



STELLAR CARE Chronicle

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



Celebrating May

Teacher Day
May 2

Astronaut Day
May 5

International Nurses Day
May 12

Endangered Species Day
May 19

Memorial Day
May 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

My Life, As I See It: Judith McConnell

Judith and I sat down in the courtyard, a gentle breeze blowing through and the smell of food being cooked wafting across from the kitchen. I began by talking about a few facts about Judith that I had gleaned from her good friend Edna, and as I did, her eyes lit up and a grin came across her face as she prepared to tell me about her life, as she saw it.

Judith McConnell is one of our tallest residents and a proud fourth generation Southern Californian. Born in the LA area and the oldest of 4 other siblings, she was an energetic child with a hard working spirit and a mischievous glint in her eye, "and quite studious" she added. She was educated at three different universities and graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in English. While up in northern California, she also worked at the Center for the Blind in Oakland, helping the blind as a counselor and running activities for 8 years.

"Ah, food," she said, as a snack cart rolled by, "remember, I am fasting next Monday morning, 8:15." And with that one little interruption/reminder, we were back on track.

Like many bright minded youths at Berkeley during the 1970's, Judith was very politically active. She tackled broader issues that threatened the world, and is particularly proud of participating in the Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament, a nationwide movement to raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear proliferation. It was a journey from Los Angeles to Washington D.C., covering 3,700 miles and taking nine months. During this journey, she worked on the Mental Health Committee, counseling women who were victims of sexual assault during the march. "It was a long journey, but meaningful," she said with a sad smile. We stopped a moment to watch some workers smoothing cement over the courtyard, and then continued.

"I did ground work like that too," remarked Judith. After university, Judith moved down to San Diego and worked for the city of San Diego as part of the Grounds Maintenance crew. She worked around Balboa Park and the San Diego Zoo "back when it was exciting" she said. Furthering her contributions to the city, when Judith left the maintenance department, she joined the San Diego Library system and worked as a library aid for many year.

Continued inside...

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.

** 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.

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

May Birthdays

In astrology, those born between May 1-20 are Pisces. Fish are compassionate, gentle, intuitive, and artistic. Known for their wisdom, Pisces are not judgmental and are very forgiving. They never hesitate to put others' needs before their own.

Those born between May 21-31 are Rams of Aries. As the first sign of the zodiac, Aries are energetic and assertive initiators. With bravery, zeal, and speed, they jump head first into life, confident that they can navigate any challenges.

- Lois G May 1st
- Cora W May 3rd
- Jeanne M May 3rd
- Bob H May 3rd
- Arthur C May 7th
- Patricia N May 20th
- Doris S May 21st
- Pruhna I May 21st
- Nancy R May 23rd
- Callie H May 24th
- Harold J May 26th
- Cathy W May 26th



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“Most of all the other beautiful things in life come by twos and threes, by dozens and hundreds. Plenty of roses, stars, sunsets, rainbows, brothers and sisters, aunts and cousins, but only one Mother in the whole world.” (Kate Douglas Wiggin).

Grocery shopping in Ralph’s, cart leading the way up one aisle and down the next, I am emotionally unattached to the task of choosing each perishable until I find myself in the greeting card section. Just like that, I am knocked over by a wave of grief and the understanding that I don’t get to choose one of those mother’s day cards. It is just five months since my Mom passed away and I am quietly struggling with the small, daily reminders that our earth time together is no more. But the May displays of flowers, chocolates, and poetic verses on Hallmark’s best card stock have caused me to panic and lose my breath. I want to spew my new found wisdom on those shopping the printed sentiments. “Choose carefully, write your own message, hold her hand and hug her just a little bit longer. Tell her ‘thank you,’ whisper ‘I love you.’”

For most of us, the mother – child relationship is our first awareness of human connectedness. We are nursed, loved, protected, corrected and bragged about. As we grow older, we learn that no matter how wrong we are, or how big the mistake is, our mother will be first to rally on our side.

“All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That is his.” (Oscar Wilde). To say that our relationships with our mothers are complicated is understatement. I couldn’t wait to be independent, I would roll my eyes at her advice, remind her she was old-fashioned when she didn’t approve of ideas or new friends. But when I left home and had my own children, I marveled at how much she loved them and how right she was on most occasions. Mothers are masters of guilt and influence, but they are also creative and selfless. Anything, anyone needed, could be found somewhere in Mom’s purse. It was miraculous how it all fit in that square foot of real estate. Growing up in our house, there was no reason to pray to Saint Anthony. If something was lost, Mom knew where you would find it. Samantha of Bewitched could wiggle her nose to complete a task, by my Mom had everything ironed and polished, washed and hung, while cooking a roast and testing us with flash cards. The milkman, newspaper boy, mailman, Fuller brush man, and Good Humor man feared getting her orders wrong. My Dad adored her.

