



Mar Vista Community Council



AGING IN PLACE

Mar Vista Community Council

Thursday, December 17th, 2015

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Windward School Room #800

11350 Palms Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90066

[See campus map for room location and parking here](#)

Co-Chairs – Sherri Akers, Tatjana Luethi, Birgitta Kastenbaum

Co-Founders – Sherri Akers, Tatjana Luethi

Minutes

Attendees – Tatjana Luethi, Sherri Akers, Sheila Moore, Virve Leps, Lisa de Blois, Marilyn Zweifach, Charles Guinn, Robin Dennis, Mike/Michelle Dennis, Leanne Lindsey, Mohammed Hassan, Susan Black-Feinstein, Allison Beale, Rachel Caraviello, Mark Ambrose

- **Called to order** -6.07pm
 - **Brief Introductions**
 - **Public comments**

Sherri: On the SW corner of Sawtelle and Palms there is no handicapped curb cut for people with wheelchairs. We've alerted Mike Boni's office and they hope to get it corrected. See video here of how the handicapped are forced to travel into oncoming traffic - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icXETS6PyYk&feature=youtu.be>
 - Mike/Michelle: Next year is banner selection year. She is on the Board of League of Women Voters and would be happy to discuss issues oriented events with any committee members who are interested.

 - **November minutes unanimously approved**
 - **New business –**
1. **Guest speaker** - Sheila Moore, Sr. Director of Comprehensive Older Adult Services Jewish Family Services – *"How to make the most of your trip back home"*

So what to look for to determine if your parents or grandparents need additional help? Use the Holidays / you visiting parents / grandparents as an opportunity to explore if and where they might need help. What might be some of the concerns they / you have, fear, anticipated changes? Be an observer, remain open (don't interpret it, don't get scarred). Make notes of changes.

 - **Look at the physical environment** (cleanliness/clutter? Burned pots/pans? Bills piling up? Refrigerator / Pantry? Check freezer: what kind of food is in it?)
 - **Personal Care** (Hygiene – Clothes/Personal Care. Are they wearing the same clothes over and over again? Are the clothes stained / dirty / are they still able to do laundry? Weight Loss / gain. Changes in activity – exercise routine / outings. Are they socializing? Did their interests change? Pain that limits

ability to care for themselves?

- Use your whole self when you make an assessment (the same way you would explore and observe an assisted living home or skilled nursing home to assess if this is the right place for your loved one: How are the residents? Are they dressed? Are they up and doing activities? Are they in their beds? Is it quiet? Does it smell good, or not so good, etc., use your whole senses)
- **Daily Routine:** did the sleep / eating pattern change? Are they still socializing or isolating themselves, are they not talking about friends anymore. Are they becoming withdrawn and isolated? Whom do they have contact with? The usual people or who are these “new” people (usual and unusual suspects, trustworthy, exploiting senior vulnerability). How are they managing their medication? Are there lot’s of pills, marked and organized, or messy/not taking them?
- **Outlook / Mood** – has it changed from how they used to be: Negative, more quiet, more withdrawn, depression, anxiety, fears / concern for safety. What are they saying and how are they saying it. Excuses / explaining things away – “what day is it / who is the president”, response: “hm, I’m retired, I don’t need to worry about those things anymore” (diffusing the answer).
- **Memory:** Not as good as it used to be, is it a normal age change, or something concerning. Are there driving changes/ patterns / dings on the car? Are there lapses in judgment? Any obvious confusion? Are there changes in language – word finding? Are they having more trouble initiating – initiating conversations or contributing?

When will I know.....?...that it’s time to hire a caregiver, to hire a driver, to move to another place?

When you ask those questions you already know the answer. When these questions are formulating in your mind trust yourself and your intuitive hunches. There is a reason why you are asking yourself those questions. Rely on your observation, intuition, reports from other family / friends or neighbors (ask them). Communication: what are your parents / grandparents say to you

What’s the next step when you are in a position like that with your loved one?

Prioritize the need:

- Safety comes first (stove / oven, letting people into the house, fall risk, medication management, sodium intake (pre-cooked / frozen foods).
- Lots of things may need to be changed
- Pick the most critical
- Conserve your energy (pick your battles)
- Build a strategy and a plan
- Begin having discussions

How to start these difficult discussions?

