

DAILY NEWS-SUN

THURSDAY, FEB. 24, 2005

SC data lands new home

Visitor Center becomes referral hub

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Visitors Center has taken in droves of resource material from the recently closed offices of the Sun City Information and Referral Service.

When SCIRS closed its doors Dec. 1 after 25 years of service in the community, its board of directors was committed to finding a new home for the hundreds of phone numbers and local resource data available to new and existing Sun Citians, said Dorothy Fant, former SCIRS president.

Olive Branch Senior Center and Interfaith Community Care were among the agencies that requested the resource materials, Fant said, but the Visitors Center's request won the bid.

Ethel Sanders, SCIRS board member, said the board decided the Visitors Center would be a perfect venue to house and distribute the information into the community.

"They seem to be the natural choice, people come to them all time," Sanders said. "It seemed to be the place where the materials would do the most good."

Dottie Barna, a Visitors Center spokeswoman, agreed.

"It's such a good fit," Barna said. "We already answer questions, and now you can walk into the Visitors Center, ask questions and we'll have the information."

In 2004, the Visitors Center assisted 12,615 walk-in visitors at its Bell Recreation Center office, answered 3,252 telephone inquiries and mailed 3,083 information packets across the nation and seven foreign countries, Barna said. These and other activities were accomplished with the assistance of 80 volunteers who contributed 4,571 hours of community service.

The Visitor's Center was

given the SCIRS computer and all of the informational material managed by the former SCIRS, said Paul Herrmann, director of the Visitors Center. However, referrals will not be handled by the Visitors Center, he said.

Residents seeking referrals for contractors or other local organizations and businesses are being directed to the Sun City Home Owners Association, Herrmann said. Any health or medical related referral requests are being directed to Sun Health.

Providing contact information for local resources to Sun City newcomers as well as existing residents is a primary goal for the Visitors Center, Herrmann said. Another objective is keeping Sun Citians in touch with local clubs, chartered and non-chartered, he said.

Obtaining the SCIRS materials has been a challenge, Herrmann said. Most of the informational paperwork SCIRS gave away was on three-by-five inch index cards. The Visitors Center staff and volunteers are now inputting each card into a computer system for easier reference.

Some of the information cards were written a decade ago, and phone numbers or contact names have changed, so as the data is being computerized, it's also being verified and updated, Herrmann said.

SCIRS closed after it failed to garner enough funds to keep the office space rented and the phone lines running. It also lacked enough volunteers to manage phone calls. Last year, the organization was unable to apply for its regular financial support from the Valley of the Sun United Way/Sun City Community Fund because of computer and staffing issues.

Herrmann said, the Visitors Center will not receive any funding from the Valley of the Sun United Way/Sun City Community Fund.

Because the Visitors Center has evolved into much more than a resource for out-of-towners, the board is mulling over ideas for a name

From A1

change, Herrmann said. The board will vote on a new name for the Visitors Center at its next board meeting March 17.

"As we get involved in new things, 'Visitors Center,' doesn't say all that we're doing now," Herrmann said. "'Visitors Center' lets residents think we're here for the visitors only, but we're here for the residents as well."

Sun Citians recently received a letter asking them to support the Visitors Center. Previous supporters of SCIRS are encouraged to contribute to the Visitors Center now that it has absorbed much of what SCIRS once provided.

"It's imperative that Sun City remains active in the quest for new retirees," Barna said. "A steady stream of new people will help continue to increase home values, help local businesses remain healthy, and in general help maintain our vibrant community. Your gift will help the Visitors Center in its efforts to keep Sun City in the position of prominence it deserves."

To obtain a contribution envelope, or for information about the Sun City Visitors Center, call 977-5000 or visit their office at Bell Recreation Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave., Sun City. Volunteers are available Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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SUN VIEWS FEBRUARY 2005

Visitors Center Absorbs Info Referral

The closing of Information Referral Service has caused the loss of many of their services, but the Visitors Center is filling a portion of the void. The Visitors Center is expanding its database to better answer many new questions.

As informational needs arise, please call the Visitors Center at 977-5000. They have added

information about area clubs, restaurants, parks and recreation, museums, and the like. Questions regarding medical needs and services are being directed to Sun Health at 876-5432 and requests for tradesmen (electricians, plumbers, contractors, etc.) are being directed to the Home Owners Association at 974-4718.

SATURDAY, NOV. 6 AND SUNDAY, NOV. 7, 2004

DAILY NEWS-SUN

SCIRS misses grant opportunity

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Although Sun City Information and Referral Service failed to generate enough funding to stay open, the group may have missed out on a \$16,000 grant that board members say was too hard to come by.

The Sun City Community Fund/Valley of the Sun United Way had been providing the information service with \$16,000 for the past few years. This year, however, amid a slip in volunteer numbers, computer trouble and problems finding an executive director, the service missed the Sept. 30 deadline to file documents for the funding. The required documentation is essentially a financial report detailing how the \$16,000 was used.

Ethel Sanders, a SCIRS board member, said the Sun City Community Fund/Valley of the Sun United Way required the small volunteer-operated group to purchase a computer and hire a

part-time executive director to manage paperwork and communicate with the Sun City Community Fund/Valley of the Sun United Way.

Finding a volunteer to serve as executive director proved impossible, Sanders said, so two paid employees were hired for the position. But both quit within a month or two.

Over the last couple of years, income and volunteer resources have dwindled. Before the decline, 35 volunteers manned the phones morning and afternoon.

Without someone to operate the computer and file the required documentation, Sanders said the Sept. 30 grant deadline passed.

Sun City resident Jim Green, president of the Sun City Community Fund, said the unfortunate closing of the information service is no one's fault.

"They weren't able to comply with the necessary reporting that the United Way requires from all of its

agencies," Green said, noting that the SCIRS was the only United Way agency unable to comply with the regulations. "The Valley of the Sun United Way is very excited about its partners, and there were many attempts to call people at the Sun City Information and Referral Service."

Green said a meeting was scheduled between information service officials and the chief operating officer of the Sun City Community Fund/Valley of the Sun United Way to help clear up any confusion and to get the group on track with its documentation, but the SCIRS officials cancelled the meeting, Green said.

Green said he first learned of the agency closing by reading about it in the newspaper.

"They've provided some magnificent service over the past 25 years," Green said. "The Sun City Community Fund is really committed to providing a resource in the community."

SCRIS lacks funding, help

By Matthew Roy

Independent Newspapers

I found two baby hummingbirds with no mother — what should I do?

Has Thanksgiving Day been cancelled this year?

Do snakes lay eggs or do they give birth?

What is Frank Gifford's age?

Very soon, these and other important questions may go unanswered for some residents of the Sun Cities.

At an Oct. 19 meeting, the Sun City Referral and Information Service Board of Directors decided to close their doors for good Dec. 1 after more than 25 years serving the community.

"We finally decided to throw in the towel," said board member Ethel Sanders, noting despite recent media coverage, no one has stepped forward to save the ailing organization. Along with rapidly decreasing call volumes

at the center, community support for their efforts has dwindled in recent years and without adequate funding or volunteers, the board had no choice but to give up the fight.

"It's a sad thing, it really is," said SCRIS manager Nancy Pestow. "This [office] is so full of information. When people call with a question, we answer it. We don't say we don't know something, we find out the answer or we find someone who can find it."

Ms. Pestow said that SCRIS has taken calls about "anything and everything."

Beyond occasional "wacky" questions, SCRIS has provided useful help to residents, including information and referrals about local clubs and volunteer organizations, political headquarters, flu shots, phone numbers, health services, drivers services, yard work, home repairs, appliance installations,

utilities, pet grooming, consumer complaints, baby sitters, recreation centers and entertainment.

Board member Mary Rodgers has volunteered at SCRIS since 1977 and has witnessed its steady decline.

"We were the busiest in the early 80s," said Ms. Rodgers. "Back then we had as many as 90 volunteers working." Today they have but a handful of helpers in the office.

According to Ms. Rodgers, average call volumes in 1984 topped 2,000 calls per month. Twenty years later, the call center sees only 10 percent of that. Many of the newer, younger residents are computer literate and find their information on the Internet. The remaining callers tend to be those who are too frail to manage a heavy phone book or have poor eyesight.

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Funding

Continued From Page 1

"That's the ones I'm feeling sorry for," Ms. Pestow said. "The ones that really need the help. All the volunteers here are really nice and they'll take the time to really listen to people."

Earlier this year, their executive director quit and SCRIS has been unable to fill the position. The executive director would serve as liaison between the center and United Way — without an executive director, SCRIS is unable to comply with United Way's requirements.

SCRIS lost its United Way funding in September, forcing the closure. But according to Ms. Rodgers, funding is only part of the problem. In the beginning, SCRIS was funded by the Community Fund alone, but after the Community Fund merged with United Way four years ago, failure was inevitable.

"That was the beginning of the end for us," Ms. Rodgers said. "For

United Way, this kind of operation is just too small. We're a small-time service organization, all we want to do is help people."

Though volunteers remain to take calls, in order to maintain a relationship with United Way, SCRIS needs to comply with a number of regulations, tracking and reporting data to United Way. This requires specialized volunteers skilled at maintaining computers and data bases and knowledgeable about non-profit regulations.

"It is easy to train a volunteer to answer the phones," said board member Dorothy Fant. "But the computers did us in." She explained it has proven much more difficult to attract a volunteer to handle the technical tasks necessary to satisfy United Way's requirements.

