

For this health professional, caring never retires

By Cheryl Walker
The News

Although Leisure Worlder Bea Levin claims she's been re-tired since 1981, her work load belies that claim. Yet, in spite of her active

membership in numerous groups, on Oct. 17, Levin was one of seven nurses who spent four hours giving 1,530 free flu shots at the annual Moulton Plaza Health Fair.

Levin is an active member of the new Leisure World Foundation, Concerned Citizens for Peace, People for a National Health Program, National Council of Jewish Women, Leisure World Los Angeles Philharmonic Co-op and Hemlock Society.

Add to the list the Community Association, the nurses contingent of the Golden Rain earthquake and disaster preparedness task force, Community Concerts, the Laguna Hills Adult Day Health Care Auxiliary, and a host of other groups.

She also acts as advisor to nursing schools, travels, collects art, sculpts, attends Elderhostels, takes Emeritus Institute courses and volunteers for community service work whenever asked.

For November the Historical Society has decided to

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David E. Caballero / The News

Bea Levin was one of seven nurses administering flu shots on Oct. 17 at the Moulton Plaza health fair.

recognize her many community contributions by naming her Leisure Worlder of the Month, an honor Levin says "she can't believe."

But those who know her are not surprised.

Social activist Jane Slavin says of her co-worker and friend that she "really deserves the award, she's an outstanding person - everyone marvels at her energy-plus - I feel its such a privilege to have her as a friend."

Another co-worker, Helen Mills-Lindsay, a co-supporter of the Laguna Hills Adult Day Health Care Center and former California Senior senator, adds that Levin really deserves to be Leisure Worlder of the Month.

"Her generosity often thrusts her into distressing and complicated situations but she unerringly handles herself with grace and dignity making for the comfort of those around her."

Leisure World Foundation President Tom Jorde calls Levin an unqualified "people person"; that is, "whatever the need, be it medical, social or financial she is always ready to respond by saying, 'How can I help?'"

Adds Jorde, "She not only 'talks the talk' but is always ready to 'walk the walk'."

Background Born in Worcester, MA., Levin learned, through the example of her mother, who fed and clothed people broken by the Depression, "that we have to take care of people who are having a hard time."

Like her brother, she decided to make medicine a career and got her Registered Nurse credentials from Beth Israel School of Nursing in Boston where she decided to concentrate on public health.

"I have always believed that health was a right and prevention is the key to good health," she explains.

To that end, she got her Public Health Nurse certification from the Medical College of Virginia and later her bachelor of science degree in nursing from the UCLA.

She worked for the Los Angeles County Health Department for 35 years, which she says afforded her the opportunity every six to seven years of honing a new specialty in nursing; in particular in the area of acute communicable diseases and epidemiology and maternal health.

She says she particularly enjoyed helping mold the careers of her fellow nurses many of whom have gone on to successful careers in education, clinical practice and medicine.

After the death of her husband, she followed her sister, Sylvia Fine, to Leisure World, where she found much to crusade for, especially in the area of senior health.

"I'm an optimistic person but there's such a pervasiveness of discomfort and such greed where health has become a commodity.

"Although we have the best medical care here in the world, it's not getting to the people who need it."

That belief is one of the reasons she joined PNHP with its goal to secure cradle to grave health care for everyone.

"And I still think there's hope for an all-inclusive system . . . we need it."

Ceremony facts

Who: Bea Levin
What: Leisure Worlder for November
Where: Clubhouse 6
When: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 5.
Sponsor: Leisure World Historical Society