



Snapshots of Valley Volunteers: Angels in Disguise

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

Volunteers don't get paid--not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.
- Sherry Anderson

Ever wondered what the North Fork would be like without its corps of volunteers? Important work would remain undone, and the arts would languish. I interviewed a few of the wonderful folks who keep NFSC on target with its mission to keep local elders thriving, engaged, and living independently in their homes for as long as possible. What motivates and inspires their kindness?

Now 79, one volunteer says it all began when he served in Vietnam and ended up 'adopting' a local family. "Being able to help *somebody else* really helped *me* over there." Now 79, he's an NFSC Snow Buddy, a stalwart Service Saturday volunteer, and seasonally delivers produce or soup.

When one retired nurse moved to Crawford she felt an immediate sense of community. She perceived that it was a "community of neighbors helping neighbors—and I wanted to be one of those neighbors." Now she's a stellar volunteer for NFSC as well as CAWS and serves as the communications coordinator for the Friends of the Crawford Library.

Early on in life, one Hotchkiss volunteer was instructed about money: "You will never have enough if that's what you care about." He and his wife help everyone they can, regardless of who they are. "It's all about giving to others..."

Another volunteer, who worked as a nurse for 45 years, says volunteering "feeds my workaholic addiction." Since moving to the Valley she's helped out at the Trading Post, KVNF, Blue Sage, Heirlooms for Hospice, Barkin' Bargains, and UpRoot; most Thursdays you'll find her washing the dishes after the catered lunch at the Paonia Senior Center.

One of our younger NFSC volunteers—only 56—wanted to get involved because he likes helping others, grinning as he explains, "It's more fun to work on someone else's property...Even if you don't agree about everything, they're still your neighbors."

When Nancy D first arrived in Paonia years ago, she observed that a lot of older folks needed help and made herself available to aid with packing, moving, cleaning, shopping, rides to appointments... Now nearing 80, she restricts herself to the less physical tasks (no window-washing!), but when her sisters came for a family visit, she convinced them to drive with her all over the hinterlands of Crawford, delivering CSA produce with a smile. Nancy says, "...What may seem a small thing to me might be a Very Big Thing for an elder person."

A common thread stitches these individuals together. Bonnie Q took a break from mopping the floor after a Thursday catered lunch to explain: "I really love helping people—it makes them feel good, and then I feel good!"

JOIN US TUESDAYS@2 at the Paonia Senior Center!

On March 4th, Claire Schauer will offer a presentation about using CBD to improve the lives of the senior community. Fields of Glory is a locally owned and operated farm that takes great pride in cultivating their own USDA certified organic hemp and carefully making CBD products.

On March 11th, join the Song Circle just for the joy of singing with others. No skill or talent required, lyrics provided. Facilitated by singer/songwriter Ellen Stapenhorst.



Always the 2nd TUESDAY @2

Fires & Floods! On March 18, Mindy Brennan of the Office of Emergency Management for Delta County will provide the information we need to help us be prepared if a disaster were to strike the North Fork Valley. 3rd TUESDAY@2

On March 25, our senior Book Club gathers at the Paonia Senior Center to discuss great reads. This month we'll be reading a novel or nonfiction book by the marvelous author Geraldine Brooks. Always the 4th TUESDAY@2

NFSC volunteers provide free transportation for seniors within Delta County. Plan ahead and call **NEIGHBORLY RIDES!**

Do you need help with a small household task? Call **HANDY HELPERS** for volunteer assistance.

(970) 527-1735



Award-Winning Film Free for Seniors at the Paradise

Meryl Streep has often been called “the finest actress of her generation,” and since she was born in 1949, she’s definitely “one of us.” Her stellar performance as Zofia “Sophie” Zawistowska, a Polish immigrant who comes to America with a dark secret from her past, won her second Best Actress Oscar. The psychological drama from 1982 also features Keven Kline in his first feature film and Peter MacNicol. This powerful film airs at the Paradise Theater on March 13 at 10am through the Philip Salembier memorial series and offers free admission for seniors, also including popcorn and a fountain drink.



March Birthdays

Happy Birthday to:

John Zachman 3/2
Norm Lewark 3/9
Ron Hanna 3/22
Mary Czech 3/28



Kim Roberts 3/4
Julie Sapena 3/12
Laura Major 3/26
Jill Knutson 3/31

March Calendar

What's Happening in March

Put TUESDAYS@2 on your calendar. Something different at 2:00 each week at Paonia Senior Center. (see article page 2.)

Here & Now MEDITATION-Meg O'Shaughnessy facilitates this ongoing group at Paonia Senior Center Thursday mornings at 9:00-10:00. All are welcome.

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) Exercise and fall prevention classes presented by the North Fork EMS: Paonia Senior Center Tues & Fri 8:45-9:45 or 10-11; Hotchkiss Memorial Hall – Mon & Thurs @9:30; Crawford Town Hall 10-11 Mondays and Wednesdays plus Advanced classes Tues & Thurs 5:30-6:30 pm.

Write Your Life- Memoir for Seniors at Paonia Senior Center on Wednesdays at 1:30. Please call for more info/to join.

Senior Meals– Paonia Senior Center open for VOA Lunch (also available for Pick-up) M,W & F: Call Debbie at (970) 874-7661 for more info or to sign up.

Hotchkiss Senior Center serves hot full meals cooked on the premises Tues, Wed and Thurs, all at noon. No reservation required, to-go orders available. 872.3494/

Caregivers' Support Group Thursdays, 1 – 3 pm via Zoom. Contact Gayla Michaud for information at 970.825.6288 or email GAMich76@outlook.com

Catered lunches @ Paonia Senior Center Thursdays @ Noon. Flying Fork 3/6; Potluck 3/13; AP Catering 3/20; Chrys Bailey 3/27. Sign up starts Friday before next Thursday's lunch by calling 527.3435, or signing up in person at the Senior Center. \$5-6 per person

Thanks to our generous sponsors:



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Both Senior Connections and the Paonia Senior Center appreciate their support!

North Fork Senior Connections

Finding Solutions to Help Seniors Age in Place

P.O. Box 1738 Paonia, CO 81428



March
2025

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Potluck on 3/13!

Everyone loves the Thursday catered lunches, but we've had several folks ask: "When will there be another POTLUCK?" Please join us at noon on Thursday, March 13 for a great meal at Paonia Senior Center. Bring a dish to share and join the fun!



Here Today Death Café*



If you're looking for a safe space to share around the topic and experience of death and dying, in the company of others, sipping tea and eating cake, please join us.

Monday March 10th 2-3:30

@ Paonia Senior Center 106 Third Street



Facilitator Meg O'Shaughnessy has hosted Death Cafés since 2018.

For more info
oshaughnessymeg@gmail.com
970-270-6349

*Death Cafe is a not for profit organization which aims to increase awareness of death, with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives. www.deathcafe.com