In the end, declining volunteer support at SCRIS has made it impossible to continue.

Board members hope to share their files with other local groups, so at least the valuable information

they have compiled over the years will not go to waste.

Once SCRIS is gone, residents with still have a few options for information and referrals in the Sun Cities.

For information on home services, such as contractors, installers, landscapers, zoning, repairs, and other needs in Sun City, call HOA at 974-4718.

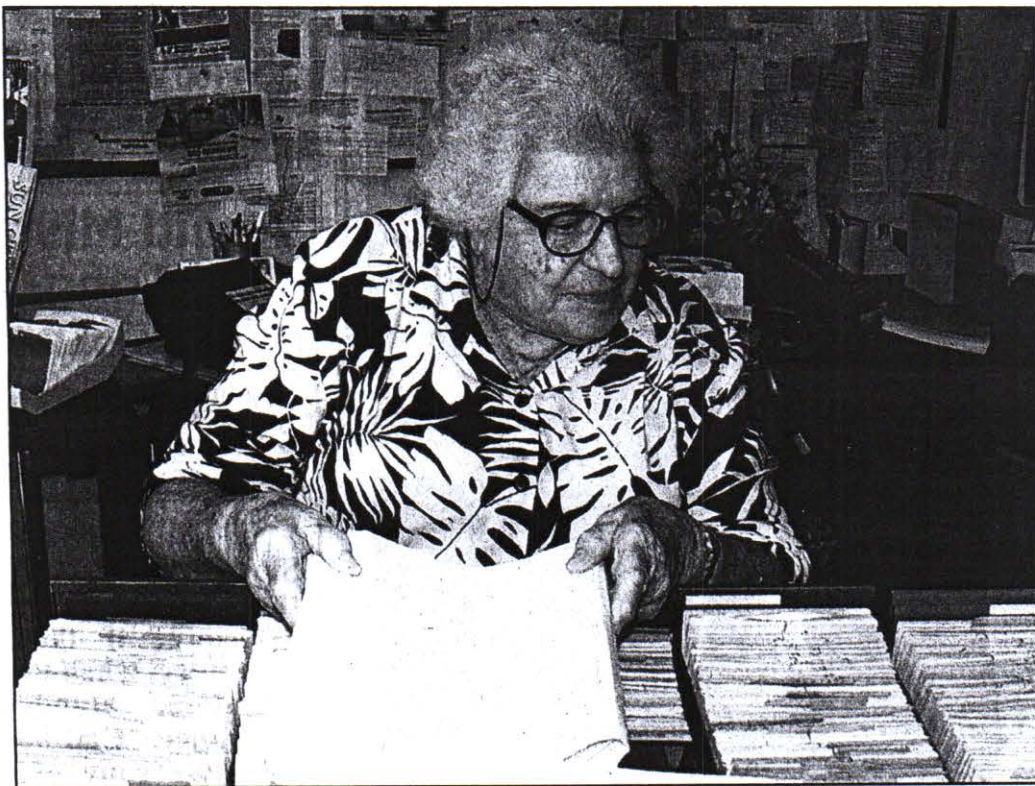
For the same types of services in Sun City West, call PORA at 214-1646.

There is also the Community Information and Referral Service in Phoenix at (602) 263-8856, which may be helpful, but may not have as much West Valley-specific information as SCRIS.

For referrals and information regarding health care, home care, home services, senior centers, day centers and similar topics, call Interfaith Community Care at 584-4999 or visit them online at www.interfaithcommunitycare.org.

OVER

Who to call? Referral service to close



Independent Newspapers/Matthew Roy

Mary Rodgers, a volunteer at the center since 1977, sifts through an extensive card catalog filled with information and referrals for callers. SCRIC board members hope it will be possible to pass some of this information on to other agencies after they close down on Dec. 1.



Independent Newspapers/
Matthew Roy

Board member Dorothy Fant sits by a silent phone — some days they receive no or few calls. A framed picture of actor Ed Asner hangs on the wall behind her; he once called SCRIS to locate a friend and sent the autographed photo as a token of appreciation.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

THURSDAY, OCT. 21, 2004

Information, referral closing shop

Agency lacks money, manpower

STAFF REPORT

Sun City Information and Referral will be closing its doors on Dec. 1 after 25 years of service in the community.

Unable to garner enough funds to keep the office space rented and the phone lines

running and a lack of volunteers to manage phone calls, the Info and Referral staff is sad to see the organization come to an end.

"It's a shame, but that's the way it goes," said board member Ethel Sanders. "No one wanted to take us on, letting us use their space or

help with funding, so it's a big loss."

The group rented office space in the Lions Foundation Campus at 99th and Peoria Avenues. Expenses like rent, electricity, phone bills and waste management add up for a non-profit with limited resources, said Nancy Pestow, a manager.

Over the last couple of years, income and volunteer

resources have dwindled. Before the decline, 35 volunteers manned the phones morning and afternoon.

The recent weeks have seen less than a dozen volunteers who shared only morning shifts and a voice-mail system that picked up afternoon calls.

Residents called with a variety of needs, including inquires about caretakers,

handyman services, plumbers, gardeners, tax information, consumer complaints and utility concerns, according to Pestow.

Having collected a substantial database of resources for new and existing Sun Citians, Info and Referral will be passing on some of their information to the Sun City Visitors Center to be put to good use, Sanders said.

The Sun City Home Owners Association is also a good resource for residents who may not know where to turn for service referrals after the Sun City Information and Referral office is no longer.

Until Dec. 1, Sun City Information and Referral can be reached at 974-4713. For referrals through the HOA office, call 974-4718.

Funding woes may put help line on hold

DAILY NEWS-SUN

SATURDAY, SEPT. 25, AND SUNDAY, SEPT. 26, 2004

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Short on funding and volunteers, Sun City Information and Referral Service's 25 years of service may be coming to an end before the year is through.

The threat of closing down has become a reality, despite efforts to save the local resource organization, said Nancy Pestow, one of its managers.

"It's terrible. We're working on getting some funding, but that takes time," Pestow said.

"If something doesn't happen, we'll just go out of business by the end of the year."

She said the group may receive funding from an undisclosed philanthropic organization, but the process is slow and unsure and alternatives to fund-raising or piquing volunteer interest are slim.

Over the last couple of years, income and volunteer resources have dwindled. Before the decline, 35 volunteers manned the phones morning and afternoon. Now, there are 11 volunteers who share only morning shifts. A voice-mail system is what's left for the afternoon calls.

"The volunteers are working extra hard. Having only 11 isn't much to fill 30 or 31 days in a month," Pestow said, adding that she expects the volunteers' workload to increase when winter visitors return.

Money is tight for the group, which rents office space in the Lions Foundation Campus at 99th and Peoria avenues. Expenses like rent, electricity, phone bills and waste management add up for a non-profit with limited resources, Pestow said.

Should Sun City Information and Referral Service be discontinued, Pestow and her fellow workers know the community will feel the loss.

"We have a lot of people here who can't even lift the telephone book or can't read the telephone book and just need a number. What would they do?" Pestow said. "We are a huge resource here."

Phone calls come into the switchboard for a variety of needs, including inquires about caretakers,

handyman services, plumbers, gardeners, tax information, consumer complaints and utility concerns.

Though seemingly most helpful to new residents, volunteers say long-time residents frequently take advantage of the referral service, knowing the answer to their questions is only a phone call away.

"Not a day goes by without several callers saying, 'I don't know what I'd do without you. You've always been such a help to me,'" said one volunteer who declined to give her name. "What a shame that because essential funds are drying up and people are not coming forward to volunteer, this great tradition of providing needed information and referrals (may) cease and desist."

For more information about donating or volunteering with Sun City Information and Referral Service, call 974-4713.

Service scales back hours

**SUN CITIES
INFORMATION AND
REFERRAL:** Dearth of
volunteers leaves
agency no choice but
to cut operating hours

MICHAEL MARESH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Like many community groups experiencing a shortage of volunteers, Sun Cities Information and Referral is feeling the pinch.

And residents contacting the organization for information may be affected by that shortage through closed doors or an answering machine.

The organization which provides residents with information on a wealth of topics, including house cleaning, transportation, yardwork services and other necessities, has been forced to scale back its hours because of the lack of volunteers.

Sun Cities Information and Referral, 9451 N. 99th Ave., is now open 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. In the past, when volunteers weren't so hard to come by, the operating hours were 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every weekday. The organization, the local branch of the larger Community Information and Referral service, now makes do with one volunteer a day.

"There were three volunteers at a time," said Nancy Pestow, manager of the local CIR branch. "Now we are down to one."

Pestow said she started to notice the decline in the volunteer ranks in the past year.

"We are not open in the afternoon because of a lack of volunteers," she said.

For the organization to remain open until 3 p.m., she said, its

number of volunteers would have to more than double from 24 to 50.

"People aren't volunteering lately," she said. "Everybody is having the same problem. The new people who are moving in do not want to volunteer anymore."

Pestow said the CIR branch usually takes calls from Sun City and Sun City West, and according to local CIR President Jim Groundwater, the branch receives about 4,000 calls a year.

"It's been a growing problem," Groundwater said of the volunteer shortage. "It's getting more difficult to find them now."

Pestow stressed people calling after the office closes at noon will still get answers. The first thing volunteers do in the morning is check the answering-machine messages from the previous day, and those calls are given priority.

"We get it on the recorder and take care of (them)," she said.

Pestow said she isn't holding out much hope in attracting new volunteers because other Sun Cities organizations are in the same situation.

