

UKIAH SENIOR CENTER HISTORY

In the latter part of 1969 and during 1970, the idea of Senior Centers was sweeping across the United States. Some had been started and many more were in the planning stages. The local Office of Economic Opportunities (later to become North-Coast Opportunities) appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to establish a purpose, plan programs, and to secure a facility to develop into a Senior Center. People were selected from Senior Organizations such as AARP, Retired State Employees Association, Retired Teachers Association, Methodist Senior Citizens Group, Progressive Senior Citizens, and also Senior Citizens of the community who were not affiliated with an organization.

This committee met many weeks and defined the purpose. "To create programs which will assist Seniors in the fulfillment of their social, physical, and intellectual needs." This was written into our Articles of Incorporation which were approved by the State of California on August 2, 1972.

The first elected Board of Directors consisted of Jean Taylor, Claude Trimble, Al Eldrick, Pearl Knight, Lois Anderson, George Bartlett, and Wayne Kern. The first officers were Jean Taylor, President; Claude Trimble, V.P.; Al Eldrick, Treasurer; and Pearl Knight, Secretary. The first Center was located at 601 N. State Street.

The Center was run by volunteers (except for cook), who did everything from mopping floors, serving food, washing desks, and running the recreational programs. There were 57 volunteers who recorded 922 hours of volunteer time, many hours of volunteer time went unrecorded. Some of the volunteers were Mary Jennings, Alice Trimble, Mary Belletich, Betty Cooper, Lois Eldrick, Lynetta Jones, Mable George and Jim Noble. A complete list of volunteers was never kept and it is impossible to name everyone. Betty Cooper was appointed to be in charge of the Center.

From June 1973 thru July 1974 was a period of rapid growth. The fund raising efforts began to bear fruit. We received \$2,400 from United Way; \$3,000 from the City of Ukiah; \$1,800 from the League of Women Voters; \$15,000 from the Department of Aging; \$50,000 from the County of Mendocino from Revenue Sharing Funds; and about \$30,000 of AoA funds thru N.C.O. for our meal program. This money entitled us to do many things -- increase our meal program to five days a week, start a home delivered meal program, start an I&R and Outreach program, purchase a 15-passenger mini-bus for a transportation program.

It also allowed us to purchase the Junior Achievement building at 319 E. Perkins Street, remodel it and add a 1600 sq. ft. addition to it. This became our real Senior Center and we moved from 601 N. State Street.

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In March of 1974 the first paid staff was hired -- a Managing Director, Secretary, and two Outreach workers. The Managing Director was Clarence White; Barbara Roed, Secretary, and the two Outreach workers were Sarah Stewart and Priscilla Grant. Also hired was a cook, Sharon Presley, and a bus driver, Jack Carpenter. Mr. White served as Managing Director until September of 1975 when he resigned because of ill health. George Bartlett, who was serving as Treasurer for the Center, was selected by the Board of Directors to replace Mr. White.

This was also a period of rapid growth. Many Seniors became members of the Center. Some new programs were started by Mr. White, such as the Health Program under the direction of Betty Fitzgerald, a CETA worker. As the program was established, Betty became an employee of the Center.

From July 1, 1977 thru June 30, 1978, a program called the Community Aides and funded by CETA was organized by Betty Fitzgerald. The purpose was to go from door to door to ascertain if a Senior lived there. Our aim was to contact all elderly persons and inform them about the Senior Center. This would also give us an idea as to numbers of Seniors in the community. Eight people were hired thru CETA to do this work. Only about 60% of the area was covered during the time frame of the program. The reason for not completing the survey was that we found these workers actually became Outreach workers and we provided a service as well as acquiring a total number of Seniors in the community.

It also became apparent that the Center was outgrowing its facilities. In the fall of 1976 it was learned that the Ukiah Valley Teen Center was in financial difficulties. Negotiations to purchase their property at 495 Leslie Street were started. Their property consisted of a large, paved and lighted parking lot, and a 50' X 80" steel building. The property was purchased in early 1977. The money for the purchase was raised by selling \$100 Note Certificates payable in five years. Our membership purchased about \$30,000 worth of Certificates. Our buildings at 319 E. Perkins Street were moved to the new location and the space in the metal building became the dining room and recreational facility for the Center.

In December of 1978, the Center submitted a proposal to the State Health and Welfare Agency to be funded for the Multi-purpose Senior Services Project, a state funded research project to determine the cost of alternative methods of long term care for the elderly. In June of 1979 the Ukiah Center was notified that it had been selected as one of the eight sites in California. Again, the Center went thru a remodeling period. The old buildings were made into an office complex for the Center and the MSSP program. After a formative period during which a qualified staff, directed by Cynthia Coale, was hired to administer the program, the MSSP program started serving its first clients July 1, 1980. The Center soon found that under MSSP some additional programs were needed. In December of 1980, an Adult Social Day Care program was started. This became known as Senior Day Services

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Another program known as the Senior Help Program was started early in 1981. This was a program to supply workers to elderly people who were home bound, to be chore workers and Senior Companions.

A program funded by the State Department of Rehabilitation, in the amount of \$11,100, was started in September of 1982 to aid the visually impaired Seniors.

1982 was another priod of growth. The Center gained many new members. A six stall garage to house our buses and staff car was started. This was funded by the State Transportation Department thru the City of Ukiah, at a cost of about \$49,000.

Under a very active Board of Directors consisting of Roland Kussow, President; Lois Johnson, V.P.; Don Musser, Secretary; Paul E. Chamberlain, Treasurer; and Directors Joe Crowell, Robert Little, Mary Facklam, Jack Simpson and Loretta Challand, many things are planned for 1983.

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