



OASIS

Adult Day Program

Quarterly Newsletter

New Year, New Goals For OASIS

By Meghan Velasquez

The last year has been full of excitement and growth for OASIS Adult Day Program. July 2022, we re-opened the day program after closing for almost two years due to the pandemic. We started out with a total of 11 participants and in the beginning, growth was slow but impactful for those who knew and saw what we were capable of.

Finally, in the early months of 2023, we saw the reflection of our hard work and dedication show through in our enrollment numbers and growth. We are currently at capacity and range between 60-70 enrolled participants and have a waiting list that ranges between 5-15 depending on the month.

Everyday my staff and I have the joy of watching our activity room fill up with those who enrolled, seeing their smiles and hearing their laughter.

The idea of expanding the program was always in mind, even before the program closed, but timing would be key. In the spring of this year we received a generous donation from Sante Health Foundation for a little over \$200,000, which help makes the dream of our expansion turn into a reality. We are gathering bids and continuing to fundraise so we are prepared to break ground when the timing is right.



WHO WE ARE

We are an innovative day program for individuals in early to mid stages of Alzheimer's disease and/or other related dementias.

STAFF

Program Manager:

Meghan Velasquez

Site Coordinator:

Nora Munoz

Program Assistants:

Pete Arguijo, Teresa Flores-Lopez, Maria Garcia, Dolores Perez

CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Manager:

Meghan Velasquez

Phone Number:

(559)224-9121

Email:

mvelasquez@valleycrc.org

A program of

valley
CAREGIVER
RESOURCE CENTER

THE aging network

FASHION SHOW

And Resource Fair

THE painted table
EVENT CENTER

5080 N. BLACKSTONE AVE.
FRESNO, CA 93710



02.08.24 **10 AM**
\$25 ENTRY

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Kim E. Armstrong, Ph.D.
President
Clovis Community College
State Center Community College District

The Aging Network Fashion Show and Resource Fair is an event that aims to support seniors in the local community and benefit the Valley Caregiver Resource Center's Oasis Adult Day Program. The proceeds from the event go towards funding the Oasis Adult Day Program, which provides respite for family caregivers and social engagement for seniors with dementia.



Benefiting the Oasis
Adult Day Program

SPONSORSHIP AND RESOURCE TABLE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE.
VISIT THEAGINGNETWORKCA.ORG TO BUY TICKETS & SPONSOR.

We are beyond excited at the opportunity to help more families navigating this difficult journey and being able to open our doors to more participants who are longing to be a part of not only a community, but a family. The Aging Network is hosting an upcoming Fashion Show event and proceeds will go to our expansion efforts. I will be the emcee and would love to see the tables filled with friends and families of our loved ones here at OASIS. If you would like to attend, or if you think your loved one would like to be in the fashion show itself, please contact me directly.

Your continual support, words of gratitude and love truly touches the hearts of our team here and is a consistent reminder of why we do what we do. Thank you!

Holidays Are Here...Again

By Lynne Rayner



At this time of year “Peace on Earth” is often seen or heard in greetings, but just as is true of the Earth, peace in the family is often a hard commodity to come by. Family and friends with all of their divergent (and sometimes divisive) views on life are troublesome enough, but with a member who has dementia, the stress levels can soar. The good thing is that many of the things you would ordinarily do to “keep the peace” are things that will also help when dealing with dementia, so let’s look at this from the standpoint of you as the host or hostess.

You probably already try to create a pleasant and calm environment in your home, but you can add one or two things to emphasize it. Play soothing music in the background, loud enough to be heard, but not so loud that it becomes a distraction that can interfere with conversation. Use a calming scent like citrus in candles or room fresheners. If the weather permits, open a window or two and let in some fresh air (Reisner, 2021). All of these will help visitors relax and reduce tension.

