

CONSTANTIA CARE

Newsletter

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Language Teacher to Animal Activist



Bayarjargal Agvaantseren

Thousands of snow leopards have been saved from the dangers of mining companies thanks to the tireless efforts of a former language teacher turned animal activist.

49-year-old Bayarjargal Agvaantseren first became determined to save the vulnerable big cats after she spent some time working as a translator for a wildlife scientist back in the 1980s.

The big cat population of southern Mongolia has been dwindling as a result of habitat loss and poaching. Prior to Agvaantseren's conservation efforts, snow leopards also fell prey to Mongolian farmers who were keen on protecting their livestock.

Upon successfully creating an insurance program for local herders, however, Agvaantseren managed to recruit the farmers as allies in her fight to protect the big cats.

Then in 2009, she learned of extensive mining operations that were being launched in a critical area of snow leopard habitat in the South Gobi Desert.

Her advocacy resulted in the region being turned into the 1.8 million-acre Tost Tosonbumba Nature Reserve, which is the first federally protected area in Mongolia created specifically for snow leopard conservation.

Not only that, Agvaantseren also succeeded in persuading the Mongolian government to cancel all 37 mining licenses on the precious land and ban all future mining permits on the reserve.

In recognition for her conservational career, Agvaantseren was recently awarded the 2019 Goldman Environmental Prize for Asia.

"In a remote, unforgiving corner of the world dominated by runaway mining operations, Agvaantseren championed protections for Mongolia's remaining population of snow leopards," reads the Goldman website. "Moreover, she was able to shift perceptions of snow leopards among herder communities, who now see the animal as an integral part of their identity."

One person can make a difference!!

Volunteering: Why working for free is 'so rewarding'

It can feel as good as a "runner's high" and improve mental health - now a campaign has been launched to get more people volunteering to help others.

The Royal Voluntary Service is aiming for the largest recruitment drive since World War Two in order to relieve pressure on public services.

It said volunteering could reduce stress and boost happiness, with many volunteers saying they are less lonely.

Two women in Wales have told why they love to volunteer.

Betty, an 88-year-old former nurse who was born in Hirwaun in Rhondda Cynon Taff, has lived with anxiety and loneliness since the death of her husband.

"I don't like being by myself," she said.

But her loneliness has been eased by mother-of-three Helen Sier, from Merthyr Tydfil, who started visiting Betty in 2017 twice a week as part of a good neighbours scheme.

"She's just a beautiful lady," said Helen. "I'm so glad I've had the chance to work with her and as it's gone on, our friendship has really grown. We've got a really close bond.

"I didn't even consider volunteering until about 2016 - I'd become a Christian and that changed my whole perspective of life."

Helen cannot work full-time as she has to care for her youngest son, who has autism, but now has more time during the week to help Betty while her son is at school, and said the scheme came "just at the right time".

"Every time I go and visit Betty she's so excited and you can see how much of a difference it makes to her.

"It's rewarding to know you're making that big of a difference to someone and it's lovely to hear all the stories.

"I lost my own nan and grandpa when I was younger so it's nice to spend time with an elderly lady and you can just get along because you can talk about anything."

Not only do volunteers provide much-needed company for people in need, but sometimes unpaid roles are vital to keeping services moving.

Emily Thompson, 30, volunteers for two hours every week at the falls, strength and balance service at Llandough hospital in Penarth, but also chats to patients and helps refill their drinks.

"I absolutely love going there," she said. "We meet such wonderful people, the patients have all got such different stories to tell and I absolutely love it.

"What I do is teach chair-based exercise classes with people on the rehabilitation ward, so older people to try and increase their strength and balance and reduce their risk of falls.

"When you're in hospital it can be very lonely and very boring. The staff are in there doing a wonderful job, but you can provide a bit of time to go in and break up the day for somebody, it's really appreciated.

"You see that with the Royal Voluntary Service trolley which goes around. They are selling snacks and toiletries, but a lot of benefits for the patients in hospital is just to see a smiley face every day."

Emily admitted working hours could be a stumbling block for many people, but said volunteering could be a flexible activity.

"I think that's definitely a barrier to people volunteering but the thing is there are so many different roles out there that you could easily do with one hour a week and it could be flexible.

"It's definitely worth reaching out to charities to say 'I have a skill' because everyone has a skill they can offer and with an hour a week, or even an hour a month, that could be valuable to someone."



Emily Thompson (far left) and other volunteers at Llandough hospital in Penarth.

Elderly Tell Life Stories. Just Ask.

VERA PARIS, an 88-year-old artist who grew up in England, Germany and America, had a story about husbands. "My first one introduced me to my second one," she said. After a pause that held more than a hint of mischief, she added, "But that's a story for another day."

