QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME #28

Winter 2025-2026

H.E.L.P.® HELPING ELDERS LIVE PRODUCTIVELY



Cherished are the moments we set aside for one another.

Heartwarming and inspiring are the two words I most often use to describe being here at H.E.L.P. Although our accomplishments are measured in small ways - from worry lines erased to the "ah ha!" moments during a tech-help session - they add up.

Our clients inspire us and the time we spend with them is truly heartwarming. For me, the best time is when I overhear the banter and cheery conversations between interns and our clients. It lifts my spirits!

Thank you to USC and Cal State Long Beach and Dominguez Hills, for the wonderful interns that serve alongside us. Their energy, intelligence and thoughtfulness make our organization stronger.

To our friendly phoning volunteers, I would like to express how much we appreciate your dedication. This time of year must be extra busy for you, so thank you for continuing to prioritize our clients. The winter months can be especially lonely and challenging for socially isolated people and the time you give is the best gift of all.

The selflessness of volunteers and contributors make everything we do possible.... In this season of thanks-giving, thank you!

Whether you are traveling or staying close to home this winter, I hope you all will look for moments where you can make a difference in an older persons life through a kind word, helping hand, or even just a smile.

All my best this holiday season,

Connie M. Hay
Executive Director

In this issue:

Stories of Impact

ENGAGE Program & Tech Desk

Combating Holiday Social Isolation



Service Opportunity & Collection Drive

H.E.L.P. has adopted the Lomita Long-Term Residential Care Center. This holiday season, we are collecting new blankets, socks, robes, & pjs-to be wrapped and delivered before Christmas with cute greeting cards featuring poems and artwork by Kindergarteners - adorable! Please donate! Drop off at our office Monday - Friday 9-4PM. To volunteer and for more information call (310) 533-1996.

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Stories of Impact: Michelle Bell's Journey as a Friendly Phoner.

Michelle is a native of San Francisco and was raised in SoCal (go Dodgers!). She earned her law degree and master's in communication (she likes to talk!); although most of her career was spent raising her two kids, teaching, and writing. Michelle has written a book of nature poetry, and her work has been published in anthologies and journals.

She's always had a great admiration of our elders. She was fortunate that her grandmother lived with her in the family home where Michelle was raised; she was a great example of living life fully, at any age. More recently she cared for her parents during the last years of their lives; they provided her with a lifetime of inspiration, particularly during their last chapter.

Michelle channeled her respect for seniors into a new career, at 68! She has been a lifelong athlete and nutrition advocate (some would say nut), so she thought why not help elders age gracefully, with mobility and fitness.

Perhaps her greatest joy of helping elders has come from her experience as a H.E.L.P. Friendly Phone Caller. She's been participating for just over a year, calling two very kind people, once a week. She recalls looking forward to getting started, but she had no idea how incredibly rewarding this experience would be.

> *"I'm a talker, but my friendly phone calls have taught me to slow down and really listen".*

She has really gotten to know the folks she calls, and they tell her they look forward to her call every week, which means the world to her, knowing she is brightening up their lives a bit. She has learned that to volunteer time to help others is a gift we can all give; but with H.E.L.P, the gift has truly been hers.

Become a Volunteer and Make a Difference Today

To learn more, call (310) 533-1996

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Pictured: Jean (client) with Aileen (USC Intern) during recent Friendly Visit

ENGAGE Program

Staying Connected: Practical Ways to Reduce Loneliness and Isolation in Older Adults

By Grace Farwell, MSG, MPA ~ H.E.L.P. Program Coordinator

As people age, staying socially connected can become increasingly challenging. Many older adults outlive friends or family members, stop driving, or face health conditions that make it harder to get out and about. Recent research from the University of Michigan (2024) found that 1 in 3, or 34% of adults aged 50 to 80 reported feeling isolated from others. About the same number said they had contact with people outside their home ***only once a week or less***. Even more concerning, 37% shared that they've felt a lack of companionship in the past year.

