

Miscellaneous Announcements

** Please note that Family Support Group meetings will be held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. The meetings will be held in the Library on the first floor.

** We are always in need of belts for our community. If you have any belts or suspenders that are not being used, we would appreciate the donation

** To ensure the safety of all residents, **DO NOT** leave the following in resident rooms: sharp objects such as scissors, needles and tools; tools are dangerous items that should never be left in rooms. Any kind of chemicals such as cleaning supplies; and medications (should be in med dept).

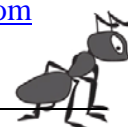
** Do you have a family member, friend, or neighbor who would like to receive this newsletter? Please leave a note or email Barbara with their name and address.

July Birthdays

If you were born from June 22-July 22, you are a Cancer, the crab. If you were born from July 23-August 22, you are a Leo, the lion. A Cancer can be highly emotional, caring, generous, and intuitive. Leos are creative, enthusiastic, charismatic, and highly ambitious.

- Dolores H. July 2nd
- Reta S. July 14th
- Mick M. July 18th
- Frances D. July 20th
- Irene S. July 21st

If you would like your monthly invoices or this newsletter sent to you through email, please email Barbara at barbaram@collwoodterrace.com



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The CT Stellar Care Chronicle



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Celebrating July

Picnic Month

Recreation & Parks Month

Anti-Boredom Month

Canada Day

July 1

U.S.: Independence Day

July 4

For this month's column, I want to share a very personal story with you. Its' about our grandmother, and why we do what we do. I hope you will understand.

Halmoni

It was a neat square building that was gated. It sat between two apartment buildings standing guard on either side. We parked in the front parking lot and sat for a minute, anxious and afraid. What would we find inside? It was a first visit for me to see my grandmother who had moved in several months before into this assisted living community.

Although my mother and I had many discussions about this move many times prior to the actual move-in, I had not been able to come for a visit until several months had passed. Every time I spoke with my grandmother, she always assured me that she was doing fine and told me not to worry. She knew I was busy with work and raising a family with teenage boys and all their activities. "It's so nice of you to call when I know you're so busy" she'd always say, as if she's apologizing for taking my time.

This was a woman who raised me from infancy until I was almost nine years old. I could do no wrong in my grandmother's eyes. To her I was the brightest, prettiest, nicest child there ever was. (I'm sure she made every one of her grandchildren feel this way.) "You're going to be so tall because you've got such long legs" she'd tell me when I was little. Never mind that I'm 5'4 and my sisters are almost half a foot taller than I am. I've always felt tall.

"You should become an ambassador because you sure can talk" she'd say. And even though I was painfully shy around strangers, there was a seed planted in me that had me believing that maybe I would make a great ambassador someday.

When I moved into her house during part of my college years because my mother "just could not understand me", my grandmother listened without interruption and just agreed that it was just too bad that we couldn't all be understood. My grandmother was the wisest, most intuitive, sharpest, most loving woman I've ever known. So to have put off this visit for months was unforgiveable on my part.

I knew the business. I had spoken to the administrator and staff members and knew they were qualified and seemed capable and caring. But this wasn't just another facility that I was evaluating, this was my grandmother's new home.

We carried boxes of fruit inside, for Koreans never go "empty handed" on the first visit to anyone's home. We walked in and found the sign-in sheet by the door. Check, they were keeping track of the visitors in the building, that was good. A smiling woman came out to greet us. "We're here to visit my grandmother, Mrs. Han" I told the greeter, "can you tell me where she is?"

"Oh, she's been waiting for you. She's in the main room, let me show you where it is."

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Administration

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Chris Moore

Director of Food Services



CT Stellar Care's Employee of the Month

Joshua Vega
Activity Department

Congratulations, Josh, on a job well done!

Happy Father's Day!



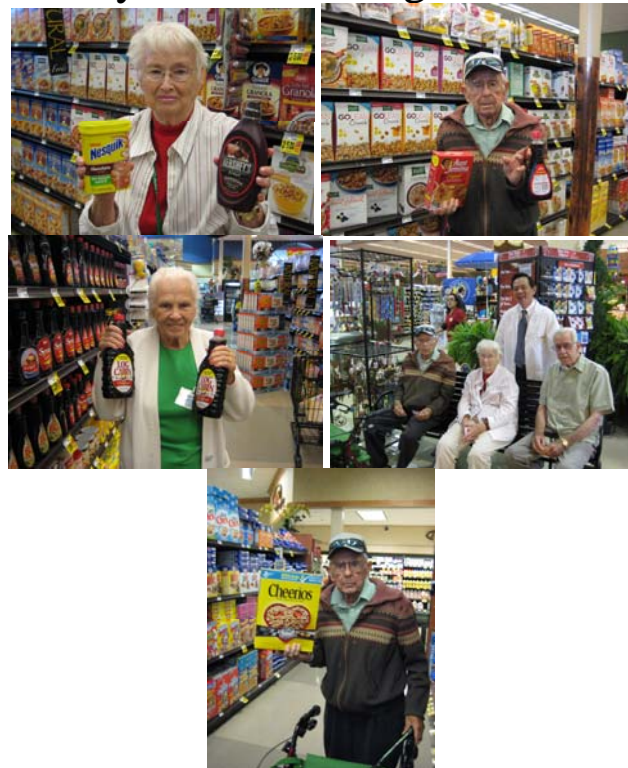
Go Padres!



