

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

... it's about Time

MARCH 2015



Let's Get Connected!

It's the first part of March and many of us are already flipping pages on our calendars and filling in some exciting activities and events to look forward to this year. Before your life gets too busy, here are a few more dates to circle:

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Wednesday, April 8th 5:00—7:00 p.m.

Community Connections hosts the Quincy Community Supper
Community United Methodist Church, Quincy



Monday, April 20th 5:30—7:00 p.m.

Quincy Member Swap Meet 'N' Eat
Plumas-Sierra Fairgrounds—Mineral Building, Quincy



Monday, May 18th 5:30—7:00 p.m.

Graeagle/Portola Member Swap Meet 'N' Eat
Mohawk Community Resource Center, Blairsden



Monday, June 8th 5:30—7:00 p.m.

Chester/Lake Almanor & Indian Valley Member Swap Meet 'N' Eat
Almanor Recreation & Park District, Chester



Saturday, September 26th 9:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

APPRECIATION BRUNCH **
Plumas-Sierra Fairgrounds, Quincy

**We are still looking for an inspiring theme for this year's Appreciation Brunch. If you have any suggestions, please let us know. There's a gift for the winning idea!

One of the greatest benefits of being a Member of Community Connections is the opportunity to learn valuable skills from each other. We would like to offer a variety of new workshops throughout the summer and fall. Please let us know what you are most interested in or maybe a topic you are willing to teach to others and we will take care of the coordination!



The Community Connections Advisory Council is looking for 2-3 Members to serve on our Community Service Project Committee...please let us know if you can help!

Where I Connect

*By Holly Coons, Chester/Lake Almanor
Advisory Council Member*



I have finally found an organization that fits my personality and needs! I really believe Community Connections is for everyone of all ages. After reading the meeting minutes and participating in several Advisory Council meetings so far, I now understand how much this program can help each community.

I have a public service occupation, which fits me well. I am most comfortable when I am helping others, and it just seems natural for me. However, I have a hard time asking for help myself. Yet I am learning to accept a gracious act of kindness with a simple thank you, thanks to Community Connections.

I am aware of the cost of labor and I know everyone has their own stuff to get done. Now that I am a Member I am looking for requests from other Members that I can provide so I can bank my hours for my own requests. The Community Connections Daily Announcements provides me with all kinds of requests to choose from—though I would like to see more in my area.

I now check the Daily Announcements every day looking for requests from other Member's needs. I am strong, can cook, run errands, give people rides, organize, type, iron, provide child care, sell tickets for events, set-up for events...and the list goes on. The best part is that I do not need to sign up for anything that I cannot handle. I am looking forward to a simple thank you, as I leave feeling helpful.

As a Member of the Advisory Council, I am excited to bring Community Connections into my community for the purpose of bringing these gracious people together to help one another meet their needs. Also, Chester and Lake Almanor have plenty of events year round and as a Community Connections Member I am looking forward to volunteering and helping make these events successful by helping out where I can.

I also connect with all the great services other members provide. The ideas are endless and the newsletter and Daily Announcements provide me with all the events happening in our communities way in advance. I am learning there are unlimited things I can provide for others and that I can request for myself.

When I did finally make a request for help, I was very impressed with the knowledge and experience of the Community Connections Member who came to my home to hang curtains.

What a genius idea—taking turns helping each other in the community we live in!



Left to Right Back Row: Judy Buck, Marilyn Hoffman, Norberta Schmidt, Carol Kolb, Judy Williams, Eldora Duniphin
Left to Right Front Row: Bernice Cook, Arline Harrison, Rose Marie Heater, Phyllis Golla
Volunteers not shown: Betty Hoskins, Marilyn Johnson, Sherry Kumler, Nancy Wertenberger, Kathy Scully, Tina Connelly, and Kenny Davis

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT Quincy Community Hospital Auxiliary (PINK LADIES)

It's February 28, 1967...a meeting is in progress at the Quincy High School cafeteria. The purpose of the meeting is to organize a Plumas County Nursing and Convalescent Hospital Auxiliary—there are 23 people in attendance.

