

May 2014

agenda™

LeadingAge California



GOODWILL HUNTING: How Public Relations Connects Public Interest with Private Gain
By Stuart Greenbaum

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LeadingAge California represents more than 400 nonprofit providers of senior living services – including affordable housing, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, skilled nursing, and home and community-based care. LeadingAge California's advocacy, educational programs, communications and other resources help its members best serve the needs of more than 100,000 seniors. Founded in 1961, LeadingAge California is celebrating its 53rd year of public service.

Media's Role as the Nexus of Public Policy & Public Opinion

by Joanne Handy

As molders of public sentiment, the media wields tremendous influence on how we view the world. Often the stories we read bring a new understanding and appreciation to an issue that may have otherwise escaped our attention. We owe a great deal to the so-called "Fourth Estate," whose reporting has, in addition to the mundane day-to-day news, revealed political corruption at the highest levels, educated the public on human rights, and the list goes on.

Lawmakers often base their public policy efforts directly from stories they see or hear in the media. In fact, some lawmakers are disparagingly referred to as politicians who "legislate from the front page of the newspaper;" implying the lawmaker has little depth of understanding of the issue but rather motivated by an opportunity to garner public attention. However, this is an understandable response due to the way media is inextricably tied to public opinion. This ability to put an issue on the lawmaker's agenda gives the media tremendous power in setting public policy.

We have seen this power first hand this year as numerous reports surfaced on assisted living regulation in the country. In a story with national reach, PBS' *Frontline* aired a series of stories entitled "Life and Death in Assisted Living" which kicked off several months of recurrent reporting on assisted living. We have seen new media partnerships including the San Diego Union Tribune and the California Healthcare Foundation's Center for Health Reporting "Deadly Neglect" project. Nearly 20 bills authored by 16 different legislators were introduced in Sacramento on assisted living and San Diego County Supervisors have moved to create a special prosecution unit on assisted living communities.

While it can be argued that these stories straddle the line between the objective "investigative journalism" and the non-objective "advocacy journalism," it is clear that this approach will remain a fixture in the way California makes public policy. Our charge is to ensure that nonprofit providers have the opportunity to share the good work they do every day on behalf of older Californians.

In our feature story, "Goodwill Hunting: How Public Relations Connects Public Interest with Private Gain," author Stuart Greenbaum of Greenbaum Public Relations provides nonprofits with the tools to effectively and proactively engage with the media to tell your story and highlight your benefit to the community. •••

Joanne Handy is president & CEO of LeadingAge California.

GOODWILL HUNTING:

How Public Relations Connects
Public Interest with Private Gain

By Stuart Greenbaum



Imagine a gigantic, brightly colored see-saw located in front of an otherwise traditional long-term community. The elongated teeter-tottering beam, balanced atop the cartoon-sized springy fulcrum, creates a magnetic field attracting all visiting children. Admiring residents routinely cluster on the surrounding benches, laughing along with their playful young guests. Passersby can't help but smile at the curiosity.

An incongruent sight for sure, a kids' playground structure at an older adult community. Yet the installation's juxtaposition makes perfect sense: Youngsters now look forward to visiting the community; and the residents, though initially suspicious of the idea, appreciate the extraordinary, life-enriching experience. It is a wonderful reason to get outside, a place to congregate and communicate. Plus, it's just so different – something cool to talk about, to differentiate their community from others.

In fact, the quizzical nature of this see-saw even attracts the attention of local news media, who report on its pan-generational popularity and use it routinely

as a backdrop for stories related to healthy aging. This is a happy coincidence – *goodwill with extra benefits*. Spoiler alert: such good fortune may not be as serendipitous as it appears.

In reality, this result is intentional, a credit to the role of professional public relations: *to identify and exploit the coincidence of public interest and private gain*. For the record, *Webster's* defines "exploit" as "a daring act or bold deed; or to make unethical use of for one's own profit." Submitted here is a third, hybrid definition: "a daring deed to make *ethical* use of for public benefit and one's own profit."

So, how does a public relations initiative control happenstance? It requires creative planning, quality execution and discreet promotion. But it begins with respecting the process.

