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WINTER 2003-2004



Bea Freeman gets ready to pitch a horseshoe at ElderHealth-Connection. (See story, page 2)

## Gaffney House Offers Supported Living

**O**n September 10, ElderHealth Northwest celebrated the completion of renovations at Gaffney House, a gracious historical home for elders with Alzheimer's and other chronic health conditions.

All of the Gaffney "kids," Ben, Kevin and Katie have volunteered and/or worked at ElderHealth. (They are all grown now).

Joe Gaffney commented, "Terri and I were as old as our kids are now when we got involved with ElderHealth. Looking back, it is amazing how much this agency has accomplished and how far it has come. ElderHealth has been an important part of our family for all these years."

In its 100-year life, the mansion has been used as an early version of a nursing home, a dance hall, and various administrative offices.

It's fitting that a mansion with such a rich history will soon be a home to residents who themselves have led lives filled with wonderful experiences. Executive Director Nora Gibson notes, "The home was built around the time many of the elders in our community were born. Many of those elders now require help in order to manage on a day-to-day basis. We're very excited that in this beautiful space we'll be offering care to individuals with fairly intensive needs. And while people living here might need the same level of assistance as someone living in a nursing home, this lovely setting will never be thought of as an institution."

The home is a cornerstone of ElderHealth Northwest's new model of care, providing neighborhood-based care options which help elders avoid life in institutions or isolation. Adult day health care and in-home care are also components of this care network which we call the Integrated Neighborhood Network.

DSHS licensure is still pending, but potential residents may sign up on a "priority notification list." For more information, contact Jennifer at (206) 528-5315.



At the Gaffney House Grand Opening, from left to right: Kevin, Joe, Katie, Ben and Terri Gaffney.

*It's fitting that a mansion with such a rich history will soon be a home to residents who themselves have led lives filled with wonderful experiences.*

Built in 1903, the Seattle landmark is named in honor of Joseph and Terri Gaffney and their children, all of whom have played an important role at ElderHealth.

Joe Gaffney was a founding member of ElderHealth and has served on the board and advisory board for two decades.

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## Making an Eldercare Decision?

ElderHealth Northwest Care Management helps families assess eldercare needs, arrange for services, and find appropriate housing.

We understand your family's needs are unique, and it is not always easy for everyone to agree on solutions. We use our expertise and experience, your ideas and information, and our vast knowledge of resources to determine appropriate services. We've had great success at helping family members agree on a course of action.

**For more information, contact Joan McGinnis, Director of Care Management, at (206) 571-0491.**

## JOBS AVAILABLE

- Care Manager (part-time)
- Occupational Therapist
- And more positions

Call the ElderHealth Jobline: (206) 224-3760

## HEADS UP!



Heads Up Program Participants Swan and Peter work on a summer gardening project. Comprised of younger adults with acquired brain injuries, the program recently celebrated its first anniversary.

## Enjoying Meaningful Relationships at ElderHealth

BY NORA GIBSON,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Today I was walking around our Downtown Seattle adult day health program noticing our staff's enthusiasm, openness, and sense of community. I appreciated how their joy seems to be both what brought them to ElderHealth Northwest and the result of the work they do here.

I watched a staffperson walking by a very frail older woman sitting in a wheelchair. This woman is almost totally blind and cannot walk or speak as a result of many strokes. It would have been easy not to stop; the old woman was not making any sounds that she needed something and would only have seen a figure brush by and felt the air

move a little. But the staff person stopped and leaned down over her until their foreheads were touching, and it brought the most wonderful smile to both of their faces. She whispered in the old woman's ear, which caused her to respond by reaching up to touch the young staff person's face. It was lovely to watch, and I see that quality of interaction whenever I visit any one of our seven adult day centers.

These day-to-day interactions are the heart and soul of our adult day centers, and we are creating residential settings where we can nourish these types of relationships around the clock.

Part of the challenge we face in taking care of people that are so frail is that they can't communicate easily, or perhaps they can't remember what hap-

pened a few moments ago. But we can appreciate them as they are now, we can genuinely enjoy our time with each other. The other components of care are vital as well—skilled nursing, meals, rehabilitative services and exercise—but what can have the biggest impact on quality of life is developing meaningful relationships. Our residential settings are small so that there is a real opportunity to focus on that relationship. We can know a person as a whole and not as a "task"—something often necessary in large institutions.

I feel emotional about ElderHealth in part because I'm privileged to work in an environment where people come up to me and say, "You saved my life, and you gave my father back his life." This fuels my passion for the work and for the future of ElderHealth.

## In Honor of Bea Freeman

When asked what it is about Bea Freeman that is so special, one ElderHealth staff person replied: "She is a beautiful person who has enriched each day that I have been here." During Bea's past eight years attending ElderHealth Northwest's Connection site in Renton, her cheerful, positive spirit has had an impact on anyone lucky enough to have come into contact with her.