Several local physicians stand and speak of their need for help at the county hospital to care for the needs of 30 elderly patients who are 'emotionally disturbed and/or mentally retarded'. Volunteers were asked to work out the details of organizing an auxiliary and identify the services they would be able to provide – with the most important service being frequent visitations with patients.

By the end of May, officers were chosen and Joyce Bivens accepted the position as the first auxiliary President. It was agreed that auxiliary members would wear pink pinafores as uniforms to indicate their volunteer status and visitations began in earnest. The volunteers soon became known to everyone as the 'Pink Ladies'. Fast forward 48 years, almost to the day, and the Quincy Community Hospital Auxiliary is in danger of being dissolved.

For the past few weeks Feather Publishing has been covering the unfolding story of the parent company's announcement to close the Quincy Nursing and Rehabilitation Center claiming it was no longer financially feasible to remain open. There have been several community meetings where local leaders from Plumas District Hospital, Plumas County Public Health, and the Department of Social Services have spoken to concerned community members and residents of the facility who showed up to voice their fears, concerns, and anger over the possibility of losing such a vital service in Quincy.

While discussions regarding the future of the facility continue, behind the scenes a very dedicated and committed group of 16 Pink Ladies and 1 Pink Lad continue to provide support and services to the current residents. These volunteers have a passion for service and a special compassion for the aging. They give of their time and share their personal talents to enrich lives and bring some sunshine to the residents of the Quincy Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Some of the current Pink Ladies volunteers have been serving for more than 20 years!

In addition to birthday and holiday activities and celebrations, the volunteers have taken on the responsibility of raising funds and accepting donations to purchase such things as microwaves, chairs, gliders, and draperies. There are weekly Bingo sessions, piano music for singing and the occasional dance, and hours and hours of just sitting together, sharing, storytelling, and yes, crying together.

Over the years the Pink Ladies have personally sewn on hundreds of buttons, mended clothing, made more than 100 comfortable lap pads and blankets, donned Santa costumes, baked pounds of treats and goodies, completed many puzzles, and scrounged through countless yard sales to purchase supplies and gifts for the residents.

(Continued on next page)

When asked why they chose to become Pink Ladies, the answers varied. Judy Buck said, “We are there because our family members lived and died there. Others became Pink Ladies because they worked there.” She added, “Kenny Davis, the one man who has become known as the ‘Pink Lad’ has been playing the piano for our parties for more than 20 years. He works in construction and has literally come down from the rooftops to play the piano. Without him the parties would be flops.”

Rose Marie Heater added, “ I wanted to do something I could do within my own limitations and because I enjoyed being around older people, I wanted to make their lives a little brighter.”

Arline Harrison has been a Pink Lady since 1987 and says, “I don’t know why I started...I needed something to do.”

Most of the Pink Ladies recognize that if it were not for them and their volunteer efforts, some of the residents would be severely lacking in necessities. Phyllis Golla shared, “When I worked at the facility for 13 years as the Social Services Director, we had no budget and the residents were not well dressed. Some of them had no family and each resident was only allotted \$35/month—which didn’t cover much. If it were not for volunteers like Eldora Duniphin and Arline Harrison who could sew and who went to yard sales, some of the residents would have had no clothing!”

Gayle Franzen who has served as the Activities Director at the facility for the past two years said, “It’s a 56-bed facility and right now we only have 28 residents. The Pink Ladies have been steadfast, wonderful, life-savers. They have made my life so much easier and the residents love them. Having them there brings the residents out of their rooms!”

The list of services the Pink Ladies have provided over the years is endless. However, they all agree the greatest “service” they have provided was that of human connection. Just being there to look in someone’s eyes, remind the residents that they matter, listen to their stories, laugh with them, cry with them, and make them feel cared for, seen, and appreciated...those are the things that volunteers can do that are priceless.

It seems there is little anyone can do at this point to change the inevitable. It is very likely the facility will be closed in the coming months and all 28 residents (those who live that long) will be required to relocate. Since Plumas County has very limited options for long-term care, a few residents will find a new home within the county, others may be required to move to facilities far from the place they have come to call home. In the words of the current Pink Ladies President, Judy Williams, “We are so gonna miss those people.”

