

Adventures in Caring 2018-2019 Annual Report

The last 18 months has been a time of re-inventing Adventures in Caring (AiC), in order to make the mission sustainable and our services accessible. We had to invent an entirely new way of operating, from the ground up. This is embodied in two new initiatives that will take us into the future.

1. Student-Led Intergenerational Initiative



April 2019 Volunteer Training: New trainees and assistant trainers with founder, Karen Fox.

First is the much-loved Raggedy program. After the fires and mudslides of December 2017 & January 2018, most local charitable dollars began, understandably, to go into emergency services. AiC suffered huge losses of funding. As a result, by December of 2018 we could no longer afford to hire our full-time Director of Volunteers, Shelley Rickard, who has been with us for fifteen years. It was a sad day for all of us to lose Shelley. The question before us was how to continue the program without a full-time volunteer director, and if we could, in what form?

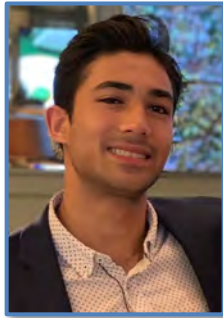
I met with three pre-med students in December 2018, in a small restaurant in Isla Vista, and asked them if they could help. Byron Rosenthal, Jesse Basra and Shane Pathania, all Raggedy volunteers, were members of the Mu Delta pre-med fraternity on the UCSB campus. I asked for their help, and they responded with an enthusiastic "Yes, we can do this!"

They suggested we form an Adventures in Caring on-campus organization. Together we created five committees through which the work on campus would be organized.

Next, I reached out to a former Raggedy volunteer, Anmole Ahdi, who is taking a gap year between graduating and applying to medical school, in order to care for his mother after his father died last year. I asked him if he could work for AiC as part-time Program Coordinator (all we could afford) and he agreed. Anmole now coordinates with the five on-campus committee leaders.

The committee leaders for the coming school year are: Shane Pathania (President), Krishna Balagopal (Outreach), Jesse Basra (Program Documentation), Andrea Ure (Continued Learning), Isabel Arana (Service & Fundraising). Together with Anmole, Byron (who is

graduating) and myself, we planned out the coming 2019 fall quarter, with who does what week by week.



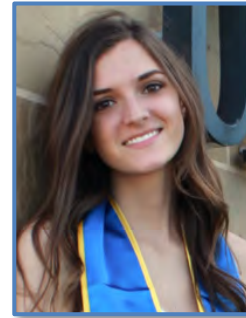
Shane Pathania



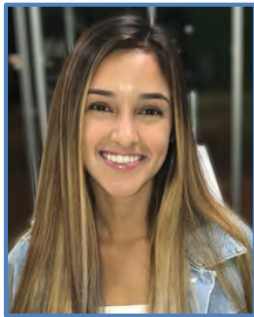
Krishna Balagopal



Jesse Basra



Andrea Ure



Isabel Arana



Anmole Ahdi



Byron Rosenthal

This has tremendous potential. Our volunteer internship now has three tiers in which students can participate, with increasing layers of responsibility and skill:

- 1) As Raggedy volunteers befriending the most socially isolated frail elderly in our community. Through practice, they develop the compassion, emotional maturity, and ability to communicate with those who are seriously ill, injured and dying—at a standard that helps to restore well-being.
- 2) As training assistants coaching new trainees. They learn how to give insightful, constructive feedback at a standard that develops this skillset in others.
- 3) As committee leaders organizing the program. They learn the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle of continual improvement, and how facilitate learning and planning conversations. At our monthly meetings they report to the AiC board of directors and respond to board questions. In doing so they build very practical project management skills.

Thanks to Byron's leadership and the members of this team, AiC is now positioned, both on campus and in the community, to run the program this way throughout the coming school year. Other fraternities and sororities are already expressing interest. The experience we gain in the next school year will also prepare the program to be replicated on other campuses. This is one pivotal way that the Raggedy program can be sustained and grow in the future.

As a key supporter of Adventures in Caring, you play a vital role in this program's continuance.

Despite losing a full-time, highly experienced director of volunteers and reinventing the structure of our program, we continued to deliver high quality services. Our standout team of 45 UCSB students befriended 800 frail, socially isolated elderly residents in the following nine local skilled nursing, memory care, and assisted living units—throughout the year.

