Everyday Mindfulness

By Laurence Suter-Gunn, Active Aging Center Program Manager

The frantic pace of the Bay Area is not for the faint of heart. If you’re like me, you want to be more grounded in the moment while meeting life’s daily demands, but find it difficult to stay centered. Maybe you’ve assumed it isn’t as vital to your health as exercising or nutrition – but it is. Andy McGuire, Whistlestop’s meditation instructor, notes that when we practice mindfulness, “we feel lighter, freer, and less burdened by our thoughts, feelings and emotions.” Achieving that centeredness, what McGuire calls “inner awareness,” is an antidote to mindless living, and essential in establishing a better balance of physical, mental, and emotional health.

Mindfulness is Whistlestop’s theme for this month and our Active Aging Center (AAC) offers classes and workshops to help bring more focus into your life. Of particular interest to members looking for a meaningful experience, Whistlestop offers the following: Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation, Soul Collage, Write Your Life Stories, and Senior Circle (see our offerings on pages 6-8). We encourage selfcare through massage therapy, social groups, brain fitness workshops, and watercolor classes. We also offer a variety of medical services, many of them free to members—programs like memory screenings, hearing tests, medication reviews, nutrition workshops, and fall prevention sessions.

The research is in! Being present in the moment is not only the most commonsense way to live but it turns out to be the healthiest. Mindful activities have a direct, positive impact on reducing anxiety, depression, and stress. Moreover, studies show that mindfulness is key to long-term weight loss. When the mind and body are aligned, you are mindful. Seek out activities that engage both, and you’ll find the balance you’re looking for.

Researcher Wells Whitney, with the Buck Institute for Research on Aging, stresses that we should be more conscious of our health-related goals. Working in partnership with Whistlestop to study the health status of older adults, Whitney emphasizes the importance of conscious health choices. He identifies stress reduction, personal goal setting, mental and social engagement, and spirituality as essential aspects of living a longer, healthier life. Whitney facilitates a free workshop at our AAC. If you’re interested in getting a clearer measure of your health, contact Whistlestop today.

Volunteering is another powerful exercise in mindfulness and a way to focus attention on the present. More than 200 drivers, teachers, greeters, and servers volunteer at Whistlestop. It’s a great way to benefit your community while improving your quality of life.

Some assume that mindfulness involves extreme self-discipline. In other words, mindfulness sounds like a lot of work! Actually, you might already be involved in mindful activities. If not, there are countless everyday activities you can jump into without any special training to help you remain mindful throughout your day: knitting, socializing, gardening, reading, or writing can all help you stay powerfully present.

It’s never too late to practice mindfulness. And you’re never too busy to practice it if you incorporate a more conscious mindset into your everyday life. At Whistlestop, we want to be a partner in your journey toward a more present and grounded life.
If you were to walk into a meeting of Whistlestop’s Senior Circle you would find a group of dedicated listeners. “It’s not a place where people give advice,” says Steve, one of the facilitators for the Circle. “And it’s not a discussion group. It is a place to listen, not a place to give advice.”

It’s a rare place where people can be listened to without judgment.

Work at the Senior Circle is based on the principles of Attitudinal Healing created by Marin’s Jerry Jampolsky and now taught internationally by Jerry and his life partner, Diane Cirincione. Their Center for Attitudinal Healing is located in Sausalito. Principles include: “The essence of our being is love; health is inner peace, and healing is letting go of fear.”

The Senior Circle is a highly collaborative process and all of the facilitators support each other as well. Others who rotate as facilitators are Catherine, Ann, Nick, Judy and Mimi.

Whistlestop’s Senior Circle follows the Attitudinal Healing peer support group model. When the facilitators get together, they ask, “Is this working?” Steve says they do see changes in the participants. “For one thing, people become much better listeners. There are not many situations where a person can speak without interruption as they do here. Senior Circle is a safe and confidential space in which to deal with issues of aging.”

Facilitators try to create a community where people can express themselves without advice or criticism; people can think out loud and find their own best answers for themselves, an essential principle of Attitudinal Healing.