This situation is being duplicated across the nation...it is very expensive to operate full-service long-term care facilities for the elderly. Insurance is inadequate at best and non-existent in many cases. The cost for private care for most seniors is astronomical and out of reach for most. Nearly every state is experiencing a rash of facility closures.

What is a community to do? We can learn a lot from the past 48 years...for it is only when we all come together and share in the burdens, envision the possibilities, and roll up our sleeves to be part of the solution that positive change can take place. No one told those Pink Ladies so many years ago that it couldn’t be done or that it wouldn’t work. The same is true today.

While Community Connections is not the be-all end-all answer, we can be a huge part of the solution. We already have more than 300 dedicated, committed Members who are actively participating in exchanging services with each other to offer support wherever it is needed. Who’s to say with a little more focus we can’t identify hundreds of seniors already living in our county who could greatly benefit from some basic support services that will allow them to live a little longer, independently, in their own homes?

The Pink Ladies are an inspiration to so many. Their perseverance, dedication, and commitment to helping others has left a legacy—one that we have a responsibility to recognize, appreciate, and carry on. Every one of us can do something and everything we do will make a difference to someone!

There is a pretty well-known member in the Quincy community who is 91 years old and still works 6 days a week at the CAN Food Bank volunteering their time to feed the hungry. This dedication to doing what you can, where you can is what Community Connections is all about.

It’s true, we will miss the people at the Quincy Nursing & Rehabilitation Center when it closes. Yet history has taught us there is no limit to the difference a dedicated volunteer can make and there is no end to people in need. Ultimately, we ourselves are ‘those people’...if not today, certainly in the years ahead.

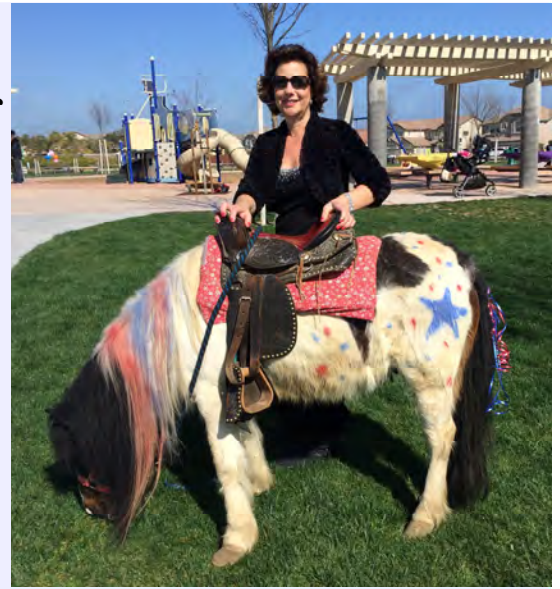


Member Spotlight

MaryAnn Trujillo, Graeagle Member

I am MaryAnn Trujillo, and my husband and I moved to Plumas County about four years ago to our second home in Greenhorn Ranch. Since then we have purchased another home and moved to Graeagle along with our two dogs, Sophia and Sadie.

Plumas County is one of the most beautiful places to live in California and, like so many others, we came up here to enjoy a more peaceful lifestyle and enjoy our surroundings. I have been blessed with my amazing husband Eric, two adult children, and three adorable grandchildren—Royce age 2.5, Cion 1.5, and Gia who is 6-months old.



Before moving to Plumas County, I lived in the San Francisco Bay area for thirty years where I volunteered for many things—mostly surrounding my children's education. I was the Treasurer for the Athletic Student Board for my son's high school for two years, and drove the basketball team to all of the away games all four years while my son was in high school. As the Football Team Mom for four years, I also provided dinners every Thursday night to the football team, and I served as Homeroom Mom to both of my children's classrooms simultaneously, which was a challenge on party days!

Once my children left home for college, not only was I an empty-nester, but I felt very empty with regards to my volunteering. After moving to Graeagle I just started asking various people what organizations were available in the area that I might be able to volunteer with. I was told about Heidi Rose at the Mohawk Community Resource Center (MCRC) in Blairsden and it was suggested I give her a call. I called Heidi on a Friday and she told me Leslie Wall from Community Connections would be there on Monday night to give a presentation—so I went and signed up immediately. That was about eight months ago and so far I have only volunteered at MCRC since there are not many service requests in my area.