Del Mar Fair



Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt



We were led into a large community room filled with elderly women and men, or halmonis and harabajis (grandmas and grandpas) as they were addressed, Korean style.

I looked around the room. On a loveseat sitting up with a surprised look and a beaming smile was my halmoni. After many tearful hugs and kisses, we walked to her room where she showed me around. The pictures of our families were lined neatly on top of her chest of drawers, her closet was filled with her dresses, her bathroom things were arranged in order. Everything was neat and clean. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Halmoni sat on her bed and opened the drawer to her nightstand. She reached in between the perfectly aligned items and pulled out a bag of candy. She always loved hard candies and passed them out as treats. She took a handful and pressed them into my palms. "No, no, halmoni, you keep them, I know you like them" I told her.

"Oh, I've got so much here, I can never eat them all, they're for you." It was my grandmother just being her unselfish, giving self again.

We went out to eat, shop and then went back and visited. We spoke with the nurses and caregivers, the servers and cooks. They all told us how sweet my halmoni was and how cooperative she was with everything.

"Yes, but do you know how special she is", I wanted to shout. She raised her children and grandchildren, and then other people's children to put one granddaughter through private school and then nursing school. She never had a lot of money, but she'd peel garlic, wash and cut up vegetables, dry and package them in plastic ziplock bags to send up to me so I'd save time when cooking for my family.

When I broke a dish while clearing the table, she just brushed it aside and said "the dish sellers have to make some money too!"

Did these staff members know just how sensitive my halmoni was to nuances, to sharpness in their voices, the tone of their answers? My halmoni who didn't understand any English knew whenever we were speaking about someone, when we were concerned, worried, upset. She had no difficulty figuring out what we were feeling.

Did the caregivers know that halmoni never wanted to "bother" anyone and therefore would rarely ask for help, even if she needed it? Would they know that she'd be sad for hours or days after we've left but would never show her tears in front of them because that would be asking for pity?

Would the activities staff know that grandma found it hard to walk but had difficulty accepting help because that would acknowledge that she had a limp and she was too proud to be thought of as "handicapped"? Yes, I had explained all this to the staff members, but would they really understand?

Who could understand as well as I could. But then I was just here to visit. And I was going back to my family, 400 miles away.

The first visit is always the hardest, I knew that. But do the ache and the tearing of my heart ever completely go away?

I was in Korea, working on site development for a senior community when I got the call from my mom. "Grandma passed away peacefully in her sleep."

Mom had brought grandma back home for the last two years of her life. The last time that I saw her was at her bedside in San Diego before our trip to Korea. Grandma was frail and bedridden. Her memory was a little hazy at times. She was sleeping when I entered her room. Her eyes were closed when I touched her lightly. "Halmoni" I called softly.

She opened her eyes slowly. Her eyes crinkled into a smile. She whispered "You're so pretty, you look like my granddaughter."

"I am your granddaughter, Halmoni, it's Linda, I'm Linda."

Halmoni opened her eyes wide. "Linda, is it really my Linda?" She seemed to recognize me then and asked about the children and our house and the deer. She loved the deer that roamed in the back woods of our house. She couldn't get over the fact that deer could freely walk around when we weren't even a zoo. It was as curious to her as when we explained about the fax. "So they send something on paper from Korea and it comes through the phone lines across the ocean and it comes out through the machine here?...But how can it travel so fast?" She was amazed.

During our long conversation, she became brighter and more sharply focused. Halmoni reached out to my husband and took his hand, then turned to me.

"Don't let him out of your sight."

"I won't Halmoni."

"Follow him everywhere" she said with a mischievous grin.

"Sure, Halmoni."

"Even to the bathroom." She admonished with a twinkle in her eye. It was her way of apologizing. She was telling us that she was happy for us. She was not happy when we married too young in her eyes. Before I even became an ambassador.

We held hands, I brushed her hair, I fed her. She loved fruit. Everything was "delicious" for her and she was so thankful. For us, for her family.

This is a story of just one of my grandmothers. I've had two in my life. Both were special, both were wonderful. I have been blessed in countless ways by their gentle wisdom and all encompassing love.

I believe there are important reasons for why we do what we choose to do in life, for the people we choose to be with and the work we choose to do. When I am working, I am around many many "halmoni's and harabaji's. For me, I see my grandma in their faces; I see my grandma's needs in theirs. And it's a privilege and a blessing for me to be here with them every day.

Linda Cho
Director of Operations