"We have been putting ads in the paper," she said, adding that she requests volunteers work two three-hour shifts a month. A few volunteers are working one shift a week, she said.

Virginia Harvey, a Sun City resident and volunteer, said she doesn't understand why fewer people are volunteering.

"I really don't know," she said, adding that she has volunteered with various causes for as long as she can remember.

"It's a very interesting place to work, and you learn a lot about Sun City and the surrounding area," she said.

Residents interested in volunteering can call Pestow at 974-4713.

Michael Maresk can be reached at mmaresk@aztrib.com or at 623-876-2521.

CALL SUN CITY INFORMATION & REFERRAL, *They Can't Say No!*

by Dorothy Fant

This is the story of a little-known organization which provides a great service to the Sun Cities.

A little more than 25 years ago a growing active retirement community began to realize that the original euphoric couples and individual settlers might realistically need more than recreation and pleasurable activities provided by its founder Del Webb.

The new residents (displaced from their former familiar environments) had to have someplace to turn to for help with questions and the new endeavors in their new endeavors in their new environment.

Fortunately, among the residents of Sun City were individuals who recognized this fact, and spearheaded by Mrs. Gertrude Flyte, a retired school teacher, a group was formed which in March 1975 opened an office as the Sun City Information and Referral Service.

What does it do? Its goal is to link people in need with any kind of problem to a resource that will help. This is done by means of telephones answered by trained, dedicated volunteers who have at their fingertips, extensive files on over 2,000 categories, plus reference books of all kinds. No problem is too small or too large to challenge the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the volunteers – they “can’t say no!”

They’re often faced with a wide range of problems including: Where can I take my grandchildren for a day’s outing? Where can I find the telephone number for the zoo? Where can I borrow a high-chair and playpen? I need help with my rent. How can I get married in Sun City? Where can I find a Santa Claus? How do I make raisins? How can I find a doctor? Where can I get help with my taxes? One of the all-time “doozies” faced by the group ... what time will the sun set on October 21st, I want to have a party and I need to know!

In addition to answering questions, regardless of nature, Information and Referral Service (I & RS) maintains an up-to-date file of persons willing to perform services of all kinds: maintenance, installations, yardwork, repairs, baby sitting, adult sitting, pet sitting, drivers, caregivers, carpenters, plumbers, house cleaners, etc. There is also an extensive file of organizations: State Clubs, Hobby Clubs, speakers, entertainers, business organizations, fraternities, etc.

The enterprising office manager peruses the newspapers daily for what’s going on in town, Sun Cities activities, plays, excursions, performances, political meetings and voting information.

Dedicated volunteers are on duty beginning at 9 a.m. weekday mornings and some afternoons. When no one is in the office an answering machine takes messages for follow up the next day. Volunteers are always needed and it is a fascinating, unusual way of spending a few hours each month. In the early 1980s the total incoming calls numbered around 12,000 per year.

When you’ve got a problem without a ready answer remember, help is just a phone call away!

Call one of three numbers: 623-974-4713 ... 623-974-4714 or 623-974-4715.



Retired in style



Glenn Sanberg

Information is agency's raison d'être

Like so many good things that have come on the scene to help Sun City grow and prosper, Information and Referral Services was born of an idea whose time had come. Sun City's population had grown to more than 5,000 by 1974 and a score of service agencies had come on the scene to meet the specialized needs of this rapidly growing community.

Gertrude Flyte, a retired school teacher and community activist, saw the need for an information center where newcomers especially, could find answers to their special needs. It was her dynamic persuasive force that brought some 29 various agencies together to develop a plan to meet this growing need.

As a result a new independent agency, Information and Referral Services, was formed. By March 1976, it was operating out of temporary space provided by the Sun City United Church. Two months later the office moved to the Professional Building where Webb had provided rent-free space. By special arrangement I&RS could now help its benefactor, Sun City Community Fund, by servicing its calls.

Although primarily staffed by volunteers a part-time office manager was hired in 1977, and by 1983 the office was moved into the new Community Service Building on 99th Avenue and Peoria.

Gertrude Flyte's vision flourished.

From these humble beginnings Information and Referral Service began to take on significant community value. From only six or eight calls a day the volume of inquiries increased rapidly as residents began to rely more and more on I&RS for answers to their questions. Today it would be unusual if there were less than 40 or 50 calls a day. There are now some 50 volunteers who report regularly for three-hour shifts at the telephones. More volunteers are needed according to Jane Bjornson, the present office manager.

Helping people in this way is not only rewarding, volunteers say, but a liberal education as well. There are few dull moments. In a single week recently there were calls ranging from appeals for help requiring direct aid from the Community Fund to someone wanting to know if Thanksgiving had been canceled. One caller wanted to know where she could hire a Santa Claus.

Most calls are serious and some pathetically urgent. When counseling is indicated, these calls are carefully handled so as to protect the individual.

When the telephone rings the volunteer has to have immediate access to a myriad of facts. Over the years I&RS has accumulated a virtual library of critical information which is updated regularly. Whether it is an inquiry for the name of a doctor practicing a certain specialty or "where can I find somebody to mend my fence?" the inquiry is logged and records updated.

In a community such as Sun City with its specialized problems of senior citizens, an organization such as Information and Referral Service is indispensable.

If you would like to lend a hand either as a volunteer or to shore up the Kitty for some new equipment they say they need, call 974-4713. The hours are 9:00 to 4:00 five days a week.

Glenn Sanberg, who lives in Sun City, is retired from the American Society of Association Executives.

Referral service answers calls to duty

By J.J. McCORMACK
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The volume of questions stays constant from year to year, but new and sometimes bizarre questions are phoned in every day to Sun Cities Information and Referral Service.

"How do you cook a turkey?"

"A duck just laid an egg in my front yard, what do I do?"

"What's the recipe for oatmeal pie crust?"

Questions like those and dozens of others every weekday keep some 60 information and referral volunteers on their toes and flipping through multiple card files and scanning maps and pamphlets in search of answers.

The data contained in the card files and posted on walls and bulletin boards throughout the information and referral office is obtained from any and every possible source, including newspapers, government agencies, hospitals, clubs, colleges and technical schools and non-profit organizations.

Daily News-Sun staff

For the first time in its 16-year history, Sun Cities Community Information and Referral Service is cutting operating hours in July and August.

Starting July 1, the community information hot line will be in service

from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The low volume of calls in the afternoons during the summer months warrants the change in operating hours, said Betty Kline, officer manager for the local information and referral service.

Calls directed to the service after 12:30 p.m. will be referred to Community Information and Referral Services in Phoenix, 263-8856.

Before 12:30 p.m., area residents can call 974-4713 and speak to a local information and referral operator.

If the answer can't be found by employing the resources available to them, one of five information and referral operators on duty will refer the caller to someone who can supply the answer.

The caller looking for the oatmeal pie-crust recipe, for example, was directed to a dietitian at Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, given a toll-free number for an oatmeal producer and was referred to Maricopa County Cooperative Extension.

"We can take care of almost any kind of a question that people bring up," said Betty Kline, office manager for community information and referral. The office of the 16-year-

old, non-profit agency funded by the Sun City Community Fund is in the Sun City Community Service Building, 9451 N. 99th Ave.

The fact that callers can be referred elsewhere lowers the odds that a question will stump the information and referral staff, Kline said.

"There's usually something we can refer them to, no matter how strange the question," said Jane Bjornson, assistant office manager.

The variety of calls keeps the volunteer operators interested and challenged, said Kline, herself a six-year veteran of the service.

"It's never the same every day,"

Kline said. "That's why we keep our volunteers so long."

The service is vital to those older adults in the community who are unable to use the telephone book because of its weight and small print, Kline said.

"It's a great feeling, you know, when you can help people out who've got problems," she said.

Able-bodied people of all ages also take advantage of the service, Bjornson said, noting that newspaper reporters, state legislators and even doctors have been known to call on occasion.

To reach Sun Cities Information and Referral Service, call 974-4713.

Help is on call at referral service

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Sun Cities Information and Referral Service was formed in 1972 to provide answers to questions and problems that trouble senior citizens.

But the service volunteers don't always get your typical questions:

What can I do about the mallard ducks that have invaded my swimming pool?

How do you cook prunes?

Tell me how to stop this blinking light on my VCR!

"The variety of calls we get are always interesting. You can never predict what people will call and ask," said Sun Citian John Schields, who has answered telephone lines for Information and Referral for four years.

Schields and other volunteers often keep the more interesting and humorous calls logged in a book in the office.

"One time I got a call from a Sun City woman who wanted to know if there was a clinic around for STDs. I didn't know what that meant and really blushed when she told me STD stood for sexually transmitted disease. But we got her the information she needed.

"Another time I had to give a phone number to a man who was deaf. He wasn't able to hear what I was saying so I suggested he put his wife on the phone. The only trouble was that she was blind and not able to write down the number. It took a while before I could help."

More than 10,700 calls came into the office last year from people asking for referrals, information and answers to questions, said Dorothy Fant, president of Information and Referral's board of directors.

Volunteers man three phone lines from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays in the Information and Referral office, 9451 N. 99th Ave. The telephone number is 974-4713.

Fant said the office needs more volunteers to help answer the phones.

"Every year we get more calls and we are at a point where we need some more volunteers to help us out," Fant said. "It is an enjoyable way to help your neighbors and meet new friends. It is also a fun way to be in touch with what goes on in the Sun Cities and the surrounding area."

