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Senior Homes - Aging in Place

By Cathy Tyson



Rotarian Kevin Croak cleaning a screen door track so it will slide



Rotarian Ken Kosich disposing of some plant material



Rotarian Brad Davis with "client" Susan Ross from Orinda who has lived in her home for over 50 years. The Rotary Home Team helped her with burned out lights, plugged leaking gutters, fixed leaking toilets and plugged sinks, installed smoke detectors, fixed screen doors, and worked on door handles.

Photos provided

It's no secret that the population of older adults, those 65 and over, is growing as baby boomers near retirement. Livability can be extended for seniors in generally good health through adaptations to the home and perhaps additional support services. Who doesn't want to live in the comfort of your own home as long as safely possible?

From low tech repairs to high tech home automation technology to bathroom equipment that is designed for safety – there are a number of options to help Lamorinda seniors age in place.

The best deal in town is the free home repair from the Rotary's Home Team. For simple things like a running toilet, leaky faucet and blown fuses the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary's Home Team offers complimentary, no strings attached house calls. Finding a handyman to handle repairs especially for seniors on a fixed income, can be a challenge. These gentlemen and a few ladies have made it their business, or rather service project, to help.

It all started when Hayes Englehart would visit his elderly dad. His father would be happy to see him but always had a list of maintenance items that needed attention. Although his father passed away, they had many happy memories of fixing things around the house. Fast forward a few years, after sharing his idea with Rotary Members, their service project was up and running. If a repair is beyond their expertise they'll forward the request to their partner Episcopal Senior Communities Service Coordinator.

The project came together smoothly; most club members had an extra hammer, or screwdriver to donate to the cause and they were happy to give their time. In total - four complete sets of tools were donated – including the tool boxes. Orinda Hardware has graciously offered to sell things like light bulbs and batteries at cost – which are paid for by club funds.

Bea Hollander is one happy customer. "Last Saturday morning three angels came to my house and indeed earned their wings. Hays, Buddy and Alex from the Rotary Club – they are a wonderful team. I gave them a list of eight things that needed to be done and they completed seven on the list and worked and tried very hard to fix the eighth one. Hays replaced some parts without charge and best of all he replaced and fixed the cable from my TV so that I am able to use my headphones and now I will be able to hear music on my TV since I do only watch Closed Caption, so here I come, "Dancing with the Stars!"

On a recent Saturday, Englehart said, "I honestly thought that we would be inundated with calls." Especially since no other program does this type of work. Unfortunately their four teams had zero visits scheduled. "We're covered and they're covered," he adds, workers and homeowners are covered by a liability waiver release, not liable in case of an accident.

Repair requests can be made by phone (925) 956-7363, Fax (925) 944-7011 or e-mail at RotaryHomeTeam@gmail.com. For further information go to www.lamorindasunrise.org.

The bathroom is the most dangerous room in the house. Although not readily apparent - there may be a broken hip lurking there ready to pounce. Simple safety items like grab bars can go a long way in maintaining independence and reducing falls. Usually made of steel or a combination of steel and plastic, they are designed to bear the entire weight of a person. The Home Team, contact information above, knows how to install these.

Aegis of Moraga graciously allowed photographs to be taken of the latest in bathroom fixtures. In addition to walk-in showers that can accommodate a walker with a bath bench and hand held spray, they have the Bathtique - a bathtub with drop down sides that is available for all of the community to use. A bather can slide in without stepping over the tub wall and risk falling, gentle jets circulate the water - safe, comfortable and relaxing.

With three multi-function toilets in the building and more on order for all Northern California Aegis facilities, they have made a commitment to toilets. "How can we make life better for seniors?" asks Executive Director Steve Mattingly. He feels improved quality of care equals improved quality of life, "Better hygiene translates into fewer issues with delicate skin and potential for infection." While residents are encouraged to give it a try, Mattingly says, "The staff loves it." The Lotus toilet offers a heated seat, and gentle warm wash and dryer functions - probably a new experience for most seniors.

The spacious facility in Moraga has assisted living and memory care options. The dedicated staff take care of chores, maintenance and meals, in addition they offer exercise classes, games, daily bingo and more. Care managers are available 24 hours per day, a nurse is available to monitor health needs and each apartment has a call button to summon assistance. For more information, call (925) 235-0109 or go to www.aegisliving.com

Home automation technology - a unique computer based customizable support for independent seniors that delivers real time remote care giving. ResCare Home Care with offices in 33 states and a location in Lafayette offers Rest Assured - its web-based system along with professional nursing and home care visits in the home.

Non-tech savvy seniors only have to push one button to get in touch with a caregiver with the OneTouch service. Also offered are three levels of Skype-like computer video services, Family Support level connects authorized family members anywhere in the world with a PC to virtually visit, chat, see sensor-activated alerts. The Drop-in level is for seniors that don't need continuous support. Virtual caregivers check in at scheduled times with medication reminders, help with meal preparation and more. Active support consists of 24/7 support of adults who have cognitive issues.

For families spread across the country, these options can offer comfort and safety via telecams and home sensors that could prolong independent living. For more information, go to www.rescarehomecare.com or call (925) 283-5076 to reach the Lafayette office.

Rotary's Home Team

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www.lamorindasunrise.org

Aegis of Moraga

Phone (925) 235-0109 or www.aegisliving.com

ResCareHomeCare

Phone (925) 283-5076

Senior Transportation Options

Lamorinda Spirit Van

(925) 283-3534 Serving Lamorinda seniors and with and without disabilities.

Orinda Seniors Around Town

(925) 402-4506 Serving Orinda seniors.

Senior Helpline Services Rides for Seniors

(925) 284-6161

Serving Contra Costa County seniors.



Kelly Ferro from Aegis of Moraga showing a walk-in shower with grab bars Photo Doug Kohen



With the Bathtique a bather can slide in without stepping over the tub wall and risk falling Photos Doug Kohen

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