



CHAMPIONS

Aging in Community

Dedication

The leadership provided by Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust has supported many worthwhile programs in the region. Under the direction of Dr. Judy Mohraz, Piper Trust has garnered national acclaim in just 12 short years. Since it began awarding grants in 2000, Piper Trust has invested more than \$300 million in local nonprofits and programs.

In particular, the tenacity and knowledge of Piper's Trust's Program Director, Carol Kratz, make an indelible impression on many efforts, including this one. In her former position as Human Services Manager at MAG, she elevated regional human services planning to be an important focus in this region. At Piper Trust, Ms. Kratz's work is respected outside this region and throughout the country. Ms. Kratz was pioneering aging in place efforts long before others realized their importance. With attention now focused on this issue, Ms. Kratz's efforts are further recognized as innovative and impressive. Her endurance, focus on leveraging the strengths of older adults, and skill in bringing people together creates long-lasting achievements, nurtures other leaders, and results in making the region a better place to live for people of all ages. This book is dedicated to Ms. Kratz out of gratitude and appreciation.

Sincere thanks are also extended to Grantmakers in Aging and Pfizer Foundation for supporting the development of this book as part of the region's participation in the Community AGEnda, a national pilot project designed to promote age-friendly cities.



Carol Kratz, Program Director at Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, Champion, Mentor, Friend

Introduction

The trend showing increasing numbers of older adults represents a monumental shift for society. All communities are facing the same increases in the numbers of people aged 65 years and more. The Pew Research Center estimates 10,000 people will turn 65 every day for the next 19 years. This is not confined to any one geographic area or any one demographic. At the same time, aging is an intensely personal issue. The topic of aging causes one to confront the issue of mortality. We are all aging, yet most share a persistent

denial of that fact. It is not uncommon to hear someone saying they don't want to go somewhere because it's full of "old people," despite being in their 90s themselves. In the end, perhaps "being old" isn't so much about the number of years, but more an expression of one's abilities, condition, and mindset.

The idea for this book came about from listening to people's mixed feelings about getting older and their very clear and consistent goals to remain independent, connected to community, and living in their

own homes. With support from Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, Grantmakers in Aging, and Pfizer Foundation, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is undertaking regional planning to assist people in aging in community more successfully. The desire to age in community is a widespread priority in the region, as documented by the MAG Municipal Aging Services Project funded by Piper Trust. People's concerns about their ability to age in community were also documented by that same effort. This book honors the

people who are aging in community well and supports others who wish to do the same. The success stories that can illustrate the path forward are not to be found in best practices in other parts of the country, but right here in this region, within the lives of people quietly navigating the biggest shift of our time. ∞



Family

Connections to Each Other

The ability to connect with other people is one of the most basic human needs. People need people. With age, one's circle of support can grow smaller. The following stories are from people who have found ways to expand their circle of support with profoundly positive benefits. Family, community, and volunteering provide outlets to explore new relationships that enhance the life of the individual and the strength of the community.

My Mum is almost 88 years old and is adored by everyone who meets her. She grows smaller with age due to scoliosis, but her skin is beautiful, her eyes are bright, and she looks like an angel with her long silver curls piled on top of her head. She really is charming, sweet, kind, thoughtful and beautiful. There seems to be an aura around her that makes people want to be in her company. On top of all that, she has an English accent, which makes people hang on her every word. She has always been a wonderful cook and

even though she lives alone, most of her meals are little gourmet works of art. Due to some medications she takes, she has to eat fairly often, but she still takes time to create tempting little snacks that look like they should be photographed before eaten.

Mornings are her delight. She is out with the early sun watering all her treasures in the garden. Sometimes a patch of wild daisies didn't come up in the right spot so she'll gently dig them up and lovingly plant them elsewhere. She does all this after she has made sure all the cats

have been properly fed and watered. The inside kitties first, and then any outside strays that find her garden as their permanent or temporary hangout. Some might need special feeding, like "Mouth," who showed up one day with a broken jaw and could only eat soft food. After all is just as it should be, she'll go back to bed until the sun comes around to the window and she feels the rays on her face. Then she'll get up, make a nice cup of tea and another snack, or perhaps a proper little lunch. Usually in the afternoons she has a special

sunny spot in the house and gets all comfy with a good book. If it's a real exciting novel that gets her all worked up, she'll take another little nap. Come evening, she lights up the living room, puts my favorite news channel on and waits for me to pop in for a visit after work.

