

SUMMER ♦ 2008

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New Year is Jam-Packed with Exciting Activities

One of our goals at Mountain Shadows is to ensure our residents lead active, challenging, fulfilling lives. We encourage all of our residents to explore new interests – to really *live* and enjoy life! We think we are succeeding. In fact, we’ve heard some staffers and friends say they’re even a just a little bit envious of all the amazing and fun things our residents do! Here are just a few of the activities our residents have participated in over the past few months:



Sherry enjoys sit-skiing.

Sit-Skiing at Wrightwood

Twelve residents hit the slopes at Wrightwood this year. “The residents all had a ball,” says Donna Ponomarenko, Activities Director at Mountain Shadows. “Two new residents went sit-skiing for the first time and loved it! They want to go again. The weather was perfect, the snow was beautiful, and everyone had a fantastic time!”

Sports Report

Twenty-five residents participated in this year’s *Exceptions Athlete Competition* – and they did an *exceptional* job! Here are a few of the results:

MSCH Hockey Team – Gold Medal

MSCH Bocce Ball Team – Gold Medal

Track & Field – MSCH competitors won Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals

Valentine’s Day Dinner

Cupid struck on Valentine’s Day as five special couples dined together at Old Town Buffet. Chris and Debbie, Kenny and Diane, Joey and

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Brittany, Denise and Gary, and Brian C. and Betsy, all dressed to the nines and enjoyed a romantic evening.

Many thanks to Donna Ponomarenko for her hard work in coordinating all of these exciting activities that keep our residents learning and living life to the fullest!

Mardi Gras Dance

Every House was represented at the most recent Mardi Gras Dance, which was held on February 5th. “The dance was held in the Olive House parking lot,” say Arlene Galvan, of Mountain Shadows. “There was lots of dancing and everyone was given lots of beads. All of the residents wore masks and were dressed in costume. Everyone had a really



Residents in costume for Mardi Gras.

good time. There were big smiles on everyone’s faces!” ■

MSSG Welcomes New Board Member

Mountain Shadows is pleased to welcome Dr. Kaveh Farhoomand to its Board of Directors. Dr. Farhoomand is a physician in private practice specializing in internal medicine.

Kaveh received his MD from the Western University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific in 2000. The University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as the most selective private osteopathic medical school in the nation. Following graduation, he completed his residency at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic, which U.S. News & World Report ranked among the top three hospitals in the United States. The Clinic’s Cardiac Hospital has been named #1 in the world for the last 12 consecutive years. The Cleveland Clinic is a multi-specialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. Founded in 1921, the clinic’s vision is to put the patient first by providing outstanding patient care based upon the principles of cooperation, compassion and innovation. Kaveh is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Kaveh has been in private practice for three years. For the past two of his three years in practice, he has been named one of the Top Doctors in San Diego by the San Diego County Medical Society

(SDCMS). This is a peer-selected award which honors the top 5% of physicians in the County. These “Top Doctors” have been identified by their peers as physicians to whom they would entrust the care of their own family members and their own patients.

Dr. Farhoomand is the Chief of Internal Medicine at Tri-City Medical Center. He is also affiliated with Scrips Hospital in Encinitas. As a member of the Internal Medicine, Bio-Ethics, and Critical Care Committees, Kaveh is instrumental in setting the highest standards for overall patient care.

Kaveh chose to go into private practice because it allows him to provide his patients with a high-level of personalized care. He is dedicated to putting the patient first and welcomes the opportunity to benefit the well-being of our residents and the Mountain Shadows Community as a member of the Board of Directors. ■



Bob Gable Takes the Road Less Traveled

**I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.**

—ROBERT FROST

If you knew Bob Gable for more than ten minutes, you knew he loved life. Most days, he could be found wheeling around the Mountain Shadows campus wearing a large sombrero, greeting all passersby with a huge grin and friendly, “Hi! Isn’t it a beautiful day?”