Patience is a virtue and a prerequisite. Management must have unequivocal confidence in and commitment to the future of the organization for public relations to thrive. Fortunately, for aging services providers there is an intrinsic appreciation for producing

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CCRCs & Assisted Living

Assisted Living Reform Dominates Legislative Agenda

The nearly 20 bills introduced to reform the state's regulation of assisted living are making their way through the Legislature. LeadingAge California is working to ensure the reforms result in thoughtful public policy that has a positive impact on the field and the seniors served by the system. The status of each bill as of April 21, 2014 is listed below:

[AB 1436](#) (Waldron, R-Escondido) would require public information be posted online regarding a RCFE licensee's compliance history. **Location: Assembly Appropriations. Position: Support**

[AB 1454](#) (Calderon, Ian, D-Whittier) would require regulatory visits be conducted annually. **Location: Assembly Appropriations (Suspense File). LeadingAge California Position: Support**

[AB 1523](#) (Atkins, D-San Diego) would require every RCFE on and after July 1, 2015 to maintain liability insurance. **Location: Assembly Appropriations. Position: Support**

[AB 1554](#) (Skinner, D-Berkeley) would change the way complaint investigations are handled by the Department of Social Services. **Location: Assembly Aging and LTC. Position: Support**

[AB 1570](#) (Chesbro, D-Eureka) would establish new training

requirements for caregivers and RCFE administrators. **Location: Assembly Appropriations. Position: Co-Sponsor**

[AB 1571](#) (Eggman, D-Stockton) would require new information to be disclosed to the Department of Social Services from applicants seeking an RCFE license. **Location: Assembly Human Services. Position: Support if Amended**

[AB 1572](#) (Eggman, D-Stockton) would make changes to the way resident and family councils are formed and operated in facilities. **Location: Assembly Appropriations. Position: Support**

[AB 1751](#) (Bloom, D-Santa Monica) would require one-quarter of a CCRC's governing body be composed of voting resident board members and would also take away the provider governing body's ability to determine who is added to the board. **Location: Assembly Appropriations. Position: Oppose Unless Amended**

[AB 1899](#) (Brown, D-San Bernardino) would deny an RCFE license to any applicant who has forfeited his or her license due to abandonment of the facility. **Location: Assembly Aging & LTC. Position: Support**

[AB 2044](#) (Rodriquez, D-Pomona) would establish staffing levels in RCFEs and add new training requirement topics. **Location: Assembly Human Services. Position: Support if Amended**

[AB 2162](#) (Fox, D-Palmdale) would require RCFEs with six or fewer beds to install automatic sprinkler systems by January 1, 2019. **Location: Assembly Governmental Organization. Position: Watch**

[AB 2171](#) (Wieckowski, D-Fremont) would revise a list of resident rights and create a new private right of action that would allow litigation on regulatory violations. **Location: Assembly Aging and LTC. Position: Oppose**

[AB 2236](#) (Maienschein, R-San Diego) would increase fines for regulatory violations in RCFEs. **Location: Assembly Human Services. Position: Support**

[AB 2632](#) (Maienschein, R-San Diego) would prohibit the Department of Social Services from issuing a criminal record clearance to individuals with arrest records pending the completion of the investigation. **Location: Assembly Human Services. Position: Support**

[SB 894](#) (Corbett, D-Hayward) would make changes to the way revocations of RCFE licenses are handled by the Department of Social Services. **Location: Senate Judiciary. Position: Neutral**

[SB 895](#) (Corbett, D-Hayward) would require that RCFEs be subject to annual unannounced visits using a comprehensive evaluation approach, thus ending the Department of Social Services' use of the Key Indicator Tool (KIT). **Location: Senate Appropriations. Position: Neutral**

SB 911 (Block, D-San Diego) would make changes to the number of classroom training hours for RCFE administrators and include a new training specifically on the adverse effects of psychotropic drugs. The bill would also prohibit facilities from retaliating against residents who use 9-1-1. **Location: Senate Appropriations. Position: Oppose**

SB 1153 (Leno, D-San Francisco) would give the Department of Social Services the authority to prohibit new admissions to an RCFE if serious health

and safety violations were found or if fines were not paid. **Location: Senate Appropriations. Position: Support**

SB 1382 (Block, D-San Diego) would increase annual fees by 30 percent for RCFEs. **Position: Oppose Unless Amended**

Prepared by Eric Dowdy, vice president of policy and communications for LeadingAge California. Dowdy can be reached at edowdy@aging.org or 916-469-3376.