Senior Circle meets in the Whistlestop Board Room from 10 to 11:30 every Wednesday morning. There is no fee. Many people show up – usually about 10 to 12. Facilitators emphasize that independent older adults are welcome. Participants range in age from 60s to mid-90s. About two-thirds are women.

Issues that come up include loss, illness, financial concerns, and isolation, which is often tied to the loss of a driver’s license. Each meeting starts with everyone sitting around the table holding hands to symbolize that they are all connected.

‘The essence of our being is love.’
Seymour Boorstein is an 86-year-old practicing psychiatrist/psychoanalyst, former world-class swimmer, husband/father/grandfather, bicyclist, active international traveler, and meditator. Writing the “what” of Seymour’s life would far overrun our allotted space for this article, so we asked Seymour several questions on inspiration: what inspires him; how he gets in touch with his inspiration, and how he knows he is acting on his inspiration. Here are the nuggets.

First, Seymour loves what he does, which is why he still practices psychiatry in his home office. He only works with clients he enjoys. “High school and medical school were the happiest days of my life,” says Seymour. “Pre-med was grim with 250 students competing for 40 places. I had no plan B, so I studied like crazy to get A’s. As a result, I got into med school one year earlier.” Seymour studied an additional 15 years to become a psychoanalyst. He did his residency at the Menninger Clinic and loved it. Today, his practice is 60 years old and counting.

Second, Seymour stays physically fit. He rises at 5am to participate in an exercise bootcamp. Most of the participants are in their 50s and younger. He loves being with them, doing his version of the tough workout without trying to compete with younger muscles, but happily serving as inspiration to others. Even after a recent neck injury, Seymour returned to exercise. If he dies in the process, he quips that he is “delighted to have bypassed the nursing home.”

Finally, he builds friendships with younger people. He loves working with the fresh ideas and energy that younger people bring. He actively builds these relationships by scheduling breakfasts with his younger friends and by remaining involved in his children’s and grandchildren’s lives.

Seymour lives with his wife of 60+ years, Sylvia Boorstein, cofounding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center and peripatetic meditation instructor. They are a delightful tour-de-force, and an inspiration on how to stay youthful and engaged on all cylinders in your 80s.

Living From a Place of Inspiration

By Serena D’Arcy-Fisher & Alan Gump

Claudia Tomaso, the happy Raffle Winner, right, with Kristin Stoerker, travel navigator and quiltmaker.
Orville Teising was born in Chicago, and worked for the A.C. Nielsen Market Research Company. When he was asked to open an office in Los Angeles, he jumped at the chance and spent the next three years there before moving to San Francisco. He and his wife Rochelle have been married for 38 years. Some of Orville’s passions include backpacking in the Sierras, theater and music performances. He and Rochelle sing in the Mayflower Chorus. The two of them love theater and usher at Berkeley Rep, Marin Theater Company and ACT. The couple loves to travel and do home exchanges. They went to Europe for a year, to Guatemala where they learned Spanish, and many other countries.

When Orville retired, he was looking for something to do that fed his soul. He met a Whistlestop paratransit driver who told him about the organization. He began volunteering in the Café and in the Information and Resource office. After Whistlestop acquired the contract for Meals on Wheels in Marin County, Orville began delivering meals to homebound older adults. He gets so much more than what he gives and has become great friends with some of the people he delivers meals to.

Several years ago, Orville became ill. He has been trying multiple treatments while continuing to volunteer for Meals on Wheels and in the Jackson Café for the monthly community breakfast. Orville is one of the first people our marketing department goes to during a campaign to raise money for Whistlestop programs. His authenticity comes through when he tells the Whistlestop story. Delivering Meals on Wheels is at the top of his list of things he loves to do. Orville says he feels especially alive when he sings, travels and delivers meals.

Erika Vaughn, Meals on Wheels Manager says, “Orville has become more than a volunteer to me; he is a friend. Orville has inspired me over the years, coming in to deliver meals with a great attitude and a smile on his face, all while battling cancer. When I was diagnosed with cancer myself, Orville told me to stay positive and kick that cancer in the butt. On rough days, I think of my friend and I can hear him saying, “You’re going to be okay.” I just love Orville and I am honored to work with him!”

