

STELLAR CARE

4518 54<sup>th</sup> Street  
 San Diego, CA 92115  
 License # 374603625

Postage  
 Information

The  
**Stellar Care Chronicle**

Stellar Care \* 4518 54th Street \* San Diego, CA 92115 \* p 619-287-2920 \* f 619-286-8534\*

**RESIDENT RAVE**

Deborah Blake

Born in San Diego, California USA

*Growing up in a family of 9 children was not easy.* Deborah is the 8<sup>th</sup> child. She has always been sensitive, fair, caring and loves to share, except for her food. Deborah was so serious about her food growing up, that she didn't like anyone to even look at her plate or pretend to take food off of her plate. If any of her siblings touched her plate, she would get up and leave it, but not before giving a stern reprimand.

*During her elementary school days, Deborah* and one of her sisters who was two grades above her were very close. They dressed alike almost every day. When the time came for her sister to graduate to junior high, Deborah was confused and initially refused to go to school without her. It took a while for Deborah to realize that she "had to go to get good grades" for her to graduate and follow her sister to junior high school. Once in junior high school, Deborah did exceptionally well. She loved gym class and ran track and field. She also joined the Starlighters Drill Team and participated in many competitions.

To change things up, Deborah moved to Dallas, Texas for a while before returned to California with her sister. *Deborah's passion is people and she loves caregiving.* Upon her return, Deborah decided to pursue a career that would satisfy her passion for people and caregiving. She enrolled in and graduated from Nursing School. After getting her degree, Deborah worked at Hillcrest Convalescent, where patients and coworkers would often remark "There she goes in that white uniform, not a hair out of place and shoes as white as snow". Deborah was as meticulous with her self-presentation as she was with her patient care, and her beautiful smile and tender touch always brightened the faces and hearts of her patients, their families and even her coworkers. She was the "Light of the Hallways" at Hillcrest Convalescent. A true caregiver at heart, Deborah can be seen in the corridors of Stellar Care and although unable to speak well, her love for the people at Stellar Care and their love for her is clear as day. She now works as a caregiver with her eyes, observing what is going on in the building, giving directions and making sure everyone is being treated appropriately.

*Continued inside...*



**Celebrating April**

**Stress Awareness Month**

**Robotics Week**

*April 8–16*

**Easter**

*April 16*

**National Volunteer Week**

*April 23–29*

**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*

**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.

\*\* Please refrain from taking loved ones in stairwells, several visitors have used keypad codes in front of residents that have been able to remember the codes.

\*\* To ensure the safety of all residents, do NOT leave the following in resident rooms: sharp objects such as scissors, needles and tools and chemicals such as cleaning supplies. All medications should be in med. dept.

**April Birthdays**

In astrology, those born between April 1–19 are Rams of Aries. As the first sign of the zodiac, Aries are energetic and assertive initiators. With bravery, zeal, and speed, they jump headfirst into life, confident that they can navigate any challenges.

Those born between April 20–30 are Bulls of Taurus. Bulls are stable, reliable, and committed in both work and family. Bulls also appreciate love, beauty, and creativity, making them true romantics and lovers of the good life.

- Miles G ..... Apr. 4th
- Louise G ..... Apr. 4th
- Genevie J ..... Apr. 5th
- David D ..... Apr. 9th
- Ok Boon L ..... Apr. 18th
- Shirley S ..... Apr. 20th
- Phillip R ..... Apr. 21st
- Nancy T ..... Apr. 22nd
- Harvey M ..... Apr. 24th
- Myrtle L ..... Apr. 24th
- Kenneth G ..... Apr. 29th



**Congratulations Stellar Care  
 Employee of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter**

 **Ruben Leon-Guzman**   
 Maintenance Department

On Friday, March 24, I was fortunate to attend the “Biocom/Biogen Alzheimer’s Research Forum,” co-hosted by Biocom and Alzheimer’s San Diego. Trisha Miyahara, one of our family members and co-facilitator of our Family Support Group, joined me. We found ourselves in the beautiful Alexandria building, home to the San Diego Biocom offices, on the Torrey Pines Mesa.

