

Opinion

Elderday Has a Reason to Celebrate

This Adult Day Health Care program has helped seniors in Santa Cruz County for 30 years.

By [Linda Covella](#) | September 26, 2011

I'm learning more and more about all the wonderful programs available for seniors in Santa Cruz County and am amazed how long some of them have been around. A few weeks ago, I looked at [Meals on Wheels](#), which is celebrating its 35th anniversary.

Also this year, [Elderday](#), the Adult Day Health Care program of [Salud Para La Gente](#), celebrates 30 years of service to seniors and adults with disabilities.

The history of Elderday goes back to 1981 and a one-room building in Harvey West Park. Each day, 10 seniors were picked up in private vehicles and taken to Elderday.

Sheri M. Anselmi, Ph.D., director of Elderday, said Majel Jordan was the brainchild behind the organization, and Cathy Cress, the first director, helped create Elderday's first logo.

"Evidently, the inspiration came as a result of a lack of socialization programs for isolated and compromised seniors," Anselmi said. "There was a survey conducted in February 1981, as a result of numerous seniors that were cycling through county services but not getting better. That's when Elderday began to take shape—as a place for these neediest of seniors."

Growing to Serve a Larger Community



Elderday founder Majel Jordan and director Sheri Anselmi. Credit Elderday

It's come a long way since then, now occupying more than 10,000 square feet at 100 Pioneer St. in Santa Cruz, serving more than 85 people per day and picking them up in eight lift-equipped buses. The facility includes an onsite gym, two fully equipped nursing stations and eight bathrooms.

In the mid-1980s, Elderday became an official Adult Day Health Center (ADHC), which requires licensing by the Department of Public Health and Department of Aging. An ADHC must follow regulations for such things as meals, transportation, staffing and facility layout.

How did becoming an ADHC change Elderday?

Anselmi explained that "initially, Elderday was an adult day program, which meant it provided socialization activities, supervision, assistance with toileting and some minor medical oversight (i.e., weight, blood pressure, etc).



Elderday participant Irma Talamantez with her family. Credit [Linda Covella](#)

“Once Elderday became an Adult Day Health Care Center,” she continued, “it implemented a health component that included occupational and physical therapy and nursing services provided by a registered nurse. ... By becoming an ADHC, Elderday was tasked with the responsibility of preventing unnecessary and inappropriate hospitalizations. In other words, keeping health care costs low and helping seniors stay at home longer.”

Professional Team

Preventing unnecessary hospitalization is accomplished in large part by Elderday’s staff of 23 professionals (both paid and volunteer), which includes a licensed clinical social worker, registered nurse, licensed vocational nurse, physical and occupational therapists, social worker assistants, nutritionist, podiatrist, certified nursing assistants, psychologist, medical doctor and activities coordinator.

That’s an impressive team!



Elderday Registered Nurse Mary Voiteck with Volunteer Dennis Robinson. Credit Elderday

The Program

In order for seniors to participate in the program, they must have the consent of their primary physician and must be compromised in one or more ways: physically, psychiatrically, socially and cognitively. Anselmi said that more than 25 percent of the participants have some form of dementia, predominantly Alzheimer’s.

Besides physical and occupational therapies, nursing, mental health and dietary services, Elderday provides meals and recreational activities.

Meals are provided by [Swing Time Café](#) in Watsonville, which serves “food that is local, seasonal and fresh,” said Anselmi. “They’re wonderful.”

It sounds like Elderday has some fun activities as well, including an outside walking group (ambulatory and non-ambulatory), pet therapy, woodworking, watercolor, Zumba, chair yoga, groups for men, life skills and knitting. To top all that off, it also has monthly parties with prizes, dancing and music.

All the services at Elderday are covered by Medi-Cal and offer a sliding fee scale for private-pay individuals.



Elderday participant Maria Ruelas with her family. Credit Elderday

Recently, I’ve written about different living options for seniors—should [we stay in our homes](#) or is it [time to move on](#)? Elderday is another great resource that allows seniors to stay in their homes while providing caregivers time to work or take care of other personal matters.

Congratulations and many thanks to everyone at Elderday for giving so much to seniors, caregivers and the community these past 30 years!

Announcements

The [Scotts Valley Senior Center](#) will have a flu clinic Wednesday, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Cost is \$30 and is a covered benefit under Medicare Part B. You must present your card at time of vaccination.

Also in Scotts Valley, *Annie Get Your Gun*, put on by [Scotts Valley Performing Arts](#), runs Friday, Saturday and Sunday through Oct. 16. Students and seniors pay \$15 (adults \$20, children \$10).

[California Grey Bears](#) will host its Annual Harvest Picnic at Harvey West Park (326 Evergreen St., Santa Cruz) at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday. Enjoy a BBQ lunch, raffle prizes and live music. Seniors join the fun for free!

Don't forget that [Kohl's](#) at the [Capitola Mall](#) has a senior discount day every Wednesday!