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Whistlestop, contact Laurie at 415-456-9067 or volunteer@whistlestop.org.
Keep Learning and Have Fun at Whistlestop

The following is a sampling of the events, workshops and classes at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center. For a full list of classes, please see page 8. Visit us at whistlestop.org. For more information or to register, call 415-456-9062, x 100 or 101. Many of our classes are free or offered at a reduced rate, but donations are always welcome. Annual Membership is $20. Please note the Active Aging Center will be closed for Independence Day on Wednesday, July 4.

Jackson Cafe regular Rich Gosse and his wife Debra.

SPECIAL EVENTS WORKSHOPS

Free Manicures
Tues; 10am-1pm; Registration required
We are thrilled to announce that Christy, our very own manicurist, is back to offer complimentary manicures to you. Call our front desk on Tuesday morning to schedule an appointment. Manicures are free, but donations are appreciated.

The Crystal and Dan Duo
Thurs, July 5; 11am-Noon; Lounge; No fee; Drop-in
Come enjoy the Crystal and Dan Duo in the Lounge before lunch. Feel free to sing along – they take requests!

Patrician Luncheon & Sing-Along
Thurs, July 5; 11:30am-2pm, Lunch served; Noon-1pm, Entertainment generously provided by Bread & Roses Presents
It may be the day after Independence Day, but our patriotic spirit is still going strong! Sing along as Bread & Roses Presents™ pianist Alan Thomas and singer/song leader Jeanne Skybrook perform during lunch in the Jackson Café.

Getting Started with Cannabis
Wed, July 11; 10am-11am; No fee; Registration required
Carrie Tice, Octavia Wellness CEO, will present Getting Started with Cannabis, a guide to the therapeutic benefits and chemistry of cannabis, with a Q&A to follow. Learn about medical marijuana products that do not produce a high, but instead promote healing.

International Friendship Day Project
Week of July 23-27; 10am-2pm; No fee; Drop-in
Friendship is a wonderful thing! Think about what friendship means to you and get ready to express that joy through art – create a unique square that celebrates your friends. Completed squares will be joined together to create artwork for the Lounge. See this project officially unveiled on the International Day of Friendship, Tues, July 31.

Virtual Vacation
Tues, July 24; 11am-Noon; No fee; Registration required
Join us for a virtual vacation hosted by the Marin Photography Club. Four photographers from the club will present their photos of beautiful and exotic locations – relax and enjoy the virtual scenery.

Financial Planning Issues and Your Retirement
Wed, July 25; 10-11am; No fee; Registration required
Michael Zaidlin shares valuable insights and advice about financial planning issues connected with your retirement and the years leading up to it. Be proactive during this critical time and make informed, unemotional investments and financial decisions to ensure a secure retirement. Sponsored by Valley Memorial Park Cemetery and Funeral Home in Novato.

FEATURED CLASSES & SOCIAL GROUPS

Tai Chi
Mon; 11am-Noon; $8/10; Drop-in
Instructor David Mac Lam teaches classic Yang Style Taiji, Qi Gong, and Taoist Style Meditation. The mind-body work of Tai Chi fosters peace of mind, pain management and increases immune function. David’s mission is to train the body, refine the spirit, and foster peace in your life.

Meditation
Thurs; 3:30-4:30pm; $4/6; Registration required
Meditation lowers stress levels, reduces anxiety, lessens depression, enhances cognitive function, and helps restore sleep. One session with instructor Andy McGuire offers practitioners immediate results. Andy has expertly guided large and small groups through the practice of Vipassana, or Insight Meditation. Open to all; no prior experience necessary.

Senior Circle in partnership with the Center for Attitudinal Healing
Wed; 10-11:30am; No fee; Drop-in
Join Sophia Osotio, Whistlestop’s Nutrition Program Coordinator, and learn how to improve your health by modifying your diet. Discussion topics: pre-diabetes, hypertension, and weight loss. Snacks and recipes provided.

Summer ESL Classes
Mon & Wed; 2-3:30pm; June 4 - July 18; $25/35; Registration required
As you age, challenges come in many forms, from depression and poor health to loss of independence and decreased activity. Senior Circle is a group for independent adults (55+). Trained facilitators use Principles and Guidelines of Attitudinal Healing to facilitate each meeting, guiding the group toward personal empowerment while dealing with the challenges of aging in a safe and supportive environment. This is not a discussion group, but a group where participants share while the group listens without receiving advice, criticism, or interruption.

