

# CONNECTIONS

PARTICIPANT NEWS ~ WINTER 2014

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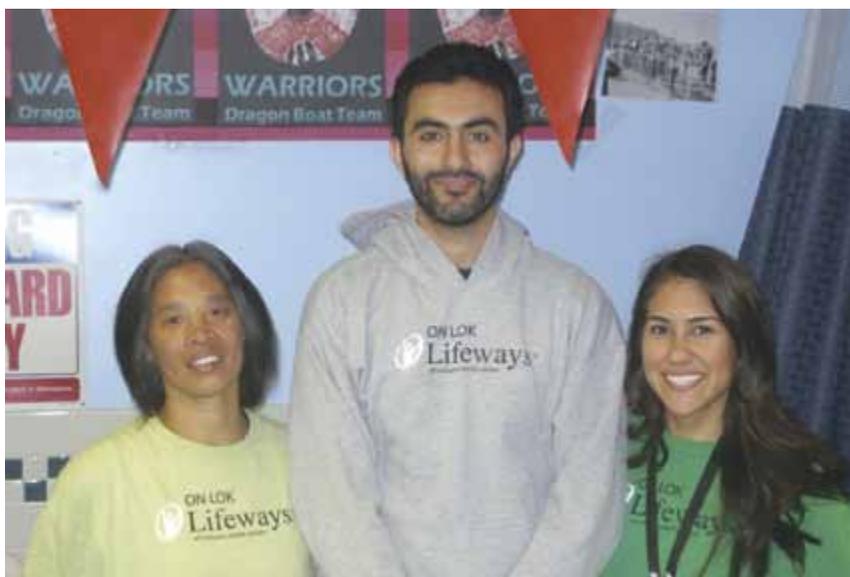
Tiếng Việt, trang 10

## OASIS AQUATICS PROGRAM

# Floating (and Walking) on Cloud Nine



Seniors exercise in a pool with instructor Mohammed Asaad.



Meet the awesome Oasis Aquatics Program team (from left): Susan Fong, Mohammed Asaad and Naomi Lozano.

“I AM ALWAYS HAPPY WHEN I COME HERE,” says Camile, a participant at the On Lok Lifeways Mission Center.

“I feel great!” says Peter, another participant from the Mission Center, while getting ready for his workout in the pool.

“I am doing a marathon today! I feel stronger than ever,” says Ilina, from the Rose Center, with confidence while water walking in the pool.

“I feel alive, revitalized and refreshed! Oh, I am on cloud nine!” exclaims Vivian, a 30th Street Center participant, after a 45-minute session in the pool.

Our Oasis Aquatics Program is a true testament to its name: a place of happiness and peace.

On Lok’s founder and former Executive Director Marie-Louise Ansak was the initiator of a pool in the Gee Building. When the building opened in 1994, the pool was named after her. Today, the Oasis Aquatics Program offers 10 classes a week, serving 55 to 60 participants in each seven-week session. The program serves On Lok and Institute on Aging centers in San Francisco, and each participant attends weekly for his or her workout in the pool. The program is specifically designed for participants with chronic pain.

The Oasis Aquatics Program’s main objective is to improve the quality of life of our participants by decreasing their pain, improving their mood and developing their physical strength. The program is a collaborative effort with each interdisciplinary team that provides referrals to the program. Our staff reports that occasionally they get calls from people in the community asking

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# Cloud Nine

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if they can sign up for On Lok's Oasis Aquatics Program, because they heard how great it is. There is more demand for the program than we can possibly accommodate.

The aquatics program's healing benefits extend beyond pain management. The program is also intended to enhance participants' mood and maintain or increase their quality of sleep, self-confidence and participation in daily life activities. Because the classes are small and conducted in a more intimate environment, participants get individualized attention and can make friends with each other. The team focuses on ensuring that every participant feels welcome and relaxed during the exercise.

"We dance and sing in the water. We make friends. Who would not like that?" says Mohammed Asaad, Aquatics Coordinator.

The properties of warm water and water therapy are healing for body and mind. After a seven-week course, participants report improved strength, reduced pain and better moods. One of our participants had a phobia of water. In her life she was never introduced to water and swimming. With the help of the energetic and compassionate team, consisting of Mohammed, Naomi Lozano and Susan Fong, this participant was able to overcome her fear and enjoy exercise in the pool. We also have participants who have been in a wheelchair for over 10 years. They, too, experience the benefits of the aquatics program and can even walk in the water, freely moving their bodies.

Nicholas Sager, Activity Specialist, shared a big goal the Oasis Aquatics Program is working toward: "We will continue to partner with On Lok's Quality Assurance Department to measure the health improvement parameters in seniors taking



**Benefits for participants include enhanced mood and increased quality of sleep, self-confidence and participation in daily life activities.**

the aquatics classes. Imagine if we could track whether participation in the aquatics program helps reduce the risk of falls among seniors over time! After taking the class, are seniors more motivated and do they remain positive? As a manager, I would like to know whether we can help maintain or improve someone's ability to live at home longer as a result of this program. Even delaying an admission to a residential care facility for the elderly by a few months can make a huge difference in any senior's life."

And another dream the program's team has—which is probably shared by many On Lok staff members and seniors—is to find a way to deliver the program to our South Bay Centers in Fremont and San Jose. "It will probably require partnering with some local pool facility, but we are hopeful!" says Nicholas.



## Donate Life

**R**IGHT NOW nearly 20,000 Californians are waiting for an organ transplant. An organ and tissue donor may save or enhance as many as 50 lives. All major religions support donation as an unselfish act of charity.

