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Winter 2016/2017

Librarians Stimulate Minds at Adult Day Health

“Which funny celebrity used to run around with a cigar hanging out of his mouth?” asks Cleo Brooks from the Seattle Public Library, where she serves as a librarian and ADA coordinator. Her strong voice fills the room.



Photo: Amy Chapman

Cleo preps participants for an Independence Day discussion and celebration.

“Groucho!” comes the immediate response from Stan, a participant in the health and wellness program at Full Life Care’s North Seattle Adult Day Health Center.

“You’re the man, Stan!” Cleo exclaims, as she passes out paper Groucho Marx masks which need finishing touches. About 20 participants work on the project. One woman uses large strokes to create bushier eyebrows, while a younger man draws a stuck-out tongue then colors it in bright red, creating a sort of Groucho-meets-the-Rolling-Stones effect.

Meanwhile, on the large, flat-screen TV at the front of the room, another librarian, Eric Grob, queues a short clip of Groucho Marx dancing. When it finishes,

Eric circulates the room, bringing a coffee table book of celebrities from Hollywood’s Golden Age to discuss with participants.

Before the hour-long class, Eric and Cleo explain their process. “We use multisensory presentations as much as possible,” Eric says. “We’ve learned to mix it up and offer a wide range of activities.” They recently brought in activities related to Shakespeare, and shared information about the *First Folio* touring exhibit that made a stop at the Seattle Public Library. He notes several of their presentations have focused

on decades – like the ‘40s or ‘50s – that resonate with the participants.

“The group actually guides our work here,” Eric continues. “They give us feedback and we take the themes and discussion in the direction of their interests.”

Cleo elaborates: “If the discussion dies down, we’ll help them start it up again. And we love the way they support each other and how they compliment each other on the projects we work on when we’re here.”

One of Cleo’s first projects with Full Life was over a decade ago, when she hosted a tour at the downtown

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Expanding Possibilities at Buchanan Place

According to Jonathan Hover, his mother, Jenny Hover, didn't have artistic inclinations when he was growing up.

He remembers her passion for social justice, though. Jenny was an activist in the 1960s, throwing herself into the feminist and anti-war movements. He says she had a dedication to taking care of others, including the friends of her children. "They were like unofficial foster kids," he says.

She spent a number of years working at a Social Security disability law office, and most recently worked as a social worker for the Downtown Emergency Service Center. That's when she started exhibiting symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

Jonathan lived with Jenny for several years during the early stages of her disease. Year-round, they would take weekly walks to shop at the University District Farmers Market.



Photo: Camilo Molina

In April 2015, Jenny moved into Buchanan Place, where she participated in The Frye Museum's outreach creative arts program, Bridges. Jenny discovered a new passion for painting, and her work appeared in this year's "The Artist Within" exhibition and the back cover of *Raven Chronicles*, an arts journal.

Jenny also enjoys listening to The Beatles and Woody Guthrie, featured on a playlist of music curated for her by Buchanan Place staff members as part of the Music and Memory project.

Jonathan and Jenny still take weekly walks to shop, now to the

Columbia City Farmer's Market located just a few blocks from Buchanan Place. About her new residence, Jonathan says, "I couldn't ask for a better place. And the staff is awesome."

Librarians Stimulate Minds at Adult Day Health

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library for Full Life's Heads Up Program participants, demonstrating how resources can be accessible for persons with an acquired brain injury.

Now, Eric and Cleo offer a monthly presentation to engage Full Life members with the library's resources. "It's a Library Without Walls concept," Cleo explains, "because libraries are so digital now, and can be accessed

from anywhere in the community. People can physically come to us, or access us online, or we can bring resources to them in the community, like here at Full Life."

Full Life's adult day health centers help participants improve their health and make connections in their communities. To find out more about enrolling at one of Full Life Care's adult day health centers, contact: 206.528.5315.



Photo: Amy Chapman

Cleo Brooks and Eric Grob

Misfits Need Comrades

By Maria Balajadia
ElderFriends Match Coordinator
(2015-2016) AmeriCorps member

Drawn by the idea of human contact, Joe Wilson joined ElderFriends to visit an elder and hear stories about the good old days. As a self-proclaimed “Misfit from Missouri,” he isn’t a big fan of the modern world. Luckily for him, he’s matched with ElderFriend Larry Grosshans who, according to Joe, knows all about the old ways. Larry hails from Filer, Idaho where he lived for 27 years. Though he’s now retired, during his 74 years, he worked at a cheese factory, as a bookkeeper, at a casino and somehow even managed to fit in dishwashing, janitorial work, farm work and some truck driving.

Both Joe and Larry moved to Washington to be closer to family but also sought out other companionship in their new town.

Through the ElderFriends program, Larry and Joe first met in early 2015, connecting over the fact that they’re both country people. They often meet weekly at Larry’s apartment in Issaquah. A typical visit for them includes sitting side by side, sometimes in cowboy boots and western shirts, and talking. Larry says, “Joe and I talk about all sorts of things. Experiences we have had, things we used to do.”



Joe Wilson and Larry Grosshans

In fact, one of Joe’s favorite memories is sitting next to Larry as he tells a fascinating story from his youth about a lost girl in his hometown.