Nutrition Bites Workshop
Thurs, July 12; 3-4pm; No fee; Registration required
Join Sophia Osotio, Whistlestop’s Nutrition Program Coordinator, and learn how to improve your health by modifying your diet. Discussion topics: pre-diabetes, hypertension, and weight loss. Snacks and recipes provided.

Your Retirement
Thurs, July 25; 11:30am-12:15pm; $40/45; Registration required
Sandy Bailey has played at Carnegie Hall and all over Marin. We are so lucky to have him teaching Beginning Ukulele at Whistlestop. Advanced Class offered from 12:30-1:30pm.

Meditation
Thurs, July 5; 11:30am-12:15pm; $40/45; Registration required
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**Community Breakfast in the Jackson Café**
First Fri (July 6); 9-10am; $3/$6; Drop-in
Drop in for the best deal in town. Join us in Whistlestop’s Jackson Café for a tasty, hot buffet breakfast, including a beverage, fruit, and juice of your choice.

**Ping Pong**
Fri; 2-4pm; $2/4; Drop-in
Join Vivian and her lively group for a fun game of Ping Pong. All skill levels welcome.

**HIGHLIGHTED SUPPORT SERVICES**

**ACASA**
The HOPE Program, Senior Peer Counseling and ACASA is a group of volunteer Spanish speaking senior peer counselors (services also available in English). Trained counselors have supportive counseling skills and provide weekly home visits to their clients, offering free and confidential emotional support. ACASA is currently looking for counselors. For questions or to sign up for a friendly visit, contact Laurie Hunt, 415-473-6802.

**CalFresh (Supplemental Food Program) Consultation**
Fri, July 6 & 20; 10am-Noon; No fee
CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) provides qualified applicants with monthly electronic benefits that can be used to buy food at many markets. Sit down for a one-on-one consultation to see if you qualify for this beneficial program. To register, bring an ID, proof of income and unearned income, bank statements, and proof of residency, and a CalFresh specialist will determine your eligibility.

**Stay Cool at the Active Aging Center**
Whistlestop offers a chance for the public to escape the heat as a designated local “Cooling Center” this summer. Public, community and government buildings all across Marin County offer air conditioning, water, and restrooms for older adults and people with disabilities during business hours. Stay cool and safe this summer!

**Technology July - August 2018**
Pre-registration and payment required.
415-456-9062

**iPad/iPhone Basics 1**
Tues, July 10 & 17, 10am-Noon (2 classes)
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people
In this two-week course, you’ll learn how to make calls, send emails, send texts, download music and add applications. Each session provides one-on-one help and comes with instructional handouts. (Bring your charged-up Apple device to class.)

**Senior Connect**
Tues, August 14 & 21, 10am-Noon (2 classes)
Fee: $10 Maximum 10 people
Priority will be given to first-time students. (No device necessary!) What is the Internet and where do I begin? This workshop is for seniors who want to learn about using iPads and tablets and what they can do on the Internet. We have iPads and tablets for you to try while we teach you some basics about how to use the Internet. You can try a device and learn how to use the Internet safely and protect your privacy. You will be with other beginners.

**ONGOING**
**Open Lab | No Fee**
Every Mon and Wed, 10am-Noon
Use our Apple and PC computers to access the Internet. Volunteers are available for problems with your laptops, tablets and software applications. Apple product assistance on Wednesdays 11am-Noon.

**Whistlestop would like to extend our gratitude to Marin Subaru for honoring Whistlestop as its Hometown Charity for the “Share the Love Campaign!” with a big check for $17,000!**

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"If your doctor tells you,
‘There’s nothing anyone can do’ for your
NEUROPATHY…"

GET A NEW DOCTOR.

Look at the word… “NEUROPATHY.” It means “sick nerve.” M.D.’s, even neurologists, have difficulty with this simple concept. All they have for your “sick nerves,” causing you all this pain, worry and aggravation, is drugs like gabapentin or Neurontin, to deaden your symptoms. Side effects?

