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Between 55 and 64 Years Old?

It's time to have life your way!

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

If you are between 55 and 64, you are in the biggest group of baby boomers, 9.8 million in California alone! The youngest Baby Boomer turns 50 this year. Some of you plan on working till 70 and many of you want to retire early because of plans to have a second "passion" career, to travel, to focus on a hobby or even to go back to school. Having an ill spouse, health challenges of your own or caring for an aging parent might derail your idea of life at this stage. Disappointment, frustration, and grief can turn to depression, which can negatively affect your health; it is good to have a plan so that these "pot holes" on the road of life don't completely stop you.

In order to prepare for a longer life and keep a balance between the "need-to-do and the want-to-do," my colleagues and I continue to do consultations with those approaching retirement, downsizing and/or those who are in caregiving roles. Without a plan, one can be sucked up into a "vortex" of duties and obligations while not re-fueling the passions of the mind and heart.

A professional consultation with a certified professional care manager – who is a coach, resource and advocate – can assist individuals with designing a plan for now that includes the what-if's of the future, as well as all the options available to make this a productive phase of life. All of this while factoring in activities to keep one's mind and body healthy.

These are some of the areas covered in a consultation:

- Your health or that of a family member. How to plan for changes or how to manage someone you love with the right approaches, resources and care. Where to get evaluations and/or second opinions.
- Legal tools you need and the language you might want in your legal documents so you do have life "your way" even if you lose capacity. This includes "end-of-life" planning way before you think it is needed.
- Options for housing that cover everything from staying home with the support of the Lamorinda Village (www.lamorindavillage.org) to moving to a Life Care Community that will support your needs at every level.
- Desires of the heart and mind – assisting you in finding avenues to pursue your dream.
- Weaving in new opportunities for volunteerism. Studies show that vol-

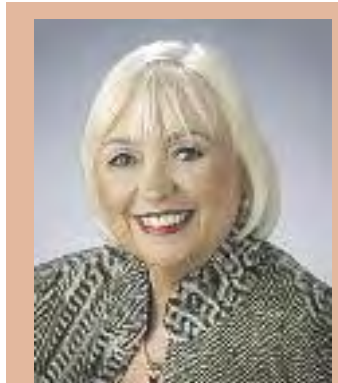
unteerism can lengthen life and actually be a "pain reliever."

- Educating you on activities and lifestyles that include "mindfulness" in order to preserve and enhance your health. Research shows that those who engage in such activities have reversed some serious health issues as well as reduced the stresses of everyday life.
- Financial Planning – or knowing the costs of the options to choose from. This knowledge can then be then shared with your financial planner and/or estate planning attorney. You don't want to sell investments like a home without knowing the consequences financially as well as emotionally.
- The care manager can be on "stand-by" for you (if life throws you a curve ball) and assist with those issues you don't have answers for. Also, if you need a guide to traverse the medical system or to handle a family member with a disease such as Alzheimer's, the care manager is there to partner with you.

You can find a professional certified care manager at www.eldercare-answers.com or www.caremanager.org.

As you plan for this new phase of life, you want to stay informed. There are two upcoming opportunities to gain some additional knowledge. One is a class I will be hosting, "Understanding Dementia," on Tuesday, Aug. 12 at 5:30 pm in my office. Call (925) 937-2018 to register (it is free).

Another free workshop is the Lafayette Community Foundation's 6th annual Senior Symposium, "Aging By Design," on Saturday, Aug. 16 at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church (see related story below).



Linda Fodrini-Johnson is the Founder and Executive Director of Eldercare Services, a Licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor, and a Certified Care Manager.

Senior Symposium Scheduled for Aug. 16

Submitted by Rhonda Andronico

Guest speakers of the Lafayette Community Foundation's 6th annual Senior Symposium, "Aging By Design," include Dr. Lauren Hicks, medical director of senior services at John Muir Health, who will discuss many aspects of aging and provide suggestions and tips including diet, exercise and overall health care. His talk, "Risk Management: What is Going to Happen to You and Why; and Why It Does Not Have to Happen," will provide valuable information about the aging process. Dr. Hicks will also share projections for future care of our aging population.

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, executive director of Eldercare Services will serve as moderator for a four-person panel discussing "Community Involvement and Your Good Health." Panel members will include Mary Bruns, Lafayette Spirit Van; Elaine Welch, Senior Help Line Services; Elaine Clark, Meals on Wheels and

Linda Groobin, John Muir Caring Hands. Vivian Clayton, Ph.D., a renowned Lamorinda clinical psychologist specializing in geriatric neuropsychology will discuss "Normal Memory Changes As We Age." Dr. Clayton's research was recently highlighted in the March 12 New York Times article, "The Science of Older and Wiser."

In addition to the speakers, the symposium will include more than 40 vendors representing agencies and services that provide assistance to seniors in Contra Costa County. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the program will run from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Aug. 16 at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Attendance is free and light refreshments will be served. For additional information and to pre-register to be included in the raffle drawing, please visit www.lafayettecfc.org or call (925) 284-8214.



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Samira Says



Samira Davi is a Nurse Liaison for ManorCare Health Services in Walnut Creek. Samira has over 10 years of experience working in health care in Contra Costa County, which has gained her a wide view of what is important to the health care consumer. She will be posting common questions and comments in each issue of the Lamorinda Weekly. You are welcome to contact Samira directly at 925.270.8766

Exercise Tips!

Staying active and fit is a great way to improve and maintain mental and physical aptitude. It is especially important during the later stages of life. As people get older they typically engage in less physical activity for a number of reasons including, fear of falling or general safety, a lack of transportation, and limited equipment or facilities. It is important to realize, however that exercise does not have to be backbreaking to provide substantial benefits. Walking, gardening, dancing, or swimming are great ways to get exercise- and don't take too much of a toll on the body. As people get older, they tend to lose physical performance in four main areas: strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance. Exercising for a short time every day can seriously reduce the rate at which these attributes diminish over time.

- Some benefits of physical and mental benefits to exercising and staying active include:
- Better sleep!
 - Enhanced brain activity!
 - Improved blood pressure!
 - It feels good!

Just like with any exercise program, it is important to make sure that certain precautions be taken prior to starting. Here are some tips for starting your exercise plan.

- If you have mobility issues, try joining a class where there are supervisors who can help you.
- Make sure to do a 5-10 minute warm and stretch before every workout.
- Try to exercise at least 3 times per week.
- Make sure to drink enough water before and after exercise so that you don't get dehydrated.
- Eat a healthy diet to support your exercise plan. Make sure to eat fruits and vegetables high in water, foods with protein to help rebuild muscles, and dairy or juices that contain calcium to sustain bone mass.

We at ManorCare Walnut Creek and ManorCare Tice Valley are happy to provide you with these exercise tips.

As always, we at ManorCare offer post-acute medical and rehabilitation care for those recovering from surgery, illness, or injury. The continuum of care provided by our experienced and committed team members (including physical, occupational, and speech therapist) helps our patients to successfully transition back to home.

Please feel free to call for additional information or to schedule a tour.

For more information please visit www.manorcare.com.
For a short video visit us on YouTube: www.youtube.com/hcmanorcare



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