If you knew Bob well, you also knew that his surname, Gable, means “fork” in German. Bob was adopted from Germany as a child and he liked to share with everyone what he knew of his heritage. What you may not know is that there are different meanings for the word gable in German. The table forks with which we are familiar today weren’t used in Germany for eating before the 16th century, so in Middle High German, “gable” referred to a maker or seller of agricultural equipment such as hay forks, shearlegs, etc. A second meaning of gable referred to someone who lived or was near a fork in the road. We may never know the exact origin or meaning of Bob’s surname, but it would seem the latter may be more apt.

From what accounts we have, Bob’s childhood was normal. Bob’s school bus driver, a woman now in her 80’s, knew him from the time he was six-years-old. According to her, Bob was a young whippersnapper, very bright, very smart. He spoke three languages, German, Spanish and English. He was a typical teenager, but was more well-mannered than most. All things considered, it seemed Bob would have a bright and fulfilling future.

Then, one day, when Bob was 18-years-old, his adoptive father walked up to him and shot him in the head. He shot and killed himself with the next bullet. Bob was critically injured, his life changed forever. Paralyzed on the right side of his body and from the waist down on both sides, severely brain-damaged, and with no parents and no way to care for himself, he became a ward of the State. This is when Bob Gable stood at his fork in the road, when it was his time to choose between two roads

diverged. Many would have chosen the road of hatred and self-pity. But not Bob Gable – he took the road less traveled by ... and that made all the difference.

Says L.V. McKillion of Mountain Shadows, “Bob was always so, so positive. He could have chosen to hate, to give up, but he always kept a positive outlook on life. Bob always said to me, ‘It’s always better to love than to hate, right L.V.?’ and I always said to him, ‘Absolutely, Bob. Absolutely!’”

“Bob was just an all around great guy,” continues L.V. “He was funny, witty, and always very polite. If anyone was having a bad day, he would take it upon himself to try and lift their spirits. All of the residents and staff loved him so much. He told lots of jokes and he loved to sing. He even volunteered to sing at nursing homes. One of his favorite songs was *When Irish Eyes are Smiling*.”

Adds Rachel Duenas, RC, “Bob was always smiling. He was a very happy-go-lucky person. He never got upset. And he always wanted to cheer you up if you were having a bad day. Oh, he was just so sweet and kind. No matter what, he would be smiling and telling everyone what a beautiful day it was. He was one of a kind.” When asked if Bob had a family, Rachel didn’t hesitate, “Yes, we were his family.”

Bob Gable passed away on February 22, 2008.

If Bob were with us now, as we feel the depth of his loss in our lives, we think we know what he would do. He would do as he always did – try to make us feel better ... and he would *sing* ...

There’s a tear in your eye,
And I’m wondering why,
For it never should be there at all.
With such pow’r in your smile,
Sure a stone you’d beguile,
So there’s never a teardrop should fall.
When your sweet lilting laughter’s
Like some fairy song,

(Please see GABLE on page 8)



Harlem Globetrotters' Game a Slam-Dunk for Mountain Shadows Residents

Since being formed in 1927, in the Savoy Ballroom in the South side of Chicago, the Globetrotters have played before more people, in more places than any other sports team in history. The 2008 tour marks the 82nd consecutive season of play for the organization, which averages more than 200 games per year.

"Tony Mosely of Pine House is a BIG Globetrotters' fan," says Donna Ponomarenko, Activities Director at Mountain Shadows. "So when I saw they were coming to the Sports Arena, I went online and got tickets right away. Five residents, Tony, Doug, Duane, Nick and Charles, went to the game."

While the Harlem Globetrotters are now known as an exhibition basketball team, they were initially a serious competitive team. The team won the 1940 World Professional Basketball Tournament when they beat the Chicago Bruins in overtime by a score of 37-36. NBA greats Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain, Connie "The Hawk" Hawkins, and Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton all played for the Globetrotters over the years.

The team gradually worked popular comic routines into their act and eventually became known more for entertainment than sports. During their 82-year history, they have played in 118 countries, on six continents, before more than 125 million fans.

