The mission of LITA (Love is the Answer) is to improve the quality of life for persons living in skilled nursing facilities, residential care facilities, and retirement residences throughout Marin County by providing volunteer visitors. LITA promotes friendships that lessen isolation and loneliness, and increases public awareness of the needs of residents of long-term care facilities.

LITA was founded in 1975 by Mae Wygant, who had volunteered in a nursing home and began recruiting friends and fellow church members to visit with lonely residents.

When people move into a long-term care facility, they must often leave a beloved pet behind. This separation from their most constant companion is often the most devastating. The Pet Connection, one of LITA’s programs, involves a volunteer’s pet as part of their weekly visits.

Volunteers and their pets are carefully matched with residents to foster ongoing friendships. Executive director Jenay Cottrell says that currently there are some 40 dog and cat visitors including several rescue dogs.

Enrico is a happy-go-lucky Havanese, who visits an older adult with post stroke expressive aphasia. Darlene was very frustrated and self-conscious about her language deficits, and she withdrew from group social activities.

Staff members advocated for pet visits, which have brought her comfort and companionship that does not require conversation. Enrico was surrendered for adoption because his family lost their home and left him behind when they moved. He has a new family and a new career that suits him perfectly.

Betsy is a small terrier mix who survived being struck by a car. She was rescued and rehabilitated after the loss of a hind leg. With typical terrier spunk, Betsy has not slowed down, and enjoys staying busy as the LITA dog at Stockstill House in West Marin. Betsy fetches a ball, takes walks around the backyard and sits on laps non-stop every Thursday.

Wade is a cocker mix who was thrown over a chain link fence of a schoolyard in Los Angeles. The school called the Humane Society, and he found his way to his owner, Daisy.

To volunteer, contact Volunteer Director Meg Stiefvater,
Whistlestop Selects Eden Housing As Partner for Renaissance Project

Whistlestop’s Board of Directors has selected Eden Housing to be the nonprofit housing partner for the Renaissance project, which will feature a new Whistlestop building including inside parking, the Active Aging Center, the Jackson Café located on the Fourth Street side, and 50 affordable housing units.

We spent several months interviewing nonprofit housing developers, and we visited several senior affordable housing projects throughout the Bay area searching for the right partner organization for our Renaissance project. We narrowed our choice down to three finalists. Based on a written proposal response, an interview with our selection committee, and a check of references, our Board chose Eden Housing.

Similar to Whistlestop’s roots, Eden was born out of vision, hard work, and entrepreneurialism...
It’s Cuisine for a $5 Meal

Charmina Pariani first learned of Whistlestop when she saw an ad for a job on craigslist. “It was remarkable,” she said. “Everything in the ad made me say, ‘Yep, that’s me.’” She was hired in the transportation department in May of last year. In January, she saw an in-house ad about a managerial position in the Jackson Café and she applied. She got the job. She was well prepared for it with her seven plus years experience at Drake Terrace Senior Living. She worked there in all areas, including as a server and as supervisor of the dining room.

She had not eaten in the Jackson Café before, and she was pleasantly surprised with her first meal. She says the food is beautiful as well as nutritional and healthy. “The chefs make an art of it. It’s cuisine really, and you wouldn’t expect that from a $5 meal.”

Charmina has already made many improvements in the service. She meets with the volunteers and says the café is now fully staffed, with double the number of volunteers. She wants to respond to customer and volunteer concerns and has worked to shorten lines during lunch. She says customers and volunteers are happy with her new ideas and she’s happy with her new job.

Did You Know?

Whistlestop serves more than 17,000 low-cost meals a year to Marin County residents at our onsite Jackson Café, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael. Not only is the food good, but the café has become a popular place to socialize during lunchtime.
Thai Peanut Sauce

This dipping sauce works well as a dressing for summer salads or as a dipping sauce for grilled prawns or chicken brochettes.

1/3 Cup Creamy peanut butter
1/4 Cup Chicken stock or water
2 Tbs Coconut milk
1 Tsp Fresh lime juice
1 Tsp Soy Sauce
1 Tsp Fish Sauce
Pepper sauce to taste, Tabasco or Serrachi sauce

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and pulse to a smooth consistency. ✪

continued from page 2

to create communities that enable residents to thrive. For senior developments this means creating environments that help residents age in place, encouraging them to live independently for as long as they can.