That's my Mum and I love her.

Hope: My mother-in-Law, Hope, has been in my life for over 30 years. She has been by herself for about 20 of those years. Before she retired, she worked at Food City and seemed to be the person who got functions together. She was always involved. When she retired she got involved with the YMCA and other groups. She is not a substitute instructor there, she has gotten other women involved. She coordinates day trips to the casinos. She has become involved in the American Legion-Post 42. She stays active and still puts together potlucks.

I this it's terrific that she keeps active. However, the true reason I'm submitting



this is because, two-and-a-half years ago, my father passed away. This left my mother heartbroken and lonely. They had been together for just over 50 years. It saddened me to see her so sad and broke my heart to see her cry all the time. I asked

Above: Mum in her garden.

Photo courtesy of Juanita Roberts



Above: Hope at home
Photo courtesy of MAG

my mother-in-law to perhaps ask my mother, Trini, to get back involved in the Silver Sneakers program. She gave her time to heal. Soon, though, Hope did ask; however, Trini wasn't ready.

Trini attended grief counseling. It didn't seem to help and she still cried every day. Even

going to the grocery store was hard for her. I knew and still know she is missing my father, her best friend, her lifetime companion.

Hope didn't give up and she knew when the time would be good, when Trini was ready. I was holding a party at my home and asked Hope to pick my mom up; she did. At that time she was able to convince

my mom to get involved. Since then, Hope has my mom going back to grief counseling and staying for the potluck afterward. Hope got my mom to join the Legion and now she helps out there. They even go to the casinos together with other friends.

I know my mom still misses my dad, but she is living again. I am so thankful to my mother-in-law. Because she stayed active and involved, she was able, I think, to save my mom from a continued path of sadness. I can't say thank you enough.

Jeanne: I grew up in a family of grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, and two sisters. We were taught many lessons through actions, not words. You were respectful to the older generation and they respected you. You had your place in the family rules and duties. If you stepped over the line, you expected to be punished by losing a privilege; okay but fair! Phoenix was small when I grew up. Family and friends all watched out for each other. That has been

pretty much the same for my children. We ran loose in the neighborhoods, now freedoms are limited. Too bad!

Jeanne: I have lived long enough to enjoy my great grandchildren and the many different generations.

Elke: My mom was an inspiration to me and still is.

Ralph: I have a wife who loves and appreciates me. I'm a better man because of her.

Anita: My children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren have helped me live this life.

Betty: Love of family has helped me live.

Dora: I have a son who has worked for three Governors. He is a detective. Another son retired as a detective from the City of Phoenix, where he worked for 33 years. I

have a son who is a mechanic; another son has worked for a construction company for 20 years. I have a daughter who has worked in the school system for 40 years and another daughter who is a housewife with two boys and two girls.

Curtistine: My faith in God, my family, my friends and the people I serve have helped me to live my life.

Amy: My grandparents, Ann and Ernie, shared a fierce and unending love for each other. When he became paralyzed, she became his caretaker, never leaving his side. Following doctor's orders, she put his lifeless legs through exercises every day. When he passed away, she continued the exercises



Above: Mel and Sharon
Photo courtesy of MAG



Above: Antoinette and Ernest
Photo courtesy of Amy St. Peter

on her own legs, trying to hold onto a piece of him and a routine they shared for a long time. A beautiful network of friends and family supported them in their own home for years. Their daughter, my mother, was their lifeline and would visit often and take them to appointments and shopping. A neighbor would look for the blinds to be raised

every day in one particular window. If the blinds remained down by mid-morning, that was a sign something was wrong and the neighbor would come over. A sister who lived across the street and friends a few houses down were constant sources of companionship through the festivities of poker games at night, tears shed

during life's tougher moments, or frequent laughter as they reminisced about youthful antics. Though separated by thousands of miles, years past, and their passing from this life to the next, the sense of community and the close bonds of family they gave me still guide my life today.