Other things can be done ahead of time to prepare. Psychologists say that during holidays or other periods of high stress, psychological symptoms can worsen (Beresin, 2021) so an important consideration then is the condition of your loved one. Has it changed, and if so, how? Is it enough of a change that you might want to alert family and friends who are not aware? If the answer is “yes,” then contact these people and as clearly as possible explain the changes. Give them a common goal by asking for their help in using some strategies you have found to be successful to defuse any difficult or awkward situations.

Again think about inclusiveness and plan activities that can include your loved one, activities like cards, playing board games, charades and other guessing games, doing crafts, and watching old Hollywood or family movies. Cooking together can be fun and also helpful. Organization is key here. To keep the peace in the kitchen, set up work stations with clear directions on what you would like done, and set out the utensils needed. Perhaps have in mind who you would like to do what. Be aware of the location of the work stations so that hot surfaces and electrical appliances are not a danger. Folding napkins, washing dishes, or setting the table are also kitchen-related and stations can be set up for them also.

Another important consideration for keeping everyone from getting short tempered is to pace yourself and the event so that you allow time for “delays” like guests arriving late or the turkey taking an hour longer to cook than you planned. Have healthy snacks available so that people don’t get cranky from hunger.

The words for the day are “Be positive” and “Be thankful” in all you do or say, but without actually saying “no political or religious topics.” The key is to turn a negative into a positive. For example, if conflicting views on the Israeli/Hamas war (or any other current event) should arise, you could say, “Yes, there are terrible losses on both sides. It’s another reason to be grateful that we live where we do. What kinds of volunteer opportunities do you see in which we could participate?” Both sides might see similar ways to help. Other similarities to consider are people’s interests, skills, and relationships so try to put them together. You can even seat people at the table by interest, for example, which can reduce the number of opportunities for confrontation or disagreement. Someone might eventually realize that all the stamp collectors are in one corner and all of the people who don’t believe the Post Office should even continue to exist are in another, but if it keeps the peace, does it really matter? Who has or has had the best relationship with your loved one with dementia? Seat that person close by.

What if you have had to change some of the old traditions for new ones because of your loved one’s condition and some of your guests (family, especially) are upset? Some suggestions from Dr. Peter Reisner of the Mayo Clinic include ideas like thinking only about this year. Concentrate on the people involved, not the expected date or place. Food, however, is important because it can bring back happy memories. Perhaps most important of all, he recommends involving the family at the outset. Have a family meeting to discuss the changes you feel are necessary so that you avoid “misunderstandings and hurt feelings” (2020). That way family members have a chance to make suggestions and be a part of the process.

There are no guarantees here and for many of you, it’s what you would do anyway, but perhaps these ideas will give you a way to do something different and be successful. My wish for you is that this holiday, whichever one you celebrate be the calmest and most joyful ever, with deep felt hope for the new year!

References

- Beresin, Eugene, M.D., M.A. (2021, December 1). *10 ways to cope with holiday stress*. *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inside-out-outside-in/202112/>
- Reisner, Peter, M.D. (2020, November 20). *Speaking of health: 5 tips for navigating changing holiday traditions*. <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown/health/speaking-of-health/5tips-for-navigating-changing-holiday-traditions>
- Reisner, Peter, M.D. (2021, December 3). *Speaking of health: 9 tips to fend off holiday stress*. <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown/health/speaking-of-health/fend-off-holiday-stress-with-these-tips>
- Shapiro, Jeremy, M.D. (2021, November 26). *The key to managing holiday stress: Replacing rigid expectations with acceptance prepares us for whatever happens*. *Psychology Today*. <https://psychologytoday.com/usblog/thinking-in-black-white-and-gray/202111/>

Upcoming Events

- **Winter Spectacular- Featuring Linda the Harpist**
Wednesday , December 21st
2:00pm-4:00pm
- **Jazzercise with Josie**
December 13th 11am-11:30am
December 27th 2pm-2:30pm
- **Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Group**
1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday of every month
10am-11:30am

Newsletter Staff

Lynne Rayner
Editor

Meghan Velasquez
Editor & Design

Staff Spotlight- Pete Arguijo

By Lynne Rayner



Pete Arguijo IV, a Program Assistant at OASIS Adult Day Care shares his favorite piece of advice: “Opportunities come to those who are ready to take them. Things in life happen for one reason or another, but those who are ready when the opportunity comes will be rewarded for their patience.” In looking at Pete’s life experiences so far, it is easy to see how they have come together to create this belief.