Social isolation can affect anyone, but older adults face unique risks. Factors such as chronic diseases, mobility challenges, hearing loss, dementia, depression, and the loss of loved ones can make it difficult to maintain meaningful connections. Living in rural areas, financial limitations, or language barriers can also deepen the sense of loneliness. Of course, the holiday season can exacerbate feelings of sadness due to loss and loneliness.

The effects of isolation go far beyond emotional pain. Studies show that being socially isolated is linked to a 29% higher risk of premature death. It's also associated with increased rates of high blood pressure, heart disease, weakened immunity, dementia (especially Alzheimer's), and functional decline. In short, loneliness doesn't just hurt — it can be deadly.

To help address this growing public health issue, H.E.L.P. launched the ENGAGE program in Fall 2023.

The program connects older adults with caring volunteers and student interns who make regular Friendly Calls — simple neighborly conversations that can have a powerful impact. Research shows that intergenerational programs like this not only reduce loneliness but also help decrease ageism and strengthen community bonds across generations.

In 2024, ENG*AGE* expanded to include monthly friendly visits, where volunteers assist with light household chores such as changing batteries and light bulbs, taking garbage cans to the curb, doing light dusting, and so on. While these visits provide needed assistance around the home, the time spent in cheery conversation getting to know one another is the most impactful. Add in the tech support we provide to help older adults stay digitally connected with friends and family, and you have a recipe for improved spirits!

Through ENG*AGE*, H.E.L.P. continues to remind our community that connection matters. Sometimes, a friendly call or visit can make all the difference. If you know of someone who could benefit from a weekly call, please let them know about this program.

ENGAGE is supported in part through LA County Board of Supervisors Fourth District, Office of Supv. Janice Hahn

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A Spotlight on our Volunteers

Joyce



After retiring, Joyce knew she wanted to spend her time giving back. Volunteering has always been close to her heart, and over the years she's been fortunate to serve with several wonderful organizations.

Joyce loves helping people and hopes that in some small way she's been able to make a difference in their lives. One of her favorite parts of volunteering is participating in H.E.L.P.s ENG*AGE* program—it's meaningful, rewarding, and always reminds her of why she loves what she does.

Aileen

Aileen, *(pictured on page 2* with an ENG*AGE* client), is an occupational therapy doctoral student at USC who loves exploring coffee shops in the South Bay and spending time at the beach.

She is passionate about helping individuals live independent and fulfilling lives and has gained valuable insight into how people adapt and thrive through meaningful activities and creative solutions.

Her journey at H.E.L.P. has been especially rewarding. Through the ENG*AGE* program's friendly phone calls and visits, Aileen has had the privilege of supporting older adults in living productively and staying connected.

FREE TECH WEDNESDAYS

Bring your your Smart Phones, Ipad or Laptop and ask your questions!

Stop by anytime Wednesday or call (310) 533-1996 for an appointment

H.E.L.P.® Interns

THE TECH DESK

SOCIAL SECURITY WILL NOT THREATEN YOU

DON'T BELIEVE IT, REPORT IT!

Social Security phone scams often involve impersonators threatening arrest, suspension of your benefits, or legal action unless you immediately pay a fee. Don't believe it! As official or "real" as the caller may seem, remember the government will not call you for information or make demands. Keep your private information private, like address, bank account numbers, social security numbers. These are YOUR property, and yours' alone. If you receive such a call, hang up immediately and report it to SSA's Office of the Inspector General.

Warning signs of a Social Security phone scam

- **Threats**: Scammers threaten arrest, a suspended Social Security number, or legal action for non-payment.
- **Payment demands:** They pressure you to pay with gift cards, wire transfers, prepaid debit cards, or cash.
- **Suspicious requests:** You are asked to provide personal information like your Social Security number or banking details over the phone, especially if you didn't initiate the contact.
- **Urgency:** The caller insists you must act immediately to avoid consequences.
- **Secrecy:** They tell you not to tell anyone about the call.
- **Spoofed caller ID:** The call may look like it's from the SSA, but this is a common tactic called "spoofing" to make the call appear legitimate.