Neil: These things help me to live my life: the positive outlook that I learned from my parents, staying healthy, living life with integrity, a strong sense of resiliency, respecting my wife at all times, and promoting the capacity to find the hope in the hurt and the good in the bad. My father instilled a strong work ethic, as I started working at age 10 delivering newspapers. I have typically worked one full-time job and held one or two part-time positions. But I balanced this with trying to be a good father to my adopted children and my foster children. I was a single father for nine years and learned

the importance of being there for our wonderful children.

Sara: Lo mejor de mi vida son mis hijos — *The best thing about my life is my children.*

Carol: I want my two adult children and seven grandchildren to see how wonderful life can be in retirement. I do miss them since they still live in the Midwest, but we travel to see them and invite them to Arizona whenever possible. I think that self-care isn't selfish. It is necessary if we are to give to others we care about. Life is good. I'm 66, happy to be alive, healthy and married to a wonderful man, my best friend.

Elizabeth: A song in her heart and a spring in her step, a smile on her face, and friends everywhere are the things that describe Elizabeth, a centenarian with an interesting life that goes beyond her many years. Making a difference by brightening other's lives has been her story. With her

hubby at her side, she shares the milestones that make her who she is. As a young woman of 19 years of age from Colorado, she moved to Montana and opened a dance studio. She married a young doctor who was in the United States Air Force. He spent four years away during WWII, leaving Elizabeth to care for two small children alone. After raising her children and losing her husband, she moved to California, and married again. They enjoyed hunting, camping, fishing, dancing and singing before they moved to Arizona to enjoy golf, tennis and dancing. She misses the RV trips most of all, but still enjoys bridge and social activities.



Above: Older adults performers
Photo courtesy of Mesa Arts Center

Community

Carmen: We all leave our outside lights on at night. Also, we watch each other's homes and pets for each other when needed.

Xiuzhu: 生活在凤凰城，可以去中国老年人活动中心参加那里举办的各种活动，如学习，跳舞，唱歌，打麻将等，且交通方便。 — *Living in Phoenix, the Chinese Senior Center gives many activities, including studying, dancing, singing, card playing. The transportation is good.*

Lidia: I love my neighbors.

Ralph: My wife and I were homeless, living out of our car, sleeping in Walmart parking lots. Because we picked up trash around the area that we parked and never panhandled, security became very protective of us (even with police). We applied for social security (SSI), food stamps, medical, etc. So we never wanted for anything and grew closer to one another. We found that the Lord was watching out for us.

Mary: By becoming acquainted with lots of neighbors, we all share food, sorrows, and joys with each other.

Anna: I am connected to community through church activities and yoga. I teach Spanish to retirees. I am involved with a sportsmen's club, lady friend luncheons, dancing, outdoor activities like gardening and walking. I am in a computer club. I enjoy reading good books and listening to good music.

Sunnyslope Center, by Carey

Was sitting here at home,
Talking to myself.
Feeling like a relic,
On a forgotten shelf.

Trying to get by each day,
Hoping I could cope,
When I was invited to the
community center
Here called Sunnyslope.

I took a shower,
Combed my hair,
And thought I'd take a chance.
I found a place full of fun and laughter
Where seniors like to dance.

The staff was warm and friendly
And I felt right at ease.
There was singing, games and bingo
Lots of stuff to please.

The food was good, the coffee strong,
I'd found a place where I belonged.
I'm so thankful I now have hope
At the community center called Sunnyslope.



Above: Older adults find connections and support at the Sunnyslope Senior Center.

Inset: Carey

Photos courtesy of Sunnyslope Senior Center



Above: Takashi throwing clay on a wheel.
Photo courtesy of the Mesa Arts Center

Guadalupe: Sentirme feliz con todas las personas que me rodean es lo que me ha ayudado a vivir mi vida. — *Feeling happy with all the people around me has helped me live my life.*

Juanita: No me gusta la soledad. En siendo amigable y convivir con los demás me siento relacionada a mi comunidad. — *I don't like solitude. I am connected to my community by being friendly and living life with others.*

Sergio: La mejor parte de mi vida es estar bien de salud y convivir con los demás. Me siento relacionado a mi comunidad por medio de las amistades que he formado con mis vecinos. — *Being of good health and living with others is the best part of my life. I am connected by the friendship we share as neighbors.*

Neil: The best parts about my life are my relationship with my wonderful wife and

my 16 year-old daughter, being a foster father, working full time at a job that I love, teaching college as adjunct faculty, volunteering weekly as an ordained deacon and at a food pantry, and being able to stay active and practice my faith through social justice efforts. I hope to age well into my 80s.

