

Society recognizes senior advocate

August honoree gave up singing for volunteer work

By Cheryl Walker
The News

When Ros Rosen first moved to Leisure World she knew she'd never be satisfied "sitting around doing nothing - and I don't play games."

She tried the glee club for a while, but it was notices about volunteer opportunities with the Medicare Assistance Program, the early incarnation of the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program, and the American Association of Retired Person's tax counseling program that really caught her attention.

So she got involved in both.

And 12 years later, she still is a dedicated volunteer for the programs - which is why the Historical Society will turn its spotlight on Rosen next month as Leisure Worlorder of the Month of August.

"I feel they are the most important thing I do: helping people," says Rosen, citing remembered cases of tax refunds found, long-stalled benefits released and benefits reaffirmed and won.

United Mutual President Irving Goldberg, himself a long-term AARP tax counselor and program coordinator, says Rosen "is one of the most dedicated, community-minded people it has been my pleasure to work with - the Leisure Worlorder of the Month honor is most deserved in this instance."

Another tax program volunteer, Jim Hart, a site coordinator for the AARP outreach at both the Rossmoor Regency and the Laguna Hills



David E. Caballero/The News

A computer and knowledge about federal Medicare and insurance programs makes Ros Rosen one of the premiere counselors in HICAP. She is being honored as Leisure Worlorder of the Month for August.

Senior Center as well as in the community, says his colleague is "very involved and very active."

Susan Gosselin-Bowlds, volunteer director at HICAP, says Rosen was her organization's first Leisure World counselor and also a volunteer coordinator and takes her expertise not just to local senior centers and facilities but to the homebound.

"Ros Rosen is a really special lady - she works and gives so much to people, I adore her."

United Director Bert Posthill added that Rosen "is the ultimate volunteer - concerned, hard working, helpful, well-organized, smart - she does everything, she's a wonder to behold, the most helping person I know . . . she is great!"

Background: Brooklyn-born, Rosen says the death of her father when she was a young girl precipitated an early entrance into the work force.

Once there, however, she demonstrated a talent for bookkeeping and accounting that proved her ticket to success in a variety of industries; among them, manufacturing, banking and insurance.

And she also utilized the same skills to help co-workers get benefits and do taxes.

So when she retired in 1985

Ceremony facts

Who: Ros Rosen
What: Leisure Worlorder of the Month for August
When: 10 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 5
Where: Clubhouse 6
Program sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society.

and came to Leisure World, the segue into the tax program and HICAP (then called MAP) was a natural.

As the AARP program offers no charge tax counseling, HICAP offers no charge unbiased assistance and information on patients' rights, Medicare benefits and appeals for denied claims, legal advocacy, Medicare supplemental insurance and health maintenance organizations.

"Seniors have to understand with their HMO that they are not getting charity or welfare, they are paying for it (through Medicare) and have a right to be treated with respect and dignity."

HICAP also helps consumers evaluate long-term care insurance policies, watchdog Medicare scams and keep abreast of changes in Medicare coverage.

She notes for example in the instance of Medicare changes, HICAP volunteers are getting all the facts about the new Medicare Plus Choice

programs and she is working with Leisure World's People for a National Health Program and Social service to host a community seminar on the topic in September. And hopes to set up a series of seminars to follow.

Rosen, like other HICAP volunteers, completed a training program and earned certification as a counselor by the California Department of Aging. The tax program requires training and certification as well so counselors will be able to help taxpayers keep abreast of changes - and get the deductions and refunds that are their due.

Although Rosen isn't paid for her work in cash, she says she gets great pleasure out of doing her best for her clients.

"If you're having trouble with the system, that's what we're for," says Rosen.

Currently, HICAP offers three sessions a month in the Clubhouse 3 conference room and two sessions per month in the Senior Center.

Appointments are required.

During tax season, AARP has walk-in service at Clubhouse 1 and two days a week at the Laguna Hills Senior Center. She notes too that the Rossmoor Regency lets her host tax and HICAP training at the facility as well.

Rosen says volunteers are always welcome to train as counselors for both programs. For information about HICAP's call 639-4962 or AARP's tax call 498-1219.



Among the many honors Ros Rosen has received is the Warshaw Award in recognition of her 10 years volunteering in the Orange County Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program.