Skilled Nursing

New Medi-Cal Ombudsman Program for Cal MediConnect

The Department of Health Care Services and the Department of Managed Health Care are working together to develop and implement an ombudsman program for the Cal MediConnect demonstration occurring in eight counties in California: Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, and Riverside. The program is being funded by a grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The Cal MediConnect demonstration seeks to provide long-term care services and supports (LTSS) to persons eligible for both Medicare and Medi-Cal, the so-called “dual eligible” through Medi-Cal managed care plans. Providing LTSS through a capitated, managed care plan is new territory for the federal and state government, and for beneficiaries. This new program is designed to provide ombudsman services specific to the needs of Cal MediConnect beneficiaries, their family members and caregivers, including:

- Provide ombuds services to individuals enrolled in Cal MediConnect plans;
- Empower enrollees and their families;
- Investigate and resolve enrollee problems and complaints with Cal MediConnect plans;
- Monitor ombuds efforts and track problems, complaints and trends;
- Share ombuds best practices with CMS and other states as appropriate.

These ombuds services will be available to Cal MediConnect enrollees in addition to existing grievance and appeal procedures in Medicare and Medi-Cal. They are needed because the transition of LTSS from fee-for-services incentives to managed care incentives puts persons needing LTSS at risk. The Cal MediConnect Ombudsman Program will engage those risks and provide transparency in the progress and efficacy of the demonstration.

The law requires that the Cal MediConnect Ombudsman Program be operated by an independent third party that contracts with the state. While the program will be housed in the DMHC, the Legal Aid Society of San Diego is the independent organization that will operate the new program, in collaboration with local organizations in each of the eight counties. Ombudsman services will be provided by independent, local, person-centered, and linguistically and culturally competent assistance to enrollees and their families or representative.

These local organizations were chosen for their high level of experience providing ombudsman services and are being trained on topics specific to the Cal MediConnect Program. The Cal MediConnect Ombudsman Program began on April 1, 2014 in San Mateo County and will begin in the other Cal MediConnect counties as each county is brought online.

Prepared by Jack Christy, senior policy advisor for LeadingAge California. Christy can be reached at jchristy@aging.org or 916-469-3366.

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Housing

California's Housing Crisis: A New Proposal for Funding Affordable Housing

Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) has unveiled a new investment plan for revenues generated from California's cap-and-trade system, which includes a minimum of 20 percent set aside for affordable housing.

In 2006, California enacted a progressive greenhouse gas emissions reduction program that set a benchmark for emissions standards across the country. The program, codified by Assembly Bill 32 (Pavley), required the State Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop a plan to achieve the emissions reductions mandated by AB 32. As a result, ARB implemented a cap-and-trade program.

The strategy includes a plan for a permanent source of funding for affordable housing by setting aside at least 20 percent of the cap-and-trade revenues (possibly up to \$1.7 billion annually) to be used for affordable housing projects that are centered in transit-oriented development and consistent with greenhouse gas reduction strategies. The funds would be distributed regionally and projects would be selected based on competitive greenhouse gas emissions performance.

LeadingAge California Sponsors Vital PILOT Fee Legislation

LeadingAge California is sponsoring AB 1760 (Chau, D-Monterey Park), which seeks to void future payment in-lieu of taxes (PILOT) fee contracts. Increasingly in California, local

governments are charging nonprofit developers of affordable housing fees to compensate for the tax revenue that the developers are exempt from paying under California law. PILOT fee contracts can cost developers hundreds of thousands of dollars and put developers at risk of losing their state welfare tax exemption. If enacted, this bill will protect

Grassroots

Why is Grassroots Advocacy Involvement Important?

There is fundamental truth in author and activist Margaret Mead's inspiring statement, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Personally delivered messages have an enormous impact on legislators' perceptions and voting behavior. The more often decision makers hear from a diverse coalition of constituents on a particular subject, the more attention is given to addressing related issues.

LeadingAge California has a team of professional lobbyists with issue expertise and an extensive network of contacts in government, agencies, associations, and organizations. The policy team tracks and negotiates legislation specifics which do, or may impact our membership. With term limits, frequent staff turnover, competing interests, and political ideology, the team must work collaboratively within strict time constraints to educate legislators and steer attention toward the need to support senior services and affordable housing.

While lobbyists provide

the welfare tax exemption status of nonprofit affordable housing developers and void any and all PILOT agreements made on or after January 1, 2015.