Information and Referral is sponsoring a fall kick-off beginning at 9 a.m. Oct. 11 at the office. The public and prospective volunteers are welcome to attend and learn about the service.

Many of the calls the office

gets are for consumer help — residents wanting information and referrals for lawyers to live-ins.

Others calls are for general information about craft and social clubs, nursing care, help in the home, voter registration, transportation in the area and a number of other different subjects.

"We once got a call from a lady who was down to her last \$2,000 and didn't know where to go. We got her in contact with the right community service to help her. That's what this service is all about," Fant said. "We bring people with problems in touch with those who can help them."

Sun Citian Rita Wright, who has volunteered in the office

since 1986, said volunteers use a file divided into 114 categories to help them find the answers to the many questions they receive.

"By volunteering here I have found out so much more about what's available in the Sun City area. You certainly learn a lot," Wright said.

Volunteers spend much of their time researching questions they are not able to answer immediately. Once they find information about a topic, they put it on file.

Information and Referral is sponsoring a fall kick-off meeting beginning at 8:30 a.m. Oct. 10 at the office. The public and prospective volunteers are welcome to attend and learn about the service.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Sun Citians John Schields and Rita Wright, volunteers for Sun Cities Information and Referral Service, provide answers and make referrals to residents who call the no-fee service.

Regardless of the question, ⁽⁹⁻⁾ local service has the answer

AUG 19 1992

Information & Referral volunteers offer assistance on variety of issues

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

Sun City resident Lewis Whitehead sits at a desk in a two-room office on 99th Avenue, taking a phone call from a lady who wants to know the name of the new shopping center at Camelback and Scottsdale roads.

"She's legally blind and she can't look it up," he says as he consults the phone book for the number.

Volunteers at Sun City Information and Referral Services, Inc. have performed the free service since 1975, acting as a link between residents and community services.

The organization maintains a list of references on people who provide home help, yard work and housecleaning services in the Sun Cities as well as information on transportation, clubs and housing. A

caller also can be referred to a specific agency that meets a particular need.

"A lot of callers are people who are infirm. Their sight is going and they need help around the house. For example, someone to drive them to emissions testing or take them shopping," volunteer Neil Bultman says.

While the majority of the callers request names of people who do in-home or landscaping services and most questions are easy to answer, some require a little investigation.

"If we don't know the answer, we'll try to find it. Once in a while we're stumped but not too often," Mr. Whitehead says.

For example, callers have asked:

■ What time would it be in the Netherlands if it was 5 p.m. in Sun City?

■ How can I open a bottle of

vinegar?

■ What was the name of the Greek mathematician who named the theory of dimension of hypotenuse?

■ What president died shortly from gangrene caused by biting his own tongue shortly after he was inaugurated?

These unusual calls add variety and volunteers say they enjoy assisting people in the area.

"You're helping people who are infirm or ill or not knowledgeable about Sun City. When they have a question, they have no idea where to start. It makes you happy if you can make someone's day," Mr. Bultman says.

Bernice Schaefer has been a volunteer for two months.

"I was looking to do some volunteer work and this appealed to me. I enjoy talking and helping people and the volunteers are pleasant and enjoyable to work

REFERRAL

From Page 1

with."

During the winter, volunteers take about 50 calls a day, he says, but in the summer the number of calls slows to 30-35 a day.

The office operates from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and volunteers put in a half-day of work each month. Last year, a staff of 50 answered 8,700 calls. The Sun City and Sun City West community funds provide funding for the organization.

Information and Referral can be reached at 974-4713.

See ■ REFERRAL, Page 18

Volunteer enjoys information and referral work

MAR 6 1990

By TIFFANY MEANS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Odds are high that if J.D. Reiss can't recognize a face, he will recognize the voice, especially if it's asking a question.

For four hours a week for the past seven years, he has provided answers over the telephone from the Sun City Information and Referral Service building.

"Mr. Reiss serves his community usefully. The board appreciates his work," said Edith Hicz, Information and Referral Service president.

Reiss also is a member of the Sun City Lions Club, helping mainly with services for the blind.

He moved to Arizona 21 years ago with his wife, Lucille. He probably knows more about Sun City than most residents want to know.

"The most common calls are from people who want things to do," Reiss said. "They are retired contractors, plumbers and

others available for people who need help."

An equal number of calls come in from people seeking referrals, with household help being the most popular demand.

However, not all residents require help because of physical limitations.

Many people who are left on their own have never learned how to take care of themselves, Reiss said.

"We get sad cases, as well as stupid ones," he said. "An auditor called in to put her name in our files and she said you'd be surprised by how many widows can't balance their checkbooks, or even write a check."

More serious calls are made by people asking for help because they are fighting to keep out of institutions.

On the other hand, many people view the information service as a "talking phone book."

"I always ask them if they looked in the phone book, be-

cause they knew how to call us," Reiss said.

But no individual calls bother him. What he finds annoying is the tendency for the phone to stop ringing for an hour and then for 15 calls to come in at once.

His co-worker, Irving Raihill, appreciates Reiss' sense of humor, but said he's on the alert for a practical joke.

"Seriously, he's a charming, intelligent, public servant," Raihill said.

Although the questions remain generally the same, Reiss has noticed differences in Sun City since he arrived in 1969.

His favorite change was the removal of the feed lot by Olive Road and 99th Avenue, although he doubts few people will remember it.

But he dislikes the change in people's attitudes.

"When we first came, people going into a drug store would smile and say hello. We were all strangers then, and it's the same today," Reiss said.



REFERRAL VOLUNTEERS — J.D. Reiss, left, and Irving Raihill spend part of their time answering the phones at the Information and Referral Service.

Bureau scouts for help

People needed for variety of volunteer jobs

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
Daily News-Sun staff

PEORIA — The three phones were all busy. Questions were being answered regarding where to find nursing care.

Earlier someone wanted to find a "pattern for a goose," which turned out to be an outdoor lawn ornament. Sometimes callers want to find out how to get to the airport.

Answers are provided by volunteers.

They were sent to the Infor-

mation and Referral Service by the Volunteer Bureau of the Sun Cities Area, Inc., which shares quarters in the Sun City Community Services Building, 9451 N. 99th Ave.

"There's a gold mine of opportunity here," said volunteer Martha Dale of Sun City who has only been working as a volunteer for a couple of days. She is retired as head of psychological services at Newberry (Mich.) Hospital.

Alma Weatherly of Young-

town is office manager of the Volunteer Bureau and matches volunteers to jobs requested by the 54 agencies that need assistance. Through September, 495 referrals had been made.

"There will probably be double that many in the next three months with so many people returning to the Sun Cities and wanting to volunteer," she said.

Among the most challenging jobs are those of teacher's aides in the new Kingswood School,

which opened this fall, two miles south on Bell Road from the intersection with Grand Avenue.

Aides are needed to work a couple of hours a week in reading and math or helping teachers prepare materials.

In January, 13 aides from the Sun Cities helped Luke students to insert messages in balloons, blow them up and release into the air.

"Volunteers are need from 7 to 10 p.m. on Nov. 17 for Luke Grade School children during a Sleep-In," said Weatherly.

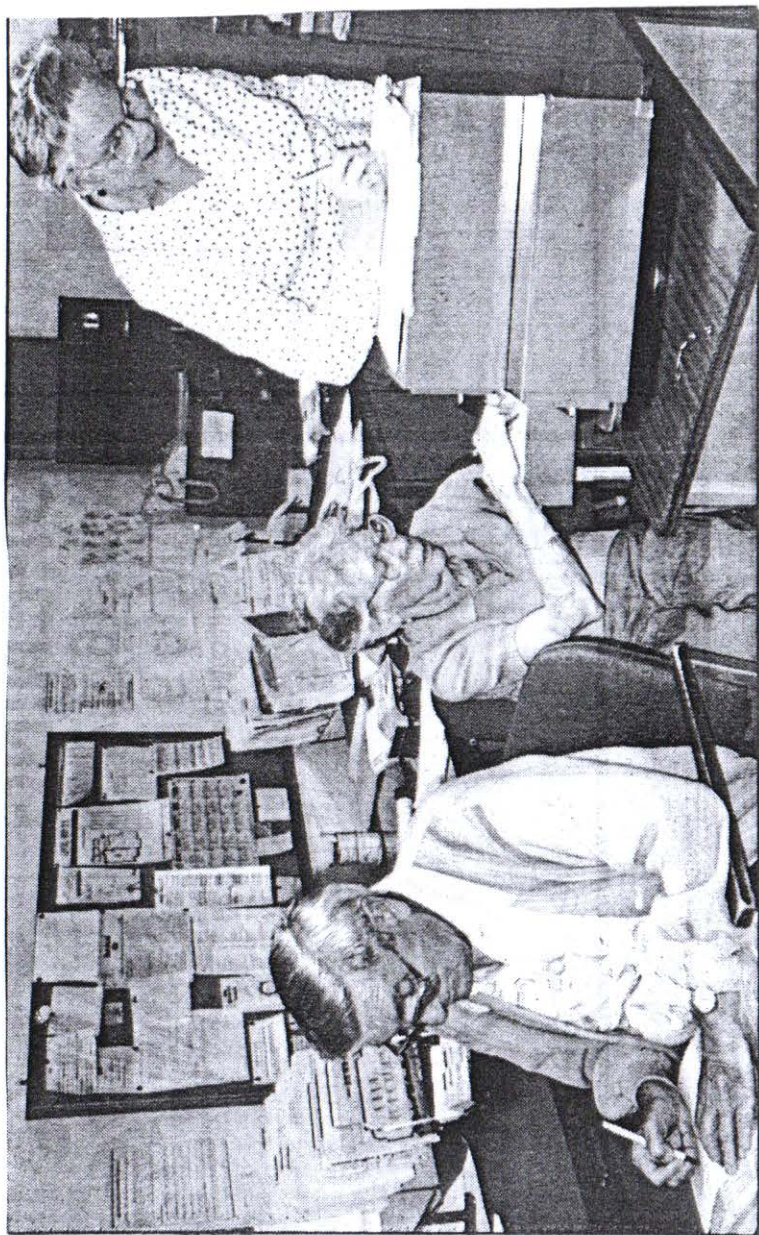
She said the aides will read stories, perform magic tricks, do clowning, blow up balloons and paint faces.