- First identify who you will be talking with
- Parent / Grandparent, or other family members first? A Support Network for your parents / grandparents. What happens when I’m not here / can not be here?
- Don’t try too much too soon (example: “how are things going with driving”?)
- Start simple (hold your reactions, and think about how to generatively respond)
- Honor where they are in their process (depending on the situation, safety might be more important)
- You might see them making crummy decisions, honor some of it if safety is not a concern, but bring up your concern, let them know you care about them > start a discussion (“I noticed that you”)

- Find an ally (neighbor, cousin down the street) to bring in for these discussions, good cop/bad cop, be creative versus being an instant change maker / bulldozer. Example: instead of saying “you can’t drive anymore” be creative and remove the battery, disconnect the cable – pick your battles.
- The path of least resistance (defensive communication), be sensitive and mindful
- Be sensitive and mindful to the environment and others who are already helping
- Seek help from experts in the community (sometimes they will listen more to experts than you)
- Lead with positive statements
- Use yourself as an example
- “I” statements are powerful versus “you”
- Follow with concern
- Try to engage them in problem solving
- Goal is to keep the communication open, and not create defensiveness, then it’s hard to move forward
- Defensiveness will shut down the system
- Change is a team effort
- Safety priority will be your guide how much to push (urgency)
- Your perceptions are powerful (when you come out of town, be sensitive, you are coming from a place of power)

The steps you take to make positive changes many not be received positively – and that doesn’t mean they are not positive. When you push, parents push back. Hard to know if you are on track. Many options are not optimal. You may need to accept that your loved will need to go through a process in order to deal with the change (refusal, rebellion, etc., coping process).

What to do in this short time home with parents / grandparent before you have to fly back home?

Resources / Connections:

- **Informal:**
 - Family Plan
 - Neighbors
 - Friends from Church / Synagogue
- **Formal:**
 - Local Service Agencies (Centers, Social workers, etc.)
 - Life Line
 - Private Geriatric Care Managers
 - Make Connections with Health Care Providers
 - Caregiver / Attendant Agencies
 - POLST / DPA-HC
 - Monitoring
 - First Responders
- Caring for yourself as a caregiver
- This is a personal journey (practical / emotional)
 - Understand what you found
- Have compassion for yourself and your parents / grandparents
- Accept what may remain different (versus bulldozing)
- Have realistic expectations
- Plan for the future
- Emotional reactions are normal (anger, resentment, sadness, physical reactions, etc)

When you come home find resources and support for yourself and how to handle the situation you discovered with your parents / grandparents.

Sheila provided handouts with screen shots of slides.

A wide ranging discussion followed about personal experiences. For those whose parents and grandparents have passed, it's helpful to learn how to assess elderly friends and even knowing for ourselves what to look for to determine if additional help is needed. Discussion about using volunteer opportunities and continue contact with older friends and families to get a clearer perception of what our alternatives might be as we age and how we really feel about them.

- **Old Business reviewed -**
 - a. Update on Board response to motion supporting Councilmember Mike Bonin to create a new ordinance addressing short term rentals ([Council File 14-1635-S2](#)) – motion passed by MVCC BOD and is now part of the council file. No update.
 - b. Update on \$1,500 Neighborhood Purposes Grant for Westchester Playa Village – Lisa de Blois - outreach events will be held at the Mar Vista Library in January - it's going to be a presentation and networking: events. January 27th, 6.30 – 8pm will be changed as it conflicts with the Homeless Count. January 30th, from 11 – 1 is confirmed. Discussion about need for more volunteers for Homeless Count - http://www.theycountwillyou.org/mar_vista_count
 - c. **Future guest presentations**
 - a. **January** – Allison Bealle - on how to hire a caregiver, adult day care program and support organization
 - b. **February** - Lilly Ortiz of LA Metro will present on their [On the Move Riders Club](#).
 - c. **March** – Monica Moore of [UCLA Easton Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research](#)
 - d. **April** – [Affordable Living for the Aging](#) roommates in Mar Vista to lead a discussion group, Q&A about their program (TBC)
 - e. **Future speakers** – Mar Vista Time Bank is a possible speaker - <http://ourtimebank.timebanks.org/>
- **Meeting adjourned at 7:40**

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