“Many of the seniors we serve cannot afford assisted living, so our goal is to provide service-enhanced, affordable living that encourages long-term independent living,” said Linda Mandolini, Eden Housing President. “We have done a number of developments that are co-located with senior centers, most recently co-locating with On-Lok in Fremont. We believe this partnership with Whistlestop is not just a good opportunity for our future residents, but is also a model that other community builders and activists can replicate when considering how to grapple with a rapidly aging population. We are thrilled to be a part of this next stage of the Whistlestop community and look forward to working together.”

We plan to provide periodic updates about the Renaissance project to Whistlestop Express readers in future editions.

Joe O’Hehir is Whistlestop’s CEO. ✪
Call for PETS

Whistlestop Express is looking for photos of your cute pets. Do you have the sweetest Labradoodle or the perkiest Pekingese? The smartest rescue dog or the fastest Tibetan Terrier? We’d love to see them. Send a photo (jpeg), along with your name, hometown and pet’s name, to john.bowman58@gmail.com or drop it off at the Whistlestop, 930 Tamalpais Drive, San Rafael. You can add a line or two about what makes your pet so special.

Is Your Pet the Cutest?

This is Bob Lemon. He lives with Josie Lemon and Greg Pickford in Mill Valley. They say, “Bob is a good eater.”

Visiting Nurses • Home Care • Mom/Baby Visits
Locally Based • Not For Profit

Sutter Care at Home offers you the most comprehensive range of home care services available.

Marin County’s Choice for Home Health Care

To arrange for care or learn more about our services, please call 415.492.4600 or visit us online at www.SutterCareAtHome.org www.facebook.com/SutterCareAH
Older Horses Help Older Adults Through Grieving Process

At Equine Insights in San Rafael, horses help people work through and heal from emotional wounds.

Judy Weston-Thompson, MFT, CEIF-MH, a psychotherapist for 25 years, started integrating horses into her practice about five years ago. She works with clients of all ages, including older adults. “So many seniors have grief issues,” she said, “They have lost friends or loved ones. So have our horses, all approaching or older than 20 years old. So they understand one another.”

Weston-Thompson learned the power of horses in healing through a personal experience. She bought three horses and one of them was especially challenging. Working through those challenges with that horse was therapeutic for her and the horse. She decided to share this experience with others. She is a certified psychotherapist with special training for working with horses to help people. “Clients find this is such a powerful way to heal.”

Three horses work with Judy and her clients at her San Rafael facility. They are Caesar and Calysta, both quarter horses, and Star, an 1,800-pound Draft Percheron. They develop remarkable relationships with these human clients, often from the get-go. “They will go right up to someone they want to work with,” Weston-Thompson said.

She recalled the time a woman with a prosthetic leg came for therapy. The woman was sitting on a chair outside, and Calysta walked up to her and soon their eyes locked. “They just stared at each other for several minutes,” Judy said “It was trance-like. The connection was incredible.”

She said that clients who work with the horses move through their issues very quickly. “I leave at the end of the day quite energized. I believe I have always been highly intuitive, something every therapist needs. But these horses have deepened my intuitive instincts.”

Photos and videos of this specialized therapy can be found on the website: www.equineinsight.net.
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD
Wednesday, Apr. 17 • Noon-2pm • Jackson Café
Fee: $10 for lunch and a fabulous show
No registration is required; pay at the door
Come celebrate the 20th year Anniversary of the Multicultural Department by taking a trip around the world. We will celebrate the diversity of all of our cultures with delicious food and wonderful live entertainment, Cabaret-style, provided by Luzina & Tom Tison Promotions.

NEW! RUSSIAN SOCIAL GROUP
Thursdays • 1-2pm
Whistlestop has a new Russian social group. This is a great opportunity for Russian speakers to have a support group and a good time in the community. If you are interested in participating or know someone who is, please contact Vicky Voicehowsky at 457-0586 or Anna Ladyzhenskaya at 336-8430.

FRENCH SOCIAL GROUP
Tuesdays • 1-2pm
Information: Call Vicky Voicehowsky, 457-0586
Whistlestop has a new French Social group on Tuesday afternoons and needs French speakers to attend. Please help spread the word or come and join us!

FRENCH CLASS
Tuesdays • Noon-1pm
Fee: Free | Level: Basic-Intermediate
Registration: Call Vicky Voicehowsky, 457-0586
Learn to speak the language of love with Susan Duncan, who has been teaching French for 18 years in Marin County.

