>Vietnamese Social Group</td>
<td>415-456-9062 x129</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2:30PM</td>
<td>Intermediate Italian</td>
<td>Starts 11/5</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Beginning Italian</td>
<td>Ends 10/22</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45–3:45PM</td>
<td>Balance Class</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>4–5PM</td>
<td>Korean Drumming</td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30AM</td>
<td>Community Breakfast</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11AM–NOON</td>
<td>Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>456-9062 x117</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAYS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>ACASA</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Spanish Club</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Chinese Brush Painting</td>
<td>11/6 &amp; 11/20</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Ping-Pong</td>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Except for Corazón Latino Group, held weekly at Pickleweed Community Center, all classes are held at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael.

TECHNOLOGY
Pre-registration and payment required. To register, Call 415-456-9062. See details of classes online.

November and December 2015

iPad/iPhone Basics 1: Getting to Know Your Device
Tuesdays, Nov 10 & 17, (2 classes), 10am-Noon
Fee: $48, Maximum 8 people • Congratulations, you finally got your very own iPhone or iPad. There is only one problem – you have no idea how to use it. In this personalized, two-week course, you’ll be guided through how to make calls, send emails, send texts, download music and add applications. A course for those new to the smart phone/wireless device world, each session provides one-on-one help and comes with instructional handouts so you can practice at home. Don’t let that amazing technology sit in its box any longer. (Bring your charged-up Apple device to class.)

iPad/iPhone Basics 2: Essential Applications
Tuesdays, Dec 8 & 15, (2 classes), 10am-Noon
Fee: $48, Maximum 8 people • Need a refresher for using your iPhone or iPad? Are you using the latest iOS 8.0? This course will review some of the basics. We will show you how to get the most out of your built-in apps including Photo editing, iCloud, Calendar, Siri, Email, Texting, Facetime, Health, Maps/GPS, and more. Learn how to find out what version of the device you are using and when and how to upgrade. Learn the steps to find and install new apps, and how to update, delete and organize your apps for easy access. If you understand the basics of your device and are ready to see what else it can do, this is the course for you – perfect sequel to the “Basics” class. Don’t forget to charge-up and bring your device, your Apple ID and password to class.

ONGOING

Open Lab
Every Monday and Wednesday, 10am-Noon
No Fee • Use our PCs for your own purposes, access internet, etc. Volunteer staff available for advice on problems with your electronic devices, laptops, and tablets who can help with software applications.

New Whistlestar Memberships:
Join now for $10-$20 (sliding scale) and your membership is good through Dec. 31, 2016.

Jackson Café
LUNCH MENU
WHISTLESTAR MEMBER (LOWEST PRICE) / NON-MEMBER OVER 60 / UNDER 60. PRICES INCLUDE TAX

Main Entrée
$5.75/$6.90/$8.05
Sandwiches + Burgers
$5.20/$6.10/$7.25
Soup du Jour
$3.40/$4.35/$5.70 bowl
Garden/Caesar Salads
$4.05/$4.35/$5.20

OTHER ITEMS
Tuna Salad Side $2.50
Beverages $1.25
Desserts/Fruit $2.25
Cheese $0.50
Avocado $1.25
A Grateful Helping Hand

Terry McKinney of Mill Valley, Whistlestop’s Volunteer of the Month, says some of her best times are Thursdays when she’s volunteering at Jackson Café. Terry celebrated her fourth year anniversary as a volunteer at Jackson Café this summer. Terry, who has always volunteered and has had many volunteer positions with numerous other organizations, says Whistlestop is the best place to volunteer, and not just because she gets a free lunch. She loves to meet and work with other volunteers, she gets to work with Whistlestop staff and members, and she gets to interact with Café manager Marilyn Moore.

“She is always there when we need her,” Marilyn says. “She can work every station and does it with her big, beautiful smile. We are blessed with every moment she shares with us.”

Before volunteering, Terry was a young nurse who came to San Francisco with two girlfriends from Ohio in 1978. Her friends returned home; she stayed. Terry had fallen in love, first with San Francisco and then, six months later, with a young intern named Tom at the Veteran’s Administration hospital where she was working in her first nursing job.

Terry and Tom moved to Marin with their two children in 1996 and have been together for 37 years. They love Marin even more than they loved San Francisco. Bicycling, running and hiking the Marin trails are some of the things they enjoy doing together. You will often see Terry putting on her helmet after her volunteer shift and Tom coming to pick her up so they can ride their bikes home together.

To learn more about volunteering for these or any other opportunities, email: volunteer@whistlestop.org.

Whistlestop MULTICULTURAL

By MARTA VILLELA

Agradecidos Por — Grateful for Your Thanks

Remercie, grazie per, graça por … I could keep writing “Thanks for” in the many different languages we hear at Whistlestop, but the most important thing for me is knowing what people from different cultures are thankful for. I always find it interesting to learn why people are thankful. And I always find the answers compelling.