Prepared by Meghan Masera, director of policy – housing and HCBS for LeadingAge California. Masera can be reached at mmasera@aging.org or 916-469-3372.

expertise and alliances, LeadingAge California advocates offer the answer to "who" is impacted by regulations and legislative proposals. Advocates are living proof of regulatory consequences, which often makes the difference compelling policymakers to act. The real-life stories shared by constituents can be recounted during committee hearings and floor debates to describe the need for support.

It is easy to get involved and activists are free to choose their preferred degree of participation. Advocacy options are implemented as appropriate and may include letter-writing, representative-calling, Capitol or district office visits, community site visits, opportunities to offer testimony, and social media networking with representatives. LeadingAge California offers assistance with scheduling, meeting materials, templates, issue briefs, site visit ideas, and other logistics to help achieve a successful interaction with policymakers. • • •

For information on how you can become more involved in LeadingAge California grassroots advocacy, please contact Susan Holt at sholt@aging.org or 916-469-3383.

AnnieScott Rogers

All the World's a Stage

AnnieScott Rogers has become the definition of a lifelong learner, embracing a creative life full of art, music and travel, and, after a 45-year career as a clinical lab scientist, acting in independent films.

Performing isn't a completely new venture for AnnieScott, who recently celebrated her first year living at the Sequoias in San Francisco. Singing in church choirs from the time she was five years old, she always loved to perform but decided early on to focus on science as a career, realizing it would give her more stability. "When I was a sophomore in high school they had college Career Day," she says. "I had three things I was interested in – religion, music and science. I figured I could fit music and religion into my life if I went into science. Plus I could probably support myself better. So I set my sights on science and kept up with my singing and my work in the church. Everything worked out quite well!"

Her career has allowed her the freedom to live in many different places around the country, including several years in Hawaii. Living in

Louisiana when she was almost 50 years old, she decided to delve back into performing arts, dabbling in opera then later trying theater. "I decided that I really enjoyed acting. I liked putting on a costume and being in front of people."

A production of "Arsenic and Old Lace" was her first major foray into acting, taking on the role of Aunt Abby. "That's a huge part and I was terrified! I thought if I can get through this, I can get through anything. There were so many lines and I'd never had an acting lesson or anything. But I got through it and I actually got a pretty good review!"

Now established with an agent, she is focusing solely on independent films, acting in local projects that can go anywhere from eight to 12 months to three years.

A lifelong traveler, her adventures have taken her to exotic locales including Africa, Turkey and Egypt. "Egypt was probably my best one! Our tour guides were archaeologists and they would give us tests every morning on what we'd seen the day before." She is currently planning a trip to Ireland with a friend she met while traveling with another tour group.

"My next trip? Maybe to Argentina or Brazil!"

Not one to stay put for too long, she is also involved in the choir at the Sequoias, where they are studying Handel's Messiah. "Music keeps you younger! It gives me a more positive attitude towards life."

She has also taken up watercolor lessons and classes at the University of San Francisco, where she sees people of all ages participating. "There are people up to 100 years old going to classes," she says. "It's amazing to me, but then again it's not really, because you keep on learning the rest of your life. It keeps life exciting!" •••



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Introducing the 2014-2015 EMERGE Class

Congratulations to the Fellows selected for the 2014-2015 Class of EMERGE, the LeadingAge California leadership development program. We had many applicants for this class and we are thrilled to announce those who were selected:

Gayathri Amancherla, *Assistant Controller, American Baptist Homes of the West*

Jen Arent, *Senior Resources Director (Sonoma County), Episcopal Senior Communities*

Karina Barragan, *Lead Social Services Coordinator, TELACU Residential Management*

Marcela Castaneda, *Administrative Assistant of Plants Operations, The Forum at Rancho San Antonio*