NEW! IMPARARE L’ITALIANO! LEARN ITALIAN!
Tuesdays & Thursdays • 3-4pm • Starting in May
Fee: $24/month
Information: Contact Sandra Jimenez, 454-0998
Registration is required.
Learn Italian with our new teacher Elizabeth Guagenti. Elizabeth has a Bachelor’s degree in Italian Language and Literature from UCLA. She spent a year in University of Padova, Italy.
**Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP**
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

**DO YOU WANT TO BE A TUTOR?**
The Multicultural Department is looking for volunteer tutors to help our older adults learn English. This is a great opportunity to help others better integrate into our community. Hours are flexible. If interested, please contact Vicky Voicehowsky, 457-0586.

**JEWELRY CLASS**
*Once a Month: Thursday, Apr. 18 • 1:30-2:45pm*
*Fee: $8 per class (Includes materials)*
*Registration and payment required prior to class*
*Maximum space available: 10 people*
Maria Barsesat, local bead artist, will show you how to make beautiful, simple and easy jewelry items for yourself or as gifts.

**OLDENAIRES SUNDAY DANCES**
*Apr. 28 • 2-5pm*
*Fee: $10 General Admission, $7 Oldenaires Members*
Please join us every last Sunday of the month at the San Rafael Community Center for some wonderful dancing. Featuring a live band, The Manny Gutierrez Quartet; snacks and refreshments, great wood floor, plenty of parking, open to the public/singles and couples.

**DROP-IN COMPUTER LAB**
*Mondays & Wednesdays • 10am - Noon*
Volunteer computer tutors are available to work with you one-on-one if needed.

**DIGITAL PHOTO CLASS**
*Beginning: 1st Wednesday • 2-4pm*
*Advanced: 2nd Wednesday • 2-4pm*
*Fee: $15 | Instructor: Gene Dyer*
*Registration required: 459-6700*
Call for more information and class descriptions.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**
Be a part of the incredible Whistlestop family of volunteers, have fun, inspire others, and gain the satisfaction of being an active member of your community.

**Contact:** Millie at 456-9062 x117 or volunteer@whistlestop.org

- Exercise Instructor
- Board/Card Game Leaders
- Bi-lingual Computer Teacher
- English Tutors
- Jackson Café Servers
- Information and Referral Office Volunteer
- Drivers for Meals on Wheels

**IN-KIND DONATIONS NEEDED**
Mah Jongg sets, Chess set, Dominos, Ping Pong table, books, yarn, movies on DVDs. If you have items to donate, call 456-9062.

**WHISTLESTOP HOME-DELIVERED GROCERY PROGRAM**
This program is available for homebound older adults (60+) who live in San Rafael and need shopping assistance. There is a one-time sign-up fee of $10 and delivery is free. Older adults pay only for the groceries and they can use the program on a weekly, monthly, or shorter basis. This program is a partnership between Episcopal Senior Communities, Novato Independent Elders Program, and San Rafael Safeway. For eligibility, or if you would like to volunteer, call 456-9062 x117.

**FREE BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC, MEDICATIONS AND BLOOD SUGAR CHECKS**
*Tuesday, Apr. 9 • 11:30am-1pm • Arcade*
**Facilitators:** Student nurses from Dominican University Drop-in
Bring all of your medications and supplements to find out how and when to take them, how to store them, possible side effects, or interactions with other drugs. Don’t miss this opportunity to prevent health problems by keeping your blood pressure, meds and sugar in check.

**EATING FOR YOUR HEALTH/TRIGGER POINT MASSAGES PRESENTATION**
*Tuesday, Apr. 16 • 1-2:30pm • Boardroom*
**Presented by:** Dr. Paul Podjowski, La Vita Chiropractic
**Registration requested:** Call 456-9062 (Space limited)
**Fee:** Free

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**Marin County Commission on Aging**
*Thursday, April 11 • 10am-12:30 pm*
**Where:** Maria B. Freitas Sr. Community, 455 Freitas Pkwy, San Rafael
**Topic:** Area Plan on Aging Public Hearing
**Speaker:** Division of Aging & Adult Services
This workshop will explain the proper methods of combining appropriate food groups for optimum digestion and maximum energy. It also uncovers the secrets to fueling your immune system and eating to decrease your risk of cancer. Dr. Paul will also offer free Trigger Point Massages.

**HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DOCTOR’S VISIT**

**Thursday, Apr. 18 • 10-11am • Caboose 2**

**Presented by:** Student Nurses from Dominican University

**Registration requested:** Call 456-9062 | **Fee:** Free

In this presentation, Nursing Students from Dominican University will help you prepare for a doctor’s visit. They will talk about how to ask your doctor valuable and helpful questions, how to manage your priorities during the visit, and what to make sure you know before you leave.