Last year, a Brownie troop asked for grandmothers to "describe life when they were young." The Grandmothers' Club came to her rescue.

Other areas needing volunteers include the Principle in Alphabet Literacy (PALS) program at Glendale Community College, Surprise Community Center and Rio Salado Community College on Northern Avenue; the Laubach Literacy Program at Dysart Community Center and the one at Centro Adelante Campesino in Surprise.

Volunteers are also needed in retirement homes, for Interfaith Services, Inc., Westside Food Bank and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) tax program, which will soon be underway.

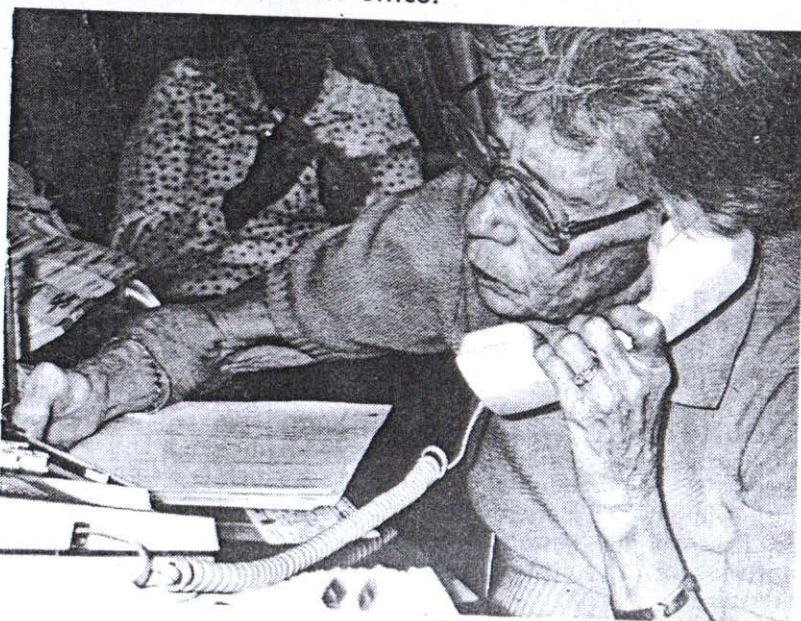
Information: 972-6809.



Daily News-Sun photos by P. Atwood Williams

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION — Pat Duncan, left, has been a Information and Referral Service volunteer since 1985. With him are

newcomer Martha Dale and Betty Lewis, a volunteer since 1985. The Volunteer Bureau found the volunteers for the service.



Daily News-Sun photos by P. Atwood Williams

TAKING PHONE REQUESTS — Newcomer Martha Dale said working at Information and Referral Service is "a gold mine of opportunity."



Daily News-Sun photos by P. Atwood Williams

PLANNING STRATEGY — Volunteer Services Office Manager Alma Weatherly confers with Board Vice President Bill Oberstadt in her office.

Information group plans coffee klatch

OCT 10 1989

By CONNIE STEELE
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Volunteering as a resource person with the Sun Cities Information and Referral Service can pay off in knowledge and satisfaction.

Hoping that people will want to find out about both, officials plan a morning coffee klatch for anyone who has worked or who may be interested in working for the service.

Coffee, tea and donuts will be served 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, in the conference room of the Sun City Community Services Building, 9451 N. 99th Ave., Peoria.

The service provides information spanning a range as varied as the persons calling in. Requests might relate to when the state fair opens, what the entry fee is and the best way to get there; or to passports, bus passes, social services, holiday closings or support groups.

Some requests arrive on foot. Betty Kline, office manager, calls these their walk-ins.

Volunteers Bea and Chuck Hodson have found the Sun Cities Information and Referral

Service a great way to help themselves as they helped others.

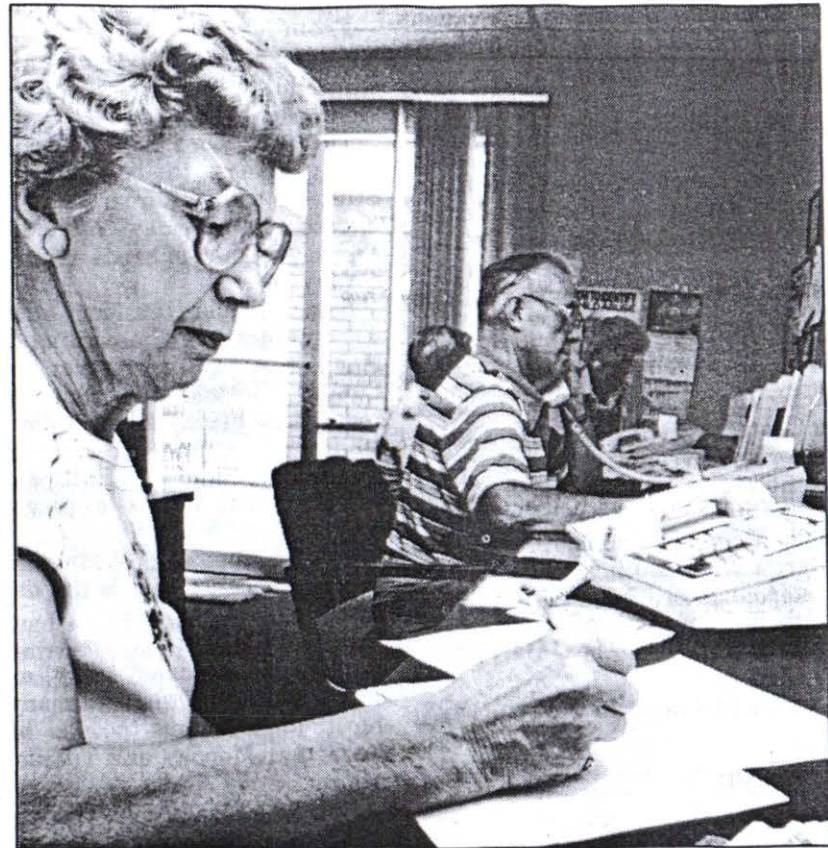
They began volunteering afternoons with the service when they moved to Sun City two years ago. By finding information for others, they learned a lot about their new hometown. They moved to Sun City from Batavia, Ill., 40 miles west of Chicago.

Besides fielding answers to the community, volunteers act as an answering service for the community funds for Sun City and Sun City West.

Kline likes to point out the many reference files available to volunteers. Much of their information comes from newspapers, she said.

"We can answer just about any kind of problem they (callers) might have," she said. "Our calls put us in touch with various organizations, all the way from the governor's office to any place you might want to contact at the local level."

It takes five volunteers a day and 25 volunteers a week to man the service's three telephones. Normal attrition creates



Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

INFORMATION VOLUNTEERS — Bea Hodson, foreground, volunteers Columbus Day at the Sun Cities Information and Referral Service while her husband, Chuck Hodson, answers a telephone call.

a constant need for more volunteers, said Pat Duncan, volunteer chairman.

Duncan said a highlight of the volunteer coffee will be a 25-minute film on the referral service. Don Heffelfinger, a past president of the group, produced the film to document the service. His wife, Dorothy Heffelfinger, was one of its first

volunteers.

The Community Funds of Sun City and Sun City West are the service's sole supporters. Eugene Wright, of the Sun City fund, will attend the coffee and give a presentation.

The kick-off coffee is free and open, but the hosts ask that reservations be made by Oct. 14. For information, call 974-4713.

Upon occasion, Information and Referral Service is called to help residents care for situations which arise unexpectedly and demand prompt attention. An invalided spouse, thus, may survive an apparently healthy one who has managed the household. In this kind of situation, we have been able to name a nursing home or a counselling organization, or a temporary housekeeper-companion, any of which can care for the needs of the survivor, at least temporarily.

I&RS receives questions from retired, older citizens who encounter financial difficulties because their costs exceed the money they have saved and/or receive as pensions. They want part-time employment to augment their incomes. We are able to name a variety of such jobs.

When residents need doctors (or members of other professions) we are able to provide names and telephone numbers of organizations - like Maricopa County Medical Association - which will name individuals in the specified profession. I&RS files also include sites and dates of operation of clinics and service offerings like immunization checks and shots, blood pressure tests, hearing tests, etc..

Many calls to I&RS are from senior citizens needing names and phone numbers of workers doing tailoring, house cleaning, yard work, painting and small construction jobs. We are able to direct callers, also, to people skilled in repairing electric appliances, plumbing equipment and general construction defects or deterioration

Public transportation is a need which must be provided for many senior citizens. I&RS receives many calls from residents needing rides, frequently from one place to another within Sun City, occasionally to Phoenix. Our volunteers are able to give phone numbers and local sites for meeting buses, limousines, taxis, and vehicles especially modified to transport handicapped or invalided people.