Alicia: Me gusta compartir con los demás y convivir la vida. — *I enjoy life and being around others.*

Terry: I think being curious and having a sense of adventure is very important. I enjoy traveling and visiting places. I like to learn about other's lifestyles and languages. I have had experiences and have met interesting people, traveling alone. I enjoy traveling with others, but going alone, don't let that stop you. I have met many good friends while traveling alone that I might not have met if I had been traveling with a companion.

Volunteering

Melvin: Volunteering at Benevilla keeps us young and this is a great organization that helps the communities in many ways. As one ages, if you do not keep doing things, you will lose your self-worth.

Lenore: I'm very involved as a hospice volunteer, a spiritual caregiver, taking part in physical and spiritual activities.

Mildred: Some people feel left out and are lonely because they don't join in the activities that are available to them in the local

clubs and their church. They could get to know more people if they were friendlier by volunteering and sharing their talents.

Ronald: My wife of 55 years and I have had over 30 people live with us. They have been family, friends, and strangers. We have been Senior Companions for seven years and have impacted many lives. It is a joy to be able to give and receive love and joy and happiness. It is a great life.

Mary: I wanted to make a difference.

Lester: Lester hungers for a better world. And for the past 35 years, he channeled that desire into feeding the poor. The 96-year-old La Loma Village resident and his wife, who passed away in 2009, helped establish a major food bank in Houston in the 1980s, he volunteered for several years at the Westside Food Bank in Sun City doing what he called "grunt work," and more recently he's helped organize food collection drives at La Loma Village to benefit St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix. But Lester's longest-running hunger



Above: Pat and Lester, residents of La Loma Village

Photo courtesy Sun Health

relief project has been the CROP Hunger Walk, a charity event organized by Church World Service to raise funds to alleviate hunger worldwide. On Feb. 24, 2013, the retiree participated in his 21st CROP Walk since the 1980s. Lester and a group of friends walked about 3K along the West Valley course. “I’ve

been having some stability problems lately, so this year I used a walker and we walked the shorter distance,” Lester said. He used to log 10K for the event. Despite the challenges, his fervor for the cause remains strong.

“They do fabulous work,” Lester said of Church World Service. “This walk is a

good way to support local and international hunger relief efforts.”

According to Lester, his daughter refers to him as the “most cock-eyed optimist” that she knows, and the label fits. At an age when most people are somewhat sedentary, Lester keeps plugging along, motivated by his zeal to help those in need. (He also is a strong advocate for public education). “I have to have a purpose in life; I can’t relax and let the world pass me by. Hunger relief gives me a meaningful purpose.”

Toni: I live in Heritage East and do more than my share of volunteer work. I am 85 and the director and accompanist for the Tempe *Looney Tooner Kitchen Band*. Our band consists of a dozen seniors that rehearse every Monday morning and perform between four to six shows a month at nursing homes, adult care centers, hospitals and schools. I am also an Audrey Angel, and as an Angel, I perform

on the piano at homes that take care of infirm seniors. I started taking lessons at Arcadia Music Academy in Phoenix in 2002. It proves if you make your mind up to do something, you can accomplish it. I received two awards in 2006, The “Something Good Spirit” and “Ageless Hero” awards. Thanks!

Marvin: My mission in life is to always help people. By doing this, it gives me not only a feeling of well-being, but more importantly, a feeling of being independent and worthwhile living.