Alexander Court Memory Care
Buena Vista Care Center
Casa Dorinda Skilled Nursing

Alto Lucero Transitional Care
Heritage House Assisted Living
The Samarkand Skilled Nursing

The Californian Skilled Nursing
Valle Verde Skilled Nursing
Vista Del Monte Memory Care

More than Volunteering: Learning through Service



The first Continued Learning Committee meeting with student volunteers on campus. This Committee plays a key role in building the core skills of relationship-centered care.

To give you an idea of the quality of relationships formed by our student interns, and the power of service-learning, here are some of the stories our volunteers reported back to us this year. Please note that students' journals below, were not originally intended for publication, so they are not polished stories. Instead, *their purpose is to do the work of reflecting on experiences in order to learn the most from them.* The struggles and failures, the uncertainty when stepping out of one's comfort zone, are just as important to developing the communication skills, emotional maturity, and compassion, as the successes, and perhaps more so.

Our Power to Uplift

One of the people I visited today was telling me stories of his life during the war, which included his passion for singing and music. He told me, "I think my mind is so strong because of all the songs I had to memorize. But it makes me feel out of place here, where most people have dementia or Alzheimer's." He began to cry, so I reached out, held his hand, and comforted him. Soon enough, he became more cheerful and recalled a funny story about him singing.



This reminded me of the power we humans have in healing each other and lifting each other up. It's a power I've learned through this program not to take for granted.

—Ryan Davis

Parting Gifts

Today was my last day volunteering at The Samarkand. The four-hour trip completed my 50-hour commitment, and now I can begin to carve out enough time to survive finals week. This was certainly the most rewarding visit I have had.

I stumbled upon a resident I hadn't seen for awhile (she had been moved to a new room). I was excited to see her and we talked for over two hours. The conversation was hilarious, fulfilling, and thoroughly meaningful. I

appreciated her company and she mine. When I said goodbye, she gave me a hug.

Then I made rounds and said goodbye to my friends, those I had not seen earlier. My last memory of The Samarkand was waving goodbye to the nicest, funniest, and most gentle-spirited resident I have had the privilege to encounter this past year. When I was walking away I flashed him a peace sign, and he, grinning, flashed one back.



It was an honor to be a Raggedy. I was able to befriend many residents at The Samarkand, and their stories will always stay with me.

—Nicholas Kim

Beyond My Comfort Zone

At first, I wasn't really sure if she wanted to talk to me. I took a chance though and sat down next to her. Mary is very soft spoken, and it was a challenge to find the right questions that might give her the chance to open up.

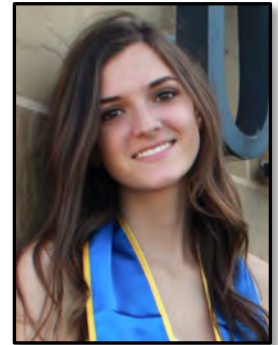
Every now and then I'd find a small clue to latch onto and ask her more about. She told me how she was double-jointed, just like her father, and went on to describe a picture of him when he came to America from Sweden—with his leg lifted all the way up to his shoulder! I asked her if she had ever been to Sweden and she told me some amazing stories about her visits there.

Most of our conversation, however, was difficult for me. She kept saying, "I don't do anything all day. I have no energy. The days just drag on and on. All I do is sit and sleep, and wait for the next meal."

It was heartbreaking to see the sadness in her eyes. I found it so difficult to find any words that could bring her peace. I recently learned that no empathetic words of advice begin with "at least..." So I steered away from that. I didn't try to give

her advice. I didn't try to pretend I could even imagine how difficult it was for her. Instead, I did all that I felt I could: I listened.

I asked her about things that might bring her some happiness, and looking back on it I realized this worked. By the end of the visit, she had said a few times that she was so very lucky: "I've lived a full life, with a beautiful family, and I've had so many wonderful experiences traveling the world I couldn't even pick a favorite place if you asked me!"



This was such a challenging conversation, but I could tell she appreciated having someone to talk with. Even though it was difficult, this visit pushed me to grow and learn how to be a source of comfort in an emotional conversation.

—Andrea Ure

Goodbyes

I almost forgot to go volunteer today. Life has been so stressful lately and I didn't feel like making the effort, but I had to go because it was my last day volunteering here and I couldn't bear to leave without saying goodbye.