This information-providing organization serves its "clients" for no fee. Our staff members are all volunteers who receive no compensation, except for an office manager and her assistant, each of whom works half-time or less. Our office, all our equipment and supplies, and the two part-time salaries are donated by Sun City Community Fund Inc., Sun City West Community Fund Inc., and Sun City Lions Clubs. People needing our help reach us and receive answers by telephone.

Here, then, in Sun City Information and Referral Service Inc., is an organization existing completely for the creation and continuation of a satisfactory life-style for the senior citizens of the Sun Cities area.

submitted by Edith B. Hitz

July 10, 1989

James W. Hawks, Director
Board of Directors
Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc.
10626 Thunderbird Boulevard
Sun City, AZ 85351

Dear Mr. Hawks:

Since the primary objective of Sun City Information and Referral Service is to help satisfy the informational needs of the residents of the area, we adjust the subject matter of our files to fit the kinds of questions asked by retirees and senior citizens.

Approximately 70 men and women, themselves local residents, make up our staff of volunteers. Both the workers in our office, thus, and the people for whom we supply answers to questions are older individuals - retirees, people over 55 years of age, "senior citizens."

I hope that the accompanying paper describes our organization sufficiently to allow a reader to recognize that we cater to the physical, social, medical, and psychological characteristics and needs of the older people who live here - and whom we serve.

Sincerely,



Edith B. Hitt, President

Description and Identification of Sun City Information and Referral Service

Sun City Information and Referral Service, Inc., with offices at 9451 N 99th Avenue, Suite 1, Peoria, AZ 85345, has as its chief objective to provide answers to questions and problems that confront senior citizens of the Sun Cities area. Our services are designed to be useful - sometimes almost essential to the older people who live here, regardless of their financial statuses.

These services range through helping seniors find ways: to adjust to aging; to learn means of providing for ill health of one spouse when the other is at a different level of dependence, or independence; to locate medical or therapeutic assistance; to obtain home health care and other domestic services; to acquire help with legal services, financial problems, provision of transportation, location of companions or "sitters;" and to help solve many other perplexities.

over

CALLS RECEIVED BY COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN 1988	
SUN CITY	
2,386 +12%	
HEALTH	21%
COMMUNITY ISSUES	12%
GOVT. SVCS	8%
LEGAL/ ADVOCACY	5%
FINANCIAL AID	4%
INDEPENDENT LIVING	4%
FOOD	3%
HOUSING	3%
DISABLED SVCS	3%
COUNSELING	3%
ALL OTHERS	34%
YOUNGTOWN	
160 +1%	
HOUSING	16%
HEALTH	14%
FOOD	10%
COMMUNITY ISSUES	10%
INDEPENDENT LIVING	6%
ALL OTHERS	44%

Help is a phone call away

Local services provide answers to health, consumer questions

By CHRISTINE SELIGA
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Health care questions and consumer help were the top reasons local residents called two information and referral services last year.

Community Information and Referral Services Inc. reports 21 percent of 2,386 calls from the Sun Cities were for health-related issues.

Statistics from 1988 for the Sun City Area Information and Referral Service show the consumer help was the No. 1 reason for calling the service:

Both services are free to the public.

Norma Johnson is the communications coordinator for Community Information and Referral Services Inc. which is located in Phoenix.

The calls to Community Information and Referral Services in Phoenix are confidential, spokeswoman Norma Johnson said. But the service knows the origins of the calls because the callers are asked for their zip codes.

Of 2,386 calls from Sun City and Sun City West, 21 percent were about health care.

In Youngtown out of 160 calls, health care was the second most recurring subject. Fourteen percent of Youngtown callers had questions about health care and 16 percent called about housing issues.

Many of the health care calls were about where a person can get aid or low-cost items such as hearing aids and glasses.

"You have a lot of poor people on a limited income in Sun City," she said.

Because the number for the Phoenix

Information and Referral is inside the front cover of the telephone book under other phone numbers to call in case of emergency, the service gets its share of calls for emergency health care.

"They'll say, 'I don't want to bother 911,' and I'll hear our worker say, 'No, no call 911 right away,'" Johnson said.

One woman called after being bitten by a scorpion and was given the Poison Control emergency number. The service followed up and called her back, which it does when necessary.

At Sun City Information and Referral Service in 1988, the No. 1 subject among callers was help for consumers, office manager Betty Kline said.

About 3,249 calls were received in this category with people asking where to buy, rent or repair household items to questions about building permits.

The next highest category was questions about organizations in and around Sun City with 1,224 calls. The third-highest was questions about housing and transportation, with 1,046 calls.

Kline said the Phoenix information service might have received so many health calls because it is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while Sun City Information and Referral Service is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

She said often the two services will refer callers to each other.

For more information about the Sun City Information and Referral Service call 974-4713.

For more information about the Phoenix Information and Referral Services call 263-8856 or 1-800-352-3792.

SUN CITY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE, INC. SUMMARY OF REQUESTS IN 1988	
HELP FOR CONSUMERS	3,249
ORGANIZATIONS IN & AROUND SUN CITY	1,224
HELP WITH HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION	1,046
MISCELLANEOUS	964
HELP IN THE HOME	911
HEALTH NEEDS	670
EMPLOYMENT, INSURANCE, FINANCIAL HELP	290
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	108
SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE HANDICAPPED	50
NEED FOR COUNSELING	48

News-Sun

WHO SEEKS

INFORMATION — The Sun Cities Information and Referral Service, Inc. and the Community Information and Referral Services give information on everything from the number of Poison Control to where to get a driver's license. The charts indicate the number of calls in the Sun Cities and Youngtown and what the callers asked about in 1988. Help for consumers and health issues were among the subjects people asked about the most.

Information, please

Calls keep Information and Referral busy

By CHRISTINE SELIGA
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — In one afternoon last week, the telephone room at the Sun City Area Information and Referral Service resounded with a cacophony of volunteers' voices.

"If you are a regular nurse or registered nurse, then we can't list you," Helen Fisher said.

"OK, call me back," Evelyn Palo said.

"What you want is Webb's number," Lee Rahill said.

Fisher, Palo and Rahill are three of about 68 volunteers who man the phones at the service.

The volunteers are there to take calls and answer questions about everything from where to register to vote to how to get to the airport.

Fisher has been working as a volunteer for about 10 years. She said she has stopped volunteering at other places but she never tires of working for Information and Referral, 9451 N. 99th Ave.

"It's always different and you learn from it," she said.

That morning, Fisher gave a lady a recipe for lemonade.

But that is far from the most unusual requests which are all written in a logbook.

Once a man called and asked what time it would be in Ut-

recht, the Netherlands, if it was 5 p.m. here.

A woman called wanting the name of a masseuse. She said she had called some massage parlors in Phoenix and was surprised at the response she had received.

Another woman wanted to know where to get inflatable coat hangers for traveling.

Someone even called wanting to know how to handle a slow player in duplicate bridge.

Last year Information and Referral's volunteers answered 14,685 calls.

If the volunteers don't have the answer to a caller's question at their fingertips, they can call back as long as it is a local call.

Pat Duncan, coordinator of volunteers, has been working for Information and Referral since 1976, a year after the organization was founded.

"You're helping two groups of people. You're helping the people in Sun City who need help and the people who want to give help," he said.

Most of the time people want to know factual things or are trying to get the name of someone who provides a service, Duncan said.

The office keeps a file of services and the people who provide them. The services range from

plant sitter to someone to provide personal hygiene care.

Professional people such as doctors are not listed at the office. If a person wants a professional service he is directed by a volunteer to that profession's referral service.

Volunteers work from two to four tours a month. A tour is one 3½ shift from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. The average amount of calls per tour last year was 45.5.

Information and Referral could use more volunteers especially for the summer months when volunteers go away on trips.

"If they like telephone work they would care for this," said publicity chairman Jim Groundwater.

Office experience is also helpful for volunteers and Information and Referral will train volunteers.

"Ultimately they have to be interested in people," Duncan said.

Sixteen volunteers who gave 90 or more hours of service to the agency during the past year will receive special awards at a noon luncheon, Saturday at the Ridge Club in Sun Ridge, 12221 W. Bell Road in Surprise.

For more information call the Information and Referral Service number at 974-4713.



MAY I HELP YOU, PLEASE — Lee Rahill, left, and Helen Fisher, right, answer the questions of local residents who have called into the Sun City Information and Referral Service.

In the know: Agency matches people with services

By RICK GONZALEZ

6-14-87

"Where can I find inflatable coat hangers for traveling?"

"How can I get help for my sick palm tree?"

"What can I do with a cat that has delivered a litter of kittens in my back yard?"

Although such queries may sound silly, these are just some examples of the questions encountered by workers of the Sun City Information and Referral Service, Inc.

The service is, according to Jim Groundwater, public relations chairman, "a liaison between residents and the available services" needed by many residents.

"It directs residents to the agencies established to meet their particular needs," Groundwater adds.

"You'd think people would know where to call for some things, but they don't," Groundwater says.

"No matter what the problem or need, the Sun City Information and Referral Service will make every effort to give you the answer, or direct you to those who have it."

Groundwater says the group had its first meeting in 1975, as an affiliate of the county Information and Referral Service. At that time, the Phoenix group "showed the Sun City group how it operated."

In 1976, however, after some friction between the groups, the Sun City group became an independent organization on its

own.

