



From Sailor to Service – Meet Moe Pocha

Before joining Full Life Care as program manager of our Snohomish County Adult Day Health Center in Everett, Glenda “Moe” Pocha spent 14 years sailing on an ocean-going tugboat between Seattle and the Alaskan fisheries.

At sea 10 months a year on the tugboat Impala and sailing up to 12,000 miles towing and sometimes rescuing fishing barges, Moe said her seagoing adventures helped prepare her for a career in adult day health services in surprising ways.

Moe joined the ship’s five-person crew as “Cookie” (the cook) and despite spending much of the first year horribly seasick she “loved the freedom, openness and peacefulness of being on the ocean.”

With urging from her captain and mentor Wes Hanson, Moe gained her sea legs and earned her certification as an “Able Seaman.” Over the years she became a skillful pilot and navigator for the 155-foot, 296-ton Impala and dreamed of one day captaining her own ship. Unfortunately, a herniated disk required multiple back surgeries and Moe made the difficult decision to retire from sailing.



Able Seaman Moe Pocha on the tugboat Impala

Her departure coincided with a sharp decline in her mother’s health and Moe became a primary caregiver. Initially she felt that “losing my career and watching my mother slip away at the same time was the worst possible thing that could happen. Instead, I absolutely fell in love with caring for my mom. That opportunity was the last gift my mom ever gave me and the best thing that’s happened to me,” Moe said.

While studying human services at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Moe interned at Full Life’s Adult Day Health Center in Everett and immediately connected with the clients. She felt she had found her new calling.

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Grant Helps Grow Solstice Wellness Studio

Full Life's Solstice Wellness Studio Project is getting an investment from The Seattle Foundation's GiveTogether grant program to boost participation in the innovative day program aimed at improving the lives of persons living with mental health issues.

For many of the studio attendees, the experience is their primary, and sometimes only, opportunity to interact with peers.

The program is part of Full Life's Solstice Behavioral Health services and provides three studios, free and open to the community, aimed at improving the lives of persons living with mental health issues.

The wellness, art and writing studios promote social connection and empowerment through a mix of enrichment programs ranging from cooking, yoga to artistic expression. The studios provide an environment where attendees are not defined by an illness. For many of the studio attendees, the experience is their primary, and sometimes only, opportunity to interact with peers.

David (last name withheld by request) is such a participant. Wheelchair-bound with multiple chronic health issues, David takes a shuttle from his adult family home twice a week to participate in Solstice Studios.

"I still have a car but I can't drive anymore and this is the only place I get to go," said David, an avid knitter working on a Seahawks-themed scarf for his mother.

Nursing students from Seattle University College visit the wellness studio each week to provide a brief health workshop. Emily McIntyre and Emma Cyders recently gave a presentation on hydration. They led a discussion on recognizing the signs of dehydration and provided tips on how to stay hydrated.

Lauren Swiderski is a music therapy student who volunteers at the wellness studio every Thursday. She also volunteers at Full Life's memory care homes Gaffney House and Buchanan Place.

"I favor playing the ukulele over the guitar at the wellness studio because it is quieter and soothing and has a wide range," Lauren said.

Lauren's emphasis on a "wide range" sums up the breadth of the studios. We are pleased to expand these opportunities for participants to engage in self-expression while they enjoy the company of new friends.



David frequently knits during Wellness Studio

ElderFriends Share Holiday Joy

The winter holidays remind us how much we owe to volunteers who make our cause their own, become champions for our participants, or simply roll up their sleeves and say “Here are my talents, how can I put them to work for you?”

Cheryl Swartz got involved with Full Life six years ago on the recommendation of a coworker who volunteered to visit an ElderFriend. Curious about what we do, Cheryl’s first introduction to ElderFriends was our annual fundraiser, Beer for a Cause. She showed up with a beautifully packaged gift basket to donate to the raffle and discovered she had a passion for service. Soon, she and her daughter Katherine were visiting an elder on a regular basis. She also joined the ElderFriends fundraising committee and recruited her friends Cathy Ayers and Sandi Gollofon to join her in planning ElderFriends’ social events.

Cheryl grew up without grandparents or a large family network and said that participating in ElderFriends has given her and her daughter a feeling of family connection. Cathy agreed and said their goal is to make events feel home-like.

“Creating that feeling for them warms my heart from the excitement, smiles and hugs they share with us,” Cathy says.

Cheryl said her favorite part of organizing events is at the end when she hears elders getting excited for the next event. “When they come up eager to find out when the next event



Marsha answers questions from first graders at the Bertschi School.

or holiday party will be held it brings me pure joy,” Cheryl says.

Ginger Seybold, director of volunteer programs, says she gets glowing reviews for the parties that Cheryl and her crew organize.

“Cheryl, Cathy, Sandi and their crew of volunteers really create an atmosphere that fosters community,” says Ginger. “All the ElderFriends pairs look forward to the chance to gather together, make new friends and rekindle friendships. Everyone feels special and honored.”

The elders who attend these events don’t have family nearby to get together with for a barbeque or to celebrate the winter holidays, Ginger says. Long time ElderFriends

participant Marsha Paprowicz told her: “Your party *is* my Christmas.”

Marsha was diagnosed with MS in 1998 and has since seen her social world shrink as her mobility declined. The disease forced her to quit working and give up an active social life organizing bridge games in her neighborhood. Since her only relations live in Maine she depends on ElderFriends social events and her ElderFriend companion Robin Brooks to stay connected.

“I can’t imagine what my life would be like without ElderFriends,” Marsha says. “It’s really important for people like me whose world has become so small because of age and physical limitations.”