Mrs. Paris, stares ahead as she speaks. She is legally blind and can see only peripherally. Sitting around the kitchen table were five fellow residents, knuckles gnarled with arthritis, some trembling with palsy. They told stories that spanned the globe and the last century.

The six live at Meadowview, an assisted-living residence, which is at the Wartburg Adult Care Community. Since February, about two-thirds of Meadowview's 80 residents have participated in a biography program, which takes place once a month. Residents are encouraged to explore and review their lives by telling their stories to other residents, while they sit around a table in a kitchen that overlooks a courtyard. Martha-Jane Dunphy, a social work case manager, serves as the group's moderator and scribe, drawing residents out when needed, pointing out common threads among their separate stories, and, while writing it all down, telling them all they should write books.

Raffaella Mazzia, 87, was sitting next to her "baby brother," Joe Cirigliano, who is 84. They spoke of a life long ago on 116th Street and Pleasant Avenue in Manhattan, when stick ball and box ball were the diversions of the day and the sister and brother lived with two other siblings and their parents.

They laughed when they told the story of how, 70 years ago, they used to tease their mother about how she was born on the ship coming to America, and if she had only waited a little while she wouldn't have had to worry about becoming a citizen. The teasing, Mrs. Mazzio and Mr. Cirigliano said, smiling, would always make their mother throw her head back and laugh.

Mr. Cirigliano went into the army for four years during World War II and fought on D-Day, which he spoke of humbly. "I remember crossing the English Channel," he said, "and then running into a lot of trouble. Some people I was with, they never reached France. But me -- from France, I went to Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg. Every time I began to learn the language, they'd move me. The Army was like a vaudeville show."

Kay Caruso, 85, a teacher for 34 years, lived in Darien, Conn., and had a husband in the Army, also for four years. During that time the menu at home was limited: "For supper, there was fried potatoes, scalloped potatoes and mashed potatoes," she said. Right before her husband came home, she miraculously found lamb on the supermarket shelves; it hadn't been available for years. She cooked it for her husband his first night back.

"And he looked at it and said all he had in the army was lamb," Mrs. Caruso said, smiling at how the two of them couldn't stop laughing.

Carl Solberg, 87, was a journalist, in a career that included 30 years at Time magazine. He spoke about the very first story he ever wrote, almost 70 years ago, at a county newspaper in the Midwest. "There was a family in town who had a son and he was a little eccentric -- maybe more so," he said. "He took an ax and chopped his father's head off, then he tried for his mother, but it was only a glancing blow. Can you imagine a better first story than that?"

Mrs. Mazzia, who worked as a secretary before she was married, had her own workplace memories. "In those days," she said, "the bosses would get fresh with you. I'd have to tell them right off, no way."

In addition to their own work, the residents spoke of loved ones whose deeds, even decades later, filled them with pride. "Our father was an immigrant from Italy and started as a stock boy in a shoe store," said Mr. Cirigliano. "For years, he went to school at night to learn to speak English like he was born here. He learned to speak beautifully. And he eventually managed that store."

Milly Duncan, 92, who, like her husband, grew up in New York City, smiled broadly when she spoke of how he went on to be an owner of the Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce Company.

Mrs. Dunphy said that an important function of the program was for each person to tell his or her story and, in the process, realize how distinct and important their lives were. Such discourse also helps residents take note of the struggles and accomplishments of others, in the hope that they will become friends. In an assisted-living setting, said Mrs. Dunphy, new friendships take effort.

Mrs. Dunphy said that she was always struck by the way in which Meadowview's residents told their stories with such a humorous flair. "Their sense of humor got them through a lot of difficult times," she said.

She is always surprised at the scope and content of the stories she hears.

"We had a 103-year-old resident who would tell the story about how she had three husbands, all of whom had known each other," said Mrs. Dunphy. "She had married two of them while they were on their deathbeds, but after the weddings, both had rallied and hung in there for two or three more years. She loved that story."

After living a full, adventurous, and even at times ordinary to mundane life, the elderly may have the desire to share his or her autobiographical reflections on life and the unique journey of living through the decades. An elderly person may enjoy telling their life stories. Just ask. However, some may not. And that's ok too.

Coming up...

...during the month of MAY 2019

Canalway Cavalcade - 4th, 5th and 6th May 2019

Canalway Cavalcade is a distinctive waterway festival that has been taking place at Little Venice since 1983. Organised by Inland Waterways Association volunteers, there will be an array of boats, trade show stalls and boater gatherings at this festival for water lovers. As well as the boating activities, there will also be Morris dancing, competitions, food, a real ale bar and family-friendly activities making it an enjoyable day out for families. Plus, with the location being quaint Little Venice, this creates the perfect opportunity for a gentle stroll and an enjoyable view alongside your lunch and ale.



