

# GRACE HOME NEWS

DECEMBER 2019



## The Meaning of Christmas

What is the meaning of Christmas? Does it mean gifts, goodies, a tree and family? Or does it remind us of Jesus who became a lowly baby dependent on a mere woman to care for Him so that He might more fully be a Savior for us? Let us hear what Christmas means to our elders.

I asked many of our residents the same question: What does Christmas mean to you? These were their responses:

- Annual family get-together with a good home-style meal; no presents
- Jesus was born that day; family getting together; gifts are not important anymore
  - A beautiful time; Jesus was born
    - Because I get presents
  - Santa Claus; Christmas trees; decorations; lights
  - Christ's birth; presents- usually books; snow
    - Christ was born
    - Salvation
- The day Christ was born; goodness; buying stuff for loved ones; beautiful time
- God gave His only Son; children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren; friends

What does Christmas mean to you??? As Christmas approaches, let us try to remember that there would be no reason for the hustle and bustle if it weren't for the Baby Jesus born that long ago night in a little town of Bethlehem.

*Merry* 

November 15 was our annual FALL MEAL. The décor theme this year was pumpkins and green. The dietary staff really outdid themselves and served a scrumptious lunch of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, candied sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin, pecan, or apple pie for dessert. There were over 60 people served that day and from what I hear, not one person was disgruntled but rather very pleased.

## MISSISSIPPI BOUND

October 16... Board members, Directors of nursing, Administrators, Dietary Supervisors and Activity Directors from across the U.S. and Canada met at the church in Brooksville, Mississippi. The next two days were spent on how to better our elders' homes for the future.

The first day started out with a talk given by Carla Stilleto. She talked about the "traits" of the traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The reason for this talk was to reduce staff turn-over. Some of the points she gave were:

Traditionalists were born mostly pre- 1945. Most of them have retired leaving around 2% still in the work force. This group lived through the Great Depression and WWII. They did all they could and could not get enough. They were grateful for a house, a job, and food to put on the table. They were very aware of the clock because time meant a pay check. Most of that generation would have worked a job that would have required a time clock.

Baby Boomers were born approximately 1946-1964. This group wanted to give their children a better life and thus became workaholics. They had grown up with basically nothing new ever and not enough food at times. They didn't want their children to grow up like that so they worked hard and long to prevent that, many times preventing their children from having a father at home. They also only got trophies for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. If you didn't win, then that was just too bad. You better go home and practice so you got a trophy next time. The ladies of this generation stayed home and raised their families. Then when their families were gone, many entered the work force for the first time.

Generation Xers were born from approximately 1965-1980. This group went to college straight out of high school. They got their degrees around the same time that the baby boomer mothers were ready to enter the work force thus creating a large group looking for jobs. This created the need to have a degree for everything short of changing a diaper.

Millennials: 1981-1996. This group was the beneficiary of the baby boomers' giving hand. Several more contributing factors to this generation were the rapid increase of fast-food drive-thrus and the incoming credit cards. Children were given many, many choices. Choices of meals, choices of clothes, many gifts. The parents of these children did not want them to be hurt by not "being good enough" to win a prize so they would give prizes just for showing up. They were given more than just a voice but a vote as well.

Then there is Generation Z who were born after 1997. The main thing said about this generation is that they don't remember September 11, 2001 or a time before all the security in the airport.

She gave us several pointers on working together with all these generations. The biggest take away that I found from that talk was to try to understand which generation your workers are from and meet them in the middle. We are in a time when there are many jobs to be had and if someone is not happy with their job there are many more to be had. At the same time, we must be careful to not be careless in the care of our elders and remember that it takes up to a year and maybe more to get to know our elders well enough to care for them like they really need to be cared for: mentally, physically, socially and spiritually.

In the afternoon we each met with our departments and again after supper. This is such a rewarding time of sharing problems, answers, ideas...

The 2<sup>nd</sup> morning was a presentation on architecture and how a well-designed campus can enhance the elders' lives. Lots of thought needs to be put into lighting and distance from elders' room to main rooms along with other core ingredients that can make a home much more workable for our elders. After lunch, there was a discussion on whose is the responsibility of the spiritual life of our elders along with a few other topics. The attending employees of Westview Care in Linden, Alberta did a skit of a good dining experience versus a bad dining experience. This brought much laughter over the group but was very thought provoking. There was then a presentation on Bright Horizons which is a brain stimulation activity that one of the RNs at Oakwood Manor put together and does with the residents there. After voting on where to have the meeting next year, it was decided it would be in Bonners ferry, Idaho. That ended the meeting with supper for those who wished to stay.

# Sundowners Syndrome

We have started a new program at Grace Home with light therapy. It was started as a way to help our residents with Sundowners Syndrome to reprogram their brains and eliminate the behaviors that make up Sundowning.

Before I can really explain light therapy, there are a few other things that need to be explained. What is Sundowners Syndrome? What causes Sundowning? What is circadian rhythm? And what do these have to do with each other?