SCIENTIFIC MASTERY

I am expert in nerves, in your nervous system. Unlike the other guys, I actually get to the source, the CAUSE of why your nerves are sick. I can actually do something for you.

How? The most sensitive part of your peripheral nerves is at the spinal nerve root. Yes, as the name implies, that’s right where your spinal nerve exits the spinal cord. If there’s misalignment or improper movement of the vertebrae there, whether you feel pain in your back or not, this will interfere with the normal function of that nerve. You will have a “sick nerve.”

SO, WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU? With gentle, specific chiropractic adjustments. I correct interference to your nerves, allowing them to heal, to function better. Your M.D. cannot do this. Certainly, the drugs you’re given cannot do this.

AND?

I’ll bet that neuropathy isn’t your only complaint. People like you have come to me with difficulty walking, insomnia, vertigo, urinary problems, constipation, sciatica, arthritis, bad hips, knees, shoulders, hands. All of these parts are controlled by your brain and nervous system, so, in a sense, everything is neurological.

Your own body (even if you’re in your 80’s or 90’s) still has the capacity to heal. Look, I don’t heal or cure any of the diseases or conditions mentioned here. I correct these dangerous interferences, allowing your own body to heal itself, naturally.

My name is Dr. Harte (D.C.) I’ve been serving Marin and the Greater Bay Area since 1981. I quit med school to become a chiropractor, to help you!


Here’s the AMAZING OFFER! Call me by Tuesday, July 10th, and you’ll get my complete examination, three kinds of neurological scans, X-rays, regularly $670, for only $170. You’ll find no doctor of any kind who will work harder for you than I will! You should know that I’ve taken care of people from newborns to folks in their 90’s.

This is the HARTE OF CHIROPRACTIC. Our office is warm and friendly. We’re located in Corte Madera, right next to the Cinema movie theatre, same street as the DMV. 21 Tamal Vista, Suite 170. Call me at (415)460-6527. “I will help you.” –Dr. Don Harte (D.C.).

PS: Questions? Call me, 415/460-6527.

PPS: The first three people to call and schedule will get an additional $100 off of their initial care plan. (Ask me for details.)
Founded in 1975, LITA is a nonprofit organization that strives to improve the quality of life for socially isolated elderly residents of Marin County’s long-term care facilities by providing volunteer visitors for regular visits. Tanya Mendoza is the Volunteer Director. Volunteers devote 30 minutes or more per week and make a commitment of one year or longer.

LITA works with skilled nursing facilities, assisted living communities, and residential care facilities around Marin to identify elderly residents who are socially isolated. LITA serves this vulnerable population with five programs:

1. One-to-One Friends matches residents with volunteers for weekly visits.
2. LITA Families provides two or more members of a family with residents.
3. The Pet Connection – when people move into a long-term care facility, they often leave a beloved pet behind. This is a devastating separation from their companion. With The Pet Connection, volunteers bring their pets as part of their weekly visits. Pet therapy visits help pet lovers make connections with people who have not been responsive to other types of interactions. LITA accepts well-behaved pets with basic obedience and commands mastered.
4. Bridging Generations involves elementary school classes that visit regularly throughout the school year. Students establish friendships with residents through socializing, writing life histories, doing crafts, or other specific teacher-guided activities. Currently, eight classes from around Marin visit residents at eight facilities throughout the county.
5. Holiday Gifts for the Elderly – each December, LITA collects, wraps and delivers new gifts to elderly residents of long-term care facilities who might otherwise not receive a holiday gift. LITA promotes friendships that lessen isolation and loneliness. LITA also conducts outreach to increase public awareness of the needs of elderly residents of long-term care facilities.

There is no fee for services. For more information, visit litamarin.org or call 415-472-5482; 4340 Redwood Highway, Suite 101, San Rafael, 94903.
Being a Whistlestop Driver is Inspiring

By Val Bowman

For nearly 60 years, Whistlestop has been providing rides to older adults and people with disabilities. With a fleet of 94 buses, Whistlestop provides more than 900 rides per day. The hardworking, dedicated staff is committed to providing the best service possible. They act as a lifeline and help clients maintain their independence by transporting them to medical appointments, stores, friends, family and more, keeping them connected with anywhere they need to go.

