



LEISURE WORLD NEWS

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Leisure Worlder of the Month, Ellen Dalrymple, sits with her Bijon Frisee Angel beside a photograph of her grandchildren at her home in Leisure World.

Photo by Dominique Riley/The News

A Valentine for Ellen

Society's February nod: a caring giver

BY CHERYL WALKER
THE NEWS

Eight years ago, The News did a feature on the Adult Day Health Care Center and what its innovative programs meant for a debilitating-stroke survivor, Dick Dalrymple and his wife Ellen, then Leisure World residents of 10 years.

At that time, Ellen was in charge of the scrip program for the new Leisure World Friends support group of the

center, which raised money for patient scholarships. As a member of Toastmasters, she was also spokesperson for caregivers unprepared for the enormous demands they encounter as they care for an incapacitated loved one.

Since then, Ellen has found new ways to turn lemons into lemonade through her work with the city of Laguna Woods community services advisory committee, cancer fundraisers, transportation programs for the disabled, and the Leisure World Foundation.

No one who goes to Ellen with a problem walks away without emotional and practi-

cal support. Her eyes see, her ears hear and her heart re-

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Ceremony facts

Who: Ellen Dalrymple

What: Leisure Worlder of the Month for February

Where: Clubhouse 6

When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 2

Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society with funding by Renaissance at the Regency and Palm Terrace.

ELLEN

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sponds.

That's why it seems appropriate that the Historical Society decided to single out an individual who truly deserves a Valentine by naming her Leisure Worlder of the Month for February.

Craig Charlton her colleague in Toastmasters and the Foundation, says he is impressed by the fact that "whenever a job needs to be done well, she answers the call."

Virginia Templeton, former city community services chair and co-worker, says no one is more committed than Ellen. She points out that Ellen even plans to train her puppy to go into hospitals and provide pet therapy in nursing homes since she sees the happiness "Angel" brings to the Tustin facility where Dick resides.

That special kind of responsiveness to a need perceived is what makes Ellen a unique person to know and work with, says Templeton. "Everything she does, she's always thinking of someone else and how something can improve their lives."

Background: Ellen was born in Brooklyn, where her family financially "got by" but "a lot of love" filled in the gaps.

She pursued a career in accounting and office manage-

ment, married and had three children.

After her first marriage broke up, the single mom, worked to put her children through college and see them on their way to homes of their own before saying "I do" again.

Then, her second husband on his 53rd birthday, had a major stroke and a life that had been tough before got more challenging as she struggled to make ends meet and care for him.

"I basically worked to pay for his care," she recalls.

She said the best move she ever made was to Leisure World where she was able to get Dick into adult day care and work with peace of mind that he was being taken care of mentally, socially, emotionally and medically through their many programs and therapies.

She in turn decided to make sure that kind of facility was available not just for him but for others.

Basically a shy person, Ellen said she knew she needed a boost to become the kind of spokesperson she knew she had to be and found Toastmasters fit the bill.

"It became my second family and I think I served in every position there."

As Ellen gained confidence before an audience, she spread her wings becoming treasurer of People for a Na-

tional Health Program, a city incorporation volunteer, Laguna Woods advisory council member helping to sort through social services grants/beautification and other programs, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life chairwoman (she's a cancer survivor), an Orange County Transportation Authority ACCESS paratransit system sign up volunteer and LW Foundation executive vice president.

She also is active in the Historical Society, the Community Civic Association, the Theatre Guild and Canine, Democratic and Film clubs.

And she served on the Golden Rain Foundation social services committee.

Through it all, Ellen says an interest in social services has been the backbone of her activities, "Volunteering keeps me busy and happy and gives back much more than I give and I love where I am, my friends, family, activities."

Sure there's stress, she confides, but adds she handles it with a sense of humor. "My glass is never half empty, it's always half full."

For the record

For the record: In the Jan. 20 story on God's Hidden Treasures ministry, the first name of the Leisure Worlder was in error. The resident's correct name is Joyce Hanson.