**Sundowners Syndrome:** This is found in people with dementia. It is increased agitation, confusion or activity towards evening when the sun begins to sink in the sky. This can affect the memory and mood of the elder. It can cause pacing and wandering, increasing the risk of falls, seeing things that are not there, striking out verbally or physically, or just plain old worry.

**What causes it?** These dear people expend so much energy just in normal activities of daily living that by the time evening comes they are extremely tired both in mind and body. Coupled with the dementia which created this scenario in the first place, the person's internal clock which tells them whether it is day or night gets confused and sends the wrong signals confusing the person even more. They don't know when they should sleep and this contributes to the Sundowning problem. Low lighting as the sun sinks brings on shadows and add that to the crazy things dementia and age do to eyes, and this again contributes to the Sundowning. A set schedule as a mother or employee contributes to this time of day as well such as the elder thinking it is time to go home from work (especially when hearing the change of shift and the loud good-byes and see you later's) or children coming home from school. There can be other things as well. Maybe they hear "4:00pm" and think "I need to catch the bus at that time". Even smells can contribute to the confusion of the time of day. Coffee is more of a morning smell while cookies would smell more like an after-school snack.

**Circadian Rhythm:** This is basically your internal clock which tells your body when it is time to sleep and eat. It is stored in your hypothalamus which is a part of your brain. This rhythm sends messages to your brain that it is time to sleep and that your body needs to produce melatonin to help you sleep. Circadian rhythm controls so much more than just sleep. It plays in on hormones, eating and digesting, body temperatures and much more. There are many health problems that could be intensified by a circadian rhythm that is off and some that can be caused by this such as bi-polar, depression.... This can be reset by using light therapy or getting the proper amount of sunshine.

Now, what do these all have to do with each other? That is quite a simple question, really. If someone is having Sundowners Syndrome, their circadian rhythm is most likely off.

Would you like to know what we are doing about that? We are using light therapy, aromatherapy and quiet time in the afternoons through shift change to reset their minds. The purpose of quiet time is to not trigger memories of long ago that would cause them to feel like they need to accomplish some task from the past.

The light therapy is a bright light (10,000 lumens) which must shine indirectly into the eyes of an elder with sundowners. They must not look at it but just allow it to shine on the side of their faces for a certain length of time. The extra light tells the circadian rhythm that it is daytime. Along with this, we try to keep these elders awake and in a well-lighted room or outdoors throughout the day. In the morning, we permeate the halls with a cheery smell such as peppermint and end the evening with low lights and a mix that creates a calming environment.

Within a week, we have started to see amazing changes in these dear people. It has not worked the same in all of them, but several have greatly improved quality of life because of it. Thank God that He sent some answers our way.

A little bit more on the good of light therapy (which is really just artificial sunlight): Besides regulating circadian rhythm, it also helps the heart in several different ways, by increasing circulation of blood in the heart, correcting blood pressures, and protecting tissue in blood vessels and the heart. 30 minutes of good sunlight or light therapy a day can improve your mood, sleep, energy and overall health.

-Laura Koehn

## REPORT OF RUMMAGE SALE FUNDRAISER

October 12 found a flurry of activity as a group of about 10 people did last minute set up for the fundraiser. Ladies had been busy baking the day before and were bringing their baked goods in. These needed to be priced, rummage items needed to be taken outside and set up along with the crafts. John and Emily Jantz with their family set up to press apples and make cider. The CNAs donated samosas to sell. Fast forward to about 4:00... While there was still a LOT of rummage items left, they had dwindled to about 30% of what we started with. Clean-up was completed and tired bodies went home. We brought in \$4,700. We were well pleased with this amount. We will fix up the atrium, taking it from an eyesore to a useful setting for our elders and what is left of the money will go to bettering our home for our elders.



Our CNAs who have grown up in India are planning to make Indian food and to sell plates of it at 12:00 pm on December 21. These plates will be sold at Grace Home. The menu will be chole (spicy curried chickpeas) bhature (puffy fried bread). They would like as many orders ahead of time as possible (preferably by December 14). Extra will be made for those who failed to pre-order. They will be selling for \$10 a plate. The money made from this will go for new recliners or what is needed to make our elders last years more comfortable. Contact Laura (209-628-9907, preferably by text) for questions or to order plates. Payment will be received that day. Cash only. There will also be a FEW crafts for sale if you need last minute Christmas gifts. Thanks!





