

Local agency rejects closure, OKs expansion, name change

By J.J. McCORMACK
Senior staff writer

The Sun Cities Area Community Council will undergo a rebirth of sorts over the next 12 months.

The council's board of directors on Friday ignored a proposal on the table to disband, opting instead to expand the human-service planning agency's reach in the Northwest Valley.

The decision came during a daylong planning session in which board members mulled options for the future, which included disbanding, continuing as a community council or expanding beyond the Sun Cities and Youngtown.

Plans for a regional council call for extending existing services to retirees in parts of Peoria, El Mirage and Surprise and developing new programs to meet the needs of elderly residents throughout the Northwest Valley.

"We will be a substantially larger organization and one that will bring great benefit to the other communities," said Tom Englehardt, council president.

Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the council, said she is looking forward to steering expansion efforts.

"I'm excited because I think it's a logical thing to do. We need to do planning regionally

on issues that concern all of our neighboring communities because they impinge on each other."

Expanding the council's mission may eventually lead to identifying and addressing needs of the general population, Englehardt said.

"Eventually as this develops, we may be in a position to extend program activities to a broader resident base," he said.

Community councils in Glendale, Tempe and Mesa serve the general population. The Sun Cities Area Community Council was established 20 years ago to address the unmet human-service needs of

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Council explores

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broader service base

retirees in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown.

The Olive Branch Senior Center, Sun Cities Area Transit System and Sun Cities Area Interfaith Services are among the programs the council has developed and sustained that now operate independently.

The council is reaching outside the Sun Cities and Youngtown in part to expand its funding base, Englehardt said. A primary source of council support for many years, the Sun City Community Fund, sharply reduced its grant award to the council this year. A \$66,000 award in 1994 dropped to \$25,000.

"As we expand into new communities, funds may be available from the United Way or the cities. There are a number of possibilities, all of which have to be explored," Englehardt said.

Aside from diminishing local financial support, Englehardt said the board of directors recognized the need

for human-service planning in neighboring communities.

Ab Flury, a longtime board member and former council president, said the expansion is overdue in light of the rapid population growth in the Northwest Valley, especially among the retirement set. Those residents will need the recreational, health and legal services now available to Sun Cities and Youngtown retirees, Flury said.

"I have thought for a long, long time that we should expand our services. The community is growing so fast around us," Flury said.

Englehardt said the expansion will take time. He said area residents will see no immediate changes in programs or council operations. The board is expected to vote at a later date on a proposal to change the council's name to the Northwest Valley Community Council.

The next order of business will be to expand the board of directors to include representatives of the new areas the council will serve.

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Sat., July 22 and Sun., July 23, 1995

Retirees wake up to local service

Community Council assists seniors at home

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Staff writer

SUN CITY — Kathryn Vaskov devoted 30 years of her life to caring for the elderly. Now she's on the other end of the care.

"It's difficult because I've always

been so independent," she said. "People like me don't take well to being told what to do, but I'm learning to accept it."

The 88-year-old resident of Sierra Winds in Peoria is just one of more than 200 people served each year by the Wake-Up/Tuck-In service provided through the Sun Cities Area Community Council. Born out of a survey on needs completed in 1986, the service was established to prevent unnecessary

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institutionalization, said Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the Community Council.

"Our focus here at the council has been to develop programs to help Sun City area residents stay in their own homes as long as they can," she said. "Del Webb started this community as an active retirement area, but various things happen in life which change that, and there were no human services developed to deal with those needs. We knew there were people going into nursing homes that didn't

need to. We did a survey and found that if you had a household with two frail people living together, with a little help in the morning and night, they could manage to stay in their home."

Cartsonis wrote a proposal for start-up funding from the United Way. Funding was granted and parameters were set for the program.

Wake-Up/Tuck-In is not a medical assistance program. Its goal is to provide personal care for people who may need a little extra help. A caregiver goes to the home of the client in the morning, helps them shower,

groom their hair, shave, get coffee and breakfast and any other personal care.

"We have certain criteria people have to meet," Cartsonis said. "They cannot require medical help nor can they require more than one hour of service. If they need more than that, they need to be looked at. They require more care than we can provide."

The person who determines whether or not a person meets the criteria is Sallie Tuttle, a registered nurse. One group that seems to ben-

efit greatly from the program are people recovering from a hospital stay.

In the case of Vaskov, that someone is Brenda Campbell. Each morning, Campbell helps Vaskov get ready for the day. While the help with the personal care is appreciated, it's the conversation that makes the experience so rewarding, Campbell said.

Making the program economically feasible for clients like Vaskov is a priority for Cartsonis and Tuttle. It costs \$7.50 an hour and no money goes through the Community Council.

Community center has full agenda

Senior center, home care on tap

By Karen Kirk
The Phoenix Gazette

SUN CITY — While most organizations are winding down for the summer, the Sun City Area Community Council is gearing up to tackle an ambitious agenda that includes planning a senior center and establishing programs to help provide affordable in-home health-care services to the frail elderly.

The Council board of directors announced at a recent meeting that it has consulted the Data Network for Human Services, a demographic statistic service, to provide it with information needed to plan Sun City's first senior center.

The center will be located in the area south of Grand Avenue, where the majority of older Sun Citizens live, according to Community Council executive director Sylvia Cartsonis.

The Area Agency on Aging has agreed to provide funds and technical help for the center, which is scheduled to be completed by June 1988.

The idea for the senior center was spawned by another Community Council program — the Happy Nooners. Through this service, area nursing homes and hospitals offer hot meals and transportation at a minimal cost to Sun Citizens who have been identified as being at risk of having nutritional deficiencies. The program also offers these people, many of whom live alone, a chance to socialize.

The new senior center will provide a similar meal and socialization program, among other services.

The Community Council also will continue its efforts this summer to establish a "Wake Up-Tuck In" program to provide reasonably priced in-home health care to elderly Sun Citizens.

The Council began planning the program after research showed that many Sun Citizens were unable to afford the hourly fees charged by most area nursing services and that they needed the services for less time than most companies are willing to schedule.

The Wake Up-Tuck In Service would provide care for a few hours in the morning and evening at a rate of \$6 an hour.

The Community Council plans to staff the service with aides from local nursing homes who will work before and after their regularly scheduled hours. This will provide good public relations opportunities for the nursing homes and will allow the aides to supplement their income, Council members say.