Abigail Castillo, *Director of Administration, Community Senior Services*

Joshua Delgado, *Regional Property Supervisor, TELACU Residential Management*

Kim Delgado, *Executive Director, Eskaton Lodge Granite Bay*

Neil Fancher, *Director of Projects & Planning, Hillcrest*

Connie Garrett, *Director of Resident Services, Plymouth Village*

Leticia Ontiveros, *Director of Security, Casa Dorinda*

Christine Hanson, *Director of Therapeutic Activities, Laguna Honda Hospital*

Heather Harris, *Activity Director, The Tamalpais*

Jennifer Marlette, RN, *Director of Nursing, Paradise Valley Estates*

Meagan McClellan, *Philanthropy Associate, Monte Vista Grove Homes*

Richard Nordsiek, *Executive Director, Quaker Gardens*

Frances Prochilo, *Program Coordinator, NCPHS/San Francisco Senior Center*

Adrian Quinones, *Manager of Security & Transportation, St. Paul's Towers*

Neal Talman, *Director of Facilities, Solheim Lutheran Home*

Megan Thomas, *Associate Administrator, St. Paul's Villa*

Therese Wellington, *Financial Analyst, American Baptist Homes of the West*



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GOODWILL HUNTING:

How Public Relations Connects Public Interest with Private Gain

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sustainable results over immediate gratification. This perspective, like public relations, is analogous to planting and patiently nurturing a seedling in order to eventually appreciate the full-grown tree's bountiful fruit and shade.

Anticipate rather than react to trends. Monitor journals and research on longevity. It does little good to strategic plan in past tense. Use current events and trends to develop opportunities based on public interest and media appeal. Attempt to associate your organization with positive, high-profile issues, such as the benefits of socialization, caregiver support, advances in Alzheimer's research, assistive technologies and livable communities. Build a reputation as *the* source of hope and optimism for healthy longevity.

Target multiple audiences. Within aging services, challenges are plentiful and imminent. On top of managing day-to-day operations, concerns range from occupancy and competition, to human resources and residential generation gaps, to negative perceptions and unflattering media, among others. The need to satisfy multiple and often conflicting target audiences dictates exploring ideas for programs or events that will appeal to the broadest cross-section of key audiences – including current residents; prospective residents and their influencers (family members, friends and professional advisors); employees and career seekers, board members and other

stakeholders; policymakers; donors and sponsors; business associates; and (implicitly) news media.

Develop high-profile partnerships to enhance credibility and extend resources. Pursue mutually beneficial collaborations with universities, healthcare systems, government agencies, large employers and other nonprofits. It should come as no surprise how frequently compatible interests surface when aging services organizations present businesses and institutions with opportunities to associate with programs that promote healthy and meaningful longevity. And, tantamount to the value that sponsorships and in-kind support, is the weight that impartial authorities and *independent validation* carry with target audiences, especially the news media.

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY THE COINCIDENCE

Pursue the unconventional in goodwill hunting. Never underestimate the element of surprise. The best public relations endeavors within older adult communities take advantage of subjects that on the surface appear incongruent with aging. A giant see-saw, for example. Stir curiosity and draw attention by exposing the unexpected; and to perhaps even dispel some ageist stereotypes in the process.

Intergenerational relations – [Connect kids](#) with older adults in meaningful ways. Establish programs based on reciprocity. Encourage the generations to

share knowledge and skills and friendships. Schedule regular visits between residents and students and coordinate Skype and letter writing sessions in between. Intergenerational initiatives also demonstrate the popular notion of *generativity* – one generation helping another.

Centenarian celebrations – The rarefied achievement of living more than 100 years is cause to celebrate. Administrators, staff and other residents should eagerly and publicly recognize each individual milestone as well as the community's role – the exemplary commitment to quality healthcare and longevity. Become an “official sponsor of longevity.”

Life enrichment – This bellwether feature of older adult communities offers limitless potential for creative programming, though it takes a special commitment to be noteworthy and newsworthy.

Thrill of a Lifetime – The principle is simple: the desire to be thrilled is ageless. Programs to make dreams come true for older adults are produced in various iterations throughout the world. The namesake version, created by [Eskaton](#) in Northern California and loosely patterned after programs originating in Oregon, has since been replicated in Australia among other locations.

Program styles vary, but one common approach is to encourage care partners to make it a regular practice to engage residents in conversations about dreams or wishes. Once a thrill is revealed, the challenge for staff becomes its fulfillment – often through creative, resourceful interpretations.

Accomplished thrills range from extravagant to poignant and consistently inspire. In one of the most memorable cases, a woman celebrated her 100th birthday and experienced her lifetime dream to become an official [Girl Scout](#). Momentous reunions have occurred on a number of occasions. Two sisters separated for 20 years after the death of their mother were brought together by the diligent sleuthing of an affordable housing staff. Another resident and former P.O.W. benefitted from the efforts of his community's especially resourceful administrator who coordinated the 86-year-old's [birthday celebration/reunion](#) with his brother in Japan, from whom he was separated by WWII for more than six decades.

