

The Carmel Pine Cone

YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS, ARTS AND OPINION SINCE 1915



Senior Life

LIVING NOW IN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE ON EARTH – A SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE!

April 10, 2015

Carmel Foundation shows boomers how to become seniors

By LISA CRAWFORD WATSON

SIXTY-FIVE YEARS ago this month, The Carmel Foundation was established to help senior citizens remain engaged in life, maintain their independence, and enjoy a variety of activities and services in a stimulating environment of respect and camaraderie.

The eligible age range for membership is 55 years old to 105 years young; although if someone showed up with a driver's license that said 106, they probably wouldn't be turned down.

Gym memberships are up but AARP cards go straight to recycling

The actual membership represents a wide range of ages, with the exception of the lower end of the spectrum — the 55-to-65-year-olds — the baby boomers.

Members of that enormous postwar generation — whose strength in numbers has been studied and celebrated since they day they were born — apparently never imagined they'd get old.

Many of the baby boomers, upon reaching "senior status," are unwilling to call themselves seniors. Envelopes bearing AARP cards go straight to recycling, unopened. Gym memberships are up, dinner reservations are late. Many of them are still working, still athletic and still dating — and even still raising kids.

"We know a lot about this generation," says Carmel Foundation President Jill Sheffield, a Baby Boomer herself. "We know the leading edge of the generation turned 69 this year. We know they will work longer than any previous generation. We know their lives are full, they're technically

savvy, and they are actively engaged in the world. And we know, as we start to see more and more of them coming our way, we'll be ready for them."

Dr. Ken Hunter was planning to celebrate his 70th birthday before he stopped practicing medicine. But a couple of

years ago, right about the time his AARP card arrived in the mail, he experienced sudden vision loss and was forced to retire. Not only did he have to step away from his career but

See **BOOMERS** page 33A



Joanne Ablan (above) and Ken Hunter (right) are two of the baby boomers who have dug into activities at the Carmel Foundation and discovered a gold mine of self-fulfillment there.



APRIL 10, 2015

THE CARMEL PINE CONE

33A

SENIOR LIFE

FOUNDATION

From page 29A

also the kind of retirement he had envisioned for himself somewhere down the road. He sold his cars, gave up golf, and put away his passport. Yet, unwilling to sit out this next inning of his life, Hunter decided to become a professional volunteer. He turned his attention to, among other places, The Carmel Foundation.

"I'd heard so many good things about the Foundation, and understood they do so many things for seniors and retirees," says Hunter. "So I got myself a volunteer position in the library. It's a wonderful place to get into long conversations about world affairs, social movements, politics, and local and interna-

tional events."

The baby boomers, says Sheffield, are very different from their parents' generation. And their needs and interests reflect that.

"This generation eats healthier and is more active," she says. "We have to be somewhat nimble and ready for them. We have changed up our lunch menus to offer fresh salads and lighter fare, while still supporting our more senior members, who want the comfort food of pork chops or meatloaf and mashed potatoes. Simultaneously trying to serve a number of generations all under the umbrella of 'senior' is tricky."

Sheffield says the Foundation's activities include line dancing, Tai chi, low-impact personal fitness and yoga. They also do a lot with iPads, cell phones and other electronics in the tech center.

The challenge and the opportunity, as Sheffield sees it, is to create very diverse offerings that are attractive to people all along the wide spectrum of membership.

Many of the younger seniors, she says, have been taking advantage of art classes, lectures and the tour bus program to San Francisco.

Foundation member Joanne Ablan, now retired, has particularly enjoyed her San Francisco trips to Union Square, North Beach, and the de Young Museum, where she took in the "Bouquets to Art" and "Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery" exhibits. At the Foundation, she also took a French course and a Pilates class, and has taken to volunteering.

"I like to attend Wednesday programs," says Ablan, 64. "I pick and choose among lectures on all sorts of topics of interest to

me, including health and wellness, a senior-made art film, and a cooking demonstration. I like touching base with issues that are relevant to me. I feel it's easy in our go-go-go, youth-oriented culture for seniors to feel a disconnect. But once I got grounded, and I accepted I really am this age, no matter what my heart tells me, I realized this time in my life has a lot to offer. And the Carmel Foundation taps into that."

"What I really like about The Carmel Foundation is the enthusiasm present among the people who work, volunteer and visit there," Hunter says. "For people of all ages, 55 and above, you can't get this kind of enrichment — education, interaction, lunch, seminars, speakers, classes, clubs, activities — anywhere else. I just got my monthly newsletter, so I'm excited to see what's coming up next."

The main building of the Carmel Foundation — where most of the programs take place, including lunches, classes and workshops — is on Lincoln Street at the corner of Eighth Avenue.



PHOTO: KERRY BELSER

Does Change Overwhelm You?
Let's Talk About It Now Why Wait?

FREE PHONE CONSULT **INTRODUCTORY 3 SESSIONS FOR \$90



CROSSROADS COUNSELING

- Caregiver Stress
- Divorce • Depression
- Anxiety • Isolation
- Grief • Job Loss
- Retirement
- Stress Management

Call 831-975-2776

Miriam N. Mehta, MA LMFT MFC 51905
So Habla Español

801 Lighthouse Ave., Ste. 212, Monterey, CA 93940
www.counseling-monterey.com

MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED | **EXPIRES MAY 10, 2015