There were so many moments when I had to keep myself from crying. So many of the residents were sad to see me go but also said how they are so proud of me and know I will do great things. It's hard being there for all these people for such a long time and now having to say goodbye. I love and will miss them all!



I will look back on this part of my life with the fondest of memories. It has honestly been one of the greatest things I've ever done. This program

has taught me so much and helped me to truly grow as a person.

—Clarice Douille

The Beauty of Humankind

Keith always waits for me at the door. But before I could talk to him, his friend came over, very eager to show me something. It turns out, there was a big scandal going on at the home. A lot of the residents were missing their belongings.

So, Keith's friend had taken the initiative to hide Keith's precious iPad, to keep it safe from whoever was stealing things, and he wanted to show me where it was.

Then we went back to see Keith, and his friend said, "I really like this guy. I would do anything for him." This hit me, deep in the heart, because sometimes I go into the facility and I see residents who just sit there and do the same thing all day every day. I feel bad for them. But the fact that some are still able to make friends and look out for each other showed me the beauty of humankind.

Their discussion continued on and Keith's friend went into detail about his life; how he got in a motorcycle accident when he was 14 and was in a coma for nearly two years of his life because of it. I'm astounded by how crazy some of these resident's lives have been. It truly was an honor to have him open up to me and talk about something so personal.

As the conversation developed, Keith jumped in a couple of times and said something self-deprecating, but his friend said, "Stop being so negative. You're one of God's children and you've been put on earth to have a good life, not to suffer."

Keith really listened. I could tell how much his neighbor lifted his spirits. Keith's friend truly inspired me to be as kind to others as possible throughout my life, no matter how hard my life may get, because I have the ability to help others around me.

I left the facility this day feeling that tremendous amount of wisdom and kindness had been put into my life. Keith's friend is a person I aspire to become like. It was beautiful to watch their interaction. I could not have learned such a lesson without being a part of this program.

—Megan Ringo



The Medicine of a Meaningful Relationship

It's great visiting the people at Valle Verde. I'm grateful I could go to the same residence throughout the whole year. I've gotten to develop relationships with these people. It is so rewarding when they remember me and we get into deeper conversations. One conversation that really stood out to me was with Jeremy.

He has been at Valle Verde for a long time, but I hadn't spent too much time one-to-one with him. Today, he opened up to me and told me, "I feel really alone in here." A lot of people there have some sort of dementia. I have had many conversations that start over every five minutes. Jeremy doesn't have this problem and he feels alone because he can't make a meaningful connection with the other residents.

We had a great time. He felt less alone and more listened to. And then he asked me to join him at bingo. We had fun there too.

—Adele Viviani



Sudden Loss

Today was the hardest visit I've ever had. Don't get me wrong, it started off full of games and laughs. I helped Sue organize a bingo game in French. Every month, there is a themed week and for this month it was French. There were about ten of us playing and I met a lot of new residents. One resident, Yula, was all the way from the Ukraine. She had lived all over Europe, and then in Canada, before moving to California. I asked her favorite place to live and she said, "California!"

While the game continued, I heard two of the residents talking about how Don had passed away last night. My heart dropped as soon as I heard those words. I immediately turned to Sue and asked her if it was true. She said, "Yes, Don passed away yesterday in his room after lunch." I could not fathom what was happening. I had just spoken with Don and we were laughing and joking at his favorite lunch table where he always sits. Don was 89 years old, but he seemed a lot younger than that. He could walk around without assistance and he was always aware of his surroundings, so to be told that he passed away was a shock. I am going to miss Don, and his jokes and the laughter he brought into my life, dearly. I hope he rests in peace and his family finds the strength to get through this difficult time.

After hearing this news, it was hard for me to be upbeat and play games, so I excused myself and made a visit to Julia. She never fails to put me back in a good mood. I will always hold Don in my heart, and I know everyone at Heritage House will miss him dearly.

—Isabel Arana



Building Friendships

Mrs. R. used to be very sassy towards me, but she has slowly become one of the sweetest residents I see. She is always interested in what I'm doing at Casa Dorinda and what I do while I'm there. We talk about my goal of becoming a PA and she is so supportive. She thinks being a Raggedy is such good experience. It's interesting to have this kind of conversation with a resident. It is one of those moments that makes you really proud to be a Raggedy.

I made sure to see Dr. H. last and we had a great conversation. He has an amazing memory and we talked about his childhood and family. It made him so happy. His long-forgotten memories resurfaced as we spoke. He also expressed interest in my career aspirations, and my journey to get there, so I like to run my plans by him. His support means a lot. He was a real legend in the healthcare field, so he is an awesome resource and a wealth of information and stories.