If you receive a Social Security scam call, hang up immediately then call the real SSA at: 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

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10 Holiday CAREGIVING TIPS

Less stress may be the best gift of all for you and yours loved ones.

The holidays can be stressful, especially for family caregivers. Instead of experiencing joy, you may feel worried about how to manage the extra activities and demands in a way that does not make your loved one feel overlooked or stressed out. You in turn, may start feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or exhausted by the increased load you are carrying. We want you to have the merriest of holidays, and hope these practical tips* will make the season more meaningful.

Enjoy What Truly Matters
- Focus on meaningful moments, not busy schedules.
- Prioritize activities that bring joy to your loved one.

Communicate With Loved Ones
- Don't hesitate to ask for help.
- Share your "wish list"—even just the gift of time for yourself.

Create New Traditions
- Drive through holiday light displays.
- Watch a holiday concert or movie on TV.
- Play holiday music and have a fun dance party.

Adjust Meals
- Simplify menus.
- Host a potluck or order meals to go.

Rethink Gift Giving
- Offer the gift of time or attention.
- Draw names for a gift exchange with just one person.

Plan for Holiday "Hot Buttons"
- Identify triggers—activities, memories, or relatives that may cause stress.
- Limit exposure to challenging situations.

Mind Your Mindset
- Practice positive self-talk.
- Reframe challenges with a gentle, constructive approach.

Prioritize Self-Care
- Get good-quality sleep and eat nourishing foods.
- Monitor for unhealthy coping habits.
- Relax with holiday-scented aromatherapy or other soothing techniques.

Express Gratitude
- Send a thank-you note to those who spend time with your loved one.
- Gratitude encourages continued support and connection.

Find a Caregiver Support or Discussion Group - which can be helpful throughout the year!

Caring for a loved one is an act of love. Simplify where you can and focus on what matters most!
Join us monthly on the 3rd Tuesday 10:30am - 11:30am for our Caregiver Discussion Group
Call to register: (310) 533-1996

*Sources: H.E.L.P., Family Caregiver Alliance, Alzheimer's Los Angeles and AARP.

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GOLDEN TICKET RAFFLES

TWO GREAT WAYS TO SUPPORT H.E.L.P.!

$100 per entry, limited to only 100 entries per destination

We don't want you to miss out on this great opportunity!



WINE TASTING IN TUSCANY FOR TWO

Visit the Tuscan town of Cortona, an ancient Etruscan hill town, with its picturesque medieval buildings and spectacular vistas of the Val di Chiana. Cortona is perfectly situated between Rome & Florence to explore all the rich culture that Tuscany has to offer: gastronomical delights, world-class wines, Renaissance art, and historic architecture. Create treasured Tuscan memories that will last a lifetime! *PACKAGE INCLUDES:*

- 6 day/5-night stay for 2 guests at a 1-bedroom historic flat in the Tuscan town of Cortona, Italy.
- Choose from 6 different accommodations
- Wine tasting of world-famous Tuscan wines and limoncello accompanied by delicious antipasti bites at a family-run wine cellar in Cortona
- A multi-course dinner at a Tuscan eatery, expertly paired with wine
- Welcome gift upon arrival accompanied with wine and provisions
- Expert concierge services are provided to curate and organize every aspect of your stay!
- 2 years to travel! No blackout dates!
- Access to Exclusive Insider Tips to Cortona

Additional Details: Welcome packets will be emailed to winners upon notification of their purchase. Reservations are based on availability. The package is valid for 2 years from the date of purchase. All Sales are final. Airfare and ground transportation are not included. There are no cash refunds. Heating and air conditioning is a fee based on consumption due at the end of your stay. Cancellation prior to arrival may be subject to forfeiture of reservations and funds