Mary Ball, CEO, Alzheimer’s SD, and panelist at the forum wrote, “Recently both the Merck and Eli Lilly clinical drug trials ended in disappointment and now attention has turned to Biogen’s aducanumab study. This experimental drug is showing promising results in its ability to remove toxic plaques in the brains of patients with early-stage Alzheimer’s Disease.” Samantha Budd Haerberlein, Vice President of Clinical Development at Biogen, was on the panel and looking forward to sharing the research and outcomes of the drug results of this Phase Three clinical trial. In the audience, some at times taking part on the panels, were scientists, medical doctors, family members of patients, two State Assembly members, and other stakeholders, including myself.

Although, the science of the studies, and the exploration into the workings of the human brain were discussions often beyond my scope of understanding, I did come away with more knowledge and information I would like to share. The most brilliant of scientists, researchers and professors are in awe of the human brain. The more they learn and discover, the more they realize they have yet to learn. Not only can a cell be broken down, but so can a neuron. Researchers have shown that all cells have different amounts of DNA and that there is more DNA in the frontal cortex. Only 1% of Alzheimer’s Disease is familial. 99% of AD is sporadic, with age being the biggest predicting factor. With all the enormous research being done globally, and the most collaborative work being done in San Diego than any other place in the world, there is still no known cause for Alzheimer’s.

Ten years ago, Biogen began research for a drug to address treatment of the disease. It takes twenty years for a drug to be tested and phased before it is available to the public. To date, all current treatments (eg: Aricept, Exelon, Razadyne, Namzaric) address symptoms. The new therapeutics in study phases address the progression of the disease. These are referred to as “disease modifying therapies” or DMTs. Research has discovered that beta amyloid (plaques) dysregulation is central to the disease. This dysregulation can begin up to twenty years before the onset of memory symptoms. The purpose of the new Biogen drug is to remove or stop the amyloid. A PET scan detects the presence of amyloid, but is a technology unavailable in most medical settings, not covered by medical insurance and only used in clinical research. Research needs funding, yet government programs are being cut. I began to feel the Catch 22 and frustration set in for me. Yet, the brilliant minds see the glass half full and persevere.

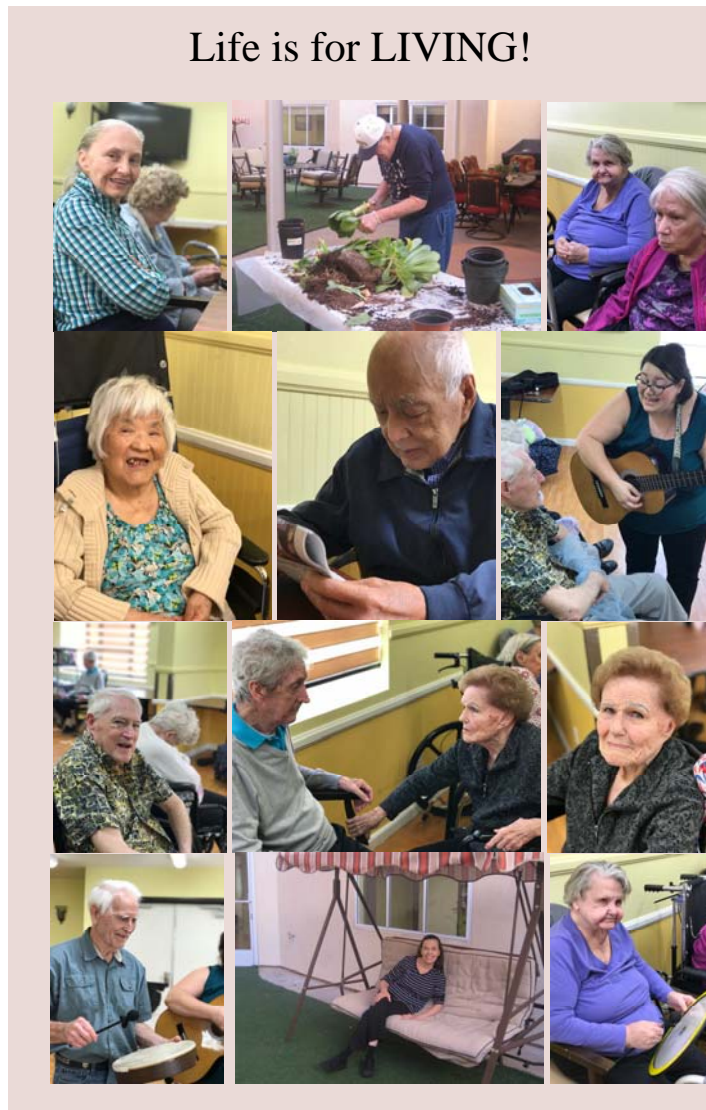
60 to 80% of all dementia is Alzheimer’s Disease. In 2017, 5.5 million people in the USA are diagnosed and by 2050 that number will increase to 13.8 million. Globally, as we are living longer, that number will look epidemic.