Here are some other facts:

- People of all ages and medical histories are potential donors. Medical condition at the time of death determines what can be donated.
- There is no cost to the donor's family or estate for donation.

■ Donated organs restore life. Tissue may replace bone, tendons and ligaments. Corneas restore sight. Skin grafts help heal burn patients.

Sign up to be a donor at [www.donatelifecalifornia.org](http://www.donatelifecalifornia.org). Personal information will be kept secure and confidential. To learn more, call 1-866-797-2366.

If you decide to be a donor, be sure to tell your family and friends.

California  
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**DONATE  
LIFE**  
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# Handling Holiday Blues

**H**OLIDAY MUSIC and catchy greeting cards remind us of how we're supposed to feel at this time of year. But instead of being merry, many people feel their spirits fall. They get a case of the holiday blues.

The low mood can have many causes, including missing loved ones; thinking about the passage of time; and feeling the stress, fatigue and financial pressures of the holiday rush. If you tend to feel blue around the holidays, here are some ideas for coping.

**Keep connected.** If you need help getting out, ask family or friends for rides to gatherings. Invite them to your home. Call someone you haven't heard from in a while.

**Share your feelings.** Talk with a trusted friend or relative about how you feel.

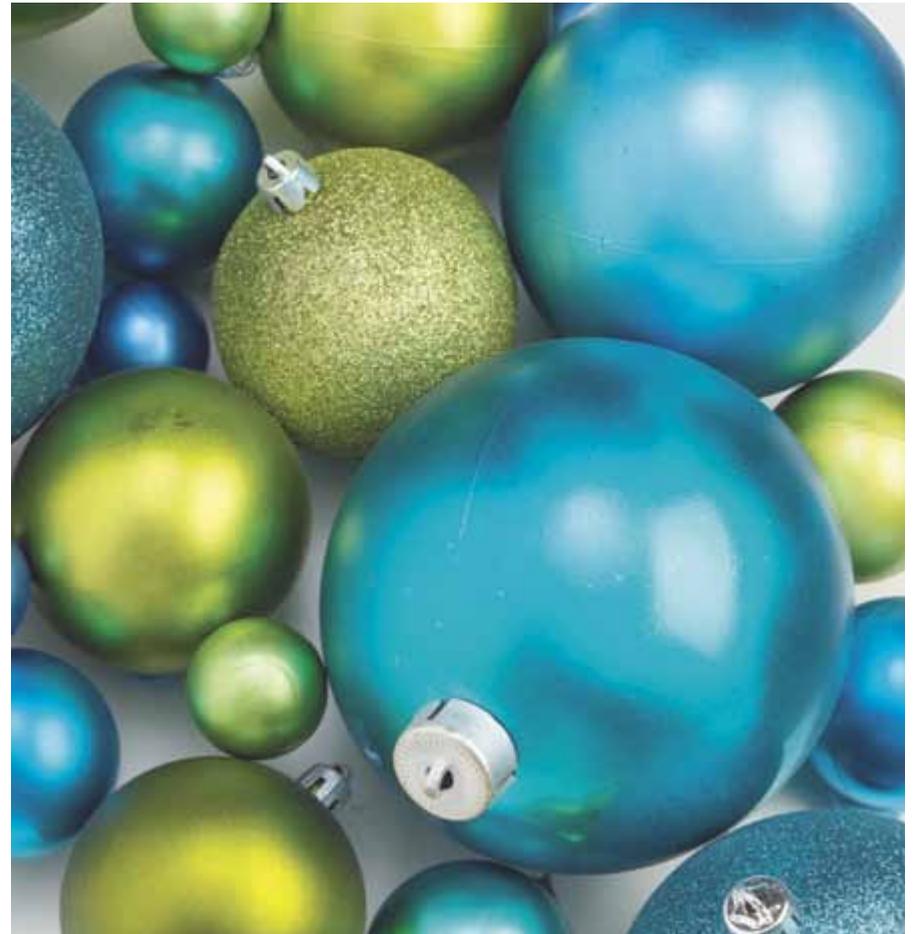
**Help out.** Consider volunteering in the community. Helping others feels good.

**Stick to a modest gift-buying budget.** Or bake or make something nice.

**Face forward.** Try not to compare today with seasons past or how things used to be.

**Mind your mood.** Remember, it's OK not to feel festive during the holidays, and a mild case of the blues should pass. But severe and lasting sadness may actually be depression—a serious but treatable medical condition. Other signs of depression include loss of interest or pleasure in things; feelings of guilt,

*Remember, it's OK not to feel festive during the holidays, and a mild case of the blues should pass.*



worthlessness or helplessness; or sleeping too much or having difficulty falling or staying asleep. If you think you might be depressed, tell your doctor. If you have recurring thoughts of death or suicide, get help immediately. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**.

SOURCES: AMERICAN GERIATRICS SOCIETY; AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

For more information about how ON LOK LIFEWAYS can help you or a loved one, call **1-888-886-6565** or visit our website, [www.onlok.org](http://www.onlok.org).



This information comes from a wide range of experts. For questions about your own health, contact your doctor. Models may be used in photos and illustrations. ♦ To stop receiving this newsletter, please call **415-292-8752**.

## HOW TO REACH US

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3575 Geary Blvd.  
4430 Mission St.  
1441 Powell St.

**East Bay Centers**  
159 Washington Blvd., Fremont, CA  
3683 Peralta Blvd., Fremont, CA

**South Bay Center**  
299 Stockton Ave., San Jose, CA

**Administrative Office**  
1333 Bush St., San Francisco, CA

**Enrollment**  
**1-888-886-6565**

For people with hearing impairments  
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