"Everyone had a lot of fun at the game," says Donna. Residents were treated to the Globetrotters' signature "Sweet Georgia Brown" warm-up routine, amazing passes, balls spun almost magically on fingertips, incredible vertical dunks (Michael "Wild Thing" Wilson of the Globetrotters holds the world record for successfully dunking on a 12-foot basket), dribbling, juggling and, of course showboating by the now famous team mascot, Globie.

"The mascot was great. He really did some crazy,

amazing stuff! The residents loved him," says Donna.

The story of Globie is an interesting one. His message sums up the success of the Globetrotters and perhaps explains why millions have continued to flock to see this incredible basketball team for the past 82 years. You see, rumor has it that Globie is the result of a top-secret experiment. Scientists were trying to find a way to cure the ills of the world by creating a being of peace. The result was a kind, gentle blue guy with the head of a globe.

When Globetrotters' Chairman Mannie Jackson bought the team in 1993, Globie just happened to be passing by. Jackson instantly liked Globie and invited him to be the team mascot. Today, Globie represents all of the 125 million fans around the world that the Harlem Globetrotters have touched over the past eight decades. He represents the global family: neither black nor white, Christian or Muslim, capitalist or communist. Globie is neither

young nor old, rich or poor, saint or sinner, handicapped or not. He is merely the spirit that makes us all feel young at heart, makes us smile, makes us laugh, and brings out the best in us through his good will and fun-loving ways.

"The residents really had a blast," says Donna. "Charles, I think had the best time. He was jumping up and down and singing and dancing the whole time!"

Perhaps that is the real secret to the Globetrotters' long-term success. They make us laugh with their antics. They awe us with their amazing feats. And, quite simply, they make us all smile... young or old, rich or poor, saint or sinner, handicapped or not.

And on that day, thanks to the "World's Greatest Basketball Show" each of our residents went home smiling from ear to ear. ■



Love on a Leash Visits Mountain Shadows Outreach

“He is my other eyes that can see above the clouds; my other ears that hear above the winds. He is the part of me that can reach out into the sea. He has told me a thousand times over that I am his reason for being; by the way he rests against my leg; by the way he thumps his tail at my smallest smile; by the way he shows his hurt when I leave without taking him. When I am wrong, he is delighted to forgive. When I am angry, he clowns to make me smile. When I am happy, he is joy unbounded. When I am a fool, he ignores it. He is loyalty itself. He has taught me the meaning of devotion. With him, I know a secret comfort and a private peace. He has brought me understanding where before I was ignorant. His head on my knee can heal my human hurts. His presence by my side is protection against my fears of dark and unknown things. He has promised to wait for me...whenever...wherever—in case I need him. And I expect I will—as I always have. He is my dog.”

—GENE HILL

It has been said that all dogs go to heaven because, unlike people, dogs are naturally good and loyal and kind. If this is true, two very special little dogs, Oso, a Chihuahua / Pekinese mix and Murphy, a Scottish Terrier, have already earned a place in heaven by displaying all of these natural characteristics during their recent “Love on a Leash” visit to Mountain Shadows Outreach Services.

Love on a Leash has been providing pet therapy with specially trained dogs since 1984. According to the organization’s web site, “A therapy pet’s primary function is to brighten someone’s day. Dogs and their owners visit nursing homes, hospitals and schools to provide emotional support. They put a smile on someone’s face, make their day a little brighter, or bring back a cherished memory.”

“The dogs did exactly what they were supposed to do,” says Denise Barnes of Mountain Shadows Outreach Services. “They warmed the hearts and brought smiles to the faces of everyone they came into contact with! It was so great to see the smiles on everyone’s faces. Heather Coffman and Cathy Arom had the biggest smiles I have ever seen when they saw Oso and Murphy.”