Helen Jacobson, coordinator for the project, has recruited nine nursing home aides to begin training July 7. They will begin working with the pilot Wake Up-Tuck In program in September.

Other projects on the Council's "to do" list include compiling a directory listing area nursing home and health-care services and establishing a hotline to inform Sun Citizens of where they can go for medical and personal care.

W/C

Sun City Area Community Council provides directory

— From cover

getting as much help as they need, she said.

Choosing the right level of care is important from two standpoints: Cost and personal needs. The higher level of care costs more than a lower level, but personal needs should be matched by the level of care and cost should not be the sole determining factor when selecting a provider.

Nursing care providers generally offer three levels of care. These are personal, intermediate and skilled.

- Personal — staff may provide some help with such things as bathing, dressing and getting

in and out of bed. Social needs such as activities and companionship are stressed.

- Intermediate — staff provides more help with grooming, toileting, dressing, feeding and moving around.

- Skilled — staff provides supervision and/or total help with many or all of the residents' needs. Medical and physical needs are stressed.

When visiting a nursing care provider, be sure a current license from the Arizona Department of Health Services is posted. The license shows the provider meets the minimum requirements for health, safety and well-being for its residents.

Remember that a license indicates only that the provider meets the minimum requirements — use your own eyes and ears to determine if the provider includes programs and services that meet the needs of the resident.

For more information or help about finding the right provider, call Sun City Information & Referral at 974-4713, or contact the social service department in your local hospital.

The Sun City Area Community Council also provides help in selecting providers. Call 972-9372. A free copy of the council's provider directory is available at its office, located at 9451 N. 99th Ave., Peoria.

3 levels of care provided

Daily News-Sun staff

Hard decisions must be made when you or a loved one has a health problem or disability and can no longer live independently.

It's difficult to face the possibility that help is needed, and it's not easy to decide how and from whom to get help.

The Sun City Area Community Council has prepared a directory of licensed home health agencies, care homes and nursing homes to make selecting a provider easier.

"The most important thing you can probably do is visit different providers so you can see first-hand the staff and how they treat their patients. No book will give you that kind of information. That's a feeling you get from being there," said Sun Citian Jeannette Shotwell, a member of the community council who helped prepare the directory.

Shotwell, who has a background in speech pathology and physical rehabilitation, said the Northwest Valley is blessed with many providers and a variety of care levels.

"It's very important to first assess how much care is actually needed," she said. "Some people say, 'I'll never go to a nursing home.' They don't have to." There's other levels of care where they can maintain most of their independence while

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Seniors chew 'n chat in hot meal program

Second in a series.

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Lunchttime is no longer a lonely time for Sun Citian Ben Sutz.

Sutz, 97, now spends his noon hour with other seniors eating a hot meal in the dining room of a local retirement center.

He is one of more than 75 seniors who call themselves Happy Nooners.

"I do this more to get away from home and not be alone. We get to know each other, eat and talk. I feel better after I have been here. I enjoy the company," said Sutz, who attends several Happy Nooners lunches every week.

Happy Nooners is one of the many services that link people with people provided in Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown by the Sun Cities Area Community Council.

Happy Nooners got its start in September 1986 when the Area Agency on Aging granted the Community Council \$10,000 to coordinate and plan the program.

Isabel Ferlise, coordinator of the Happy Nooners, said most residents who participate are in their 70s, 80s and 90s. And there are several who are 100 years old and older.

"Many are lonely. They tell me that if it weren't for the Happy Nooners they wouldn't have too much going," Ferlise said. "They look forward to seeing each other because they become like a family."

Happy Nooners is a socialization and nutrition program in which groups of 10 to 22 seniors lunch once or twice a week at

Camelot Manor, Hearthstone of Sun City, Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital, Sun Health Care Center, Vencor Hospital or Wooddale Village.

A lunch is served at a different place seven days a week.

Ferlise said the lunch costs anywhere from \$2 to \$3. Seniors interested in participating as a regular or alternate Happy Nooner can call 972-9372 weekdays.

"Most of these people aren't able to be active in Recreation Centers activities any longer so this is very important to them," Ferlise said.

Mary Scott, administrator of Camelot Manor, said the retirement center hosts the Happy Nooners twice a week.

"I think it's a great program. They get to socialize and get a good diet. It's something for them to do," Scott said.

Sun Citian Harry Kraus attends the Happy Nooners lunch with his wife every Monday at Wooddale Village.

Kraus also volunteers as an organizer for the group, collecting money and making sure everyone is happy.

"We are all able and alert. This gives us an opportunity to go to a nice place, have a good meal and socialize and meet people," said Kraus, as he ate his lunch last Monday of lamb shanks, potatoes, vegetables and carrot cake.

People to people



"We all share a lot with each other. Some people bring pictures of their family or a gift they just got so they can show it," Kraus said.

Even with the advent of the Olive Branch Senior Center, the Happy Nooners program has thrived, said Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the Community Council.

"Once we got the senior center I thought we'd give up the Happy Nooners, but they have become so involved with each other," Cartsonis said. "They have become bonded like a family."

Happy Nooners

Sun City program celebrates 1 year of providing social outlet for area residents

By JACQUE PAPPAS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Happy Birthday, Happy Nooners!

That's the phrase many were saying Wednesday during a celebration honoring the program's volunteers and its nearly 100 participants.

And although a bit belated, the celebration also saluted the program's first birthday since it was established in July 1986.