The local organization has approximately 60 volunteers manning the phones. Groundwater says the group recently received an influx of volunteers and is not in need of any more. However, he says, more volunteers will probably be needed in the fall.

In comparing the Sun City organization with the Phoenix group, Groundwater says, "We do a great deal that is not done in Phoenix."

For example, he says, the Sun City group has a listing of workers such as yard workers and home sitters, whereas Phoenix does not. Also, he adds, "We list licensed and bonded contractors, as well as unlicensed and unbonded contractors. Phoenix only lists those that are licensed and bonded."

Another difference between the two groups concerns funding. The Phoenix group receives government funding, whereas the Sun City group is funded by the Sun City and Sun City West Community Funds, Inc.

"Because we are a non-profit group," explains Groundwater, "we are not allowed to solicit donations. Otherwise, our funding would stop. But the two Community Funds do fund us adequately, so we don't have to solicit."

The service is also an answering service for the Sun City Meals on Wheels program and the Sun City Community Fund, says Groundwater.

Groundwater stresses that the one thing the service cannot do is suggest that the caller call a particular professional, such as a doctor, regular nurse or lawyer.

"That would be recommending names and we're not in the business of recommending," says Groundwater.

"Instead, we refer them to various professionals. We usually have about four names and numbers in a particular market on file which we give to the caller and they decide who they want to choose."

The organization is comprised entirely of volunteers with the exception of an office manager and a part-time assistant.

"Even the board of directors is comprised entirely of volunteers," says Groundwater. "Everyone on the board, including the president, takes regular turns on the phones."

Groundwater says most of the calls seem to come under the categories of consumer information and help in the home.

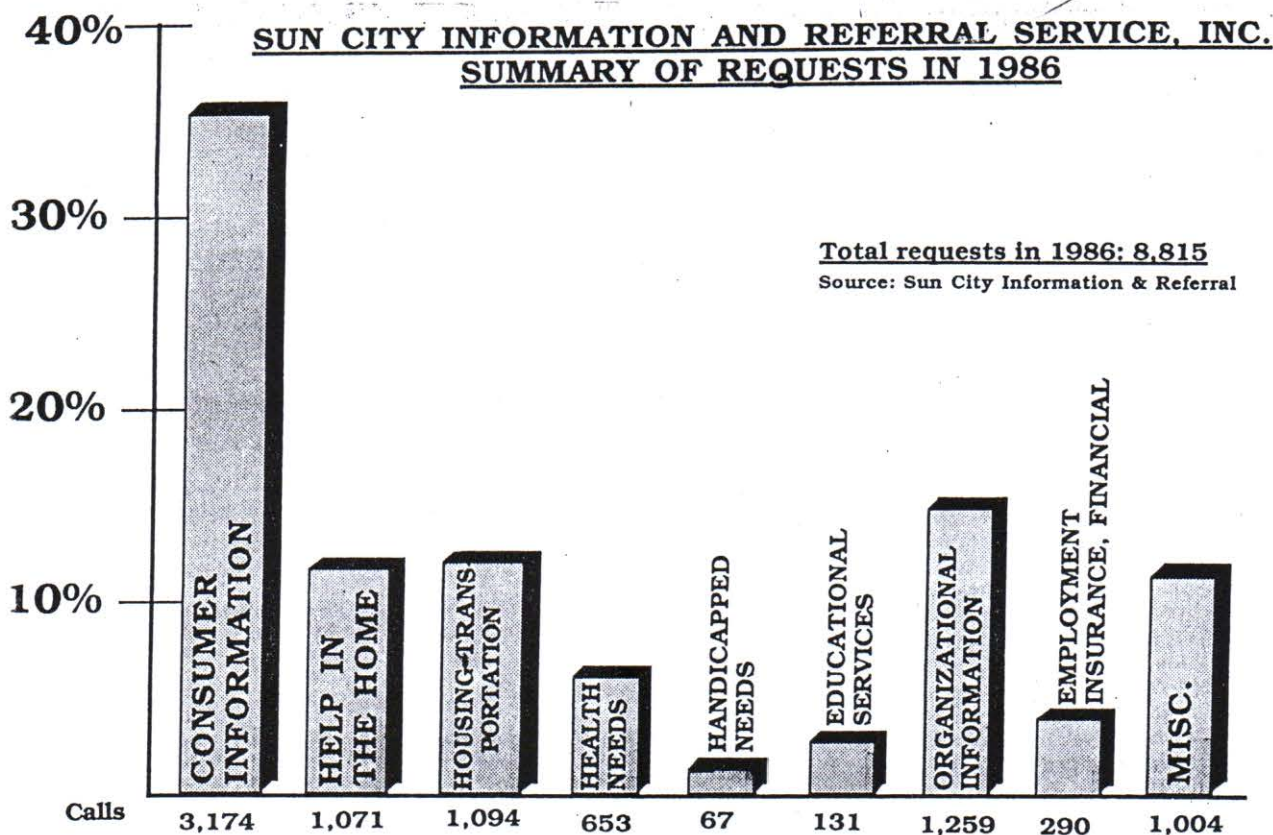
Included in the consumer information category are the need for professionals, such as lawyers, CPAs, etc.; need for tradesmen; services needed and taxes.

"We get a lot of calls during tax time," Groundwater says.

"We also have people on file who are or were tax consultants and are offering some free services."

Groundwater says most of the calls received "probably are

See PHONE, page three



PHONE

on page one

help in the home." Included in this category are areas such as gardening, carpentry, plumbing, roofing, painting, etc. Also included are various types of "sitters," such as house-, plant-, and pet-sitters, says Groundwater.

People have a wide variety of questions," Groundwater says. "We just want to act as a catalyst for the community. We bring the agencies and the residents together.

Many people don't know where to call for help. If they call

us, we can help them."

"Such interaction," continues Groundwater, "creates that vital difference between being a community and being just an agglomeration of people living in close proximity."

The organization's offices are provided by the local Lions Foundation in the Community Services Building, 9451 N. 99th Ave., in Peoria. To contact Information and Referral, call 974-4713.

Gotta question? Call I&RS

SUN CITY — It's that time of year again. You must take your car to the emission testing station and you can't remember where the nearest station is. Who can help?

A quick way to get an answer to this question — and a full range of others — is to call Sun City Information and Referral, 974-4713.



I&RS is a no-fee service which provides answers to questions and problems of area residents. Funding for rent, telephones and its general operating expenses is provided by the Community Funds of Sun City and Sun City West.

Volunteers staff the office at 9451 N. 99th Ave. in the Lions Community Services Building, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Volunteers who gave 90 or more hours of service were recently honored at the group's annual luncheon. Those volunteers include Elizabeth Bergstedt, Joyce Burge, Randall Burge, Emma Dillon, Ur-

sula Freireich, Norman Gustafson, Bonita Henley, Rose Luchans, Christine MacKinnon, Betty MacQuarrie, Evelyn Parry, Jay Dee Reiss, Mary Rodgers, Trudy White and Grace Wilner.

Carol Gustafson was installed as secretary and Ursula Freireich as president. Freireich has served as president since former president Lucile Bramwell moved away during her term.

Also elected to the board were Joyce Burge, Betty Lewis, Ruth Rothe, and Lewis Whitehead. Whitehead will be the group's representative to the Area Community Council.

Serving on the nominating committee for 1988 will be Emma Dillon, Virginia Leathers and Myrtle Linihan, chairwoman. The 1987 committee was headed by Betty MacQuarrie and included Ella Burkhart and Gladys Burstiner.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer may obtain information by calling the I&RS office.



Thelma Heatwole

Joan Frymere (left) and Ann Frymere man the Sun City Information and Referral Service office, which is run by Trudy Turnbull (right).

By THELMA HEATWOLE
Special for The Republic

SUN CITY — Some of the several thousands calls received by the Sun City Information and Referral Service may, on the surface, seem silly.

Volunteers realize, however, it may be a caller's only chance to talk to someone.

"Sometimes the caller may ask what day it is," office manager Trudy Turnbull said.

"We know they want to talk. Our volunteers are trained to listen. They (the callers) may need more than just the time of day. Volunteers have a sensitivity. If they feel there is more of a need, they refer them to an agency."

Sometimes a caller is "very sad," Turnbull said.

"But after a volunteer talks to them, they perk up and say, 'Thanks for listening,'" she said.

The stated goal of Information and Referral Service is to put people with problems in touch with those who can help them.

Referrals may be to Interfaith Service, which maintains a day-care center, or to Crisis Counseling. There are many other agencies that will give help, depending on the need.

"We have a blind lady who calls us at least once a week," Turnbull said. "Her requests are

very diverse. She lives alone and has our telephone number by her bed."

Volunteers, who received 15,099 calls in 1984, field a myriad of questions.

They include inquiries about employment, health services, home health care, housing, legal and nursing services, pet sitters, adult sitters, Medicare and stray dogs. The service also handles calls for the Meals on Wheels program.

The office keeps a roster of people who want jobs, such as housekeeping or lawn work.

"Each client is told we do not recommend. We only refer," said Turnbull, who has managed the

Update

service office part time since 1977. "It is up to the client to do their own interviewing and make financial arrangements."

Turnbull and volunteers read newspapers to learn about new resources and ways to help.

She said residents expect them to have a wealth of information at their fingertips. Vast resource files in the office give volunteers ready access to a variety of agencies and help, she said.

Some questions are surprising.

Referral service links callers with agencies that can help them

Once, a woman called to say she had a snake on her patio, Turnbull said.