Kenny and Oso

Pet therapy has gained increasing attention in recent years for a wide variety of patients – people with AIDS or cancer, the elderly, and the mentally or physically challenged. Research has shown that visiting with a pet can reduce stress symptoms, lower blood pressure, increase sensory stimulation, boost people’s moods, enhance social interaction, and reduce loneliness. Because pets provide unconditional acceptance and affection, pet therapy can be comforting. Animals bring out our nurturing instincts and can help us to shift our narrow focus beyond ourselves, helping us to feel connected to a larger world. Here are some other interesting effects of pet ownership and pet therapy:

- Activities of daily living (ADL) level of residents in long-term care facilities who did not currently own pets or participate in pet therapy deteriorated more on average than that of those who did.
- Contact with pets was associated with fewer minor health problems and better overall psychological well-being.
- Medication costs dropped from an average of \$3.80 per patient per day to just \$1.18 per patient per day in long-term care facilities that have animals as part of their therapy or environment.
- Children’s cognitive development can be enhanced by interacting with a pet.

Please see LOVE on page 8

Willow House Residents Go HOG Wild!

Four wheels move the body. Two wheels move the soul.

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

In the 1920's, a group of farm boys gained fame as they consistently won a long string of motorcycle races. The group used a hog, or pig, as their mascot and, following every win, they would put the hog (a real live one) on their motorcycle, and take a victory lap. The boys became known as the *hog boys*. Their motorcycle of choice was a Harley-Davidson. Thus a legend was born.

Mountain Shadows

Willow House residents Kristin Weller and Nick Badillo recently had the chance to live the Harley legend thanks to the help of Larry Reinhart, Mountain Shadows Recreation Driver. He learned of Kris-

tin's love for Harley-Davidsons about two years ago. "I was driving Kristin home from an appointment when a group of Harley riders went by on both sides of the van," says Larry. "Kristin just screamed with excitement. She loved it! And on Circus Day when the bikers rev their engines during the parade, she just goes bananas. She just loves Harleys."

Larry talked with Biggs Harley-Davidson General Manager, Kirby, to see if they might be able to arrange a special visit to the store. "Kirby immediately said 'Sure, come on

over!' So we brought Kristin and Nick to the store."

"Nick loves motorcycles too. He collects motorcycle figurines and has them all over his bedroom. He also likes to draw motorcycles," adds Arlene Galvan of Mountain Shadows.

"Everyone at Biggs was just super to us," continues Larry. "We spent about an hour inside the store, with Kristin and Nick just looking at and touching all the bikes. It was great! Biggs also offered us an incredible discount on merchandise, so the residents had fun shopping too."

Biggs Harley-Davidson is one of the largest Harley stores in California. The facility is over 50,000 square feet. "Kristin and Nick bought lots of souvenirs," says Arlene. "A great leather jacket, some T's, a custom motorcycle figurine, a Harley alarm clock. Both of the residents really loved it!"

After the tour inside the store, the residents went outside where the excitement really revved up. "Each of the residents was allowed to sit on one of the bikes and the motor was started up. They both LOVED it!" adds Arlene.

"Afterward, we went to the Dalton's Roadhouse, had hamburgers, ate peanuts and threw the shells on the floor. Everyone had a really great time," says Larry.

Many thanks to Biggs Harley-Davidson for helping Mountain Shadows residents Kristin and Nick live the Harley legend on a very different kind of two-wheeled ride they will remember for a lifetime. ■

"We spent about an hour inside the store, with Kristin and Nick just looking at and touching all the bikes. It was great!"



Kristin and Kirby

Toni Albright Celebrates 10 Years of Service at Mountain Shadows

Vince Lombardi once said, “Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” It is also what makes our Mountain Shadows community work.

Over the past ten years, Toni Albright, MSSG Human Resources Director, has been instrumental in developing the team of professionals whose individual dedication to our group mission has enhanced the quality of life for all of our residents.