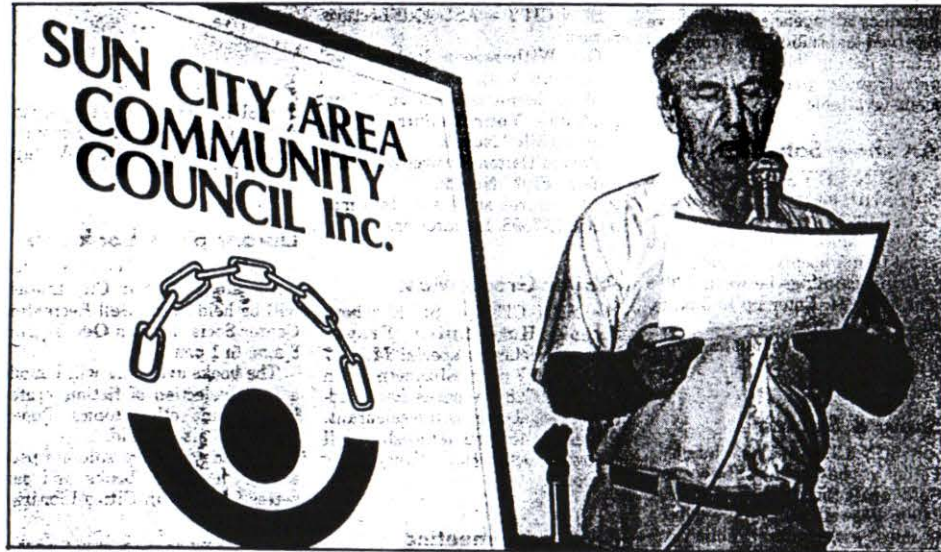
"This is the first time they have all been together," said Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the Sun City Area Community Council, which started the project.

"We have come such a long way. We started out with 10 participants and now we have about 100."

Cartsonis said the program was developed to provide nutrition and socialization to people who might otherwise be isolated.

Although many of the Happy Nooners are widows, Cartsonis said the program has its share of men and married couples.

About 10 to 25 people meet for lunch once or twice a week at nursing homes, hospitals or retirement centers in the area, she said.



FEED 'n' TALK — Merwin Graubart, chairman of the Happy Nooners subcommittee, presented certificates of appreciation Wednesday to area residents who volunteer for the program. The

And now, Cartsonis said, the Happy Nooners meet on the weekends as well — an addition to the program that started just three weeks ago.

"This is also a celebration for

all the volunteer performers who have given us their time," said Charlotte Farmer, who started scheduling performances for the Happy Nooners in February. "We really appreciate all of those peo-

ple who have volunteered their time and paint a smile on everyone's face."

Volunteers from magicians to accordion players attended the event, held at the Community

Services building.

Accordianist Victor Berk played old favorites like "Tennessee Waltz" and "Roll Out the Barrel" while people sang along and others even got up and danced a little jig.

Berk, who keeps a list of songs by his side and plays them from memory, said he used to play professionally in Los Angeles and Chicago.

"I'm not looking for money — I just try to make people happy," Berk said. "I love to play and they seem to enjoy just singing along with the music."

And even when they're not singing, there's no doubt that the Happy Nooners are glad to be part of the program.

Sun Citizens Clara Cook and Lorraine Simington met when the Happy Nooner program first started.

"It's very nice to give us a chance to get out. I would love to go every day if they could take more," Cook said. "It's wonderful. We built our friendship here. And it's nice to see the other people that participate on different days than we do."

Although the women meet at Hearthstone of Sun City for the Happy Nooner program, six other facilities are used as well.

Happy Nooners meet at Woodale Health Care Center, Valley View Community Hospital, Pueblo Norte Nursing Center, Camelot Care Center, Boswell Extended Care Center and Sunwest Nursing Center.

The idea of using existing facilities in the area to house the program was came from, Merwin Graubart, chairman of the Happy Nooners subcommittee.

"I felt there were a lot of lonesome people here that were isolated," Graubart said. "I wondered how we could start a program without capital because we didn't have a lot of money. I hope our program continues and enlarges."

He said the area facilities are not only promoting their own public relations by housing the Happy Nooners, but are also making a contribution to the community.

Pizza was provided to all those who attended the celebration.

"I think it's great that we can provide something back to the community, which is really the backbone of everything here," said Tom Thompson, assistant manager of Domino's Pizza, 10845 N. 99th Ave.

The Sun City Bank donated the soft drinks for the event.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT DEC. 12-18, 2001

Community Council to close

Lack of funds forces council to shut down Dec. 31

By **BRET McKEAND**
Independent Newspapers

A community service agency that has served the northwest Valley for over 20 years is closing its doors due to a sluggish economy and a steady decline in contributions.

The Northwest Valley Community Council will cease operations as of Dec. 31. According to Executive Director Lenore Parker, there

just wasn't enough money coming in to keep the organization afloat.

"We needed \$50,000 to \$75,000 in cash to keep operating," says Ms. Parker. "We tried, but we just weren't able to get the funding we needed to keep doing the things we were doing."

The council's board of directors notified the staff last week



The Community Council last Friday closed its thrift store in the Sun Bowl Shopping Center.

that the organization was shutting down. The council's thrift store, located in the Sun Bowl Shopping Center in Sun City, was closed last Friday.

The council was created in Sun City to help identify the needs of a growing senior population. The organization expanded its scope over the years and also provided services to victims of domestic violence as well as sponsoring in-school tobacco-education programs.

Despite financial assistance from the cities of Surprise and Peoria, the majority of the council's operating revenue came from donations and grants. Ms. Parker says donations are down considerably this year from past years and grants are getting more and more difficult to secure.

Ms. Parker says the council has always made a year-end profit of about \$15,000. She says the recent construction of the Walgreen's store in the Sun Bowl Shopping Center took away valuable parking spaces and drastically hurt business at the thrift store.

Once the store began losing money, the decision was made

A history of community service

Founded in 1979 as the Sun City Area Community Council, the non-profit organization's work has led to the formation of the following Sun Cities institutions:

- 1980 — A health needs survey conducted by the council led to the establishment of Sun Cities Area Interfaith Services.

- A need assessment conducted in 1981 led to the establishment of the Volunteer Bureau of the Sun Cities, now known as Volunteer Placement Services.

- In 1982 the council assisted in the creation of Sun Cities Area Transit.

- A nutrition and socialization program, "Happy Nooners" was created by the council in 1986.

- In 1988 the council assisted the Area Agency on Aging in creating the Olive Branch Senior Center.

to shut it down. The council also operates its main offices in Surprise. That office will be closed at the end of the month.

Ms. Parker says all employees have been reduced to part-time status as of this week. Dec. 17 will be the final day of work for the staff. Ms. Parker's final day will be Dec. 21.

"Our commitment right now is twofold: We want to make sure that what we're doing now is continued. We also want to find work for all our employees," she says.

Ms. Parker is hopeful that some other agency will pick up services presently provided by the council.

