

• Living Longer and Loving it •

InterPlay: Finding Your Inner Voice through Movement and Story Telling

By Sophie Braccini



Marlys (right) demonstrate "hand movement" with artist Karen Wyse (center) and colleague Angela Chang (left) Photo Sohie Braccini

Marlys Tobias says she is a happy woman; she has freed in the second part of her life the inner dancer that was always there but had never been able to flourish. All thanks to InterPlay, a gentle movement, dance, singing and story telling practice that she wants to bring to her neighbors in Lamorinda.

For the Lafayette resident it all started 15 years ago with Cynthia Winton-Henry and Phil Porter, the founders of InterPlay in Oakland, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. "Both Winton-Henry and Porter have been interested in how individuals and communities can regain a sense of integration and connectedness," said Tobias, "for me it has also been an extraordinary source of creativity and development."

According to its founders, InterPlay is an active and creative way to unlock the wisdom of the body by allowing individuals to regain access to their stories, movement and voice. It's a system of forms, a set of tools and ideas to help individuals and communities thrive. And anybody willing to give it a try can do it. All that is needed is a little willingness.

A first session starts with warm ups and stretching. There is no need to perform here, each participant allows his or her body to guide the way. One can stretch standing, sitting or lying down. Then the music starts and participants can walk, run, move their bodies and stop. "That part can be construed as a walking meditation," says Tobias, "but InterPlay is more than that."

The next period in the session is dedicated to getting a partner and telling that person about something they saw through their window. After a change of partner, other little items that have been noticed in one's recent past are exchanged.

Then it's time for the hand-dance. As music is playing, a group of participants move one hand together, they touch, push and pull in an incremental way. "The purpose is to get the feeling of being in touch with another person, in a non-threatening way," says Tobias, "I love the playfulness of it, the closeness developed with another person, the music."

During the shape and stillness exercise, the music plays and participants walk to its melody, then they are asked to stop and

make a shape. "As practice develops people make more and more shapes and finally just do it on their own," explains Tobias.

"Nobody is ever judged here," says Tobias, "InterPlay has allowed me to be the dancer that was always within, without being choreographed."

The last activity is called toning. Participants produce sounds (tones), that match or not; they can choose to just listen, and there is no limitation to the creativity of each participant.

"The whole experience is so energizing and freeing," said Ann Leitch, who became a friend of Tobias through InterPlay. "InterPlay opens people up to telling their stories as well, whether real or invented," adds Tobias. In the more advanced classes there is an activity called "Big Body Story," where people tell their tales with their voice and all their body.

In Oakland Tobias has participated in groups for all ages, including a children/family group where her own grandchildren experienced the method. She says she hopes to attract 50+ active adults to her classes at the Lafayette Community Center.

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Swingin' Seniors

Submitted by Mei Sun Li



Back row: Jim Alexander, Jean Walton, Roy Gilbert, Georganne Eddy, Bob Eddy, Senior Services Commissioner Steve Swantner (who organized the event), Alan Nakisher. Front row: Sam Kang, Senior Services Commissioner Sandra Smith, Milton Panagotcos, Fred Story Photo Mei Sun Li

It was another rousing day of ball for Lafayette seniors when the Lafayette Senior Services Coed softball game was played on Friday October 2nd at the Lafayette Recreation Department's ball field at 480 Saint Mary's Rd.

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A new walking group for Lamorinda seniors is being formed and the group's first walk is scheduled for Thursday, October 22. The weekly walks will cover anywhere from one to three miles each Thursday with various starting spots in Moraga The walking program is being organized and led by Lainey Piper of Senior Helpers. She is a certified senior fitness instructor by the International Fitness Association (IFA). Meet outside the Senior Helpers office on Oct. 22 at 11:00 a.m. at 1550 Viader Drive in Moraga, just behind Orchard Supply Hardware. Registration is free. Please call the home care company at (925) 376-9900 to sign up.