Born on October 25, 1914 in Aberdeen Mississippi, Bea has led quite a rich and interesting life. As a young woman, she traveled across the U.S. singing in an all-women quartet, "The Cotton Blossoms." Bea spread her music and laughter to many along the way, in particular one young man whose family had opened their home to Bea and her singing partners. This young man, Harold Freeman, became Bea's husband in 1936. Bea and Harold adopted their son Paul when he was six months old, and Bea's

11 year-old niece Alice came to visit and soon became one of the family. Bea welcomed Alice with open arms, and ever since Alice has considered Bea as her mother.

Bea always has had much love to give, volunteering at the Children's Orthopedic Hospital Guild for over 50 years.

Bea's love of music and singing has not faded. One of her favorite activities at ElderHealth is the Sing Along. Spirituals are possibly Bea's favorite type of song; "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" is one of Bea's all-time favorites. Bea has maintained a strong faith in God. She believes and projects that this is a wonderful world. So much in fact that Connection has dedicated Louis Armstrong's recording of "Wonderful World" to Bea in the past. Throughout all the changes in Bea's



Photos of Bea Freeman courtesy of JoLynn Brubaker, Jason Neymeyer, and Melissa O'Hearn of Art Institute of Seattle, Commercial Photography Department, Student Studio.

*Good friends Bea and Anna enjoy attending ElderHealth Northwest-Connection together.*

life she has maintained a positive attitude that lifts everyone's spirits. A longtime participant at ElderHealth-Connection, Bea's presence is greatly valued. ElderHealth acquired an additional space from the Valley Medical Center to accommodate this thriving adult day health program; it was renamed the Bea Freeman Building in December of 2001.

It is the support and presence of those like Bea that fuels ElderHealth staff and participants. Thank you Bea!

## THANK YOU!

## Coffee, Trees, Entertainment and More!

Since 1976, ElderHealth Northwest has relied on generous contributions from our community. In addition to financial support (reported in our last issue), many individuals and organizations provide time and in-kind donations.

Last year 150 volunteers devoted 6,500 hours to ElderHealth! Other in-kind contributions include food from Friends of the Needy of St. Monica's Church (Mercer Island) and coffee from Starbucks.

Many groups support us at Christmas by donating Christmas trees to our centers and gifts to our clients and programs. These groups include: Bank of America, Zymogenetics, Group Health Center for Health Studies, Holy Rosary Church (West Seattle), St. Matthews Catholic Church, St. James Cathedral, Our Lady of Fatima Church, St. John the Baptist Church (Covington), Pacificare, City People's Garden Store, Lowe's, and Home Depot.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church also contributes at Christmas time and on an on-going basis by providing ministry and other donations to one of our sites.

Jesus the Rock Ministry provides religious services to our weekend program and the musical group "The Happy Campers" provides monthly entertain-

ment. "Performing Hearts" also provides occasional free entertainment.

The Seattle Garden Club donated miniature Christmas trees for all our sites. The Lake Meridian Garden Club pitched in to help us decorate some of our sites.

Other churches that make significant contributions include St. Stephen the Martyr (Renton), Magnolia Presbyterian Church and Lakeview Lutheran Church. The sewing group from University Presbyterian church makes clothing protectors and walker bags for our clients.

We are also grateful to Boeing and Microsoft for their donations of money and products, and whose employees contribute significant time.

Safeway in Kent, J&J Plumbing and Dream Kraft Homes make many contributions to our Renton site.

Choice Medical is another generous donor.

The Seattle Mariners and the Seattle Zoo enable our participants to have some fun excursions.

**To all of these generous people who help to make ElderHealth the community-based organization that it is, we say a BIG THANKS.**

## CONTACT ELDERHEALTH

### DAY CENTERS & RESIDENCES

**(206) 528-5315**

#### ADULT DAY HEALTH

King County

**North Branch** (Northgate)

**Downtown Seattle**

**South Branch** (Rainier Valley)

**Renton** (Valley Medical Center)

#### MAGNOLIA ADULT DAY CENTER

#### SUPPORTED LIVING *(license pending)*

**Gaffney House** (Capitol Hill)

**Buchanan Place** (South Seattle)

**(425) 355-1313**

#### ADULT DAY HEALTH

Snohomish County (Everett)

#### DAYBREAK SENIOR RESPITE PROGRAM

**Snohomish, Marysville,**

**Mill Creek and Edmonds**

### CARE MANAGEMENT

**(206) 571-0491**

#### PLANNING CARE FOR ELDERLY

**Joan McGinnis, MSW, LICSW**

Director, Care Management

### ELDERFRIENDS

**(206) 224-3793**

#### VOLUNTEERS

**"Adopt a Grandparent"**

## ELDERHEALTH LOVES A PARADE!



*King Eugene and Queen Ola Mae get ready to ride in the 2003 Rainier Valley Heritage Parade.*



*Gordon and Hortensia practice their wave at the 2003 Magnolia Summerfest Parade.*