I asked Trisha to share her take away thoughts on this stunning day we shared together. Her words are remarkable. “The world of dementia is the ultimate conundrum. There is still much unknown about this disease, (AD), but we are making progress. The more we learn about the causes, the more we learn how much more there is to know. The more cures we attempt, the more possibilities we uncover. Our perseverance to keep going forward is one of our defining human qualities. San Diego seems to be in the forefront of the research; Alzheimer’s San Diego is absolutely the Gold Standard in outreach, creativity, and inclusion.

For caregivers, here are words for the “post it notes” that should be all over your home; “you cannot do this alone,” “your feelings are normal,” “the patient is isolated (in the world of dementia), even while physically present.”

In short, there are discouraging setbacks, even while there are encouraging hints. It is exhausting work, but that’s never stopped us before. Collaboration and Community will lead us through this thicket.”

Susan O’Shaughnessy



...Blake Continued

**Deborah has a love for family.** She is the mother of two children, Julanda and Gregory who are now adults. She also has 5 grandchildren of whom she is very fond of (4 girls and one boy). Although the mother of two and grandmother to five, Deborah has been a mother-figure to many other children and adults and has helped save the lives of many who passed by her home just to talk. More often than not, you will see her with her family having fun and laughing until they can’t breathe. After family events, she makes sure all the dishes are done, trash out and kitchen clean. She still does this every now and then if we let her. She also was a “cheer-mom” and supported Pop Warner Football.

**Deborah loves children...anybody’s children.** She was known as Debs Daycare in her community, and even opened a small business assisting her clients in raising their children. Her expertise and excellence in taking care of children was appreciated and applauded by many kids from the neighborhood. To this day, many of the kids she helped raise still refer to her as “Aunt Debbie”.

**Last but not least, Deborah has a love for God and her Church Family.** She is a member of Choice Harvest Church in El Cajon and a licensed minister. In years past, she has served as a teacher in the children’s church, an usher, a singer in the choir, led and still participates in prayer ministry and worked at altar. She also helped coordinate women’s ministry events. Always willing to help get the job done, the church could always depend on her. She was also very successful at getting donations for various events and those donors became fond of her. Approximately 4 years ago with a burden to feed the hungry, Deb established a food distribution program in partnership with Trader Joe’s. As a result, the church receives over \$500,000 worth of food per year. Currently, there are approximately 50 families served ever week. Deborah is a very supportive person and team player.

Article contributed by Deborah’s family and church



**EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT**

**Ruben Leon-Guzman**

When we say Stellar Care is a family facility, we really mean it. Ruben, the newest addition to our maintenance department, is also the nephew of our two head chefs, and cousin to one of our servers. Since transferring from the kitchen to maintenance last fall, Ruben has become a fast favorite in the community due to his positive attitude and willingness to take on any job. He was born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico, and despite never taking specific language courses, Ruben became fluent in English by watching American cartoons and Sesame Street.

In 2002, Ruben came to the US and got his first job at Martin Furniture, painting furniture and setting down roots. From there, he went on to work at Sids Carpet Barn and Bedrosian Stone before eventually picking up a part time job at Stellar Care as a server. It didn’t take long to realize that he had much more potential, and Ruben has been a star ever since transferring over to our Maintenance department.

In his free time, Ruben enjoys spending time with his three year old son (with another baby on the way!), and working on cars. He really enjoys drag racing with his ’66 Ford Mustang, and is currently saving up to buy a home in San Diego with his wife, so that he won’t have to commute from Tijuana every day. We are truly blessed to have such a kind hearted, hardworking maintenance man in our building.

The courtyard at Stellar Care is being refinished with stamped concrete. The new flooring is part of the remodel of the courtyard, along with the pergola and new furnishings. We are also putting finishing touches on the outer courtyard, off of the conference room in the front of the building. The additional outdoor area will allow our residents, families and friends to enjoy even more of the San Diego sunshine!

**Note for parents of our pet visitors**  
 Our residents and staff enjoy visits by our four legged friends. Please remember to have them on a leash, and when they need to “take care of business”, please take them out to the grassy area in front of the building. (Please be sure to pick up after your pets, as well)  
 Thank you!