## WELCOME TO GRACE HOME:

*Liliana Gonzalez- housekeeping*  
*Hardeep Grewal- CNA*  
*Cynthia Cassidy- RN*



## Activity Highlights

### OCTOBER

Tea Party- volunteers  
Candy Corn Social & Fall trivia  
Poem Fest  
Make Donuts  
Apple Cider Social  
Bob for Apples (with false teeth on a pair of tongs)  
Outing: Rummage Sale

### NOVEMBER

Tea Party- volunteers  
Indian Day with schoolchildren  
Fall Meal  
Caramel Apples  
Fall Scavenger Hunt  
Making bird feeders  
Thanksgiving Day: Coffee, news & donuts; Hot tea and Games; Coffee Bar  
Make Christmas Shopping List  
Outing: Duarte Nursery

### DECEMBER

Make Christmas Card Holders  
Christmas Carol Bingo  
Make Christmas Candy  
Make Christmas Cards  
Candy Cane Hunt  
Sing Christmas Carols  
Send Christmas Cards to Missionaries  
Christmas Party  
Christmas Time Reminiscing  
Gingerbread Houses  
Cut out Christmas paper chain  
Christmas Quiz  
Gift Wrapping  
Christmas Day: Open Gifts; Christmas Story Power Point; Games & Christmas Goodies  
Sugar Cookies  
Hot Chocolate Social  
Jingle Bell Toss  
Puzzle Shmuzzle  
Snowflakes  
Outing: Christmas Tree Lane



# Randy's Train Set:

"Now boarding all passengers for Monterey!"

I jerked back to reality from my favorite book, The Dodgers Stadium. Pushing it into my duffle bag, I hurriedly made my way through the November sunshine to the line of passengers waiting to board the train. (Along for the day is my dog, Bucky. He is a longtime friend.) Boarding goes quickly and soon we are speeding down the tracks towards the bay area. The scenery changes from valley towns to rolling hills through Pacheco Pass. Soon it is berry farms and fields of garlic. A while longer and we are slowing as we come into the quaint town of Monterey. I wake up my sleeping Bucky, and together we make our way towards the exit door.

Stepping out of the train, the age old "by the sea" smell wafts over us on the chilly coastal breeze.

On my agenda today is the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Fisherman's Wharf.

A brisk twenty-minute walk brings us to the aquarium. After purchasing a ticket, we head in for the tour. The exhibits are amazing! Sea otters and seals play in a pool. Divers in the tanks two stories tall are feeding the many fish. The touch pool had starfish, sand dollars, conches, and clams among other interesting creatures. Bucky just looks and barks his excitement. No touching for him!

The gigantic tuna was my favorite exhibit. One tuna could probably make up to one hundred fifty sandwiches! Thinking about sandwiches made me hungry. Bucky and I finish the tour and head over to Bubba Gumps. Shrimp and a fish sandwich for me and a dog treat out of my duffle bag for Bucky.

Time is running out, but we can't leave Monterey without visiting Fisherman's Wharf! The wind is picking up, so we walk quickly to the wharf to take in the sights, sounds, and smells of the busy pier. Suddenly, I see a familiar face in the large cheering crowd ahead. Clayton Kershaw! Pitcher for the Dodgers! Slowly but steadily, Bucky and I push through the crowd. Finally, we are at the front and I reach out my hand to Kershaw. He gives it a hearty shake, reaches into a large basket beside him and pulls out a signed baseball!!! My lucky day! I say thank you and turn to escape the mob. Before I leave, the candy store seems to call to me, and I come out with bulging bags of chocolates for the ride home.

Back at the train station, we board for our trip back to Merced. Another fun day in Monterey!

- Randy Ward and Emily Jantz

(used with permission)



# INDIAN DAY

“The Indians are here! I saw them in the back!” There was much excitement as we eagerly waited several weeks for the Indians to arrive. They came with their war paint, head dress, and dressed like a bona fide Indian. Their drums hanging around their necks and their teepees set up, they came marching through the halls of Grace Home.

They stopped to sing at an open door and then went on to fill up the dining room where the other elders were waiting to watch them sing. After a couple of songs, it was lunch time. Navajo tacos were served (prepared by the Indians’ mothers) back at the encampment. Some of the elders from Grace Home joined in the feast. After lunch, more elders joined in when the Indians put on a show of shooting with bow and arrows. With the arrows put away, it was then time for more singing, this time with much use of the drums and parading around in front of each elder which gave them each a personal view at these schoolchildren who had traveled back in time. Then, it was time for the treasure hunt. Many of the elders along with the apartment residents had been prepped ahead of time with bags of candy and clues. During this proceeding, one of the elders kept calling out from her room “I want to see the Indians”. Finally, she got her wish. A group of them came down the hall for a clue and their teacher herded a few in so the elder could see her Indians and she even got a song out of them.

We very much enjoyed the day with these 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from GMS along with their teacher and wish them a safe journey back to 2019.



**IN REMEMBRANCE**

**VERENA BOENISCH**

**LEONARD PEASTER**



# Christmas Scramble

gisrsden  
rnmage  
stmhrcasi  
srcead  
lyoh  
ehlhebemt  
itotlsmee  
cyand nseca  
gjieln elbsl  
heslsig  
rmery  
hma  
tendcraoosi  
abyb  
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tsevife  
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ratpy  
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gtuarelh  
ilyadoh  
ygorl  
layfim  
diitgsn  
shpjeo  
ryam  
own  
toriatdni  
ceepa  
ngoegg  
ojy  
ormgrap  
ifgst  
enlo  
olhly  
pnhpgsio  
eregtsgin  
icsicle  
neasgl  
skoieco  
ypaph  
tgrohete  
aorcls