Jean: Several years ago I had a stroke at age 85. Since I didn’t recover well enough except to walk with a cane, and my vision was impaired so that I could no longer drive or do art work that had been my hobby, I was pretty much confined to my home. I found myself staring at the walls, TV, or trying to read as well as possible. I felt I had no useful purpose in life except



to wait to die. Then I remembered what joy it had given me to volunteer as a tutor for adults who wanted to learn to speak, read and write English. I asked the local literacy program if I could have a student and they found one for me! Fortunately,

Above: Marvin at a MAG Transportation Ambassador Program Conference
Photo courtesy of MAG



Above: La Loma Village residents exercise together.

Photo courtesy of Sun Health

I had received training through their program years previously, and they provided the materials for me, found a very nice 75-year-old lady from El Salvador who spoke no English who sincerely wanted to learn English and could come to my home twice a week. She

is happy to have the opportunity to learn, I am overjoyed to be useful again, and we are both satisfied. The Southwest Valley Literacy Program is pleased to serve one more student for the community's benefit.

Doris: Doris, a 69-year-old volunteer at Paradise Valley Senior Center in Phoenix, is a perfect candidate for living life to its

fullest. She grew up on a farm in up-state Pennsylvania. When a family had a problem, sickness or hardship, it became a community interest.

“Once my father had blood clots in his legs, and 30 to 40 people showed up at our farm to cut and stack firewood to see us through the harsh winter,” she said.

“In 1979, I moved to Phoenix with my two youngest daughters, after working for 13 years here in the Valley in direct sales,” she added. Doris and her husband, Jim, now 71, then decided to go “RV-ing” full time. The couple sold the house and purchased a motor home. Travels included the Florida Keys, and week-long stays in Tennessee and the Carolinas. They spent summers in Oregon on a horse ranch. When she was 50 years old, healthy and outgoing at the time, she made friends easily. While staying at a mobile home park for seniors (in Phoenix), she gave a ride to a group of older residents to an Open House for a new senior center. She

started helping out that very day, and was asked to continue. Doris has served over 20 years as a volunteer and as a senior companion. “I have received love, support, and help from all of the people that I worked with,” she said. “I learned about different groups and programs that benefit senior citizens to let them live in their homes longer. We get transportation, food and friendship.”

She tried to give back by helping two days a week at the senior center and whenever needed. She also helps the people at her mobile home park. She is the current manager of the El Camino Mobile Home Park in Phoenix. “The information that I have filed on programs to help seniors now helps the tenants at the mobile home community.”

Doris has organized a food bank for tenants who donate to it on a regular basis. If the tenants are in need of other items, Doris has been known to transport seniors to the local emergency food bank facility.



She also distributes monthly senior center newsletters to the mobile home park, and rotates reading materials from the center’s lending library to the park for seniors to enjoy. She has been known to enlist the aid of the Phoenix neighborhood services

Above: Herb assists in the office.
Photo courtesy of City of Scottsdale



Above: Grandma Feroza with grandchildren.
Photo courtesy of Nathalea Silva

division to assist seniors with needed home repairs that have included roof repair, new furnaces, air conditioning units and painting. To date, she has successfully assisted 14 homeowners in getting

their houses painted, and others with new stoves, refrigerators and needed appliances. Some disabled seniors have been aided by Doris with getting help with ramps and rails for easy access in and out of their homes. She has also provided the needed information to connect seniors with the popular “Meals on Wheels” program.

Doris also supports the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). The particular program is “Send a Kid to Camp” lock-up. Doris volunteers to be locked up in a “mock jail.” She and other volunteers are asked to call friends, co-workers and family to assist in making her “bail.” The monies are then used to send children to camp in Payson, Arizona. It takes \$800 to send one child to camp. Doris has been doing this for four years. She has raised between \$500 - \$1,000 annually. She has strong feelings for the children. Aside from the “lock-up,” she initiates auctions, raffles and requests for donations to raise the

needed funds to reach her goal of sending one child to camp. Most of her donors are seniors on fixed incomes.

The first time she collected for MDA was in Jamestown, New York. Doris organized the neighborhood children for a street fair. This was in the early 70s, when Jerry Lewis became the national spokesperson for MDA.

“Time changes and we get older,” said Doris. “Our health and older bodies limit us in what we can do. Our thoughts are the same, although tempered by knowledge and experience...awakening each day is a wonder and a pleasure. I celebrate each one,” she said.