Founded in 1979 as the Sun City Area Community Council, the organization was originally designed to identify services needed by local residents. Its research and studies led to the development of such organizations as Interfaith Services, Volunteer Placement Services, Sun Cities Area Transit and the Olive Branch Senior Center.

Since its beginning, the

organization has sponsored a Wake-Up/Tuck-In program that provides in-home services to seniors just released from the hospital. Throughout the past 20 years, the organization was also known for its yearly compilation of long-term care options available in the northwest Valley.

Under Ms. Parker's guidance, the community council continued with its mission of identifying needed services. A program that explained the dangers of tobacco was created for local schools and the council has also been working with local police agencies and the courts to assist victims of domestic violence.

A domestic violence task force, funded by the state, recently completed a long-term study of domestic violence in the northwest Valley. The group's findings will be turned over to another agency.

Closing the council will also force the abandonment of plans to create a northwest Valley resource center. Plans and drawings have been completed and Ms. Parker is hopeful some other organization picks up where the council left off.

Wake-Tuck In service needs 'Happy Helpers'

By **CONNIE STEELE**
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Part-time jobs paying \$6 an hour are available through the Wake Up/Tuck In program of the Sun Cities Community Council.

Anyone hired will work as an independent contractor, said Rose Ann Roe, program coordinator.

They will not receive benefits or other coverage such as Social Security or disability.

But they will receive satisfaction and the knowledge they have helped someone remain in their home rather than enter a nursing home, Roe said.

That's because "Happy Helpers," as workers are called, contracting through the Wake Up/Tuck In program will bathe, dress and do light housework for men and women newly returned home from the hospital or who have one or more diseases that prevent them from caring for themselves.

Roe said anyone can apply but that very often prospects are attracted from the medical field.

"Some are RNs (registered nurses), practical nurses, nurses aides," she said.

To distinguish her workers, however, from medical professionals, Roe calls them her Happy Helpers, a spin off from

Happy Nooners, another Community Council program.

Happy Helpers hire out as independent contractors directly with the person who is receiving the services, she said.

"I'm looking for as many as I can get. Just now, I have females (only)," Roe said. "We're looking for men to work with other men."

Program hours are extremely flexible. Many of the helpers will work with four clients all in one morning, she said. And some clients want help only two or three times a week.

Only a little more than a year old, Wake Up/Tuck In grew out of a need created by Medicare requirements, Roe said. Because Medicare rules now require hospitals to discharge patients as soon as the acute phase of their disease is over, Roe said people are going home earlier than ever before.

Gladys Sanders, 23, knows. She is an employee of Royal Oaks Health Care Center, 10015 Royal Oaks Road, Sun City.

The El Mirage woman routinely gives personal care to independent persons living in the facility's garden homes and apartments.

When she heard Linda Zale, director of social services, talk-

ing about a program to keep people in their homes, "I was intrigued," she said.

Her curiosity led her to the Wake Up/Tuck In program of the Sun Cities Area Community Council.

She now works sometimes five times a week and sometimes fills in for someone.

United Way of Phoenix funded Wake Up/Tuck In early in 1988 launching it as a pilot project. The Sun Cities Community Council had found there was a need for such a service.

After initial funding ran out in April 1989, the program languished. Then in June, Sun Ridge, a retirement community in Surprise; the Sun City Community Fund and the Youngtown Community Fund stepped forward and gave the program enough money to get started again.

Since June 19, the service has helped 24 clients get a Happy Helper, Roe said. Right now the service cares for about 14 clients, but Roe said there are no surplus workers.

About one-third of the service's clients have been discharged from hospitals and within a week or so will be able to care for themselves, she said.

Information: 972-9372.

OVER



Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

GLAD TO HELP — Gladys Sanders helps residential aide and at night she helps Royal Oak resident Grace Leaming into her apartment. By day, Sanders works as a people in their home for the Wake Up—Tuck In service.

Council honors retiree's service

By J.J. McCORMACK
Daily News-Sun staff

PEORIA — Ablett "Ab" Flury Jr. says he didn't know anything about social service when he joined the Sun Cities Area Community Council shortly after moving to Youngtown in 1979.

Within a couple of years, he was the town of Youngtown's liaison to the community council. In 1985 and 1986, he was president of the human-service planning agency.

On Wednesday, Flury accepted the community council's first "Minnie Harlow Humanitarian Award" in recognition of his dedicated service to the non-profit organization that has spawned a variety of community services such as the Olive Branch Senior Center and Sun Cities Area Transit System.

The award's namesake — the late Minnie Harlow — was a founding member of the community council's board of directors and a revered Sun City social worker. The memorial award will annually recognize individuals in the Sun Cities whose "life and work best demonstrate the outstanding power of service," said the Rev. June Scott Darby, community council vice president.

Darby introduced Flury as the first Minnie Harlow Humanitarian honoree during the community council's annual recognition luncheon at Casa del Rio Retirement Apartments in Peoria.

Even though voluntarism is a way of life in the Sun Cities, "there are
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Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

The Rev. June Scott Darby presents Ab Flury with a clock after he was named the first Minnie Harlow Humanitarian Award recipient.

'Volunteeraholic' enjoys serving his community

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certain individuals who by their caring concern and their very hard work do stand out in a crowd," Darby said in her introductory remarks. She told the luncheon audience that Flury "has truly mastered the art of servanthood" and is a "volunteeraholic."

A red-faced Flury revealed his surprise, saying "golly" after accepting a clock bearing an inscription about the award.

Flury, a former Youngtown Town Council member, said he has learned a lot about social service from fellow community council board members.

"We've sure got some wonderful people in the community council. I certainly appreciate all that you've given me," he said.

After the luncheon, Flury said he was caught "flat-footed" by the award and didn't think he deserved any more than any of his community-council colleagues to be singled out for a humanitarian award.

He said he has remained committed to the community council because "it serves a definite need in the area. There are a large number of people in the community that benefit from the council's programs," he said.

Noting that his late mother and father, former Youngtown residents, were active volunteers, Flury said it was natural for him to follow in their

footsteps.

"It (volunteering) is better than working. It's more fun," he said.

A retired engineer now working as a real-estate agent, Flury once donated \$15,000 in a cash award attached to a "Volunteer of the Year" award to the community council. The award was made by the Sun Ridge retirement community in Surprise.

