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Lamorinda Village sponsors managing End-of-Life discussions

By John T. Miller

Lamorinda Village's planned simulcast of Dr. Atul Gawande's presentation on "The Value of Community Choice as We Grow Older" last month at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church was postponed due to blizzards in the Northeast preventing the surgeon and author from reaching Boston. The event has been rescheduled for sometime this summer.

Dr. Gawande's simulcast was scheduled to originate from the Beacon Hill Village. He is the author of several books, including, most recently, "Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End" (2014). The book discusses end-of-life choices and challenges many traditionally held notions about the role of medicine and the effect of medical procedures on terminally ill people.

Lamorinda Village Executive Director Anne Ornelas announced that the simulcast will be rescheduled for sometime this summer, but a date has not been settled yet.

Meanwhile, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, treated local residents instead to a free seminar on preparing for end-of-life decisions. Fodrini-Johnson is a Licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor, a Certified Care Manager and the founder of Eldercare Services in Walnut Creek. She has contributed columns to the Lamorinda Weekly in the past.

Her presentation, "Are Your Ducks in a Row?" led the audience of nearly 100 participants through a series of topics to consider when preparing for changes that can occur later in life, such as memory or sensory loss and lack of stamina and strength.

"Quite often we are on a journey that can include some interdependence before we leave this life," she said. "These conversations about end-of-life decisions should happen before it is too late, so you can fully live until you die."

Fodrini-Johnson offered several checklists for preparing, including legal and medical advice, how to stay socially active, tools for a long life, and how and where to find support. She also provided helpful tips for those who are caregivers to the elderly.

On March 23, the Diablo Valley Villages - comprised of the Clayton Valley, Lamorinda and Walnut Creek Villages - will hold their bimonthly Lunch'N'Learn program at Atria Walnut Creek. The topic will be "Tech Talk for Seniors" presented by Sharon Beck, founder of Mac-Senior.

Beck is dedicated to helping seniors get the most out of their iPads, iPhones and Macs, and will show how they can stay in touch with their families through technology. The program will run from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Registration and luncheon are free, with limited seating for 30 participants.

The Lamorinda Village is a nonprofit organization for members 55 and older that works to actively build a community embracing connections, caring, and choices in how members live and thrive.

The Village movement began in 2001 at Beacon Hill in Boston with a group of residents who wanted to receive services and support in their homes. It has now evolved into a national movement with over 50 operating Village organizations. Hundreds of organizations worldwide are at various stages of creating a Village, including ones in Clayton Valley and Walnut Creek.

Those interested in learning more about Lamorinda Village and their events can email them at info@lamorindavillage.org, or call 925 253-2300.

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