WINNER'S CHOICE: ENGLAND OR IRELAND FOR UP TO SIX

Experience the charm and heritage of the British Isles and decide between the lush, rolling landscapes of Ireland or the historic elegance of England. Whether you want to explore Ireland's enchanting castles, lively cities, and stunning countryside, or immerse yourself in England's iconic landmarks, vibrant culture, and timeless beauty, each destination promises a rich and unforgettable journey. *PACKAGE INCLUDES:*

- 7-Night, Winner's Choice of Ireland or England for up to 6 guests
- Two or Three Bedroom Residence
- 12 months to redeem/book with 24 months to travel from the date of purchase
- Choice of:
  1. Knightsbrook Resort - Near Dublin, Ireland
  2. Castlemartyr Resort & Spa County - Cork, Ireland, or
  3. Thurnham Hall Resort – Lancaster, England

Additional Details: Welcome packets will be emailed to winners upon notification of their purchase. Reservations are based on availability. The package is valid for 2 years from the date of purchase. Airfare and ground transportation are not included. All Sales are final. There are no cash refunds. Cancellation prior to arrival may be subject to forfeiture of reservations and funds



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H.E.L.P.® HELPING ELDERS LIVE PRODUCTIVELY

A Letter of Gratitude

Dear Friends,

You have probably seen a neighbor, friend or parent begin to experience challenges related to aging. Whether it is financial hardship, housing concerns, health problems, or social isolation, it can be difficult to know where to look for help. Where should they start? Who can they turn to?

The answers they need can be found at H.E.L.P., and because of supporters like you, our services remain free.

Problem Solvers: 'Listen, Then Help' private consultations

For 29 years we have been here for older people and their families in times of crisis. Sometimes, just having a simple conversation with H.E.L.P.'s gerontologist is enough. Other times the situation is more complicated and requires problem solving and finding the right solutions...

Sally J.'s husband, Rod, was recovering from a stroke, but when it was time for him to return home Sally was not ready! She needed a plan to ensure she could meet his needs... and that it would fit within their financial resources. Sally was feeling stressed and losing sleep when she called H.E.L.P.

Taking the time to understand the full scope of their situation, H.E.L.P. gave clear options, sound advice and a list of resources. Sally and Rod received the support they needed and importantly, peace of mind. Rod is so happy to be back at home, and Sally is sleeping again!

Your every donation helps an older person receive free, private, one-on-one counseling to address age-related concerns they are experiencing.

Support older people in your community. Text HELP2025 to 44-321 to donate now.
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Just "Idle" Chit Chat? ~ H.E.L.P.'s ENGAGE Program

Idle chit chat it may be, but sometimes a neighborly chat is all it takes to boost someones spirits!

Recognizing the loneliness older people can endure when they start experiencing loss and are no longer able to socialize, shop and travel, we launched ENGAGE. Heartwarming weekly conversations provide comfort and go a long way in helping them feel connected.

"I wanted to call and just say thank you so much for the incredible compassion and it's always nice to talk to the folks there, which is very helpful. It just brings a lot of comfort and it's always nice to talk to kind people, [it] really does help.
So, once again, thank you so much for the gracious calls..."

~Marcia S.

Safely ENGAGED and Living Productively: Free Tech Help Desk

Phone a puzzle? Laptop a paper weight? Another benefit of ENGAGE is free, one-on-one tech help with each clients own personal devices. Not only do they get answers to specific questions but also learn how to avoid scams that arrive through texts, emails and phone calls.

"So... you think you can't teach an old dog new tricks? I started coming to H.E.L.P. for some tech assistance. I've taken tech classes in the past but never really learned anything. I realized I can't learn in a group setting; I needed a 1:1 situation. H.E.L.P. has brought me into the 21st Century.

