



On the Road Again with Bob Ornberg

by Danielle Palli

“I’ve got a big problem,” Bob Ornberg, a resident at ABHOW’s The Terraces at San Joaquin Gardens (TSJG), once told his soon-to-be guitar instructor. “My wife can’t stand it because I play in one key and sing in another!” The instructor assured Bob that he could help him overcome that.

“By golly, he did!” Bob told the Mosaic in a recent interview. That was nearly a decade ago. Today, at age 91, Bob practices daily for the regularly-scheduled gigs he plays at the Lodges (Assisted Living) and the Grove (Memory Support) at the TSJG community. As a former member of the Horse Calvary in WWII, turned salesman and supervisor, Bob then went on to open his own business after he “retired” in his late 60s and continued to work for another ten years. In 2014, after a bad case of bronchitis, followed by an even worse case of pneumonia, Bob decided to move into the Lodges at TSJG to ease the stress on his wife. Due to his condition, he didn’t pick up the guitar for six months. Who knew that this would lead to yet another post-retirement endeavor.

One day, his daughter, Kristina, told Bob’s care manager what a great musician he was. By request, Bob picked up his guitar and began to sing a Johnny Cash song. Within minutes, a group began to gather around him and they’ve been gathering ever since. To adapt to his growing popularity as a performer he has since transformed his living

room into a studio. His son, Eric, set up a desk and printer so that Bob can print out and practice new music that Kristina transposes and emails to him. Bob has to travel with an oxygen tank, but that doesn’t stop him from singing or participating in Masterpiece Living Mobility and Lifestyle Reviews. He particularly likes playing at the Grove, where he has witnessed people with significant cognitive impairment suddenly remember moments from their past and begin singing along to country music favorites such as “Ring of Fire,” and “Folsom Prison Blues.” “There is one woman who knows the words to every song I sing!”

Lodge Lifestyle Enrichment Coordinator, Jessica Stepp, recounted a story of when Bob was performing “I Walk the Line,” that he dedicated to his wife, Dorothy, who was sitting in the audience. “It’s a memory I won’t forget. Everyone had tears in their eyes. It was just so sweet and special.” So special – in fact – that there are young volunteers and team members at TSJG who would like to take guitar lessons from Bob. There is even a plan in the works for the group to put on a show together.

“I’ve been working in this industry for 15 years and never had a resident who was a performer like this, and has a younger generation who want to learn from him,” Jessica shared. “He’s just an inspiration to us.”



Bob Ornberg

Valuing Gray

What is the Valuing Gray video contest?

It is a video contest showcasing your organization's method of valuing and leveraging the strengths of older adults for the greater good of society.



In order to be eligible for the Valuing Gray Award an organization must submit a video showcasing their system and how it is contributing to world change, along with a short application. These submissions should also explain the steps necessary to replicate a process elsewhere as these ideas are meant to be shared. Video submissions will be accepted from February 1st – 10th, 2017.

What is the purpose of the contest?

The purpose of this video contest is to prove and showcase the value of older adults. Masterpiece Living recognizes that older adults face major hurdles in the historically negative view of aging sustained through societal expectations. The MacArthur Foundation Research on Successful Aging has provided a basis for developing effective policies for successful aging in our society. The Valuing Gray Award brings to light the impact of an organization in supporting these endeavors.

Editor's note: Sadly, Bob passed away shortly before this edition of the Mosaic went to press. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of Bob's loved ones. May his successful aging and resilient lifestyle be an inspiration to others for years to come.

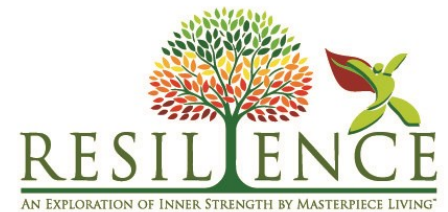
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Resilience

Resilience is a 10-session exploration by Masterpiece Living that revisits and expands upon concepts introduced in Dr. Roger Landry's dynamic book, *Live Long, Die Short*. Resilience allows us to bounce back after physically, mentally, and emotionally stressful situations, adapt quickly to changes, and develop whole-person strength. Participants will leave with actionable tools to immediately enhance their own successful aging experience.



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