**BRAIN/MEMORY HEALTH GAMES PRESENTATION**

**Tuesday, Apr. 23 • 11-12:30pm • Lounge**

**Presented by:** Student Nurses from Dominican University

**Registration requested:** Call 456-9062 | **Fee:** Free

Come learn how to strengthen and stretch your mind through games — Sudoku, puzzles, banana-grams, and word scramble! We'll talk about the best foods to feed your brain and discuss ways to increase brain health through exercise, healthy sleep and healthy lifestyle. Come share your thoughts and learn new things with Dominican nursing students.

**RESTORE & IMPROVE YOUR BALANCE TRAINING CLASS**

**Tuesdays • 2:30-3:30pm • Jackson Café**

**Suggested Donation:** $10

**Registration requested:** drop-ins welcome

Thomas Attardi, BS, MA, NMT, has been working in the health and healing rehabilitation field since 1992, primarily with the physically challenged with sustained disabilities, impairments or limitations in their overall physical well-being.

You will learn exercises for stronger legs to prevent falls and what to do if you do fall. **Bring a water bottle and 1-lb. or 2-lb. weights to class.**

**DISCOVER ENCHANTING SLOVENIA**

**Thursday, Apr. 11 • 2-3pm • Caboose 2**

**Fee:** Free

Join us for a travel presentation on Slovenia by Zoya Pinto, a native of this beautifully scenic part of Europe. Various influences from Roman Empire, Venice Republic to Austro-Hungarian Empire left their marks on Slovenian history, architecture, language and way of life. In the video, Zoya will introduce you to the most intriguing places, such as Ljubljana, the vibrant political and cultural capital; Ptuj, the oldest town, dating back to the Stone Age; year-round breath-taking resorts of Bled and Bohinj Lakes; the dramatic Julian Alps; the mysterious caves of Postojna; and charming sea resorts of Piran, Bernardin and Portoroz.

**YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR A FREE COMPUTER!**

Marin Computer Resource Center is a nonprofit Environmental Electronics Recycler that refurbishes and gives away free computers to those in need. Download an individual application at: www.mcrc.org or pick up an application in the main office at Whistlestop. They are located at 42 Digital Drive, Suite 3, Novato 883-1428.

Mon-Fri: 10am-6pm and Saturday 10am-4pm.

Thank you Bread & Roses! All of us here at Whistlestop want to say a big thank you to Bread & Roses for providing live entertainment for our special luncheons throughout the year. The music groups are high quality, and the musicians are caring volunteers. Our reward is watching people walk out from our special luncheons with big smiles on their faces. Music is healing and uplifting. We appreciate the hard work you do to supply live music to many agencies. Thank you for thinking of Whistlestop.

**Important Numbers**

Marin Access Call Center: 454-0902

Get Qualified to Ride: 456-9062, x106

eligibility@whistlestop.org

Schedule a Ride: 454-0964

Cancel a Ride: 457-4630

STAR Volunteer Driving: 454-0969

Meals on Wheels: 457-4636
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
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<tr>
<td>9–2PM</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11AM</td>
<td>Language AM Monday</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–NOON</td>
<td>Learn Computer Lab</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1PM</td>
<td>Language Persian Social Group</td>
<td>472-6020</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–NOON</td>
<td>Exercise Movement &amp; Music</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30–5PM</td>
<td>Language Citizenship Class</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15 AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00–NOON</td>
<td>Relax Mah Jongg</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45–11:45AM</td>
<td>Exercise Cardio Exercise Class</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>11–12:30PM</td>
<td>Language German Social Group</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon–1PM</td>
<td>Language French Class</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon–3PM</td>
<td>Relax Manicurist</td>
<td>Appt. Needed</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>Language French Social Group</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Tai Chi Qigong</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10 or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–11:30AM</td>
<td>Support Seniors’ Circle</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–12PM</td>
<td>Learn Computer Lab</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Language Persian Social Group</td>
<td>472-6020</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Support Corazón Latino</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–NOON</td>
<td>Relax Knit!!</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>11–NOON</td>
<td>Exercise Zumba</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Support Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Exercise Balance Class</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30–12:30PM</td>
<td>Support Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Support ACASA</td>
<td>Peer Counseling</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language Practice Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Arts &amp; Crafts w/Vicky</td>
<td>April 5 &amp; 19</td>
<td>$3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Exercise Ping-Pong</td>
<td>April 12 &amp; 26</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Exercise Yoga</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$3</td>
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For a complete list of all classes, visit whistlestop.org

The Caboose, Computer Lab, Board Room and Jackson Café are all located at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center – 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael.
Mockingbirds, Virtuoso Songsters

Actually, I think Mockingbirds are misnamed; they should be called “Mimicbirds” because they do not mock other birds or sounds, they mimic them. And they are great mimics, rapidly learning to copy almost any call of any songbird they hear. Some learn as many as 200 calls. And not only bird sounds; they have been known to mimic cell phone rings, ambulance sirens, squeaky gates, car horns, penny whistles and other musical instruments.

