



The Elves of ElderFriends

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Spring 2017

## When the Research Subject is You (And You Feel Like a Gerbil)

Last year, Marilyn Hoppe was in a research quandary.

She had recently wrapped up her career as an accomplished research scientist at the University of Washington School of Social Work, where her field of expertise included topics such as problem behaviors during adolescence.

Heading toward retirement, Marilyn was presented with an unexpected challenge. Her husband, Chuck Koressel, was experiencing difficulty in his own career as a remodel and finish carpenter. He stopped working when he needed knee replacement surgery, but before he quit, something else troubled him. He was having difficulty working with numbers, a critical skill of his craft. He soon received a dementia diagnosis.

Chuck's condition seemed to plateau for a few years. But three years ago, his symptoms increased and Marilyn struggled to keep up.

"We have a 29-year-old daughter and 27-year-old son," Marilyn says, "but with the kids grown and out the



Chuck Koressel and Marilyn Hoppe

door, I was the sole caregiver, getting depressed, and I felt like a gerbil on a treadmill. And he's only 72 and doesn't have diabetes, heart or other problems ... he didn't need hour-to-hour care and he certainly didn't need to be institutionalized." What was the answer to their care needs?

"I was a researcher," Marilyn notes, "but it seemed so hard to do this research for myself."

Fortunately, their family physician at Polyclinic referred her and Chuck to the Senior Care Clinic at Harborview, where they recommended Chuck try an adult day program a couple days a week.

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# Caregiver Training Conference

*Giving Care, Taking Care* provides current, practical skills and resources for community caregivers to use in their daily caregiving responsibilities. The daylong conference will be held Monday, June 5, 2017 at the Tukwila Community Center.

**EVERY YEAR, THE CONFERENCE IS ATTENDED BY 400 CAREGIVERS, INCLUDING:**

- Family caregivers (spouses, adult children, parents of adults with disabilities)
- Home care workers and adult day services staff
- Adult family home or assisted living staff
- Social service and mental health professionals who work with family caregivers

The event is hosted by Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, Full Life Care and Pierce County Community Connections/Aging and Disability Resources along with the support of numerous community organizations.

The early registration fee (by May 15) for individual caregivers is \$30, and scholarships are available for unpaid family caregivers. The early registration fee for agency-based caregivers is \$50. Fees include workshops, lunch and resource exhibits. Registration forms are available in April and space is limited. For more information or to receive a full brochure and registration materials, please call 1-800-422-3263 or 360-725-2544, or visit online: [tinyurl.com/GivingCareTakingCare](http://tinyurl.com/GivingCareTakingCare).

*giving care • taking care*

**A Conference for Family Caregivers  
JUNE 5, 2017 • TUKWILA, WA**



## TOPICS INCLUDE

Aging Parents: When to Worry • Dementia Basics  
Essential Legal Documents • Reducing Stress • Much More!

**Early Registration Deadline: May 15, 2017**

Limited Space • Preregistration Required

**MORE INFO:** <http://tinyurl.com/GivingCareTakingCare>  
or call (360) 725-2544 or 1-800-422-3263 to leave a voicemail with your name and street mailing address.

## When the Research Subject is You

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“I was pretty sure he wouldn’t be interested,” Marilyn recalls, “because he had grown so comfortable with just the two of us being together.”

Still, Marilyn found a spare moment to drop in at Full Life Care’s South Seattle Adult Day Health Center. In the lobby, she ran into the site’s social worker, Kelly Tongg. “She was very lovely,” Marilyn says, “and I saw all the staff constantly talking to people and treating them with respect and I thought: maybe this could work.”

Kelly set up a time for Marilyn to return with her husband. Upon arrival, Chuck homed in on a seated

group playing a type of kickball. An avid sportsman who had played college football, he said, “I can do that,” and joined in immediately.

Chuck has enjoyed attending Full Life since September 2016, and Kelly has continued to help Marilyn. “She’s helped me navigate funding sources and made special transportation arrangements. Chuck comes home tired, but that’s good, because he’s using up his extra energy during the day.”

Marilyn pauses for a moment and briefly tears up while she considers what’s transpired over the last several months: “I feel like I’ve gotten my life back.”

To find out more about enrolling at one of Full Life Care’s adult day health centers, contact 206.528.5315 (King County) or 425.355.1313 (Snohomish County).



The team members helped pass out gifts to the ElderFriends and each received one to take home.

## The Elves of ElderFriends

**Setting up for a holiday party can be a race against the clock, thought Cathy Ayers, one of the volunteers who works on ElderFriends' social events.** About 40 elders plus their volunteer companions look forward to the December event – one of several gatherings planned by ElderFriends every year – but it's a lot of work for the core crew of staff and volunteers who arrive early to decorate, set the tables, and get the catered food ready.

For years Cathy had brought two grandnephews, Jordan and Cooper Ayers, and she was happy to have such enthusiastic helpers. So in 2013 she decided to ramp-up on volunteers and recruited 10 members from Jordan's fifth grade basketball team. She didn't need to worry if the elders would embrace the team: it was a slam dunk.

They were well remembered at the following year's holiday party. A few elders checked-in with the boys on their grades and results of a particularly tough science test, while another coached them in the art of greeting. All the ElderFriends now regard the boys as *their* basketball team. Or, when the boys arrive clad in elf hats, *their* elves.

Marsha Paprowicz, a long-time participant in the ElderFriends program, says, "I would really be remiss if I didn't say a big thanks (and hugs) to the energetic & kind young *elves* who do such a great job of taking care of us all."

The team has been present at every spring luncheon, summer picnic, and holiday party for the last four years, inspiring the team members to plan their calendars around ElderFriends' events.