"Firsts" have made for magnificent thrills as well. First bicycle ride, first white-water rafting trip, first trips to San Francisco and the Pacific Ocean, first pitches at ballgames and an emotional first-ever bouquet of flowers.

That thrills often involve contributions from fellow residents, employees, even local businesses, adds an extra level of value to the initiative.

Similarly contagious is the pleasure that comes with participating in creative arts programs. At their best, workshops become engaging personal and communal experiences.

Happiness Lab – The [Happiness Lab](#) evolved from several national programs that bring creative arts to individuals living with dementia. In these interactive workshops, individuals with

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are encouraged to share and paint their visions of happiness. The approach complements a growing body of research on creativity within the uninhibited mind, the transcendent and ageless desire to be happy, and the connection between a joyful state of mind and better health.

"Aging services providers who sponsor the workshops deliver on their commitment to offer life-enriching programs for residents and also, by inviting the public, showcase this benefit to prospective residents," explains Tiffany Paige with nonprofit Artisan Mind. As co-founder and director of the Happiness Lab, Paige also encourages sponsors to invite the involvement of other community groups, "which fosters long-term mutually beneficial relationships."

The Northern California-based enterprise recently attracted the attention of LeadingAge's life-enrichment and conference specialists, who sponsored an interactive Happiness Lab Pavilion at the association's 2013 annual conference as an opportunity to introduce the unique project to professionals throughout the country.

"Of all the clever and eye-opening things at the conference ... the 'Happiness Lab' was a welcome ray of sunshine," *McKnight's* editor Jim Berklan wrote in his blogpost titled "[This lab happily has it right.](#)"

EngAGE – This Southern California nonprofit organization provides an impressive array of arts and exercise programs to

thousands of older adults living in low-income housing communities – turning them into "vibrant centers of learning, wellness and creativity." Residents and, space permitting, neighboring older adults, enjoy free programs such as plays, gardening, cooking, mentoring school kids, storytelling and social media learning to name a few.

"I think that quality programs and a quality built environment where the intellectual amenities and physical amenities are matched will be an expectation and no longer a desire in senior housing," observes [EngAGE](#) founder and executive director, Tim Carpenter.

Across the country organizations are finding a number of equally original ways to enrich the lives of older adults. "Among many examples is [Westminster Communities of Florida](#)," Kirsten Jacobs, education development manager for LeadingAge, notes. "The organization has merged wellness and life enrichment departments to achieve a pervasive culture of well-being that benefits both residents and staff."

Two more programs model how supporting the arts can produce reciprocal benefits. "Artists in need of studio space utilize vacant space in [Wartburg](#), an older adult community in Mt. Vernon, New York, in exchange for teaching classes to residents," explains Jacobs. "And in Arizona, residents of [Royal Oaks Retirement Community](#) developed a robust continuing education program offering a range of subjects through semester-long courses.

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A common thread that connects these examples is internal and external collaboration. Exceptional organizations are learning that partnerships are essential to success.”

Environmental protection; veterans appreciation; community gardens; and music, pet and other creative therapies are among the many other issues and programs being developed and promoted by aging services organizations in the United States and abroad.

STEP TWO: EXPLOIT THE COINCIDENCE

Think of a public relations program as staging a sophisticated puppet show. The more compelling the performance, the less likely the audience is to think about the effort taking place behind the scenes. Puppet masters and skilled public relations practitioners *manipulate* in relative anonymity.

Of course satisfaction does come from *producing* inspiring, life-enriching experiences. But for public relations puppetry to realize its full potential, a program must generate positive word-of-mouth and news media coverage. Practically speaking, the goal is to produce more awareness, favorable reviews and impartial referrals than any amount of paid advertising could buy.

Generating this exposure is neither a given nor a fortunate accident. This is the Trojan horse of

professional public relations: inventive and intentional stratagem. To prosper in this competitive economic environment, aging services organizations now more than ever before need to identify and *exploit* programs that promote personally and socially enriching experiences.

So, *What about all the good things we do?* This common, albeit passive, refrain from aging services providers is echoed every time there is bad news about long-term care. The answer is, unfortunately, that all the good work and goodwill is not at all common knowledge. Many stories do deserve to be told and to begin with, they should be posted prominently on all organizational communication forums. But, equally important is bringing them to the attention of news media outlets.