Betty: Betty (known to friends as BJ) really enjoys staying busy. She’s recorded more than 14,000 hours of volunteer service for Sun Health Foundation since 1997. To put Betty’s commitment into perspective, she’s averaged more than 933 hours of volunteer service annually, filling a variety of roles in-

side Banner Boswell Medical Center and at various Sun Health Foundation events. A Type-A personality always on the go, Jamieson said she simply had to stay busy following retirement from a hectic corporate job. Her abundance of spare time grew even more intolerable two years after the death of her husband.

“I said to myself, ‘I’d better do something quick or I’ll start running crazy around the neighborhood,’” Jamieson said. “It’s been very satisfying. There are plenty of opportunities; the only thing you have to do is accept the responsibility.” Jamieson added she loves the flexibility in volunteer assignments.



Above: BJ volunteering
Photo courtesy of Sun Health



Above: Older adults walking along the trail.

Photo courtesy of MAG

“Everything you can imagine is available,” she said. “I loved knowing I could try something out, and if it didn’t work for me, there would be other opportunities available.”

Liz: Liz is a faithful volunteer volunteering at least once each week for two different organizations. No matter what the weather, she is bright and cheerful always. She has gone beyond in many ways. She enjoys “people contact.” When meeting her, one will immediately know she is dependable. Liz shared, “The dedication of the volunteers who are easing the way for those needing a little help make it a pleasure to be a volunteer.” Her greatest motivator as a volunteer is hearing “Thank you,” or, “I would never be able to stay in my home without your help.” The biggest priority she has is “that we continue to do all that we can to make it possible to make the transitions as we age less traumatic.” Liz said, “Anyone wanting a wonderful

volunteering experience should see how powerful taking care of our neighbors makes you feel!”

Anonymous: I volunteer because it makes my heart sing.

Esther: Esther is a delight. She just celebrated her 94th birthday. She was born and raised in Kansas, where she met her husband. After he passed away, she moved to Arizona to improve her income as a single woman. Her favorite pastime was garage sales. She had a passion in helping her neighbor with grocery shopping and errands. She is a kind and generous friend to those who help others in need. She is a wonderful, compassionate person who is a pleasure to meet. Esther appreciates the help she gets from community volunteers and says, “If I didn’t have them, I could not stay in my home.” ☺

Impact of Aging in Community

The ability to remain living in one's home independently, or to age in community, is a priority held by many in this region. They want choices over where and how they live. Aging in place gives people these choices and most often improves their health and happiness and supports the relationships they have in their neighborhoods. The following stories recount the impacts achieved when people age in place within their communities of choice.

Caren: I am living independently, not having to answer to anybody but me. I am refusing to let my age stop me from doing things like getting out and visiting with friends.

Ramona: Before my divorce in 2008, I had never lived by myself or been responsible for all of my own life. There were always children or a husband to think of, often to my detriment. I find that I am loving making my own decisions, doing what I want to do without making excuses

for it. I absolutely love my independence. I love my life and each year it seems to get better. My daughter is proud of me and the things I do.

Clarice: I am successfully aging by being in my own home doing the things I like to do.

Anna: Every day I feel that I must pinch myself to realize that it was not a dream but all is real: the support of good friends, proper diet, exercise, and a multitude of

opportunities. What more can anyone need or want?

Curtistine: I did it my way, taking care of myself and being mindful of others.

Diane: I am aware of everything around me and I am able to think, respond, act and remember things.

Marie: I enjoy the freedom of being able to do what I want to do, live in my own house, and to enjoy the weather of Arizona.



Participants of the *Mature Moving Me* class
Photo courtesy of the Mesa Arts Center.

Enrique: It makes me feel wanted.

Lenore: I can continue to do the things I enjoy. I enjoy helping others.

Anonymous: I'm not done yet.

Clarice: I like my life because I can be independent.

Dora: What I like best about my life is that I like to help others and that my family is close to each other.

Enrique: What I like best about my life is that I am living it.

Judy: I have food and shelter.

Linda: I am sharing love, laughter and joy, and hugs from others.

Mary: I'm still alive and function well.

Ramona: I am almost 70 and not only independent, but also have the ability to help other seniors continue to be more or move back toward independence.

