

STELLAR CARE

4518 54th Street
San Diego, CA 92115
License # 374602700

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Information

The Stellar Care Chronicle

January 2015

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Celebrating January

**International Creativity
Month**

**Universal Letter Writing
Week**

January 8–14

Midwife's Day
January 8

Belly Laugh Day
January 24

**Bubble Wrap
Appreciation Day**
January 26

Linda Cho
Executive Director

Barbara Moore
Business Director

Annelie Damasco
Assisted Living Director

Susan O'Shaughnessy
Marketing Director

Rachel Robinson
Activities Director

Chris Cho
Building & Maintenance Director

Chris Moore
*Culinary Services &
Laundry Director*

"MY LIFE, AS I SEE IT"

Dr. Domingo Leonida

Domingo Leonida was born "somewhere in the middle" of a large family made up of three brothers and four sisters in Honolulu, Hawaii. As a boy, his family lived near the coast (his father was a commercial fisherman), where he spent his free time playing in the coastal waters catching crabs and fish. He still remembers the fateful day in December, 1941, when his fourteen year old ears picked up the sounds of distant gunfire and explosions. Luckily, he was in church at the time and far removed from the harbor. A smart boy, he knew that he would be drafted after high school, and decided to join the army on his own terms, enlisting and joining the Army Correspondence Course Program in Madison, Wisconsin. After his discharge, Domingo began a rather nomadic academic career, studying at universities in Milwaukee, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Madison. First, he transferred to the University of Dayton in Ohio, where he was disappointed by the mild winter, having expected winter scenery like he saw in postcards. He then transferred to Marquette University in Milwaukee, where despite the 5 degree temperature, he was very happy to finally experience a Christmas-card-like winter. Domingo stayed at Marquette for two years, working on pre-med courses and throwing in a string of courses in Russian language and a semester in St. Louis for his own enjoyment. After undergrad, Domingo received a master's degree in biochemistry from the University of Cincinnati, after which he went on to Ohio State University to work on his masters in physiology. While pursuing that degree, he was accepted into medical school at the University of Cincinnati, and promptly hopped into that program.

Just two years into medical school, Domingo had to stop his studies due to a serious chest infection. Suspecting tuberculosis (which had claimed the lives of both of his grandparents) he moved back to Hawaii with his wife Madelaine (whom he had met while at the University of Wisconsin) and their baby son. After six months of treatment, he was well enough to follow Madelaine back to Ohio, where she had taken a teaching opportunity at a women's college after earning a master's degree in physical education. While he jumped back into his schooling, Madelaine recruited her students to help babysit their children.

Dr. Domingo continued inside...

Interview by Brandon Cho

Miscellaneous Announcements

** Family Support Group meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of every month. Families are invited to join us in the Library on the first floor.

** Remember to check your family members' mail on your next visit.

** If you would like to see your loved one featured in an upcoming newsletter, forward their story to Brandon Cho at BrandonC@stellarcared.com.



Like us on facebook at
[Facebook.com/stellarcare](https://www.facebook.com/stellarcare)

Stellar Care's Employee of the Quarter

Alem Gebreselasie
Assisted Living Department

January Birthdays

Those born between January 1–19 are Capricorns, the Goat. Capricorn is the most stable and serious sign of the zodiac. Reliable, resourceful, and determined, Capricorns make excellent leaders and managers.

Those born between January 20–31 are Aquarius, the Water Bearer. Witty, clever, and honest, Water Bearers desire independence above all and are not afraid to deviate from the crowd to pursue their own interests.

Lawrence M.	Jan. 1 st
Mary A.	Jan. 5 th
Sarah R.	Jan. 6 th
Shirley K.	Jan. 13 th
Betty D.	Jan. 15 th
Dale K.	Jan. 16 th
Nora D.	Jan. 18 th
Beverly S.	Jan. 22 nd
Richard S.	Jan. 26 th
Dorothy W.	Jan. 30 th
Barbara M.	Jan. 31 st



Welcome to 2015!

We have had this newsletter to share with families and friends, stories and updates about our lives here at Stellar Care. Over time, families have shared with us that one of the most enjoyable features of the newsletter is the monthly Resident Rave column. We have such an incredible group of residents with such amazing stories, that sometimes it's difficult to tell their story in a half-page slot on the inside. So beginning this month, as you can see, the Resident feature will be the main focus, on the front page of the newsletter. We hope you will enjoy the expanded feature of our Residents' stories. This is their story, sometimes told through families, but most often, shared by the residents themselves. Enjoy the fascinating journey!