As I spent time getting to know the residents this weekend, I felt that they were now wanting to get to know me. This made it a different experience. I can tell that these are real friendships we're creating and this has really transformed my experience as a Raggedy.

—Jillian Hadley

2. Online Education Initiative

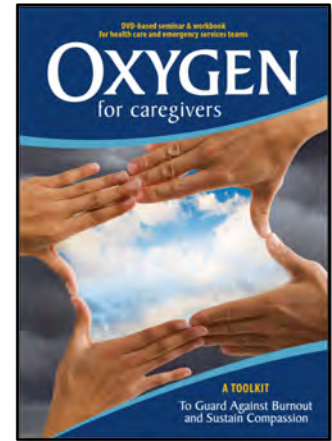
“We’ve been wrong about what our job is in medicine. We think our job is to ensure health and survival. But really it is larger than that. ***It is to enable well-being.*** And well-being is about the reasons one wishes to be alive. Those reasons matter not just at the end of life, or when debility comes, but all along the way.”

—Atul Gawande, MD

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End

Well-being also affects the competency of the care that’s given.

Over and above conducting our local volunteer program, AiC has built an entirely new way to make our training programs accessible to professional and volunteer caregivers anytime, anywhere.



Production of our first online course, *Oxygen for Caregivers*, began during the Thomas Fire in December 2017, and we completed it in June. These last eighteen months have been a strenuous test of our ability to turn adversity into opportunity.



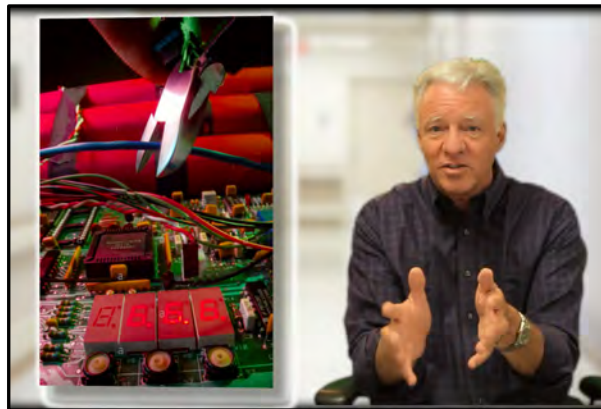
Bent Myggen

Kudos go to Bent Myggen (course production) and Natalija Glusac (business development) who have worked for most of those months without any pay at all, and the remaining months for a lot less than minimum wage. It has been my privilege to join them in putting all of our savings at risk and making this sacrifice. We have all done this while also being full-time caregivers of other members of our families.

Oxygen for Caregivers is made by caregivers, for caregivers. It is a distillation of practical wisdom from the dedicated nurses, doctors, therapists, chaplains, first responders and volunteers of the Santa Barbara community. It is an eight-hour self-paced course, made of twenty-minute sessions and five-minute steps, so that it can fit into a tight schedule. It is accessible to anyone with a desktop, laptop, pad or smartphone.



Natalija Glusac



Simon Fox teaching how to defuse the stress time bomb.

The high production value makes it a pleasure to watch and to listen to. *Oxygen for Caregivers* truly lives up to its name. It is a breath of fresh air that actually reduces your stress as you take it.

We are using the University of North Carolina’s Posttraumatic Growth Scale to measure the improvements it produces in well-being. There are

professional benefits too—it is approved for continuing education units for nurses and other health professionals.

This online course is a gift Adventures in Caring is giving to the world: a truly effective program that gives caregivers the ability to move from the suffering of burnout and compassion fatigue, to the well-being of a life they love to live. Now it is available to the world, and all proceeds from it will return to support volunteer caregivers in the Santa Barbara area.

Thanks to Bent and Natalija, the AiC office now doubles as a video and audio production studio, in which we will continue to produce high quality online courses on the practice of compassion, at a standard that restores well-being, in both the giver and receiver of care. The studio is a key to making our work accessible on-demand, anywhere, anytime. It enables AiC to be an even more effective creative hub for social innovation and human flourishing.



Laurie Small

Thanks to Laurie Small, Executive Director of The Samarkand, we are getting the word out in a powerful way. We are partnering with LeadingAge of California. Their members include hundreds of retirement communities, home health agencies, and hospices, all of whom have a crucial need to improve workforce well-being.

