



# ABHOW Words

*Sharing Our Stories*

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Residents mentor local teens.



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Community celebrates resident's 104th birthday.



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The Grove provides critical memory support.



## Judson Park Reaches Up and Out

**W**hen the fear of falling surfaced among Judson Park residents in a recent lifestyle review, team members began searching for solutions.

They discovered that it was not the falls themselves that residents feared the most, but the inability to get back up once they hit the floor, explained Ken Ray, Judson Park fitness coordinator.

Other residents simply wanted to be able to play on the floor with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

“They were afraid they couldn’t get back up off the floor because it had been so long since they had done that,” Ray says.

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*Judson Park Fitness Coordinator Ken Ray, right, shows resident Joan Ekern how to recover from a fall.*

## Judson Park Reaches Up and Out

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He developed a six-session workshop called “Get Up” that 36 Judson Park residents completed earlier this year. The program recently expanded to the Des Moines Senior Center, complete with a Spanish-language version for the city’s Hispanic population.

Joan Ekern, a Judson Park resident, suggested expanding the course to the community at large, Ray says. Shortly after taking the class, Ekern slipped while getting off an elevator and used what she learned in class to crawl over to a chair and pull herself up.

“I used it and it works,” Ekern said of the techniques taught in the workshop. “It’s well worth learning how to do that so you don’t have to call for help all the time.”

The Des Moines-Normandy Senior Activity Center jumped at the chance to offer the class. The center asked for a Spanish version because many of the Hispanic clients there are not fluent in English.

“I spoke Spanish in high school, but I didn’t have anywhere what I would need to teach the class in Spanish,” Ray says.

Enter Angelica Cabrera, a member of the Judson Park custodial staff, who volunteered to translate. While Cabrera speaks, Ray demonstrates the techniques.

“They loved it,” says Sue Padden, Des Moines senior services manager. “One of the comments I heard the most was how hard it was for them to kneel at

church Mass, and then get back up. Ken showed them how to do that.”

The first thing a person should do after falling is a “body assessment” to make sure there are no broken bones, Ray says.

“Wiggle your toes, wiggle your fingers,” he says. “If you feel like you can’t move part of your extremities, don’t move. Just yell or scream or throw a shoe to see if you can get someone’s attention.”

If there are no broken bones, Ray says, use the technique Ekern used: moving on hands and knees to the nearest piece of furniture, then grasping on and pulling themselves up.

Ray advises residents to constantly practice getting on the floor and back up again.

“If you don’t use it, you lose it,” he says.

Ray hopes that the class leads to more public outreach programs at the senior activity center, such as an upcoming spirituality workshop led by Judson Park residents.

“Within Judson Park, we don’t just care about our residents, we care about the entire active older adult population,” Ray says. “We can reach out to the entire community.”

Combining resources allows more effective delivery of services to the senior population, says Padden.

“It’s all about partnerships,” she says. “We all serve the same folks.”



*Ekern suggested Ray expand the “Get Up” workshop to the community at large.*