There is always a smile, a hug, a handshake, or a small gift, all signs of gratitude for something they have received in life. Some people celebrate Thanksgiving every day of the year for different reasons. For example, Whistlestop member Yolanda Arreola says, “I am thankful to be in this country especially because I am with my daughters, and I thank God for that.” Juana Collin says, “I am thankful for living in this state.” Member Mooi Le appreciates coming to the Active Aging Center to learn how to cook and to enjoy our classes and events throughout the year.

These comments are important to me, when I see how Thanksgiving is celebrated as a historical event every November. At Whistlestop I see Thanksgiving as a celebration of how so many individuals here are transformed. They go through a process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group, embrace these differences, and then make them their own.

Many people who come to our country enjoy Thanksgiving with family and friends, all the while giving thanks for all they have achieved, for what they are, and all they have in their lives.

Being thankful, both at Whistlestop and for Whistlestop, always plays an important part in so many of our members’ lives. And for this I say thank you.

Marta is Whistlestop’s Hispanic Outreach Coordinator.

CORRECTION

The Express misspelled the name of Whistlestop Volunteer of the Month Matt MacPhee in our October issue. We regret the error.
I am grateful for Whistlestop from when I was a student at Dominican University. I read a story about how Whistlestop members were taking exercise classes at the center. I had been taking exercise classes at Senior Access, and then started to come to Whistlestop for even more exercise classes. I am grateful Whistlestop is here for seniors, and how it can have a positive impact on their health.

I have watched Whistlestop grow and expand over the years. And I always enjoy meeting new members. All of the people here have enriched my life. This is a time when our lives can be exciting.

My heart is full of gratitude for the many ways Whistlestop enriches my life. I am grateful for the abundance of classes to benefit my body and mind. The classes cover everything a senior needs to know. And they are conveniently located under one roof.

I feel like Whistlestop is my second home. It is fun to celebrate holidays with other friendly seniors. Life is more fun since I starting coming to Whistlestop.

Diane H.

Gloria W.
Gratitude Overflowing

By VAL BOWMAN

Anne Mulvaney of San Anselmo is recovering well from a hip replacement she had a couple of months ago. She is grateful at how lucky she is to have medical insurance that made her surgery possible. She also is grateful for retiring a year ago from a satisfying second career. She earned her teaching credential at age 59 and taught kindergarten and first grade for 16 years. Anne says, “I learned a lot with everything I did, but little children are just wonderful to be around. I learned how smart they are; they taught me something every day.”

Anne’s background includes working for a Montessori School in Marin and directing the Tenderloin Community Endeavor in San Francisco.

Clearly, gratitude is a big part of Anne’s life. She says, “I am grateful for the people who have come into my life when I needed some help, or comfort, or a listening ear. They have been my angels. I am grateful for the grace I have received to get through some difficult times. I am grateful for my faith that grounds me and connects me to others, that supports my belief in a God who is both transcendent and present.

“I am grateful for community and for connections, for friends and family. I am grateful for living in such a beautiful place as Marin County for 46 years, and happy to stay here where I have put down roots. While Marin has many wonderful services for elders, a big concern for many of us less affluent with fixed incomes is housing. It’s unthinkable right now that I would have to go and live in an unfamiliar place, but with today’s conditions, certainly a possibility. I am grateful for being here.”

Anne is enjoying the freedom of retirement. She’s part of a book group, she has learned Mah Jongg and loves to swim. She participated in St. Rita’s Bible Camp this summer and is on the Liturgy Committee of her church. She loves art and goes into San Francisco regularly for exhibitions. She also makes art and will be exploring new avenues there, she says.

“We live in a place that offers many opportunities for elders to have a rich experience. I think of what Whistlestop alone offers – it’s a blessing of living here.”

A Year of Grateful Living

BY MARTY ORGEL

Whistlestop member Andy Guralas has a lot to be grateful for in just one year since the Whistlestop Express profiled him in November 2014. Andy has seen major changes and events over the past year, and he remains thankful for the support he receives every time he comes to the Center.

“This place is like my extended family and I feel I belong here,” Andy says.

Over the past year, Andy has made new friends, gotten more involved with Whistlestop members and volunteers, and has followed Whistlestop’s Mission Plaza Building project.

Andy’s attraction to Whistlestop began when he and other US Army veterans started coming to Jackson Café for lunch and conversation. He is a US Army veteran and served from November, 1954 through 1956, and they all gather at Whistlestop for lunch and other events.

The best part of his Whistlestop participation, he says, is when he interacts with other members and staff. He says he can see how caring the staff is when he is here, and he is here every day. “I see the volunteer lunch servers every day, and their beautiful smiles mean a lot to me.”