Trisa: I am single and get to have friends. I like to dance and have fun in the center doing things. I talk to persons at the center and church and go with my family.

Anonymous: My life is very enjoyable, relaxing, and I am in good health. The weather is beautiful and we never experience anything severe except heavy rains. You can enjoy the outdoors, walking, riding a bike, or whatever you prefer.

Betty: My story has been lived by very few people. I want the world to know you can come from the other side of the tracks and still make it. I love this country. I think more adults who have had interesting lives should leave a legacy and help this world. People need to know that the American Dream is still available, but you must have a moral code to stick with and live by.

Gretchen: Thankfully, I still drive (does that scare you to death? I'm 85). I think

it helps mentally and emotionally and makes you want to get out and "do" things because you can.

Sara: I have always lived life to the fullest, enjoying my family and friends and most importantly, having faith in God.

Neil: At only 65, I feel very lucky that I am healthy and able to be active and do quite a bit. As a baby boomer, I have felt that the issues that we encountered as we came of age impacted our vision of the world and our responsibilities in it: the civil rights movement, Beatle mania, the Vietnam war, the Cuban missile crisis, Watergate, Motown, protests against the draft, the women's movement, Woodstock, and the environmental movement all tended to shape our perception of being very different from our parents' and grandparents' generations. I do not plan to retire. I do not see the attraction of playing cards, moving to Sun City, taking up golf or shuffleboard, or driving a golf



Above: Betty
Photo courtesy of Sun Health



Above: Art class

Photo courtesy of the Mesa Arts Center

cart around town. To me, aging in place means continuing to provide foster care in our four-bedroom home because my wife Denise and I love raising children. It means jogging, exercising at the club and eating

healthy so we can continue to be physically active. It means working full time because I love my job and not just because we need the income. It means living in a neighborhood with all kinds of people, young and old, Native, black, Latino and white, higher income and lower income, able bodied and limited ability, gay and straight, and of different faiths and no faith. It means being able to do what we want to do, not what previous generations expected us to do.

Anonymous: What I like best about my life is freedom of movement, coming and going as I please, having good enough health to be active, able and loving it. To assist others and helping others enjoy themselves and life in general.

Sharon B.: I am able to stay independent and not have to rely on my friends and family. My family lives on the East Coast and it's important to me to be able to visit

them and have them visit me. My husband died 8.5 years ago and being able to establish a new life for myself after that has made all the difference. I think it's the most important thing a person can do if widowed or divorced.

Ed and Sharon V.: My kids tell me I should slow down, take time just for me and pursue activities with people and things I love. At 13,000 feet above the earth and 90 miles per hour, I couldn't agree more. "We're at a point in our lives where we want to look back and know we got the most we could out of our retirement years."

Louise: At this time, "aging in place" hasn't been on my radar. It could be because I'm only 64. However, "aging in place" is a lifestyle that I suppose I will have to "grow into" as I continue to move through the years. This is a new time of exploration. Everything can be new again,

but it is a newness mixed with more life experiences than when I was exploring in my youth. ☮



Above: Ed and Sharon
Photo courtesy of Sun Health

Tips to Age in Community

There are people in our lives, neighborhoods, and families who are living their lives to the fullest and making every moment count. We all aspire to this. The following tips are thoughts shared by people aged 60 years plus in our region who are still growing, learning, and enjoying life. As Carol explained, “Retirement has been a lot like kindergarten. I get to go back and do all the things I never had time to do before.”

Xiuzhu: 每个生活在凤凰城的老人都需要适应这里的生活，每天坚持散步，积极参加中心的各种活动，如学习英文，电脑知识等，以便使自己能够独立生活。— *As senior people living in Phoenix, we need to get used to the life here, keep daily walking and exercise, attend to the activities like learning English and computer hosted by the Center, and make our own life more independent.*

Gretchen: I am interested in everything—theatre, movies, books, music, but

most of all, people. I’ve finally learned not to pass personal judgment and to be grateful for the good life I have.

Betty: Take one day at a time.