I am currently employed by Eastern Plumas Health Care as the Clinic Coordinator for the Graeagle Medical Clinic. This is the perfect job for me since I love helping people. I really enjoy volunteering as a hobby and staying involved in the community and have recently become the Treasurer for the Graeagle Property Owners Association. Previously I was the owner of a Fire Protection construction business for seventeen years and currently hold a C-16 Contractor's license in the state of California for Fire Protection.

As someone who loves anything with 'bling', I really hope we can get more people in the Graeagle/Portola area to become Members because I hope to add a little more 'bling' to my life by participating and volunteering much more in the future!

"Volunteering to help others is the right thing to do, and it also boosts personal happiness; a review of research by the Corporation for National and Community Service shows that those who aid the causes they value tend to be happier and in better health. They show fewer signs of physical and mental aging. And it's not just that helpful people also tend to be healthier and happier; helping others causes happiness. "Be selfless, if only for selfish reasons," as one of my happiness paradoxes holds. About one-quarter of Americans volunteer, and of those, a third volunteer for more than a hundred hours each year." [Gretchen Rubin](#)

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?



There's been a flurry of discussion this past month with several Instructors at Feather River College who contacted Community Connections to see if we can provide support for the many FRC students who are far from their families and may be having a difficult time adjusting to a new community.

Of course our response was, absolutely! We are thrilled they thought to connect with us and will gladly do what we can to offer support wherever possible. So, we did what we always do, and asked for your ideas and suggestions—now we are inspired! Here's what you had to say:

Services that would provide support for Students

- ◆ Transportation (to airports, shopping, restaurants, Farmers' Market, etc.)
- ◆ Tutoring
- ◆ Assistance with essays, term papers, written reports
- ◆ Recreation—exploring Plumas County lakes, hiking trails, fishing, boating, and more
- ◆ Laundry
- ◆ Mending
- ◆ Workshops/Instruction
- ◆ Home-cooked meals
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Cooking Lessons
- ◆ Budgeting
- ◆ Shopping Assistance
- ◆ Community Activities/Events

Of course Community Connections is a reciprocal program and every Member is expected to both give and receive services. You also shared several ideas for ways FRC students can support our community:

Services Students can provide

- SWAT Team activities
- Community Service Projects
- Gardening/Yard Care
- Workshops/Instruction (social media, iPhones, computers)
- Housekeeping
- Community Activities/Events (set-up and take-down, staffing booths)

This is not intended to be a complete list of possibilities for there truly is no limit to ways we can offer support for students and they in turn can engage and participate in service themselves. Now all we need is to get the students to join. So, the CC Advisory Council came up with the clever idea of offering to do three loads of laundry (washed, dried, and folded) to any FRC student who becomes a Member in the month of March!

Let's spread the word and start showing FRC students what a connected community is all about!

MEMBERS/SPONSORS BY COMMUNITY

| | Members | Sponsors | Total |
|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| CHESTER | 13 | 4 | 17 |
| GRAEAGLE | 18 | | 18 |
| INDIAN VALLEY | 35 | 9 | 44 |
| MEADOW VALLEY | 14 | | 14 |
| PORTOLA | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| QUINCY | 162 | 39 | 201 |
| TOTAL | 254 | 56 | 310 |

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP = 310

| | <u>FEBRUARY</u> | <u>YEAR TO DATE</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| SERVICE REQUESTS | 41 | 304 |
| SERVICE EXCHANGES | 406 | 3173 |
| HOURS EXCHANGED | 1012 | 9182 |

Please help us achieve our goal of 18,000 hours of service before July 1, 2015!



Community Connections works because of the service hours you provide AND report. We must track our service data in order to accurately document how Community Connections Members are making a difference in Plumas County. This data is used when applying for future funding!

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS...It's about Time

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PLUMAS RURAL SERVICES

Serving People, Strengthening Families, Building Communities

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