Marsha looks forward to the ElderFriends Christmas party each year. “At Christmas time the volunteers provide us with a wonderful celebration,” she says. “I cannot praise Ginger and her volunteers highly enough. They put together a fabulous spread and give gifts and it feels like we’re part of a big family.”

This year Marsha got a chance to volunteer herself; she visited first graders at the Bertschi School who have made placemats for Thanksgiving dinners delivered to ElderFriends for the past 20 years.

Marsha told the students she treasured the Thanksgiving placemats she received every year and always hung them on her refrigerator to show off.

“You could see their little chests puff up they were so proud and happy,” Marsha says.

THANKS Full Life Supporters

Thank you to the 630 people who attended our annual benefit breakfast this year and helped us raise over \$205,000. That goes a long way in ensuring that elders and people living with chronic and terminal illnesses receive the essential services they need to remain independent in our community.

Ann Hedreen spoke on the meaning of compassionate caregiving and touched the audience with passages from her memoir. Jennifer Kelly brought the morning to life with a moving performance of a song she wrote in honor of her father Kevin Kelly, a resident at Gaffney House.

We appreciate the clients and family members who were featured in our video – a special shout out to Sandra Johnson & Clarence Gaines Jr, Todd Hiley, and Jennifer and Kevin Kelly for sharing your story with us. The short video, *Full Life is Home, Full Life is Family*, can be viewed at www.youtube.com/fulllifecare.

Many thanks to the event chair Maneesha Lall and co-chair Julie Lemery and to all of the sponsors who helped make the breakfast a grand success!



Jesse Bond, Board of Directors President, shares a heartfelt story about caring for his grandparents and presents an overview of Full Life Care's programs.



Standing: Brittany Tinker and Maneesha Lall. Sitting: Claudia Myers, Lee Bradley, Tara Cristobal-Rivera, Emily Thorpe



Featured speaker, Ann Hedreen and her husband, Rustin Thompson produced the compelling video that debuted at the breakfast.

From Sailor to Service

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“Discovering adult day health gave me a chance to love my work twice in one lifetime, which is quite a gift,” Moe said.

Moe said managing multiple adult day health programs that serve a diverse group of people with special needs requires the same kind of interdependence, skillfulness, and attention to her surroundings that she honed during her years at sea.

In particular, she said the lessons she learned watching Captain Hanson operate the Impala have had a profound impact on her style of leadership.

“In fourteen years Wes never, ever raised his voice except twice when he feared a crew member might get injured,” Moe said. “I have always aspired to the same calm, quiet leadership he would display even in the face of raging storms.”



A Brief Daydream about Grandchildren I Never Met

By Nora Gibson, Executive Director

Back in the late 1970s, I was a social work student with an internship at Northwest Hospital. There I met an elderly Korean woman who had moved to Seattle to help care for her grandchildren until she suffered a massive stroke.

She was nearing the end of her stay at the inpatient rehabilitation unit where I worked and needed to be discharged. Her family wanted her to return home, but she still needed constant supervision. The son and daughter-in-law had absolutely no idea what to do to ensure his mother's health and safety during the day.

Shortly after the grandmother's stroke, the couple found a daycare program where their children flourished while they were at work. I was frustrated that the only option for the couple's elderly mother – who had an equivalent need for oversight and continuing growth as their young children – seemed to be a nursing home.

Finally, through much research, I was able to track down a day program that was set up for adults. Located in Ballard and funded to serve low-income people, it was designed to be a “nursing home without walls,” with ongoing nursing and rehabilitative services to support people living in the community. And I soon discovered more of these adult day programs were popping up throughout the country, the result of dedicated professionals and

community caregivers who were committed to stopping the wholesale institutionalization of older adults.

It all made so much sense.

For my second year internship, I asked to be placed at that Ballard adult day center. I continued to work with my former inpatient, the elderly Korean woman, and was amazed at her continued progress. None of our staff spoke Korean (and she did not speak English), but with the help of her children we placed Korean signs throughout the center to help her navigate the building and facilitate our communication.

She thrived, and all the other participants at the center were happy. Adult day was so unlike any other long-term care setting I had ever seen. After I graduated, I became the adult day center's social worker. The center collaborated with other programs and grew to become what is now Full Life Care. So I guess I never really left.

The elderly Korean woman eventually did leave. Her rehabilitation progressed so that she could resume taking care of her grandchildren.

I think about those grandchildren now, fully grown, and am pleased to think that adult day played a significant part in reuniting them with their grandmother. Perhaps they have their own children with whom they're able to share memories of their grandmother.

I'd call it just a daydream, but I suspect it's true.

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SAVE THE DATE

The Artist Within Exhibit

OPENING RECEPTION

January 7, 2016 | 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

City Hall's Lobby Gallery &
Anne Focke Gallery

600 4th Ave | Seattle, WA

Full Life Care is proud to co-sponsor The Art of Alzheimer's *The Artist Within*, a first-of-its-kind Seattle exhibit featuring art exclusively by people living with dementia. Surprising, delightful and inspiring, the exhibit will open hearts and minds to a different way of thinking about dementia, enabling us to see that—though they have changed—the artists are still here, living with dignity, creativity and joy.

Featuring 50 artworks by individuals ages 60 to 101, the exhibit will run January 7 to February 26 in Seattle City Hall and is free and open to the public.

Visit www.theartofalzheimers.net for details.

The Art of Alzheimer's presents **The Artist Within** January 7–February 28



50 fascinating pieces by people from age 60 to 101 living with dementia

Seattle City Hall Lobby Gallery & Ann Focke Gallery

Mon–Fri 7am–6pm 600 Fourth Ave., Downtown Seattle www.theartofalzheimers.net