In addition to stopping by the community council office daily to lend a hand, Flury volunteers at the council's thrift shop, Almost Antique, and is an active member of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Sun City-Youngtown-Peoria Optimist Club. He was a founding and 10-year member of the SCAT board of directors and was a key player in the establishment of both the Olive Branch Senior Center and the Surprise Library.

Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the community council, said Flury is a productive and generous volunteer.

"When there's a job to do, his powers of concentration are really quite superior," she said.

Thanks to Flury and his habit of buying furniture and equipment bargains he discovers at Almost Antique, the community council has a well-equipped office, Cartsonis said.

Community Council gets closer to action

Move puts organization closer to clients

By JEFF OWENS
Staff writer

There are still boxes left to unpack at the new quarters of the Northwest Valley Regional Community Council in the City Hall complex in Surprise.

The organization, an expansion of the Sun Cities Area Community Council, was outgrowing its old offices at 9451 N. 99th Ave. in Peoria, and staffers felt the need to be closer to the areas they serve. It moved to its new location in mid-June.

The service area includes Peoria, the Sun Cities, El Mirage, Surprise, Youngtown and some surrounding areas.

The new site does more than just put staffers closer to clients. It puts them right in the middle of everything.

"It's really nice for us to be kind of where the action is," said Executive Director Sylvia Cartsonis. "We needed more space and needed to bring our programs together."

There's plenty of action, too. Some of the council's current programs are:

- **The Guardian Review Program.** A partnership with the Maricopa County Superior Court in which Sun Cities area volunteers monitor court-appointed guardians for the incapacitated elderly.

- **Happy Nooners.** Volunteers take

the community's oldest residents to local restaurants for lunch and socialization.

- **Wake Up/Tuck In.** Volunteers assist the elderly who would otherwise be unable to stay in their homes.

- **Homelessness Prevention.** The council assists families which are faced with a loss of housing. Last year, 19 families received help from the council.

The council also is involved in preventing domestic violence — especially elder abuse — and disaster preparedness, and has a growing concern with health facility transportation needs.

The council also serves as a liaison between various government agencies and Northwest Valley interest groups, and also keeps an eye on developments in the state Legislature.

"We're interested in any issues that concern this area," Cartsonis said.

Cartsonis said the move conveniently puts the council offices near the Surprise city offices. In the most recent budget, Surprise city officials allotted \$3,500 to help fund the council's Homelessness Prevention program.

She also said the move to Surprise reflects a desire on the part of the

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Community Council moves, keeps busy

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council to keep up with the Northwest Valley's explosive growth, and to move into inter-generational programs in addition to those which assist the elderly.

Cartsonis herself arranged a \$7,500 grant from the United Way for the Surprise Teen Center.

The original Sun City Area

Community Council was established in 1976, and incorporated in 1978.

For information about the Northwest Valley Regional Community Council, call 583-4100, or write to the council at 12425 W. Bell Road, Ste. A-104, Surprise, 85374-9002.

To volunteer for the Wake Up/Tuck In program, one of the council's more popular services, contact Sallie Tuttle at 583-4100.

Service agencies respond to population needs

By TIQA SCHADE
Staff writer

Growth motivated expansion in the area of health and human services and will continue to influence change in the next year.

The Sun Cities Area Community Council underwent a number of changes this past year, altering its name to the Northwest Valley Regional Community Council. That change was made to reflect its expanded service area. An associate director, Arminda Ayala, was also hired to handle issues relating to families and youth.

"Our major accomplishment was becoming a regional planning organization and including the communities of Peoria, El Mirage and Surprise in addition to the Sun Cities and Youngtown. So we're looking at multi-generational issues and the growth has been such that change was necessary," said Sylvia Cartsonis, director of the agency.

To better serve the communities, the organization moved from its location on 99th Avenue in Sun City to



the Surprise Town Center on Bell Road.

The community council will still focus on meeting the needs of the senior community and will continue to publish its guide to long term care.

For next year, the council is working on a plan to educate the public on local transportation options and is anticipating the establishment of tobacco cessation and substance

abuse programs for the Dysart Unified School district, said Cartsonis.

"We're having discussions with the communities to assess what the needs are," she said.

Interfaith Services also expanded its programs, establishing a social day program at Faith Presbyterian church for individuals who would benefit from social interaction. An additional program is for peer counselors, who will serve as role models for the organization's clients.

In the next year, Interfaith would like to solidify these programs, as well as expand existing programs, like the adult day care centers.

"It was a very active, very busy, very growing year," said Judy Hooker, a spokesperson for Interfaith.

This past year, Sun Health, which includes Boswell and Webb hospitals, kept in step with growth by enlarging its service area, opening two new care centers in Wickenburg and Surprise. The organization also opened an Alzheimer's clinic in Peoria.

Sun Health worked in conjunction

'The biggest challenge the organization will face in the upcoming year is providing the same level of care with \$4 million less than last year.'

**Pamela Meyerhoffer
Sun Health**

with local professionals to establish four health task force committees: Family Health, Mental Health, Cancer and Cardiovascular and the Transportation Task Force.

In the upcoming year, Boswell Hospital will undergo renovations, including new emergency services to keep up to date with technology and expanded parking lots to serve a growing population.

It was also announced that Webb Hospital in Sun City West will experience a few changes as well. Proposed developments call for a new CT scanner and the addition of nearly 30 beds.

Sun Health finances may also ex-

perience an overhaul thanks to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which will reduce Medicare reimbursements to both hospitals.

"The biggest challenge the organization will face in the upcoming year is providing the same level of care with \$4 million less than last year because of the Balanced Budget Act, which was enacted in October of 1997," said Pamela Meyerhoffer, vice president of public affairs.

Budget cuts also affected the demand for services from Westside Food Bank this year. Cuts in programs like WIC (Women, Infants and Children) have forced some seniors on to waiting lists to receive food, Vi Koshar, volunteer for the food bank, said.

The Sun City Community Fund, which serves over a dozen agencies in the area, including the food bank, will work with the United Way in the coming year. This partnership will allow the community fund to strengthen its fundraising abilities and tap into the United Way's larger and more experienced community relations department.

disc HCA's task

VF COMMUNITY COUNCIL

12-30-97

Support groups offer help to ease pain of loneliness

By RUTHANN HOGUE
Staff writer

A widow holes up for hours in front of a noisy television set.