Learn how to maintain or possibly increase your bone mass at a workshop with Anne Randolph, RPT. What are the risk factors for developing osteoporosis; what are some treatments? Get tips on how you can take control and keep your bones in the best shape possible. Friday, Oct 23rd, 11:30a.m.-12:30p.m. LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Sequoia Room. RSVP (925)284-5050. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members.

Free Blood Pressure Screening on Friday, Oct 23rd, 12:30p.m., LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Sequoia Room. Blood Pressure screening is brought to you through John Muir Medical Center Senior Services and is available for a one-time check or to assist individuals who monitor their health status regularly. No appointments are required.

Free: Brain Gym Introduction for Seniors: October 24, 2009. 10 – 11:30am. 58 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda. Must RSVP with Pam Whitman (925) 253-1223. STAY RESILIENT AND ACTIVE! Learn tools that bring your brain, body, and balance to their optimum. You will improve concentration, memory, vision, hearing and movement in easy steps. Have Fun and Take It With You!! For more information visit www.transitionpoint.com

If you or someone you know is experiencing memory loss or behavioral changes, it's time to learn the facts. Early detection of Alzheimer's disease gives you a chance to begin drug therapy, enroll in clinical studies, and plan for the future. November 5, 10:30a.m – noon. Lafayette

◆ Not to be missed

Senior Services, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette. Call (925)284-5050 to reserve a spot. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members.

Desperate for Clarity re Medicare or Medicare Part D Entitlements? Come on Down! Join us for an illuminating presentation from ElderCare Services Care Manager Vivian Torres to better understand just what Medicare pays for, what it doesn't pay for, how the drug component Medicare D actually works, and what you should do when your HMO doesn't seem to be paying its share, and more. Time is allotted for Q & A. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members, Tues 11/17,10:30 - Noon, Lafayette Senior Services, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette. Call (925)284-5050 to reserve a spot.

The Lafayette Senior Recreation Center was founded in 1950 and is operated solely by volunteers for the purpose of providing recreation and entertainment at monthly birthday luncheons, bingo, bridge, yoga and trips. They meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Methodist Church (not affiliated) at 955 Moraga Road, Lafayette. The group's An-

niversary Celebration and Holiday Luncheon will be held at noon on December 10 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Tickets for the event can be purchased by sending a \$20 check made out to Lafayette Senior Recreation Center at PO Box 163, Lafayette, CA 94549.

Ungoing workshops with the Lafayette Senior Services. Drop-ins welcome. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members unless otherwise noted. LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette. To sign up, call 284-5050.

Embracing Aging with Story and Movement, Thursdays, 10/22, 11/5, 11/19, from 1:00 -2:00p.m.

Self-Discovery and Aging' Creative Writing Workshop, Fridays, 10/23, 11/6, 11/20, from 1:00 - 2:30p.m.

Positive Living Forum (a.k.a "Happiness Club") Thursdays, 11/12 and 12/10, from 10:30a.m. – noon.

Bi-Monthly Caregiver Support Group, Mondays 10/26, 11/9, 11/23, from 1:30 – 2:30p.m.

Tea Dancing and dance lessons, every Wednesday, 12:30 – 3:00pm, LCC: Live Oak Room, \$2 Members/ \$4 non-members.

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Looking throughout the United States we have only been able to find one Family Owned and Managed Retirement Company that offers to put their money where their mouth is. Surprisingly, that Family Business is located right here in Contra Costa County.

These family operated communities have been offering their **Exclusive 70/70, 100% Money Back Guarantee for over 25 years.** Discussing the program with the family we asked, "Why and how can you offer such a generous guarantee program?"

They explained that their **70/70 Guarantee Program** first must meet some "very basic" requirements. (This is where we thought, here comes the catch-- but we were wrong). They stated that the first requirement is that the resident must be 70 years young. Second and last requirement is the resident must live in the community for a minimum of 70 days. If after the seventy day requirement the resident decides that the community is not to his or her liking, the resident can give notice, move-out and the community will refund **100% of all rent money paid.**

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