“Several people have asked me why I have stayed with Mountain Shadows all these years,” says Toni. “It is not an easy job. While HR professionals in other industries look out mainly for corporate interests, my main focus is on hiring the right people to take care of our residents, keeping them safe, giving them the quality of life they deserve. The staffing and training decisions I make have a direct impact on our residents’ lives. I take that responsibility very seriously. While that responsibility can sometimes be scary, it is also one of the main reasons I stay here. If I don’t make these decisions, who will? I believe very strongly in what we do at Mountain Shadows and I enjoy making a positive difference in the lives of our residents.”

Says Wade Wilde, Executive Director of MSSG, “Toni is one of our most valued team members. Her objectivity in problem-solving and her bulldog-like tenaciousness are commendable. I am very glad she’s a part of the MSSG family.” Stacy Sullivan, MSSG Director of Operations, agrees, “Toni has been a dedicated employee for many years. She always looks out for what’s best for the residents and Mountain Shadows. She’s very creative and thinks outside-the-box to find ways to improve things.”

“I think one of Toni’s best qualities is her ability to be calm and rational in difficult situations,” continues Stacy. “There are constant changes and challenges in our industry. Toni’s quick thinking and strong negotiation skills have helped to keep us on course during all of these transitions. The Mountain Shadows reorganization that took place due to our change to non-profit status and the recent acquisitions of Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes and

Mountain Shadows Outreach Services have highlighted her skills. She has been an invaluable resource in redefining and reorganizing the human resources infrastructure to accommodate our growing needs.”

“When I first started at Mountain Shadows, my main goal was to stabilize staffing levels,” says Toni. In order to do this, she implemented new hiring policies and established new relationships with several local colleges and community organizations. “I also created a new staff development department within Mountain Shadows. This raised the bar by developing a consistent hiring and training approach. As a result, our staffing levels have been much more stable over the past five years.”

“Toni was also instrumental in creating our Mountain Shadows Employee Appreciation Days,” says Stacy. “I wanted to show our appreciation to our Direct Care Staff,” says Toni. “So we established ‘DCS Week,’ a week-long event to honor them.”

In addition to directing recruiting and training efforts for the combined total of nearly 400 employees for all three Mountain Shadows entities, Toni also oversees company-wide workers’ compensation and employee benefits administration.

“It has been exciting to see the growth of Mountain Shadows recently,” adds Toni. “I strongly believe that Mountain Shadows is one of the best companies in the industry at providing care for the developmentally disabled population. As we expand, we can have a positive effect on the lives of even more people.”

Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes our Mountain Shadows Community Group work. Many thanks, Toni, for your dedication to building the team that makes it happen! ■



■ LOVE *(continued from page 5)*

- People who own dogs go to the doctor less than those who do not. In one Medicare study, dog owners reported 21 % fewer physician contacts than non-dog owners.

Pet therapy can act as a catalyst for social, physical, mental and emotional growth. "I was so glad to find out about Love on a Leash," says Denise. "They visited Mountain Shadows Outreach for the first time on February 27th and they will continue to visit us once a week. I love the organization – they bring joy and happiness everywhere they go!"

"Heaven goes by favor; if it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in."

—MARK TWAIN

If this is true, judging from the smiles they have brought to the faces of our clients, Oso and Murphy have already earned their place in heaven. We hope until then, they will continue to enrich our lives and the lives of our clients at Mountain Shadows Outreach Services. ■



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■ GABLE *(continued from page 4)*

And your eyes twinkly bright as can be;
You should laugh all the while
And all other times smile
And now, smile a smile for me.
When Irish eyes are smiling,
Sure, 'tis like the morning in Spring
In the lilt of Irish laughter
You can hear the angels sing.
When Irish hearts are happy,
All the world seems bright and gay.
And while Irish eyes are smiling,
Sure, they steal your heart away.

When Irish Eyes Are Smiling

Now, as we all stand at our own gable, where one road diverges to tears and sorrow at Bob's loss, we will choose the road less traveled, the one Bob would want us to take, and we will smile a smile for having known him – and that will make all the difference.

And yes, it is a beautiful day, Bob. ■

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