In fact, media relations should be an ongoing tactic in any communication blueprint. This includes building equity as a qualified, responsive resource for journalists. Mutually beneficial relationships can result in inclusion in positive stories and just as importantly, exclusion (or at least fair treatment) in unflattering pieces. Pitching the occasional good news advisory also serves to remind the media about the good stuff and maybe help diffuse and distract from the bad. (Think of it as producing a reputable version of “Wag the Dog.”) That said, beware of the law of diminishing returns. Take care not to marginalize professional public relations by perpetuating the pejorative perception of “P.R.,” by disseminating unsubstantial, self-serving *propaganda*.

Great goodwill makes great news. The Happiness Lab epitomizes the happy coincidence of public interest and private gain, of appealing to residents as well as to other multiple target audiences.

Along with providing individuals living with dementia an engaging experience, Happiness Lab workshops produce a remarkable public relations trifecta by: 1) generating positive word-of-mouth among residents, family members and observers, 2) distinguishing and marketing the community as creative and innovative, and 3) attracting a wealth of news media coverage about connecting dementia with creativity, happiness and better health.



“[Media interest](#) always seems to follow the workshops – intrigued by the ‘Happiness Lab’ title, but more so inspired by the connection of Alzheimer’s and arts,” Paige confidently points out in marketing the workshops.

Besides happy older adults, news media often respond favorably to intergenerational programs, centenarian birthdays and other life-enriching programs. By far, however, the best results have come from producing *thrills*. For example, the 100-year-old Girl Scout event generated dozens of TV and print stories. And the brothers’ reunion in Japan, initially reported on by the Associated Press, went viral and produced hundreds of stories and millions of impressions worldwide, and earned in excess of \$100,000 in free media exposure.

Carpenter with EngAGE agrees that producing and marketing original programming go hand in hand. “The Boomer generation is going to want greater variety, choice and say in where they live, who they live with, and what is provided there,” Carpenter predicts. And how better to promote this message than a recent *USA Today* article, “Colonies let seniors color outside the lines,” featuring EngAGE throughout the nearly full-page of text and photos.

These high-profile initiatives have more in common than good publicity. Their dramatic successes also reinforce the commitment of the respective organizations to allocate the resources necessary to produce quality, sustainable programming.

“Happily, life enrichment programs in aging services are shifting from past models of passive entertainment to community-wide engagement,” LeadingAge’s Jacobs explains. “A focus on holistic well-being benefits current residents and attracts future residents. A community that offers life-long learning opportunities like a virtual tour of a museum of paleontology, or the opportunity to perform in a professional theatrical production, breaks down stereotypes about aging and delights prospective residents.”

Thoroughly integrate justly earned rewards. When favorable news coverage does appear, it is essential to maximize the value of the “earned media” by posting links online, sharing with target audiences via social media, newsletters, direct mail postcards, even reprinting clips and inserting in marketing kits. More ambitious and resourceful communicators create multimedia productions and public service

announcements to extend the reach of their socially conscious endeavors.

In the bigger picture, a public relations initiative’s value to an organization directly correlates to the alacrity with which its results are integrated. Beginning with brand identification, an initiative should be reflected in the organization’s public persona. It should distinguish or differentiate communities or services from competition. Quality programs can help define and strengthen a community’s reputation as progressive, diverse places to live and work; with happy, thrilling, enriching lifestyles; among many other advantages.

SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

Everyone is aging (some of us just have more experience) is a universal truth. By producing and promoting creative, life-enriching opportunities for older adults, organizations help adjust attitudes and behaviors about the aging process. It encourages inclusivity, an “*us not them*” point of view.

As Peter Drucker famously asserted, “The best way to predict the future is to invent it.” Today’s older adults are braving new frontiers of aging, staying engaged and inspiring the next generations to age well into the future. It is fitting that a public relations initiative, akin to each scene of a screenplay, either advance the story or inform the audience. As aging services organizations identify their every opportunity to support healthy and purposeful longevity, they should as well confidently exploit their role as purveyors of society’s heightened expectations. And in this way make for a return-on-investment everyone can live with. • • •

Stuart Greenbaum is president of [Greenbaum Public Relations](#). For more than three decades, he has directed public-interest campaigns for health, safety, education, environment and aging – most recently representing Eskaton and LeadingAge California. He was honored with the national LeadingAge’s Public Trust Award in 2011, and serves as a Governor’s appointee to the California Commission on Aging and member of LeadingAge California’s Planning Committee.