Carmencita: Learn to live independently. Grow in wisdom and age before God and men graciously, come what may. Keep one’s goal, in health and sickness. Trust in God’s divine providence. Be constantly on the positive side of life. Stick to the golden rule. Always think well of others.

Diane: Society does not value us as I feel it should. They focus on the young, blonde, thin, and pretty. We have more experience in life, we are dependable, more knowledgeable than the young. Society feels we should go sit down and be quiet. We are a growing group and we demand to be heard!

Karolyn: Get your mind off yourself and help others and smile. Be helpful to others and listen to what is being said.

Rodolfo: Pray, trust God, give to church. Go dancing, singing. No alcohol and no smoking. No drugs. Keep smiling.

Virginia: Be happy for what you have, many aren't. Try to smile and see if they will talk. Be nice.

Anonymous: Be thankful for every day and make the most of it.

Mike: Make new friends. Learn more.

Sharon: I mainly get around by car and use the light rail and the Orbit bus. This enables me to attend all the many events I go to on a daily basis. By maintaining my health and spirit I am able to be active and have a very good quality of life!

Carmencita: Live life from day to day; live with pain gracefully.

Marvin: Transportation is the key to be-



ing mobile, to being efficient, to helping people.

Vance: Get lots of exercise through

Above: Art class
Photo courtesy of the Mesa Arts Center



Above: Senior hikers with guide.
Photo courtesy of the City of Scottsdale

walking, fitness center, golf, swimming, hiking; get careful heart-healthy nutrition; have regular “tune-ups,” annual physicals at Mayo Clinic, Arizona; be

regular church goers; and have a “glass half full” state of mind.

Mary: Pray, give it over to God, and never give up.

Diane: I drive myself, which keeps me independent. I do not have to rely on anyone for anything.

Lidia: I take the bus, and my, I love meeting new people.

Anna: Each one must find their way; my way is not necessarily your way.

Caren: Don’t shut yourself off from the rest of the world. Try to keep your mind open.

Edna: Be good to yourself.

Emily: Be active, get outside and talk with people. Don’t sit in front of the TV all day.

Jeanne: Find an interest, make new friends with interests like you. Keep active as long as possible. Smile at people, be open.

Lourdes: Have a positive attitude about life. Love yourself so you can love others. Accept changes in life. Be peaceful.

Sergio: Me gusta ser servicial con los demás y compartir lo que yo pueda con mis familiares y compañeros. — *I enjoy being of service to others and sharing what I can with family and friends.*

Sharon: Get off your butt! Focus on giving instead of getting.

Anonymous: Get involved in the community.

Neil: Be true to your values but open to new people and ideas. Celebrate serendipity. Find your passion and pursue it. Al-

ways. Take time to heal. Move beyond your own needs and help one another. Don't let your ego get in the way of your efforts. Laugh openly, love deeply, exercise often, work smarter not harder, think positively, practice your faith, respect women, dump your bad habits, share your enthusiasm, buy local, take responsibility for your actions, believe in your children, be true to your spouse, plan ahead, be innovative and hold on tight to your dreams.

Carol: This may sound strange, but I had to lose most of the material possessions I owned and valued. Through the help of God, I survived. I value the sacredness of



Above: Residents playing pool at La Loma Village, Litchfield Park.

Photo courtesy of Sun Health



Above: Older adults in Mesa
Photo courtesy of MAG

life, family and friends. I take nothing for granted and appreciate every day as a gift from my Lord. He has been good to me. It didn't hurt to have my master's degree to

fall back on and give me employability. I enjoyed my career both in education and as a marriage and family therapist. I also worked for a couple of employee assistance programs. I was never bored.

Terry: Do not abuse your health. Be healthy. It takes planning. Eat healthy, exercise and always think positive. Go all Gonzo. Rotary has been an important social and fulfilling part of my life. I have traveled and been witness to many changes within the organization. I was part of the first legislative council that considered the vote on the legislation to permit women to join. Rotary is life-long. We recently honored a 96-year-old Rotarian at our club. He celebrated 71 years with Rotary. Be active, be with other people. There should be no excuses. Find an organization that you are interested in. Get involved. I am 77 this month, I enjoy riding my motorcycle, and I am currently planning a trip with a friend. 🍷



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