I get so much more than tech assistance; I have someone to talk to and bounce ideas off of. The staff and student interns are so polite and professional. I'm very grateful for the assistance I have received and continue to receive. H.E.L.P. is helping me live productively."

~Jane D.

Every donation helps an older person stay safe and connected.

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<u>You</u> are the Champion! H.E.L.P.'s Family Caregiving Support Program

Understanding the pressures involved in caring for others, and the importance of taking care of ones own self, H.E.L.P. assists family caregivers through the ups and downs. There are many stages and challenges along the caregiving journey and H.E.L.P. is their biggest champion.

Pete discovered H.E.L.P. after attending a presentation on "Caregiving Stages and Options". During the session, he shared his experience as a long-distance caregiver for his brother. He was hoping to be a more effective caregiver and to better support his sister, who was providing hands-on care.

In addition to seeking information, Pete was also looking for connection with others facing similar caregiving challenges. As a result, the Caregiver Discussion Group was formed. Pete is a regular participant and often expresses his gratitude for having found H.E.L.P.

Your donations help us create helpful caregiving guides and tip sheets, compile - and keep current - available resources, produce informative classes, and lead H.E.L.P.'s Family Caregiver Discussion Group.

Won't you please make H.E.L.P. part of your 2025 year-end giving to ensure that we can continue to offer these vital programs? Your tax-deductible donation comes at a critical time, as demand for our services continues to grow.

With gratitude.

Brad N. Baker
Chairman of the Board

Connie M. Hay
Executive Director

P.S. As members of this community, we have seen firsthand how your compassion has changed lives. Thank you for your continued support.

Stories and testimonials are from actual clients

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Impact Report

Impact Report
4th Quarter 2024 - 3rd Quarter 2025

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In the last year, we have provided compassionate support for thousands of your neighbors and loved ones:



Program: 'Listen, Then Help' Advisory Program

Impact: Provided upwards of 1,000 private consultations addressing multiple issues, connecting clients to 3,186 healthcare and community resources.



Program: ENG*AGE*

Impact: Volunteers made over 1,200 Friendly Phone Calls and Visits, providing companionship to socially isolated frail or homebound older adults, and provided 200 hours of free technology training.



Program: Family Caregiving Support

Impact: Served more than 700 family caregivers through consultations, discussion groups, and classes - providing support wherever they are in their their caregiving journey.



Program: Community Education

Impact: Over 200,000 people accessed our free website resources. We reached 1,500 older people through community outreach & seminars and distributed over 14,000 publications providing essential articles, checklists and planning tools.

Support older people in your community. Text HELP2025 to 44-321 to donate now.

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H.E.L.P.'s Board of Directors would like to thank you for your support.

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RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR
COMING IN 2026

Coming soon! We will help bring the Equitable Building Decarbonization (EBD) Statewide Direct Install Program to low- and moderate-income households in under-resourced California communities. This program is funded by the California Energy Commission, California Climate Investments, and the Home Efficiency Rebates (HOMES) Program, and will bring free energy-saving home upgrades to clients. All appliances, labor, and installation are 100% covered. The EBD Direct Install Program will first launch in the South Bay in the cities of Carson, Hawthorne, Lawndale, and Wilmington. Call for more information.

Support our Mission!!

BECOME A G.E.M.

Can't give all at once? Become a G.E.M. and give a little bit every month! Becoming a G.E.M. is a new, fulfilling way to help us keep our programs running at full steam.

www.help4srs.org/donate

PLEDGE NOW

GIVE. EVERY. MONTH!

New Partnership!

H.E.L.P. has partnered with LA Care and Blue Shield Promise to provide monthly classes at three Community Resource Center locations: Inglewood, Long Beach, and Wilmington.

L.A. Care HEALTH PLAN | blue california Promise Health Plan

Community Resource Center

Save The Date

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
EST. 1996

Aged to PERFECTION

Dinner and Dance Benefitting H.E.L.P.

Saturday, March 21, 2026



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