

We Are AgeSong

February 2013

Celebrating Life at Any Age

ELDERSHIP EDUCATION

by Nader Shabahangi, AgeSong CEO

On February 22, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, at the Forget-Me-Not Cafe, 602 Hayes Street, San Francisco, Nader will introduce a new educational idea: teaching eldership to those who desire to grow into the role of the elder.

Elders Academy prepares us through education for the second half of life. Although societies have found ways to initiate us for the demands of our first half of life through educating us for adulthood and middle adulthood, we are often less prepared to face the second half of life.

Elders Academy re-establishes an important role that has been lost in the last few centuries of our industrialization: the role of the elder, once the most revered role in our human communities.

Being older does not make an elder. If we want to help individuals living in our communities and societies, we need to train elders with the important tasks of supporting and guiding those younger in age and experience.

Elders Academy is this place within which we can learn to become elders at any age. Our second half of life, rather than being a burden or a period of decline, is understood as the most important part of our life for which the first half was but preparation. ♣

A VISIT TO CAFE LA VIE: CAFE OF LIFE



there are changing art exhibits on the walls. Everyone is friendly.”

On the way back to Laguna Grove, next to Hayes and

Kebab, we passed a wall with large murals. Dale was intrigued with the blue mural. Laguna Grove is ideally located in the most happening neighborhood in San Francisco. When you visit the community, see if you can figure out why Dale found the blue mural across the street so intriguing.

This article is part of ECO-Trek, elders exploring and contributing to the neighborhood environment. To read more, visit www.agesongtoday.com/4772/a-visit-to-cafe-la-vie. ♣



INSIDE:

<i>SF GERO-Wellness Program</i>	<i>Page 2</i>
<i>Meet Ashley</i>	<i>Page 2</i>
<i>Share The Visit</i>	<i>Page 3</i>
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	<i>Page 3</i>
<i>Staff Contacts</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
<i>Featured Staff & Intern</i>	<i>Page 4</i>

What better place to visit every day than Cafe La Vie, the cafe of life? That’s a favorite destination of Dale and his dog, Bambi.

“I also take Bambi to the dog park,” Dale noted. On a sunny day in January, Dale was happy to have an opportunity to walk Bambi on flat, paved sidewalks, accompanied by his companion Kevin, a gero-wellness intern counselor at AgeSong, Laguna Grove Elder Community.

“Why do you and Dale prefer Cafe La Vie to other cafes in the neighborhood?” I asked Kevin. He replied, “The lines are shorter and locals get a discount. Plus the coffee is good and

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MEET ASHLEY, Who Makes All Visitors Feel Immediately Welcome

Do you remember how uncomfortable it was to go into a new place for the first time? An even more uncomfortable experience is visiting an assisted living community for the first time.



When you visit AgeSong at Laguna Grove, you feel immediately at home. The first person who greets you is Ashley Calloway, who has served as receptionist

for AgeSong over the past year. Ashley is a friendly, down-to-earth professional. She remembers your name if you come back a second time. Following is an interview.

How did you get to be so friendly?

Everyone here is like family to me. I speak with residents like they are members of my family. I love social environments. I used to work at the Hyatt with guests from all over the world.

Did you come from a large family?

I only have 1 sister, but my mother has 4 sisters. My grandmother, who has three sisters, was born in Mississippi as one of 18 children. Her mother (my great-grandmother) is still alive. Three of my grandmother's sisters live in California. All the other brothers and sisters live down south.

What might you want to do in the future for work?

Whatever I do in the future will be medical related work, and of course will include interacting with people. ☘

AGESONG GERO-WELLNESS PROGRAM A Unique Relationship between Counselor Interns and Community

Pre- and post-doctoral intern counselors apply AgeSong's Central Vision in a unique reciprocal program, unequalled in eldercare. Following is a recent interview with AgeSong Clinical Supervisors.

What do you do in your role as Clinical Supervisor?

As one of four Clinical Supervisors, I meet two hours a week with pre-doctoral students and one hour a week with the rest of the intern counselors. I review their interactions with residents, treatment plans, and goals. In addition, I supervise a two-hour weekly group of students, in which each student presents a case.

Each Clinical Supervisor is responsible for 7 to 12 intern counselors with whom they meet both individually and in a group. We all have doctorates in clinical psychology, with different specialty areas.

How do you and the other clinical supervisors keep up your skills?

Once a month we meet with Lane Ayre and Nader to discuss cases and further our knowledge and skills of existential, process-oriented psychotherapy.

What other kinds of training do intern counselors have?

Guest speakers provide training in their areas of competence. For example, Contance Hunt, AgeSong Enrichment Coordinator, does expressive

arts with the intern counselors.

Intern counselors also present to their peers groups they are facilitating with residents and families, covering such areas as music, art, storytelling, baking, reminiscence, and "Time Slips" (a program that allows residents to create stories). I am very impressed with this year's intern counselors and have seen amazing changes with residents, such as improvements in their health and interactions with others.

What do intern counselors do outside of supervision?