"What do I do?" the caller asked. The query was referred to the Sun City Posse.

In an unusual inquiry in July, a woman leaving on vacation wanted to be awakened at 4:30 a.m. Although the office is usually only open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, a volunteer worker obliged the request.

If volunteers do not have a ready answer, they attempt to find one even if it means a half-dozen calls. In 1984, volunteers made 11,003 calls in search of information.

The service has been in operation since March 1975. The office is in the Sun Cities Community Building, 9451 N. 99th Ave. in Peoria.

Turnbull, the only paid service staff member, said the agency is funded through the Sun City and Sun City West Community Funds. There are about 65 trained volunteers.

"I don't know what Sun City or any community would be like if it were not for volunteers," Turnbull said. "They're the backbone of the community, the unsung heroes."

"The biggest satisfaction our volunteers get is when, at the end of the day, they can say, 'I helped someone today.' They are helping themselves that way, too."

Volunteers have all Sun City's answers

By LINDA VON TERSCH

"How do I become a member of Sun City Recreation Centers?"

"Do you know of a gardener willing to trim my rose bushes?"

"Where can I purchase antique furniture?"

A volunteer on the other end of the telephone knows the answer to these questions and many more.

She has a stack of books, stuffed files and a bulletin board covered with bits of information to assist more than 2,000 telephone callers each month.

About 70 volunteers at Sun City Information and Referral Service (IR) will be honored at an annual meeting 9 a.m. March 21 at Suntowner Banquet Room.

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"It started with a group of people who thought Sun City needed a central place where people could get information about the community and services available," said Glen Sanberg, public relations director for IR.

The eight-year-old organization was germinated by Gertrude Flyte of Sun City and it answered 280 calls its first year. The second year netted 1,578 calls and continued to grow. In 1982 volunteers handled 24,511 questions.

"It started in a small way and developed over the years into a full-fledged operation," Sanberg said. "As Sun City grew and so many new people came here, there was obviously a great need for some place people can call for information."

A majority of callers need help in their homes and request names of people who will work, said Joan Sanberg, an IR volunteer.

She added the service isn't an employment agency and it doesn't recommend workers, but keeps a file card of people willing to work.

Other callers need consumer information or assistance with food, clothing, housing and transportation. Some callers need help with social security benefits and health insurance and others want information about civic clubs and organizations.

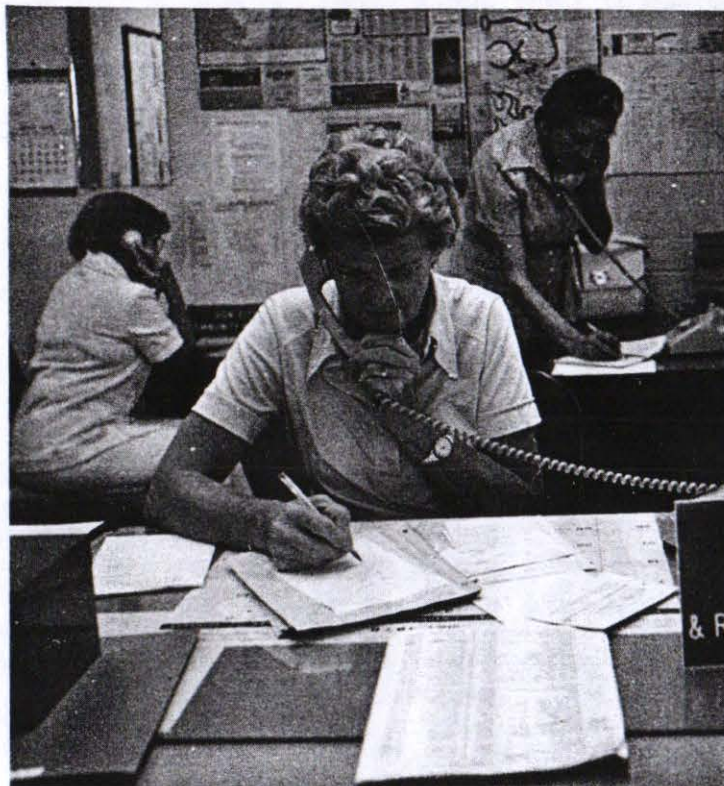
Volunteers not only distribute information, but handle requests for Meals on Wheels and Sun City Community Fund.

The service is valued at \$13,000 annually in labor costs, which include two to three trained volunteers on duty at a time 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday, Sanberg said.

Sun City Community Fund finances \$20,000 a year, which covers rent at Sun City Professional Building and a part-time secretary. The expenditure makes the average call cost only 58 cents.

"We don't foresee in the future not having a need for this service. Even though Sun City is largely completed physically, there is still new people here all the time," Sanberg said.

QUESTIONS? THEY HAVE ANSWERS



INFO AND REFERRAL SERVICE FULFILLS COMMUNITY NEED

The Sun City Information and Referral Service, a free community service whose goal is to bring people with problems together with those who can help them, is fulfilling a genuine need in this growing resort-retirement community.

The Information and Referral Service began operation in March 1975, and during its three years has helped thousands of Sun City residents. A simple call to 972-4043 or 974-6205 will bring answers, referrals and action on questions involving emergency care, employment, finances, health services, home health care, help with home maintenance, legal services, nursing services and transportation. The service is available to all Sun City residents.

Service volunteers, a large percentage of which have retired from professional careers in nursing and social work, are on duty from 9 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday (holidays excluded). If an immediate answer is not available, the volunteer will return the call as soon as possible with an appropriate recommendation.

The Information and Referral Service, which is financed by the Sun City Community Fund, Inc., has come up with a new innovation lately — the home visit. When problems seem beyond solution through telephone service a skilled volunteer may work directly with the individual in order to help solve the problem.

FEB 78
THAN TRIPLE IN YEAR *SUN CITIZEN*

Information, Referral Service Growing As Rapidly As City

Sun City is plainly wanting and getting more information and referral.

The agency dedicated to the services, Sun City Information and Referral, handled 5,424 calls in 1977, compared with 1,533 in 1976, more than a 300 percent increase.

Of the total for 1977, the largest number—790—was for help in the home, and 226 of these were for sitters for adults, children, pets and house. Chores around the house was, in fact, even in greater demand among the callers—238.

Consumer help was asked in 648 calls, most of them seeking advice, although 49 were actual complaints and 23 involved legal assistance.

Housing and transportation help commanded 404 calls during the year, and 325 dealt with information about recreation and clubs in Sun City.

Some 204 callers wanted telephone numbers they could not find in Sun City directories, and 177 asked health questions and help. Eight were for emergency medical care, and 51 for dental clinics.

Employment and insurance were the subjects of 139 calls and 10 callers wanted political information.

The service showed a continued increase in calls during January over the previous January. Calls in for the month numbered 818, compared with 287 for January 1977. Thirty-three of the

January 1978 calls were on income tax, the most popular topic.

The service will hold an awards breakfast for volunteers at 7:45 a.m. Thursday at the Greenbrier, with Jerry Svendsen of the Del E. Webb Co. as speaker.

OUTREACH

The newest innovation of Information and Referral Service is a limited amount of home visiting. When problems seem beyond solution through telephone service a skilled professional volunteer may work directly with the individual in order to help solve the problem.

SUMMARY

It is apparent that some residents of Sun City, even those with adequate financial resources, have problems making the physical and emotional adjustments of aging. Also, changes in health present new problems that must be coped with by either spouse, requiring medical or therapeutic assistance, home health care, help with home maintenance, legal services, financial aid to the needy, transportation for the disabled, adult "sitter," and countless other problems.

The Sun City Information and Referral Service is a volunteer organization staffed by Sun City people, to help with these and other problems. A large percentage of these volunteers have retired from professional careers in nursing and social work. Their rich background enhance the quality of the service.

This no-fee service is financed by The Sun City Community Fund, Inc.

to

TELL

YOU

WHERE

TO

TURN

SUN CITY INFORMATION

and REFERRAL SERVICE

An agency of

**The Sun City
Community Fund, Inc.**

*As close to you as your
telephone*



**Dial 974-6205 for help
in solving your problems.**

THE SUN CITY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

provides no-fee services for answers to perplexing questions on problems of the Senior Citizen.

ANSWERS – REFERRALS – ACTION

on

- **EMERGENCIES**
- **EMPLOYMENT**
- **FINANCIAL**
- **HEALTH SERVICES**
- **HOME HEALTH CARE**
- **HOUSING AND HELP**
- **LEGAL SERVICES**
- **NURSING SERVICE**
- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **AND OTHER AREAS**

We will "link" you with the agency that can help you, because

"WE CARE"

Call 974-6205

THE SUN CITY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE

WHAT IS IT ?

A Sun City Community Service to bring people with problems together with those who can help them.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS SERVICE?

Information and Referral Service is available to any resident of Sun City. There is no fee — financing is provided by the Sun City Community Fund, Inc.

WHAT DOES IT PROVIDE?

Information and Referral Service provides information, makes appropriate referrals and takes follow-up action.

HOW CAN INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE BE REACHED?

It is as close to you as your telephone. Call 974-6205 for answers to your perplexing problems.

WHEN CAN INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE BE REACHED?

A volunteer will take your call from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday through Friday (Holidays excluded). If an immediate answer is not available you will be called back as soon as possible with an appropriate recommendation.

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12630 North 103rd Ave., Suite 6B
Sun City, Arizona 85351

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- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **AND OTHER AREAS**

Call 974-4713

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