A frightened nursing home resident begs for someone to take her home.

A grandmother sits alone on the front porch and listens to the chattering of wild birds as they flit from tree to tree.

It's not the image Sun City promoters portray. And yet, for many older residents, loneliness is a grim reality.

In most cases, it needn't be.

From The Northwest Valley Regional Community Council's Happy Nooners and Sun Health's Olive Branch Senior Center to the recreation centers of Sun City and Sun City West and local churches, support for older seniors is available.

The need for such programs came to the forefront in the mid 1980s when an aging Sun City couple in poor health took their own lives.

Dealing with Solitaire



"We knew there were people who needed the attention who were getting older and who were getting isolated in the community," said Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the Northwest Valley Regional Community Council.

"We got all these different organizations together and brainstormed what would be needed. And that's really a part of how the Happy Nooners began and the Wake Up/Tuck In service began because it was stimulated by the discussion related to the murder suicide."

The Happy Nooners has offered nutrition and companionship for older seniors since 1986. The Olive Branch Senior Center opened a year later with a support group for the visually impaired, hot meal activities and more.

"People ask, 'My goodness, you have seven recreation centers in Sun City, what do you need a senior center for?'" Cartsonis said. "We started it for the same reason we started Happy Nooners. We tried to use our imagination and do something creative for the isolated elderly."

Meanwhile, the Recreation Centers of Sun City, which all residents are required to support, appear to

► See Churches provide, A5

lack services for the oldest members.

A recent study commissioned by the Sun City Home Owners Association revealed that 53 percent of aging seniors no longer use the recreation centers.

The study, prepared by the Arizona State University Herberger Center for Design Excellence, listed several reasons for low participation. Physical problems, lack of interest, transportation, feeling too old, the death of a spouse or caring for a spouse keep aging seniors away. The most commonly reported reason was physical problems.

The most popular activity among seniors between 80 and 85 years of age who do participate is swimming or water activities, the study reports.

But the report suggests that there's room for improvement in the centers themselves.

Straight-back chairs and hard benches, for example, make it uncomfortable to sit and chat. Rules prohibit food and drink in the pool areas. And many of the clubs require regular attendance, making it difficult for those with failing health to participate.

Mary Kihl, author of the study, suggests replacing hard benches and chairs with comfortable seating to encourage drop-ins. Relaxing the rules on no food or drink would help, too, she said. Many seniors rely on transportation services that are often late, and get hungry while waiting.

"A little lemonade and cookies could go a long way," Kihl said. "I think an outdoor cafe would be even more fun."

Don Pritchett, president of the Recreation Centers of Sun City, said the board of directors has copies of the ASU study and plan to take note.

"There are so many things in this study to try and absorb, and one of the things is to try to see how many things can fit into what we have," Pritchett said. "Hopefully, in the coming months, we can continue to look at what things are there for them."

Pritchett, however, said he disagrees with the study's finding that there is a dearth of drop-in activities for seniors at the recreation centers.

At Oakmont Recreation Center there is a Friendship Corner on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with games and casual conversation, a Grandmothers Club, and the Oakmont Men's Club. All recreation centers have spas, and there is a women's club at Lakeview and a men's club at Sundial.

"I think they attend the social events that we have, but there is much more to be done," Pritchett said.

Another way for aging seniors to interact is through local churches.

"For a lot of people, it's a private, solitary thing if they are in a religious experience," said John Corrigan, professor of religious studies at the Arizona State University West campus.

"If religion, however, provides a context for them for social interaction, it's much more likely that it's going to offset loneliness or a feeling of isolation. And that's true not just with seniors, but with people of almost any age."

In Sun City, 57 percent of those surveyed for the ASU study said they were involved with a religious group more than casually.

Council honors director

By J.J. McCORMACK
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The "backbone" of the Sun Cities Area Community Council, Executive Director Sylvia Cartsonis, was honored Wednesday for 10 years of "selfless service" to the human services planning agency.

During a regular monthly membership meeting, the council's board of directors surprised Cartsonis with a silver pin bearing the community council logo.

"You've made a difference in the work of the community council these past years. ... Not only have you made a difference, Sylvia, you make things happen," said June Scott Darby, vice president of the board of directors.

Darby thanked Cartsonis for finding funding for council programs, increasing public awareness of elder abuse, helping caregivers give better care and helping protect people who need (legal) guardians.

Cartsonis, Darby said, takes more than her share of the blame when things go wrong and less than her share of the credit when things go right.

"Sylvia is a happy and upbeat person. I think she's found the



Steve Chornek/Daily News-Sun

Sylvia Cartsonis displays the pin she received for her 10 years as executive director of the Sun Cities Area Community Council.

secret to happiness — that when you bring happiness to others you find happiness sitting on your front doorstep," Darby said.

Cartsonis told the meeting audience it has been a joy working with the council and that she would wear the pin proudly.

"I can hardly call it a job, because I have worked with absolutely magnificent people."

She said later, "I never could have done any of what has happened without the wonderful sup-

port from the board."

A career social worker and former faculty member at the Arizona State University graduate school of social work, Cartsonis joined the community council as its half-day-a-week director in November 1984. The council's budget that year was about \$6,000, she said.

Founded in 1979 at the urging of a Sun City Taxpayers Association study committee, the community council was the catalyst for the Sun

See Latest project, A5

Latest project will assist homeless

—From A1

Cities Area Transit System. It helped launch the Sun Cities Volunteer Bureau and sponsors numerous public education programs in the community.

With Cartsonis at the helm, the non-profit organization launched a variety of programs designed to improve the quality of life of area seniors. The council's biggest project to date, perhaps, has been the establishment in 1988 of the Olive Branch Senior Center.

The community council, which is composed of representatives of area health and social service agencies and

interested individuals, also was responsible for the creation in 1986 of the Happy Nooners nutrition and socialization program and the Wake Up/Tuck In in-home personal assistance program.

In 1989, the council began sponsoring the publication of a directory of long-term care options in the Northwest Valley. In 1991, the council launched a support and education program for the visually impaired.

Three years ago, the council inaugurated its nationally recognized Guardianship Review Program. Under the program, volunteers monitor the work of court-appointed

guardians for elderly wards of the court.