They go to care plan meetings once a week, participate in "stand-up" every weekday morning, and do "milieu therapy," which means helping with groups other than the ones for which they are the primary facilitator. They work in the community on different floors, accompany clients to appointments, field trips and outings.

Several intern counselors take residents for walks throughout the week. Since they work on different days, two or more intern counselors may accompany an elder to get cookies, go to yoga class, or visit Dolores Park, concerts, or the ball game.

Community members appreciate the personal attention and creativity that the intern counselors bring and the counselors, in return, appreciate the experience of working so closely with elders in such a reciprocal relationship. ☘

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SHARE THE VISIT:

AgeSong Communities Introduce Web-based Care Circles

*In our effort to continually improve our quality of care services, AgeSong is pleased to introduce **Share the Visit**, a new technology that will allow our families to be even more informed and involved with their loved one's care, even when they cannot physically be on site at the community.*

Starting in February, 2013, AgeSong Assisted Living and Elder Communities will be offering *ShareTheVisit*, a secure Web platform that brings modern-day communication to healthcare. Participants will include AgeSong community members' entire care circle, GERO-wellness interns, staff, physicians, and families.

ShareTheVisit's mission is to leverage technology to improve the lives of patients, families and healthcare professionals through coordination and communication. Online care coordination and communication will be available through email, texting and videoconferencing. "We are very excited to be the first assisted living community to introduce this service to residents," notes Dinah Bailes, AgeSong COO.

AgeSong and *ShareTheVisit* have partnered to offer better care for their clients, improved internal staff communication, and convenient, active involvement for family. Because *ShareTheVisit* works for both healthcare professionals and residents' families, AgeSong is improving the quality of care provided by their healthcare team while actively involving loved ones.

ShareTheVisit began out of a personal challenge. One of the founders, a physician, a daughter and a mother, began to



struggle with an aging, ailing parent who lived across the country. Unable to leave her work and young family for long periods of time, it struck her that in every other aspect of her life, social and professional, she was easily able to incorporate modern day communication technologies such as texting, email and video. But when it came to the care of her parent, there were no secure, private communication tools available to facilitate her involvement and keep her in the loop. *ShareTheVisit* was born. ♣

For more information about AgeSong's new Web-based communication service for residents and their care team, contact Jim Johnson. jimj@agesong.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Forget-Me-Not Cafe
602 Hayes Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

RSVP: Marlena del Hierro
marlena@agesong.com, 415.318.8672

Friday, Feb. 8 | 2:30 PM-4:30 PM
Tea Dancing in memory of Marion Rosen, Somatics Pioneer

Friday, Feb. 22 | 4:00 PM- 6:00 PM
**Introduction to Elders Academy:
Eldership Education for the
Second Half of Life**
Presenter: Nader Shabahangi
AgeSong Founder & CEO

AgeSong Today

AgeSong Institute & Bay Area Elder Communities Online Journal

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We Are AgeSong

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FEATURED STAFF:

Marlena del Hierro – Taking Time Out To Meet Priorities



Every day, Marlena del Hierro, AgeSong’s Director of Community Outreach and Education, comes to AgeSong with a smile. She works with both the greater community and the AgeSong community to help people in need find comfort as residents.

A California native, Marlena moved to San Francisco in 2010 to earn a Master's degree in Gerontology at San Francisco State University. Upon completion of the SFSU program in 2012, she sought employment in a community-based assisted living situation to enhance her long-term career development. AgeSong’s unique programs and mission were very attractive to her, as were the possibilities to work with great mentors.

It’s almost impossible to describe her actual job, because she does so much – from assessing a new client for admission to conducting an in-service at a local hospital. No matter how busy she is, she will take time out when something more important takes priority. Just yesterday, a AgeSong resident needed a companion to accompany her to a medical procedure. Marlena stepped right in to go with her. Marlena is a gem. ❀

FEATURED INTERN-COUNSELOR:

Chris Davis, Creative Advocate for Elders and Educating the Public

Chris Davis chose the PsyD program at Saybrook University because of its humanistic-person centered, existential-process oriented approach to psychology. AgeSong was her first choice in internship possibilities because it offered the opportunity to work and continue learning in this orientation. She loves the emphasis on flexibility and creativity at AgeSong!

Chris earned a Masters Degree in Education from the University of San Francisco, which emphasized the person-centered and humanistic approach to learning. Her

BFA is in Fine Art from the San Francisco Art Institute. Professionally she is interested in psycho-education, policy, and advocacy. She has a vision for educating the public about the changes taking place in the field of mental health and encouraging people to be proactive about mental well being. Her focus is on elders because they are often the most at risk for conditions that are easily preventable.



Chris certainly is a stellar example of why our intern counselors make the Gero-Wellness program work. Her creative advocacy and out-of-the-box thinking keep the team on their toes and the residents smiling. She is always willing to go above and beyond to help figure out what will work. Her smile and attitude are contagious! ❀

The articles on this page are by Cristina Flores, Ph.D. RN, AgeSong Chief Program Officer.