A major change over the past year for Andy involves his housing. He has lived in his Larkspur home for 50 years, and would travel to Middletown and Hidden Valley to take care of family members. But that all changed when the recent Hidden Valley fire broke out.

He was having lunch with his son in Middletown when a neighbor knocked on the door to tell them there were flames in the backyard. Then a ranger came by and told them there was no mandatory evacuation, so they stayed inside. Next, another ranger came by and said the evacuation was mandatory, so they packed what they could and the family evacuated. The Highway Patrol then came to help drive everyone out.

Burned out of their home, Andy’s son’s family members are now staying with Andy in Larkspur.

The family includes Andy’s son, daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, and two, what he calls “monster-sized” dogs, in residence. And he says he loves every minute of it, grateful he’s able to help everyone out.
I want to share with you a few of the moments of gratitude I have experienced during the years of my life. I smile, (sometimes tears) … remembering them, and am deeply touched.

I was born in 1939. The moment after I was out and wrapped tightly, my grandmother reached into the blankets and found a tiny foot. She pulled it out, uncurled the toes and counted them. Then she found the other foot and two clenched fists … opened them, too, and counted. “Ah, the right number. She’s perfect. Thank God.”

When I was ready to give birth to my third child, her two brothers, ages two and three, were wild. They would run screaming around the house brandishing red rubber hatchets. If I took the hatchets away, they’d brandish something else! My mother found a crib at Sears that was portable and screened, with a lid you could close. I took one look and went into labor … feeling grateful that my baby would be safe.

Hours later, my husband came home from work. He was a large man with huge hands. He held our baby in one of them. She was six pounds … about the size of a roast chicken … but delicate and lovely. With the other hand, he touched my face. “Thank you,” he said.

I am grateful that I have the opportunity to work with children … to go back into the classroom and help them be successful at school … to feel good about themselves and others … to be kind.

I am grateful that my own children and grandchildren are good human beings, able to love and be loved, to set good intentions, to be of service, and to play and enjoy life.

I offer an example. For several months I was bed-ridden … had to stay put, be cared for by others, and did not feel well at all. My grandchildren would come and read to me. One of them – 10 years old at the time – loved sharing with me Medicine Cards, which featured short descriptions from a Native American perspective of the attributes and powers (and magic) of animals. I could be wise as an owl, fleet as a cougar, fierce as a bull, without even getting out of bed. I felt so grateful for their caring. I felt it was healing.

When I was 70 years old, an old woman, brown and wrinkled as an apple doll, walked up to me on the street and asked me to show her my hand. “You’re going to live a long life,” she told me, gazing boldly into my eyes. “Count your blessings. Give thanks for every minute that you have.”

I am following her advice. Right now, I am dancing with gratitude because the kids have called to be certain I will be able to join them for Thanksgiving dinner.

“I wept because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.”
VOLUNTEER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Make a difference in an older adult’s life.

Whistlestop CarePool Volunteer Driver Program
This position offers round trip rides to ambulatory older adults going to the doctor or grocery store. Drivers use their own cars and receive ride requests through email. Drivers can accept or decline the calls, and drive on their own schedule. Ride lengths are about two to four hours for each round trip. Volunteers must have access to reliable passenger automobile with current insurance certificate, a valid California Driver License and a clear background check and DMV report.

Jackson Café Lunch Servers, Cashiers and Friday Community Breakfast Servers
The Jackson Café provides a warm and comfortable setting for older adults to eat a nutritious meal at an affordable price. Café volunteers provide friendly greetings, excellent customer service and support social interaction. Lunch hour shifts are: Monday – Friday, 10:45am-2pm. The Café is open from 11:30am-2pm. Cashier or food service experience is a plus but not required. The Friday morning breakfast shift is from 8:30am-10:30am. Breakfast is served from 9am-10am.

Meals on Wheels Drivers Needed
Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers are needed to deliver meals to homebound meal recipients. A valid California Driver’s License and a clear DMV report are needed as well as a reliable vehicle and current insurance certificate. A minimum of one 3 hour weekday shift is required. We also need a few good strong men to help with the Friday morning Brown Bag Pantry.

To learn more about these opportunities or others contact: volunteer@whistlestop.org Phone: 415-456-9062 Ext. 117 www.whistlestop.org

INDEPENDENT LIVING

For appointments, call Leslie Klor: 415-456-9062, ext. 132
No Fee/Donations Appreciated

Homeshare Program
The Homeshare Program is a free referral service for seniors providing an affordable and alternative way of meeting housing needs with numerous benefits to renters and homeowners. Do you have a room to share or need a place to live? Know someone who can use our services?

Telephone Reassurance Program
Do you live alone? Trained volunteers will call you three mornings a week to check on you. They can answer questions about other senior resources. We also offer this service in Spanish.

AT HOME CAREGIVERS
Whistlestock Presenting Sponsors Peggy and Peter Rubins.