“No matter how old a mother is, she watches her middle aged children for signs of improvement.” (Florida Scott-Maxwell). So, here we are, Medicare card carrying Baby Boomers, who grew up with the best of them; Lucy, Harriet, Donna and June. But even these television queens fell short of what power and control OUR moms held. And as I watch you, the Stellar Care “adult kids” come and visit your moms, I witness the awe and appreciation for who these women still are. You carry your memories in your eyes when you are together, and in your hearts when we are talking privately about care. *“To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors.” (Tia Walker).*

I wish you all a blessed and Happy Mother’s Day. May it be filled with joy, love, honor and gratitude as you celebrate this woman and your relationship.

“Let’s all get up and dance to a song that was a hit before your mother was born. Though she was born a long, long time ago.....your mother should know.....your mother should know.” (Lennon/McCartney).

Susan O’Shaughnessy

Our gang in action



...McConnell Continued

After working as a library aide, Judith attended Mesa College and trained as a physical therapist assistant, and got a job at the VA Hospital in La Jolla until her retirement.

Just as in her younger years, Judith maintained a very active social life in San Diego, and participated in amateur theatre, performing in local plays that some of our readers may have even seen! She also was active as a comedy skit writer, and wrote a hilarious skit detailing her troubles with finding a correctly fitting bathing suit as a tall woman. At the climax of the skit, she whipped off her ensemble, “a gold dress, and a sparkly, spangly little thing, and I had on a tiny too-small bathing suit underneath”. The audience, which included Judith’s mother, was quite surprised. Judith’s mother had a very similar sense of humor, and “she took it rather well”.

Ever the comedy writer, Judith is always in activities with a sly grin on her face, finding the humor in every situation. She is soft spoken, but radiates kindness, and one can always see her mind working to find an extra slice of enjoyment out of each moment.



New Thermostat Controls

To our residents and families,

In an effort to save energy and make living here more comfortable we have just finished installing new thermostat controls that allow us to centrally control our rooms with window-units and monitor our heating and air conditioning throughout the building. This will allow us to know the temperatures of residents’ rooms and keep them comfortable, and is also controlled by computer automations that will adjust the temperature in the units when the rooms are unoccupied. Please bear with us while we continue to make minor adjustments to these automations to make sure each room is kept at a comfortable temperature for our residents.

How it works: Each room has a motion sensor that will adjust the thermostat if there is no motion in the room for 30 minutes. Once motion is detected, it will adjust the thermostat back to the desired temperature, and the thermostat will control the room temperature as normal. This, of course, will not occur at nighttime when residents are sleeping.

If a room is in need of temperature adjustment, please inform a caregiver or the front desk.

Thank you



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

LaVonna Dixie

If you ever walk through our community and hear a gentle yet firm and projecting voice leading activities, and that voice emanates from a big cheeky smile, you have found LaVonna. The exact middle child of seven children, she grew up quiet, and learned to get attention not by being loud and outspoken, but by being hard working and kind.

Born in Moreno Valley, grew up with a love of science fiction novels. With two career-oriented parents and a full house, she learned to treasure her quiet moments to herself.

After high school, LaVonna moved down to San Diego to attend SDSU, where she graduated with a degree in gerontology. Before joining Stellar Care, she worked for half a decade at Starbucks and a Steak and Lobster Restaurant, and her customer service background clearly shows and shines when she is with our residents. She says that her favorite part about working at Stellar Care is knowing that she is helping people and their families, and she particularly loves the warm fuzzy feeling she gets when she is doing all of the little extra things that aren’t “required” (such as helping to organize our resident’s Valentine’s Day Date Night).

Eventually, she plans on going back to school to become a Licensed and Vocational Nurse, and later get her Bachelors of Science in nursing. Until then, we are thrilled to have her in our community brightening the lives of our residents.

BINGO Fundraiser to support Alzheimer’s San Diego

Tuesday, May 30th at 6:30 p.m.
in the Conference Room

Join the fun as we raise funds for
Alzheimer’s San Diego

\$2/card * Play for Prizes
Last Game 50 / 50

For more information call Rachel