It all started at home with his parents, who have been very supportive of him, and three younger siblings, Marin (21), Bella (19), and Ava (15). Except for Marin who is currently in Germany, all live together with their parents, something that requires patience on everyone’s part because of different work and school schedules and activities. Then add to the mix Acorn, Aksel, Po, Luna, and Pumpkin (three Huskies and two cats!) and patience becomes an even more important skill to develop.

The next important experience for Pete was attending Clovis High School where he found two teachers in particular who influenced him. One was Mr. Murphy, his teacher in fifth grade, who took him and 19 other students on a 65 mile hike up Mt. Whitney. Mr. Murphy taught perseverance and said that if you are having a hard time to remember that “anything you do in life won’t be as hard as the hike” just completed. The second teacher was Mrs. Lozano, the band director, whose most important lesson was to be prepared for whatever you were asked to do and to do a good job, whether it was small or big. Pete said he “took these lessons to a broader level with everything I do in life.”

From Clovis High he went to Clovis Community College, then transferred to Fresno State where he completed his BA in Psychology, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2023. Volunteer work was a requirement as part of his Psych 178s class at Fresno State, and he was placed at OASIS to do it because “I wanted experience in the psychology field and I also wanted to learn more about dementia.” He found that he really enjoyed working there bringing smiles to the faces of the participants and working with the other staff members, which revealed itself in his energy and passion. It was at the end of his tenure that Meghan Velasquez asked him if he would like to join their team, and he said “I accepted the offer and am grateful for the opportunity every day.”

All of these activities require patience and perseverance and Pete remembers these qualities when he thinks about the future of OASIS. He believes that “with the amazing team we have, combined with our hard work” many more families can be served by OASIS. He believes that that will take time and patience but that it is possible and that OASIS could become “one of the biggest entities of its kind in the Central Valley, if not California.” He believes that he can help by creating a fun and safe environment for the participants.

And speaking of fun, Pete spends his hours outside of work doing a number of fun things like playing video games with his friends, participating in Fantasy sports leagues like basketball and football, watching animé/TV series, and interestingly, collecting nice shoes like Jordans! Recently he has also started attending concerts like Bad Bunny and going to baseball games in Los Angeles and San Francisco with family and friends, all of which adds another nice quality to his life – balance.

Another Year of Success-Celebration of Care Recap

By Meghan Velasquez

People don’t often realize that Valley Caregiver Resource Center is a freestanding non-profit. With that being said, fundraising is a vital component of our ability to not only keep our doors open but continue to serve the aging community in the way that we do. We hold two major fundraisers a year, one being our annual golf tournament in the spring and the other, our Celebration of Care in the fall.

But VCRC’s Celebration of Care is more than just a fundraiser. It is a way for us, as an organization, to stop and recognize all of the hard work and dedication that family caregivers pour into their everyday lives. This year our theme was “Under the Tuscan Sun” and it was held at the Clovis Veteran’s Hall. The building was beautifully transformed, that when you walked through the doors you felt like you took a step into the streets of Tuscany. There wasn’t a detail overlooked. This year’s guest speakers were Police Chief Paco Balderrama and Direct of California Department of Aging Susan Demarois. They both touched on the difficulties of the caregiving journey and the courage of the family and friends stepping up to care for those in need and hoped to encourage more community support to help make transitioning into this role less stressful.

We are excited to say that this year’s event met the necessary goals to help us continue our mission in serving the unsung heroes of the senior community. We are grateful for all of those who supported the fundraiser in a variety of ways and hope to continue to receive your support.

We hope to see you all in the spring on the green!

