

Community Voices by Alissa Crispin: Morgan Hill Senior Center recruiting volunteers to support older adults



Alissa Crispin

A student in my third-grade class this year defined community as “people who look out for each other.” Like all communities in our area, Morgan Hill and its population are aging. So, how can we “look out” for older community members in a way that truly promotes Morgan Hill’s designation as an “Age-Friendly” community?

One way we can do this is to acknowledge both the benefits and challenges that come with advanced age. Older adults in our community contribute greatly to shaping its character — they do philanthropic work through community-service organizations like the American Association of University Women, they serve on commissions and governmental bodies, and they care for the younger generations.

But with advanced age also comes many new obstacles. Older adults in our community face challenges such as living on a decreased income and dealing with a body that heals and moves less quickly. They may also sometimes lose the means to travel independently about town. Can you imagine what it must be like to need to buy a bag of dog food or go to a medical appointment and not have the means to do so?

The Morgan Hill Senior Center has a solution to this problem. Seniors without an independent means of transportation may apply to be a part of the Get’n Around Town Program. This is a program in which licensed community volunteers drive older adults to medical appointments, to pick up groceries, or to visit with friends across town. Says current volunteer Sue Yeager, “these seniors have lost the way to do routine activities that most of us take for granted. The rideshare program is a very valuable service in Morgan Hill and I love being a part of it.” The program, however, needs more volunteer drivers to meet the expanding needs of its ridership.

Here’s where you come in: the Senior Center will be hosting an informational and recruitment event from 10 to 11 a.m. Monday, June 17. This event is free, open to the public, and child-care will be provided. Attend this event to learn how you can help elderly members of our community maintain their independence by volunteering just a few hours a week of your time. You can set your own schedule and decline or accept individual rides as your time allows. At the recruitment event, you will also have an opportunity to meet current volunteers like Angelique Fuegmann, a mother of school-aged children, who has shared that, “The Get’n Around Town Program is a wonderful way to get involved, build relationships, and make a difference in our wonderful community. To someone who is lonely and homebound, this program is priceless.”

Please take time to learn how you can “look out for others” in our community by attending this event. After all, you (and all your neighbors) have the power to shape the future of Morgan Hill ensuring that it can be accessible to and enjoyed by all people regardless of age.

Alissa Crispin is a Morgan Hill resident, local teacher, community volunteer, and commissioner on the Santa Clara County Commission on the Status of Women.