It was great to see all the families at the holiday parties. Thank you for joining us, and thank you for your generosity for the staff holiday fund. For those of you who voted for the wreaths, the winner of the 2014 wreath decorating contest is.... The Reception department with their "Nightmare Before Christmas" wreath. Congratulations, especially to Julie and Anita who worked so hard on the project.

As we welcome in a brand new year, we are excited about the adventures that it will bring. Our activities department is busy planning for the year, filling the monthly calendar with activities for all! Please be sure to take a look and join us in the fun.

Looking back in 2014, we are grateful for the support of our families and friends who have made us feel that caring for our residents is an honorable profession and a calling. We are grateful for our residents who, in spite of their challenges, show us what dignity is all about.

This partnership works, and it is our goal in the new year to continue to strengthen this partnership.

Thank you. Have a wonderful new year everyone!



Linda Cho

Spending time with family during the holidays



...Dr. Domingo concluded

Ever the busy opportunist, Domingo found and accepted a position at a whiskey distillery, and was brought on board as a researcher to help solve some issues they were having in their Kentucky facilities. Once there, he was quick to prove his worth. When shown a problem that, in his own words, "three men with a Master's in bacteriology, a Master's in agricultural chemistry, and a PHD in bacteriology couldn't solve for eight years, for some reason", he went down to the Kentucky facilities, took samples from each floor of each facility, brought them back to his Ohio lab to run tests, and solved the problem within a month. As a thank you, the distillery sponsored his education at Purdue, where he completed a handful of classes on bacteriology.

Always the multi-tasking man, Domingo used part of his 3 years in medical school to take an advanced residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation, which he would use at a later date. Following a two year internship at Mercy Hospital in Toledo, Ohio, Domingo (who had somehow also managed to join the Navy reserve in that time) joined a Navy program working on the Marine Corp base in Twenty-nine Palms. Throughout all of this, Dr. Leonida was blessed to have found an understanding wife in Madelaine, who was able to be flexible as a part-time middle school and high school physical education teacher and follow him through his many moves to many different jobs.

The next few decades was filled with a whirlwind of new careers and moves, as Dr. Leonida moved his family from California to Michigan, Ohio, then to New York to do vaccination research for the health department. Then he moved to Chicago, Illinois to work as a health officer inspecting nursing homes and private care entities and to Kenosha, Wisconsin to work as a health officer.

His other careers included work in the private sector for Caterpillar Construction, doing research on workmen's compensation programs in the industry (the findings for which were so groundbreaking that they were published in a medical journal), his own physician's private practice, a federal government fellowship in computer applications in medical research, and finally a position at a full time practice through the US Navy Reserve in San Diego, where he worked for six years until his retirement in 1999. The year of his retirement, Madelaine had a fall and fractured her shoulder, and Domingo made it his mission to support her full time and help her on her road to recovery. Now that he is together with Madelaine at Stellar Care, Dr. Leonida continues to care for his most important patient with the love and support of the Stellar Care community.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Alem Gebreselasie

This month we have decided to spotlight a true star in our caregiving department. She is always thinking of residents first, and does whatever it takes to address resident concerns and issues to make sure they are solved as quickly as possible. As strong as she is as a caregiver, it is interesting that caregiving has been somewhat of a discovered talent for Alem, who has held jobs in very different fields prior to joining our staff.

Born in Eritrea, Alem came to San Diego with her son on April 23, 1982 to escape the civil war raging throughout her country at the time. She was quick to find a job, and worked for Fujitsu in their electronic assembly department for over 10 years. After Fujitsu closed down, she found a position at another electronic company and worked there for 5 years. An arm injury forced her to quit that job, and led her to open her own business. For a few years, Alem ran a janitorial business for office buildings, but said she became frustrated when she realized she was paying her employees more than she made once taxes were taken into account. Looking for a new industry to try, she worked briefly in food services at Marine Corp Community Services before finding her true calling as a caregiver.

In 2008, Alem joined our team, and has been a pillar to so many of our residents over the years. Whenever there has been a need for specialized one on one care, she has been the go-to caregiver and has always been there to support her resident without fail. It has often been said by many of our directors and staff that if we had to choose a private caregiver to take care of us personally, we would choose Alem.

Now approaching retirement age herself, Alem hopes to visit her family home in East Africa more often and spend her free time watching Eritrean TV or visiting friends once her schedule opens up.

We are grateful to have Alem as part of our Stellar team.

Holiday Wreath Decorating Contest



2014 WINNER:
Congratulations, Receptionist Department!