Much of the Mockingbird’s singing is to attract a mate, and the males do it while performing a little aerial dance. Typically the male will perch on a tree top, then jump up and vertically for several feet, then level for a few feet and finally return at an angle to the tree top. All in the space of three or four seconds, and while singing its little heart out!

To catch these birds in the air I had to aim at a blank space where I hoped they would jump and trigger the shot as soon as they jumped. I got more misses than hits but here are a few.

Every weekend I email a special bird photo to Express readers, free. If you’d like to be on the list, just ask me at SHENmaker@MSN.com. ♦

‘Til next month, Richard
A Trip Around the World

For the past 20 years, Whistlestop has become the second home to many people from around the world. Whistlestop is a vital community resource for immigrant older adults and their families in Marin County. The Active Aging Center provides Multicultural programs and services, which support older adults and their families by encouraging independence, well-being and connection to the community. Through our vibrant social groups, including Hispanic, Persian, Russian, German, and French, we provide an opportunity for the multi-lingual older adult to make friends, speak their language, learn and stay active. We would not be what we are today without them.

Whistlestop participant Zahra Hatamaria, a native from Iran, commutes from Santa Rosa twice a week to be with her friends in the Persian Social Group. The three hour trip on public transportation is not an obstacle for her. She enjoys being with her people, sharing stories, studying English with her friends and enjoying lunch at the Jackson Café.

For Amalia Camacho, a native from Mexico, being 82 years old has been the best year of her life. She started coming to Whistlestop in November, and now comes every day. When asked why it is important for her to come to the center, she replied, “I leave Whistlestop feeling better than when I came in.” Amalia also believes that becoming an active participant at Whistlestop has been a huge blessing. “I have been able to share my wisdom, love, peace and humility with others who are just as willing to share all of those wonderful values with me.”

We love to hear stories like these. They tell us how much Whistlestop means for many people and the great impact it has on their lives. The Multicultural Department is celebrating its 20th year anniversary this month. We would like to honor the diversity and uniqueness that exists at Whistlestop. Join us for lunch and a show on Wednesday, April 17 from noon to 2pm for a wonderful cabaret-style event. Special entertainment will be provided by Luzina & Tom Tison Promotions. For more information, call Sandra or Vicky at 456-9062. We hope to see you all there!
Finally, a cell phone that’s... a phone.

Introducing the all-new Jitterbug® Plus.
We’ve made it even better… without making it harder to use.

All my friends have new cell phones. They carry them around with them all day, like mini computers, with little tiny keyboards and hundreds of programs which are supposed to make their life easier. Trouble is… my friends can’t use them. The keypads are too small, the displays are hard to see and the phones are so complicated that my friends end up borrowing my Jitterbug when they need to make a call. I don’t mind… I just got a new phone too… the new Jitterbug Plus. Now I have all the things I loved about my Jitterbug phone along with some great new features that make it even better!

GreatCall® created the Jitterbug with one thing in mind– to offer people a cell phone that’s easy to see and hear, simple to use and affordable. Now, they’ve made the cell phone experience even better with the Jitterbug Plus. It features a lightweight, comfortable design with a backlit keypad and big, legible numbers. There is even a dial tone so you know the phone is ready to use. You can also increase the volume with one touch and the speaker’s been improved so you get great audio quality and can hear every word. The battery has been improved too– it’s one of the longest lasting on the market– so you won’t have to charge it as often. The phone comes to you with your account already set up and is easy to activate.

The rate plans are simple too. Why pay for minutes you’ll never use? There are a variety of affordable plans. Plus, you don’t have to worry about finding yourself stuck with no minutes– that’s the problem with prepaid phones. Since there is no contract to sign, you are not locked in for years at a time and won’t be subject to early termination fees. The U.S.-based customer service is knowledgeable and helpful and the phone gets service virtually anywhere in the continental U.S. Above all, you’ll get one-touch access to a friendly, and helpful GreatCall operator. They can look up numbers, and even dial them for you! They are always there to help you when you need them.