Chester Brackebusch requested that his family's trip to South Africa be scheduled so that he could be back in time to help at the December 11 party. As the elders arrived, he played piano to a very appreciative audience. Another boy came home from a weekend in Chelan in time to volunteer, and joined a group of greeters, welcoming each elder as they arrived. As the party progressed, each boy hosted a table, making sure that plates were filled, beverages topped up, and every face had a smile.

"The boys' volunteerism has helped them as a team on the court too, giving them pride in their service and deepened camaraderie," says Kappie Ayers, parent and manager of 12 Cedarcrest Select teams. "We are so proud to be a part of ElderFriends. We are now connecting with the Snoqualmie Valley Senior Center and providing our other teams the chance to give back as well!"

As the boys age off their basketball team, they've recruited their younger brothers, as well as new team members from the Cedarcrest Select basketball program, to help out at these events, which are now truly multigenerational.



# REALIZING OUR VALUES

Since joining Full Life Care's staff last summer, I've come to know some of the people who build up our community. Not a homogeneous community hinged on similarity, but one rich with diversity across ages and abilities. It goes beyond staff, clients and program participants—it includes our volunteers, donors, families, and neighbors.

Full Life meets people where they are and offers the care that keeps folks healthy and social. It's this recognition of each person's dignity, and the effort to address each other's unique needs inclusively, that I appreciate so much.

Amid the diversity, I see things in common, of course. How fitting that our commonality is best described within Full Life's core values:

- **PERSEVERANCE:** Never give up on people.
- **IDEALISM:** Believe it is possible for everyone to find joy in life.
- **AWARENESS:** Recognize that sometimes every small achievement is a small miracle.
- **HOLISM:** Understanding the mind, body and soul equation and how it is core to our mission.

I first read these values last summer and, returning to them now, I see how truly alive they are. I've seen them reflected in the actions of our clients and families, volunteers, staff, board members, donors, and community partners. It's been exciting to see how we all share in these values from our unique perspectives.

I invite you to take a closer look, too. What do you bring, both unique and in common, to this community?

—Erin Rohan, Development Manager,  
erinr@fulllifecare.org, 206.224.3749.

YOU ARE INVITED TO FULL LIFE CARE'S

## Benefit Luncheon

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2017 | NOON – 1:30PM

SHERATON SEATTLE HOTEL | 1400 6TH AVE, SEATTLE, WA 98101

GUEST SPEAKER: WENDY LUSTBADER, MSW

[FULLLIFECARE.ORG/LUNCH](http://FULLLIFECARE.ORG/LUNCH)

To sponsor Full Life Care or attend an event, please contact  
Erin Rohan, 206.224.3749, ErinR@FullLifeCare.org

**New Time!**

SKIP THE EARLY  
MORNING AND  
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OVER LUNCH

*Full Life works toward a future where adults with serious illnesses or disabilities can be supported in the community rather than living in isolation or needing to resort to institutional care.*





# Millennials Make their Mark at Full Life Care

By Nora Gibson, Executive Director

**Sometimes questioned about their values by older generations, millennials are a large demographic having a major impact on our culture and society.**

My children are millennials. When they were too old for afterschool programs (but too young to apply for jobs) I brought them into Full Life Care where they engaged in what I called “forced volunteer work.”

My son helped in our specialized adult day program for persons with dementia. Participants who were anxious about catching their rides home would try to overrule him when he told them their transportation had not yet arrived. He gradually learned from our staff members, who have special skills to help people with memory loss feel at ease.

My daughter volunteered as part of a school project. She learned how to play blackjack from an elderly man whose vision was too impaired to read the cards. After she whispered the totals to him, he would call “stay” or “hit me.” His conservative approach would often win out.

Both my children comment how their volunteerism has helped in their professional careers. Now working in a hospital setting, my daughter is a physical therapist, often called on to help a patient with memory loss. She tells me she “speaks dementia” and knows how to use facial expressions and body language to

help reassure a frightened patient. My son, a district attorney in Oregon, is the elder abuse specialist in his office. As he puts it, “Mom, the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree!”

In recent years I have observed a generational shift on the part of millennials, who show genuine interest and caring for marginalized frail elders and people with disabilities. At Full Life we are fortunate to host people, mostly twentysomethings, who dedicate a year of their lives in service to older adults as AmeriCorps members. And our young staff members bring their creativity and energy to the workplace throughout Full life Care.

Finally, we have a crew of mostly-millennials responsible for the success of one of our fundraisers. Years ago, as they discussed ideas for an event that would resonate with their demographic, one millennial declared, “I don’t have a lot of money but what I do have, I like to spend on beer.” And that was the genesis of our annual Beer for a Cause.

This fun-filled evening draws hundreds of millennials and a healthy smattering from other generations. Together, we celebrate Full Life Care and the thousands of elders and people with disabilities we support in our community.

If you haven’t yet attended Beer for a Cause, I hope you’ll check it out this year. Look for details on the back page of this newsletter, and look for me at the event, sipping a glass of wine and enjoying the company of adults of all ages.



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The Full Life Times is a publication of Full Life Care, a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

FULL LIFE CARE PRESENTS

**BEER** FOR A *Cause*

**THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017 5PM-9PM**

ASTON MANOR ( 2946 1ST AVE S, SEATTLE, WA 98134 )

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[FULLLIFECARE.ORG/BFAC](http://FULLLIFECARE.ORG/BFAC) Questions? Contact Russell Eberts: 206-224-3742 [russelle@fulllifecare.org](mailto:russelle@fulllifecare.org)