In a series of Whistlestop videos about the program, drivers shared what inspires them about their jobs. Driver Ephraim Arrazo says, “For me, it’s like a mission, a mission for these people. My conviction is that we must help people who depend on others.”

Brian McCurdy says of the people he picks up, “They remind me of my parents. They passed a number of years ago but that’s what got me into this job. They can count on us to be there to pick them up and get them to where they need to go.”

One of Brian’s regulars, Jimmie, says, “I think it’s the greatest thing that’s ever happened to me. I feel lucky to have found Whistlestop. It makes me feel more independent and makes me feel good about myself.”

Steve Accomazo is retired and he says from the first day he applied to be a Whistlestop driver, “I knew this was the place. I couldn’t ask for a greater job. It comes from the heart working with these people.”

Althea Boxley, Contract Services Manager, says

the requirements for being a Whistlestop driver are a good heart, a good head, good aptitude for patience and a good sense of humor.

Victor Moore loves his job and is inspired by the people he delivers to where they need to go. “These people,” he says, “they get up and go even though they can’t walk ... they still show that courage. They show me that I can do whatever if I put my mind to it.”

Driver Unika Wilson, Road Supervisor, says, “When I wake up every morning, I’m happy because I know I’m going to change someone’s life. I’m going to make a difference in someone’s life.”

To view the video, please visit whistlestop.org/about/videos
How Whistlestop Enriched A Life

By Renee Giacomini Brewer, Chief Deputy County Counsel Marin County

My grandmother, Dorothy Brennan Wallace, was born in 1906 and died at 89. Every year she would go to San Francisco for the remembrance of the 1906 earthquake. As a survivor, when she was 8 months old, she and her family had to live temporarily in Golden Gate Park.

At Whistlestop, she made items to sell at the gift shop and also worked there. She volunteered until she was 84. She talked about the Whistlestop program a lot, as well as the wonderful people she met and worked with. She was very proud of the donations she made. Our family has many of her ornaments, potholders, and dolls. She regularly used Whistlestop Wheels to go to doctor’s appointments; she never drove a car her entire life. In other words, Whistlestop really gave her a chance to remain independent for most of her life.

Grandma was a remarkable person and grandmother – she really impacted my life. She was a graduate of Lowell High School in San Francisco, where she pushed boundaries by participating on Lowell’s track team – an unexpected activity for a young woman at the time. She was truly an extraordinary, independent woman.
For many, retirement and the years leading up to it, are a time when it is critical to make informed, unemotional investment and financial decisions so that we give ourselves the best chance of having a secure retirement, particularly since life expectancies may increase dramatically.

Please join us at Whistlestop on Wednesday, July 25 from 10-11am for an informative presentation on “Financial Planning Issues and Your Retirement” by Michael Zaidlin. Michael is the founder of Madrone Investment Advisory, LLC, a financial planning and investment management firm based in San Rafael.

Michael will discuss:

• How much can I withdraw from my retirement and other investment accounts each year, and which accounts should I be prioritizing withdrawals from?
• What factors determine whether I should be doing a Roth conversion in any particular year, and why do I want to consider doing one?
• What factors should I consider in helping me decide when to file for Social Security benefits, and why is this decision such a critical one?
• How can I ensure that I fully understand my investment fees and their potential impact on my returns?
• How do I protect myself from the role my emotions and any cognitive decline may play in any investment or financial decision I am contemplating, especially as I age?
• Whether I am considering traditional investments such as stocks and bonds, or financial products such as annuities or reverse mortgages, what steps can I take to develop a “healthy skepticism” and ensure I have the best chance of making a good financial decision?

This presentation is sponsored by Valley Memorial Park Cemetery and Funeral Home in Novato. Please register at 415-456-9062; you will receive an estate planning binder at the presentation.

Need help with your estate documents? Older adults can schedule free half hour appointments at Whistlestop with Legal Aid of Marin. Call Whistlestop’s Information and Referral office: 415-456-9062. To learn more about making charitable gifts to Whistlestop, please contact Serena D’Arcy-Fisher, CFRE at sfisher@whistlestop.org, or 415-459-6700, ext. 138.