When they’re not sharing stories about their lives, Larry and Joe talk about country music, news stories, football and their shared disdain for the modern world. Joe says, “We are misfits in this modern world. We just sorta don’t fit. And us misfits need comrades. I help Larry by being his comrade in this crazy old world.” And Larry helps Joe in the same way. “I need a comrade. I need a friend. I need someone that is as confused by

“I help Larry by being his comrade in this crazy old world.”

the modern world as I am. With Larry on my side I don’t feel so alone or alienated.” If it’s human contact that drew Joe to ElderFriends, then it’s this comradeship that’s kept him.

THANKFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2016

In April, Aston Manor hosted our annual Beer for a Cause event where we raised more than \$32,000 to support Full Life Care's programs. More than 500 supporters gathered to celebrate and learn more about our mission. Some of our participants, staff and volunteers were featured "Heroes" on our new trading cards. We raffled amazing prizes including dinner at Canlis, a beach getaway, and much more. Special thanks to our event emcee Brian Osborn, our hardworking event committee and volunteers, and our invaluable event chairs, Cheryl Swartz and Cathy Ayers. We couldn't have put on this amazing event without our sponsors, including Slalom, Georgetown Brewing Company, and everyone else who helped to underwrite this event.



In October, more than 520 guests gathered for our annual Benefit Breakfast at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel. Their donations, along with our generous sponsors, raised more than \$180,000 for our participants to stay as healthy and independent as possible. Special thanks to emcee Enrique Cerna and executive director Nora Gibson, who reminisced on her work with Wendy Lustbader, our featured speaker who had to cancel due to illness (she's better now!). Board members Jay Riffkin and Frances Holtman (event chair) gave powerful testimonials on their personal relationship to Full Life Care's mission and community. Mayor Ed Murray praised Full Life's partnership with the City of Seattle, which is recognized as an age-friendly city. Special thanks to our sponsors (back page) and all the volunteers who made this event a success.

View our new video, featured at the breakfast, at www.youtube.com/fulllifecare



Photos by: Barbie Hull Photography

From left to right: Gratitude for our MC, Enrique Cerna. Executive Director Nora Gibson joined Board of Directors members Frances Holtman, Jesse Bond, and Jay Riffkin. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray praised Full Life Care.

Nora's Corner: The Luckiest Guy in the World

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become an electrical engineer, and bought his first home. Earlier this year, he had more good fortune with the birth of his beautiful baby son, Jobira.

Tegenu describes his work: "Every day when I drive to work, I think about my past life in Ethiopia and I feel privileged to be here. I look at the freeways, the buildings,

the airplanes in the sky and I feel a moral obligation to take care of the people who made this great country, now that they are older and in need of care. It makes me feel good to be a part of Full Life Care and help make a difference in the lives of those that need us."

He thinks he's the luckiest guy in the world, but whenever I visit our memory care residents and see Tegenu in action, I'm quite sure that we are the lucky ones.



The Luckiest Guy in the World

By Nora Gibson, Executive Director

In the past few years, politicians, media and the public have paid much attention to the issue of immigration in the United States and around the world.

At Full Life Care, our staff includes hundreds of caregivers, many of whom are immigrants. Professional caregiving agencies are quite often the first employer of new immigrants from East African countries including Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia.

Recently, our organization held a management retreat. I was struck by the insightful comments from all of our managers but especially from one, Tegenu Negi, who is now the manager of Full Life's Memory Care Assisted Living. I have known Tegenu for many years and have admired him as he continues to develop his skills. He's made a major difference in our residents' quality of life, including that of my mother, through her final days.

Tegenu describes himself as "The Luckiest Guy in the World." His first lucky moment occurred nearly 15 years ago when, at age 18, he won the visa lottery that our country uses to randomly choose visa seekers from all over the world. He moved to Seattle, where his sponsors and local churches helped him overcome overwhelming homesickness. He left his family in Ethiopia and its communal culture for a "culture of one." In our country, most people see themselves primarily as an individual, and community ties are much less emphasized than in Ethiopia.

Upon arrival, he quickly enrolled at Edmonds Community College, where he studied ESL and



Jobira and Tegenu

math. Soon, his second lucky moment came when Steve Emmer, then manager of our Memory Care Assisted Living, hired Tegenu to work nights and weekends. This was a challenging time for Tegenu to balance his work and studies, as he continued to attend college full time to earn his Associate Degree in Pre-Nursing.

Determination and hard work are part of an immigrant's journey. Tegenu also found a mentor in Steve Emmer (and another manager, Jennifer Herrmann), who helped show him the ropes. Tegenu says Steve served as a personal model for him. "He did everything from change the lights, work in the garden, develop care plans, supervise staff and jump in to help bathe, feed or comfort a resident whenever needed."

Tegenu now performs those tasks Steve modelled. And he has married, helped his wife to

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800 Jefferson Street
Suite 620
Seattle, WA 98104

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Frances Holtman (event chair and Board member) with dozens of Slalom colleagues. They celebrated Full Life Care (and Frances' birthday) during the 2016 Benefit Breakfast.

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