Call now and receive 100 FREE Minutes and FREE Car Charger for your Jitterbug Plus — a $41.98 value. Try the Jitterbug Plus for yourself for 30 days and if you don’t love it, just return it for a refund of the product purchase price. Call now – helpful Jitterbug experts are ready to answer your questions.
Nona Knows Best
by MARY ANN MAGGIORE

This column, Nona Know Best, wisdom for grandparents, is a new feature of the Whistlestop Express. This space formerly was occupied each month by the words of Audrey Mettel Fixmer (GrandMom). Audrey has decided to retire from writing and spend more time savoring life and visiting with grandchildren.

Mary Ann Maggiore, a former Mayor of Fairfax and president of Five 4 Five, consults for families, teens and young adults. Reach her at maryannmaggiore@gmail.com.

Imagine you are a newborn. You’ve spent nine months in a serene environment where all your needs are taken care of. Suddenly you must do things like breathing, eating, peeing and pooping very differently. When things don’t go easily for you, you do the only thing you can do. You cry. Your parents try to make you comfortable. But you are having none of it. What you need is a calm, loving, firm, experience. What you need is a Nona—Italian for Grandma. In every culture around the world, grandparents have been helping to comfort, feed and raise the next generations. Our knowledge comes from experience, ancient lessons and love for our own children and the new children they bring into this world. Here are some ways you as a Nona or Nono can help your children.

Begin Before the Birth
Your first concern is the baby’s parents. It is best, before the baby is born, to ask them what they think they will need. Do they want you to come to their house before the due date to help set up? Do they want you in the labor room? Do they want you to stay over a few days afterward? Don’t be afraid to say what you would like to do, too. And don’t be offended if their plan is not yours. Adapt. Keep the relating loving and supportive. Remember you are there to serve. This is not about you; this is about them.

Be Consistently Positive. The new family may be feeling a little confused, a little wobbly. Tell them what they are doing right. Give gentle assurances whenever you can. “You are holding your baby so well, look how she falls asleep in your arms.” Don’t forget to reassure the baby, too. “You’re okay,” you whisper when the baby is fretful or having those first frightening poops.

Nourish Without Asking. You know their favorite foods, the best juices and soups. Go ahead, make them and offer them. If they are not interested now, don’t press. This is why refrigerators were invented.

Take up the Dirty Work. Babies bring mess. Create order. Straighten up the living room twice a day. When the young mother gets up to go to the bathroom, remake the bed. Do laundry. Take out trash. Quietly, please.

Give the Couple Space. Go out for a walk; take a drive for an hour or two. Don’t ask for directions or bother them for details. Just pick a time or leave a note while they are resting, and go. Let the household breathe. Give yourself some distance to see and feel all the power they are going through. And all the power you are going through, too.
South African Music Legend, Grammy Winning Songwriter

Hugh Masekela will appear in concert April 27 at Marin Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 10 Avenue of the Flags at Civic Center Drive in San Rafael.

The legendary South African jazz trumpeter, composer and songwriter, will perform at 8 pm. Masekela’s song Bring Him Back Home became the anthem for Nelson Mandela’s world tour following his release from prison. Masekela has performed with Paul Simon, Stevie Wonder and other celebrities.

Tickets range from $20 to $40. Order tickets through the Marin Center Box Office, 473-6800 or online at www.marincenter.org.

Celebrating Volunteers

National Volunteer Week, April 21-27, is a time to celebrate people doing extraordinary things through service. Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week focuses national attention on the impact and power of volunteerism and service as an integral aspect of our civic leadership. The week draws the support and endorsement of the President and Congress, governors, mayors and municipal leaders, as well as corporate and community groups across the country.

The theme — Celebrating People in Action — honors individuals who take action and solve significant problems in their communities. Since our nation’s founding, volunteers have been the source of action and change. Two hundred and thirty-five years later, their energy continues to move our country forward. Advances in technology and social networking make volunteering even simpler.

For volunteer opportunities at Whistlestop, call Millie Makarewicz, 456-9062 x 117.

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Whistlestop’s GOLF TOURNAMENT

Whistlestop Golf Tourney Set for May 17

The 7th annual Whistlestop Golf Tournament will tee off at noon on Friday, May 17, at the StoneTree Golf Club in Novato. The tournament will open with a shotgun start. It will close with a 19th hole cocktail party at the club. For more information call 415-456-9062 or go to www.whistlestop.org/events. The tournament honors Whistlestop bus drivers.
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