Since its inception locally, the guardianship review program has spread to other Valley communities and has been a model for similar programs in other states.

The council's latest venture, announced Wednesday, is a proposed Northwest Valley emergency shelter for the homeless. The council currently is seeking funding for the project, which grew out of membership concerns about homeless children and their families in El Mirage.

The public is familiar with many of the community council's "offspring" and current

services, but few people outside the social service community know of the council and understand how it works, Cartsonis said.

She said her interest in identifying and meeting the needs of elderly citizens has heightened over the years. "The issues (of aging) are important to me as well on a personal basis. I'm getting older," she said.

Despite all that the community council has accomplished, Cartsonis wishes she and council volunteers could do more.

"We could serve more people if we had more money," she said.

Service group aims to boost recognition

By IAN MITCHELL
Daily News-Sun staff

Fifteen years after it was founded, the Sun Cities Area Community Council has a problem.

"People still don't know who we are," said Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director of the community-service group.

Wednesday at the council's annual meeting, coordinators of the various council-sponsored services offered a partial explanation of what the council does in the Sun Cities:

■ Angy Felcyn, who runs Wake Up/Tuck In, said her in-home care service helped 105 residents in the first four months of 1994.

Wake Up/Tuck In can help people who would otherwise have to be institutionalized remain independent, Felcyn said. Workers for the service offer assistance in bathing, dressing and changing bed linens.

"This is definitely a need in the community and I think I have touched just the tip of the iceberg," Felcyn said.

■ Merwin Graubart, leader of the Visually Impaired Program, said his support group for blind and limited-vision residents will celebrate its fourth anniversary in June.

Mondays and Fridays at the Olive Branch Senior Center, the visually impaired participants gather for bridge, aerobics, crafts and discussion, Graubart said.

Because many of the discussion-group members are also hard-of-hearing, Graubart uses two wireless microphones to amplify comments.

"In this way everybody participates and those people that would normally withdraw ... now the mike is thrust in front of them and everybody can hear and everybody stays awake," he said.

■ Peggy Watral, who organizes the Happy Nooners luncheon group, said between 75 and 80 people meet once or twice a week for food and friendship.

■ Ken Toman, director of the Guardianship Review Project, said his program's volunteers have made 536 case reviews in the past year, checking to see that court-appointed conservators and guardians are taking good care of their elderly wards.

The local program has served as a model and is expanding to other Valley communities.

Andrea Somerville, president of the council's board of directors, said after the luncheon meeting in Good Shepherd Care Center that the council is planning a number of projects for next year.

The group is seeking funding to establish a non-profit fiduciary service to help people who can't afford private fiduciaries and don't want to rely on the public fiduciary, Somerville said.

Cartsonis is planning to compile a directory of law-enforcement and consumer protection services to help victims of crime find someone who can help.

The executive director said she will also serve on a state Supreme Court committee which is developing regulations for private fiduciaries.

Center retains ties with council

By CONNIE STEELE
Daily News-Sun staff

Where it took sticks and nails to complete "the house that Jack Built," it took ideas and people to complete the Sun Cities Area Community Council.

"The Community Council is the body to study areas of need and the ways to meet those human service needs," said Vincent DeFrancis, council president ex-officio, in an interview in his Sun City garden apartment.

DeFrancis has led the council for four years during which the Olive Branch Senior Center has emerged with the help of a lot of people.

Before moving to Sun City about 10 years ago, DeFrancis led the National Association for Child Protection, headquartered in Denver, and had 26 years' experience in promoting child protection services. He continues to serve through membership on the board of the national organization.

Reared in New York City, where he practiced law for eight years, DeFrancis holds a doctor of law degree from Fordham University.

"We're beginning to find problems that weren't so overt when the community was younger," he said. "As the community ages, advancing age makes people less fit to participate in the more active area of the community."

DeFrancis, in his 80s and a widower for four years, identifies with many single people.

"People need to socialize. It's important to our health to have a meaningful participation in life with others," he said.

Along with their isolation, "We find people who live alone neglect their nutritional needs," DeFrancis said.

The need for nutrition and socialization sparked the formation of several council projects, including the Olive Branch Senior Center, 10765 W. Peoria Ave.

"These are not welfare programs," DeFrancis said. "Our concern is the isolation."

"There's no income requirement for participation. You can be a millionaire and participate, as with senior centers all over the country," he said.

Senior centers give elderly people a place for less vigorous activity than that offered in recreation centers; and promote physical and mental well-being.

"If you keep both your body and your brain working, you'll stay young," DeFrancis said.

"Nothing gratifies more than



Did you know?

doing something for others," he said.

While it helps meet needs, the Sun Cities Area Community Council planning organization grew from a need. Moving from talk to action in 1976, the Sun City Taxpayers Association established a study committee to work with area social workers and health professionals, who by 1979 formed the organization that incorporated in May 1981.

Over the years, council pilot projects have separated from the parent group and grown into independent organizations: Interfaith Services of the Sun Cities Area; Sun Cities Area Transportation, SCAT; Volunteer Bureau of the Sun Cities.

In other instances, programs have retained their council ties: Olive Branch Senior Center; Wake Up Tuck In, a homepersonal care service; and Happy Nooners, a congregate lunch service.

Although professional thinking preceded each council project's formation, and federal and county dollars have supported them, volunteers are their real bricks and mortar, said Sylvia Cartsonis, executive director.

In the beginning, there were Helen Bartholomew, community health nurse; and Jacque Ensign, a social services program director; Minnie Harlow, Mary and Winifred Wheeler, social workers in private practice; and Virginia Hewer, who lives at Freedom Plaza, who met in a back room at Walter O. Boswell Memorial hospital.

No volume is large enough to contain the names of all the people whose efforts have made council projects function and succeed. A tiny sampling includes Jeannette Shotwell, Elsie Irvin, Virginia Sylvis, Doris Melleney, Charles McKinnis, Helen Vallee Erway, Ablett Flury, Jerene Maierle.

Each organization honors particular individuals who have contributed their time and efforts. With the Olive Branch Senior Center, council treasurer Ablett Flury is an "outstanding volunteer," Cartsonis said.

