

# NEWS RELEASE

## Waterford on South Hill



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Volunteering aids seniors' health and the economy**

SPOKANE, Wash. — Whether it's during an ailing economy, the season of thankfulness or any other time of year, residents at Waterford on South Hill routinely take the experts' advice without even knowing it.

According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, volunteering improves the quality of life for older persons because it gives meaning and purpose to their lives.

The benefits extend into the economy, as well. Last year's first-ever United Nations "Global Assembly on Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering" found that the civil society sector — nonprofit hospitals, service organizations and similar institutions — contributes more than 7 percent of GDP in the United States.

Further, gifts of time outpace gifts of money by almost two to one. Of the total contribution of nonprofit institutions, one quarter on average can be attributed to volunteering.

Waterford on South Hill resident Irene Snow's time can be included in that statistic.

"I didn't plan to volunteer until I moved here" she says. "It wasn't in my program at all."

That was until Waterford's knitting group, about a dozen residents who create afghans for children in the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) program, found itself in need of leadership.

"Somebody had to do something," Snow, 86, says. "You think about the children every time you read the paper. Every time we turn in 20 afghans, we get a letter from CASA thanking us for creating joy in the lives of suffering children."

Snow's friend Robert LaPlant, 87, participated in volunteer activities long before he moved to Waterford. At home in Colville, he was a member of the Kiwanis Club and worked on numerous community projects. When he moved to Spokane, he joined the Lion's Club and now transports tissue from the hospital to the airport for delivery in Seattle. He is on call for two-week intervals during a three-month period. During the two-week rotation, there are approximately 15 to 20 organs that need to be transported, each requiring about two hours.

"I figure it is my business to help in the community. Plus, it keeps you vital and engaged in the

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world around you," he says.

Toni Savalli, 80, loves books, so it's no wonder that she volunteers with the Spokane Public Library. In fact, earlier this year, Savalli was named Volunteer of the Year by the Friends of the Library. She currently serves as a board member and secretary for Friends of the Library as well as sits on the board of the Southside Senior Center.

"I worked for the Spokane library for 50 years," says Savalli, who started as a library clerk and retired as deputy director of Collection Development.

"Books are treasures, and I love using my knowledge about books to help others," she says. Later this winter, she plans to share her list of "must-read" books during a presentation at Waterford.

Snow, LaPlant, Savalli and Waterford's other volunteers join a significant portion of the U.S. population, according to a national survey conducted in 2001. The study found among people ages 50 to 64, 58 percent volunteer. Forty-two percent of those 65 and older do as well.

### **Research links social connectedness to healthy aging**

The last issue of the bimonthly Journal on Active Aging devotes four of its pages to civic engagement and the long-term effect on senior wellness as well as promotes the topic on the front cover.

In her article, Marge Coalman, EdD, vice president of wellness & programs for Touchmark — Waterford's parent company — outlines strategies for organizations wishing to encourage seniors' community involvement. She writes that "individuals engaged in the greater good of all ... are experiencing a better quality of life as they age."

Titled "Enrich the lives of older adults through civic engagement," the article highlights the benefits of social involvement, provides several examples and offers tips to supporting civic engagement work. "Along with other avenues such as lifelong learning and creativity, civic engagement offers considerable life enrichment opportunities for older adults. These pathways to improved health and well-being encourage people to lead fuller, more satisfying lives."

Coalman is a frequent speaker and media resource on aging issues and wellness. She designed Touchmark's Life Enrichment/Wellness program. The "Let Your Spirit Soar" component received the 2008 Best Practice Award from the Health Promotion Institute of the National Council on Aging. Her article is available at [TouchmarkEdmond.com/common/pdf/civic-engagement-enrich-lives.pdf](http://TouchmarkEdmond.com/common/pdf/civic-engagement-enrich-lives.pdf).

Waterford on South Hill offers a wide range of homes and lifestyle options — now including home health and home care services. The full-service retirement community is located at 29th Avenue and Pittsburg Street. For more information, visit [WaterfordSpokane.com](http://WaterfordSpokane.com) or call (509) 536-2929.