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## Aiding a Generation

By Konnie Guo



Konnie Guo is currently a sophomore at Miramonte High School in Orinda. She is an avid reader, and during her spare time, enjoys playing the piano and doing volunteer work.

Teens can assist in stopping abuse through awareness and communication. People need to know the dangers and horrors that the elderly face. Talk to the elders in your family and let them know that you are available to help them in any way. Make sure they know about the "Granny Scams" and advise them never to take these phone calls. Create a secret pass code that you would use if you are in trouble and need their help. Discuss elder abuse with peers to brainstorm ways to halt it.

Sophomore Avan Chu suggests, "We could use all kinds of methods-Facebook, Twitter, and more-to gain recognition of this issue." In today's era of social media, teens can spread elder abuse awareness with the click of a button. While it might not seem like much, just working to spread the word can make a huge difference. So next time, when you come across an issue worth mentioning, don't forget to like, share, or retweet it. It's as simple as that!

Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, [Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com](mailto:Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com).

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The saying "ignorance is bliss" is inaccurate. Though it may be nice to relax or simply sweep challenging subjects under the proverbial rug, there are some issues that cannot be ignored. Elder abuse is a very real problem in the United States affecting more than 2.1 million Americans each year, not including undocumented cases, according to the American Psychological Association. If left without sufficient care, there is the possibility for self-harm or even danger for others.

What is elder abuse? The National Center on Elder Abuse defines it as "a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult." It includes emotional and physical abuse, exploitation, neglect, or abandonment.

How can we know if a vulnerable adult is being abused in any way? If a senior is anxious and easily upset, has strange injuries, or is behaving unusually, these are signals to which we need to pay attention. Anyone can identify these suspicious signs and notify the proper authorities. Marina Box, a student at Miramonte High, says, "Everyone should be alert to make sure abuse isn't happening. The elderly definitely should not be forced to do something against their will."

Abuse is not limited to only physical or emotional harm. Lamorinda elders have been subjected to abuse through financial exploitation, one of the most difficult types to prevent. Known as "Granny Scams," these scams consist of a telephone call to an unknowing senior, with the caller under the guise of a relative in trouble. The scammer will indicate that a grandchild has had an accident or is in the hospital in foreign country and needs help. Often, the perpetrator pretends to be the grandchild, asking for money to be wired to a distant bank account with a promise not "to tell mom or dad." With this, Lamorinda seniors have been cheated out of thousands of dollars.

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