Read more from Stuart Greenbaum on how to [“Do Good and More with Social Accountability.”](#)



Create Choices for Consumer-Responsive Care Delivery

AgeTech West is pleased to share the vision of Care Innovations' Chief Executive Officer, Sean Slovenski, of how technology is creating new choices for consumer-responsive care delivery in senior living and aging services. A joint-venture of Intel and GE Healthcare, Care Innovations is a Technology Partner Sponsor of AgeTech West headquartered in the greater Sacramento, California area.

Slovenski was named CEO in October 2013 and has held significant senior leadership roles within the industry, most recently at Humana serving as Segment Vice President of Humana's Health and Productivity Solutions business group.

As the aging population rapidly grows, senior living providers are faced with some tough challenges ahead, such as managing a growing number of people with chronic conditions, increased risk for falls, and a more diverse economic situation among the people who need to live in a community. Regardless of the challenge, the older population desires more independence, with the support of more personalized care, and we know we can't do that simply by employing more caregivers and increasing capacity in senior living communities. New innovations, in communication, workflow, and technology, must be embraced if older Americans are to receive more personalized care at a price they, and our nation, can afford.

Because of the demand for independence from residents and their family members, the senior living and assisted living industry is becoming more comfortable with technology that improves

facilities' operations, as well as quality of care. In fact, more than 90 percent of the largest nonprofit senior living providers have adopted some form of technology, according to the LeadingAge Ziegler 100 Technology Adoption and Utilization Survey. This is a promising foundation on which we can make even more progress by establishing stronger connections between residents, professional care providers, and family members.

The pressure from residents and the market for senior living providers to deliver more health services and prevent injuries and complication from common conditions is increasing and will be a key factor in a senior living community's success. There is a renewed acceptance of applying technologies to drive resident independence, resident acquisition and retention, fall reduction, among others.

Solutions like smart sensor technology can detect resident movement patterns and notify a professional caregiver if something out of the ordinary occurs. The information gathered from monitoring solutions can help caregivers be in the right place at the right time, improving efficiency and quality of care.

Increased technology adoption can also lead to positive feedback from residents and their loved ones because technology can provide an unbiased view of a resident's health, and offers added reassurance that the senior will be safe and engaged with their community. For residents, technology can allow them to live independently while simultaneously increasing their sense of security, improving the care they receive, and connecting them with friends, family and caregivers.

At Intel-GE Care Innovations™, we strive to connect the right technology, workflow, data and people to improve quality of life and support better health. With a deep understanding of behavior change and innovation, we work with senior living communities to connect people to their care teams and give them the confidence to live independently, wherever they call home. We have a big challenge, yet even more opportunity because of the advanced technology and connectivity we have at our fingertips. Still, it's people who will make the difference in moving us forward, and we need to take a step each day because there's no time to waste. • • •

Sean Slovenski, CEO, Care Innovations

Dates to Remember

AgeTech West Call For Presentations

Submission Deadline: June 15, 2014

Conference Date: November 17-18, 2014

Location: Hyatt Olive 8, Seattle, Washington

To complete an application go to www.agetechwest.com

For information contact Jan Guiliano at jguilian@aging.org or 916-469-3367

2015 LeadingAge California Annual Conference – Call for Presentations

Submission Deadline: July 31, 2014

Conference Date: May 4-6, 2015

Location: Portola Hotel & Monterey Conference Center, Monterey

To complete an application go to www.aging.org

For information contact Jan Guiliano at jguilian@aging.org or 916-469-3367

Save the Date

AgeTech West “Sync in Seattle: Transforming the Aging Experience”

November 17-18, 2014

Seattle, Washington

LeadingAge California 2015 Policy & Leadership Summit

February 9-11, 2015

Sacramento, California

LeadingAge California 2015 Annual Conference

May 4-6, 2015

Monterey, California

MDS 2.0 RUG Audio Series – For dates and to register visit the LeadingAge California [website](#)

Web Seminars

For more information and to register, visit the LeadingAge California [website](#)

Care2Learn – Online courses that help care professionals build leadership skills and meet licensing requirements.





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