Thanks to Bill Moulton of Navigent in the Bay Area, the new course is fully integrated and automated with e-commerce. This allows others to participate profitably by becoming an affiliate and promoting it. LeadingAge will be our first affiliate. This is a complex setup with affiliate codes and discount coupons, plus several vendors in the loop, including Paypal, Stripe, Woo-Commerce, Vimeo, Pathwright, Authorize.net, Axia Payments and Montecito Bank & Trust, all of whom must work together seamlessly. Bill also donated the CyberSecurity Staff Reference Manual he wrote, so that AiC can adhere to world-class security protocols. All revenue generated by this system will be ploughed back into the community and help our local volunteer program flourish.



Bill Moulton

I hope you will join us on this adventure. Now that we have made our program instantly and easily accessible everywhere, to take the next step—we need your help to pass the word.

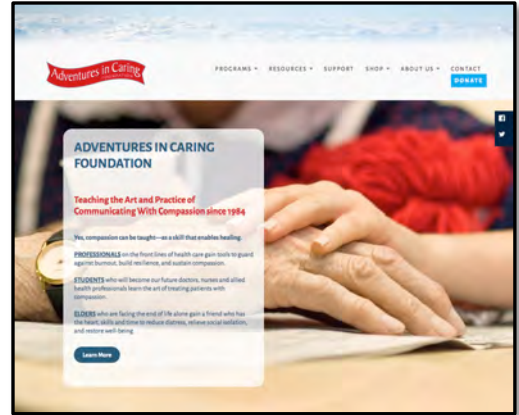
Here is the link to learn more about the program:
<https://adventuresincaring.org/oxygen-for-caregivers/>

If you would like to become an affiliate, or review the program, or register for it, please let Simon know by email at: Simon@AdventuresInCaring.org.

3. Supportive Key Steps

In support of one or both of the above two major initiative, other key steps were taken this year to position AiC for success next year.

- **New AiC Website:** Alena Rieger and Natalija Glusac completely rebuilt the Adventures in Caring website, migrated all the data over to it, and got it up and running. You can see it here: <https://adventuresincaring.org/> It gives AiC a whole new look and feel, plus it is far more robust and better organized.



- **New printers.** Coastal Copy donated two refurbished laser printers, one for color printing and one for black & white.



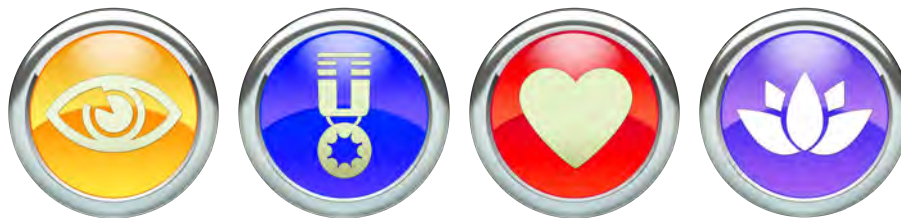
- **New phones.** Linda Alderman generously purchased new phones for the AiC office after our 18-year old system failed. Linda also covered the cost of the stamps for mailings, and regularly stops by the office to supply the staff team with Snapple!

- **Video graphics.** The sharp new icons for the AiC 4A's model, were created by Bent Myggen's son, Mikael Myggen. Mik, while making a remarkable recovery from a near-death struggle with leukemia, has played a key role producing graphics and laying in onscreen text for the new online course.

These four icons represent four orders of knowing—four ways we get to know ourselves and others. They are fundamental to the AiC mission of communicating with compassion at a standard that improves well-being, for both the givers and receivers of care.



Mikael Myggen



Thank you for being part of the team that makes this mission grow, as a ripple of compassion spreading throughout our community and our world.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments about this report.

With warm regards,

Simon Fox, Executive Director
Simon@AdventuresInCaring.org
805-962-4500



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Many thanks to the following wonderful people and organizations who stepped up in our hour of need to help the AiC mission survive and thrive in this very tough year. Thank you!

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Pat Snyder
Andrea Ure

Student Interns

45 UCSB undergraduate student volunteers

Staff Team

Anmole Ahdi
Simon Fox
Natalija Glusac
Bent Myggen.



*Teaching the Art and Practice of
Communicating with Compassion since 1984*

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