"Ab has given more hours than anyone can believe," Cartsonis said. "He's picking up, delivering. ... If you breathe a word, he sees that it gets done."

...

Wake Up/Tuck In program gets new life



News-Sun photo

IN BUSINESS — Program coordinator Rose Ann Roe, back left, and Community Council President Vincent DeFrancis, back right, stand behind William Forman, Community Fund president, and Beverly Burnett, Sun Ridge executive.

By **CHRISTINE SELIGA**
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Wake Up/Tuck In program was reborn last month when Rose Ann Roe became its new coordinator and local organizations came to its financial rescue.

Wake Up/Tuck In is a Sun Cities Area Community Council program that uses nurses aides to provide personal care for people who need help getting up in the morning and going to bed at night. That type of assistance can make it possible for people to remain in their own homes longer.

The program had been temporarily stopped in April because of lack of funds. The funds originally used for the program were from a one-time Venture Fund grant by United Way.

Community Council President Vincent DeFrancis said Wednesday, "It's too important a program to let die on the vine."

"That's what we thought," Bill Forman said.

Forman is president of the Sun City Community Fund. In April the fund heard about the temporary shutdown of the program and voted to make a special \$6,000 allocation to the

program.

"That gave us the breathing time to be able to work on it," said Sylvia Cartsonis, the community council's executive director.

During April, May and part of June no new referrals to the program were handled. Throughout that time the calls continued from people wanting to use the program and asking when it would start up again, Cartsonis said.

Sun Ridge, a retirement community in Surprise, also stepped in and has provided \$9,000 worth of funding that should be able to get the program through the end of the year.

It is part of Sun Ridge's commitment to community service, said Beverly Burnett, marketing and public relations director.

"It sort of goes along with our overall philosophy of wanting to have people live the lifestyle they want to live," she said.

Roe was hired as coordinator about a month ago. Since she began work she has done 17 assessments. Eight people were appropriate for the program and the rest were referred to other agencies that could better meet

their needs.

Making referrals is an integral part of the program because often the coordinator is in a position to spot when people are beginning to need more or a different type of care, Cartsonis said.

"People think they can manage with Wake Up/Tuck In and in essence need something more than that," Cartsonis said.

Roe is a registered nurse and worked as volunteer director at Sun City Hospice for the past five years.

She said the job was rewarding though stressful and she was ready for a change.

"I was looking for some other position and this appeared on the horizon," Roe said.

Roe said she is impressed by the organization and the way many organizations work together in the Sun Cities instead of competing with each other, which is evident in the way the community fund and Sun Ridge helped the program.

An average of 25 people a month used the program before it went on hiatus.

The people who work as aides and do the actual assistance

'It's too important a program to let die on the vine.'

Vincent DeFrancis
Community Council president

have a private contract between themselves and the person who needs help.

"What we do is connect people. We're matchmakers," Cartsonis said.

There are eight people who work as aides and most work in other health care professions. One is a retired registered nurse.

Nurses aides apply to the program and those who are accepted are given additional training by Roe.

"We're quite sure it's going to expand beyond that," DeFrancis said.

Cartsonis said the program will be reviewed at the end of the year. "By comparison it really is within many people's means," Cartsonis said.

For more information about the program or becoming an aide, call 972-9372.

Staff of life

Happy Nooner program provides food for thought

By KAREN S. LEONARD
News-Sun staff

Sun City is advertised as an active retirement community, but some residents' lifestyles are less active than others. There are even those who are downright lonely.

With those people in mind, the Sun City Area Community Council started a program called Happy Nooners.

"The Happy Nooners program is a nutrition/socialization project," says Sylvia Cartsonis, community council executive director.

"The Sun City areas do not have a senior center ... so there are some folks who could really benefit from a meal and the socialization because they get isolated at home and depressed and don't manage too well. And with this opportunity, they get to meet some other folks and get a nutritious meal a couple of times a week so their lives pick up and are a little more pleasant," she says.

Once or twice a week, 10 to 25 people meet for lunch at an area nursing center, retirement center or hospital. For \$2 a meal, they get a nutritiously balanced lunch, people to converse with and sometimes entertainment.

"We want to do everything we can for people to maintain at home for as long as they can. And the nutritional/socialization project, Happy Nooners, keeps people from getting depressed. We've had some depressed people who've joined as clients/participants and they've ended up as host and hostesses/volunteers," Cartsonis says.

The Area Agency on Aging gave Happy Nooners \$10,000 in seed money, she says, after a survey of 999 area people showed a need for such a service.

In July 1986, Happy Nooners started with 10 people. Now, the project has 91 and expects to increase substantially in the fall.

Most of the Happy Nooners are female, live alone and are widowed.

Esther Harola, Happy Nooners coordinator and a hostess, says the average age of seven people who meet once a week at Camelot Gardens is 88.

Cartsonis says, "The uniqueness of our project is that we use existing resources. We don't have a senior center; we don't have a building; we're just using the resources that are already here.

"The Community Council is a planning organization and a research organization. We research what the needs are and then we try to develop services to meet the needs. But we are not normally a direct service organization. We run pilot projects and then we try to help those projects stand alone."

The Sun City Interfaith Services Inc., the Sun Cities Area Transit System Inc., and the Sun City Area Volunteer Bureau are two such area organizations that started as community council projects.

The six-day-a-week project is run by volunteers, Cartsonis says, with Saturday being the day Happy Nooners don't meet.

She wants that to change because she believes weekends are a lonely time for people. That is why there is a Sunday brunch at Camelot Gardens.

Also, Cartsonis says, "When they come, when they're having a meal at a nursing home, if they're really marginal people, people scared about going into nursing homes, they get a firsthand view before they really need it ... so they can make some decisions."

Also, with so many people getting together with varied backgrounds and tastes, mild disputes do occur, they say.

"They're usually two talkative people and what happens is that they try to out-talk one another," Harola says. The hostess or host acts as the mediator in such cases.

But Harola says most people get along surprisingly well and usually their social life continues beyond the Happy Nooners lunch.

"We don't care whether you're rich, whether you're poor, whether you're wealthy — there's no income level — whether you're married, whether you're single ... it's you need the socialization," Harola says.

"When you're all alone, it doesn't feel good," Cartsonis says. "It doesn't matter if you're young or old, it's not good to be alone."

Information: 972-9372.