The Tweed Run - 4th May

One of London's most eccentric bike rides - surpassed only by the World Naked Bike Ride - The Tweed Run returns for its annual bike ride this May. The quintessential bike ride requires participants to don their finest tweed attire and set off on a 12-mile scenic route that begins at a secret London location and takes in some of the capital's finest landmarks along the way. Between 750 and 1,000 cyclists, clad in tweed, cycle along Regent Street creating a spectacle so out of the ordinary that crowds form along the route. A pit stop along the way allows for a spot of tea in a fine London square and a picnic break in the park is like a concert and village fete rolled into one. The whole thing ends up with cocktails and a bit of a knees up at The Closing Ceremony when prizes are given for the best dressed participants, bikes and most marvellous moustache.



The May Fair - Sunday 5th and Monday 6th May 2019

Bringing the seaside to London, The May Fair will take over Grosvenor Square for two days on the May bank holiday weekend. Providing the chance to enjoy the best bits of the great British seaside right in the heart of historic Mayfair, it will boast everything from helter skelter and fish and chips to coconut shys and candy floss. There will be maypole dancing, children's crafts, a traditional fun fair, educational workshops and a whole host of live music and entertainment.



RHS Chelsea Flower Show - 21st to 25th May 2019

Regarded as a highpoint of the London summer season, the fragrant Chelsea Flower Show is a wonderful showcase of blooms and celebrities - even the Queen attends. Particularly spectacular are the gardens created by eight hundred imaginative garden designers who spend nearly a month creating a horticultural wonderland over the 11-acre site. This beautiful and inspiring show is a real treat, even for non-gardeners. Held in the grounds of the Chelsea Royal Hospital since 1913, the Chelsea Flower Show, is the finest of the Royal Horticultural Society shows.



About Royal Hospital Chelsea

Built by Sir Christopher Wren 1682-1692, the Grade I-listed Royal Hospital Chelsea was intended by King Charles II to be a home for soldiers who were unfit for further duty because of injury or old age. Hundreds of years on and the 66 acres (27 hectares) site is still home to these Chelsea Pensioners or "The Men in Scarlet", who can be seen in their colourful jackets and triangular hats making their way down the Royal Hospital Road. More about Royal Hospital Chelsea



May Day Celebrations

Many folklore customs have their roots planted firmly back in the Dark Ages, when the ancient Celts had divided their year by four major festivals. Beltane or 'the fire of Bel', had particular significance to the Celts as it represented the first day of summer and was celebrated with bonfires to welcome in the new season. Still celebrated today, we perhaps know Beltane better as May 1st, or May Day.

Down through the centuries May Day has been associated with fun, revelry and perhaps most important of all, fertility. The Day would be marked with village folk cavorting round the maypole, the selection of the May Queen and the dancing figure of the Jack-in-the-Green at the head of the procession. Jack is thought to be a relic from those enlightened days when our ancient ancestors worshipped trees.

These pagan roots did little to endear these May Day festivities with either the established Church or State. In the sixteenth century riots followed when May Day celebrations were banned. Fourteen rioters were hanged, and Henry VIII is said to have pardoned a further 400 who had been sentenced to death.

The May Day festivities all but vanished following the Civil War when Oliver Cromwell and his Puritans took control of the country in 1645. Describing maypole dancing as 'a heathenish vanity generally abused to superstition and wickedness', legislation was passed which saw the end of village maypoles throughout the country.



Morris dancers with maypole and pipe and taborer, Chambers Book of Days

Dancing did not return to the village greens until the restoration of Charles II. 'The Merry Monarch' helped ensure the support of his subjects with the erection of a massive 40 metre high maypole in London's Strand. This pole signalled the return of the fun times, and remained standing for almost fifty years.

Maypoles can still be seen on the village greens at Welford-on-Avon and at Dunchurch, Warwickshire, both of which stand all year round. Barwick in Yorkshire, claims the largest maypole in England, standing some 30 meters in height.

May Day is still celebrated in many villages with the crowning of the May Queen. The gentlemen of the village may also be found celebrating with Jack-in-the-Green, otherwise found on the signs of pubs across the country called the Green Man.



The Green Man

May Day traditions in southern England include the Hobby Horses that still rampage through the towns of Dunster and Minehead in Somerset, and Padstow in Cornwall. The horse or the Oss, as it is normally called is a local person dressed in flowing robes wearing a mask with a grotesque, but colourful, caricature of a horse.

In Oxford, May Day morning is celebrated from the top of Magdalen College Tower by the singing of a Latin hymn, or carol, of thanksgiving. After this the college bells signal the start of the Morris Dancing in the streets below.

Further north in Castleton, Derbyshire, Oak Apple Day takes place on 29th May, commemorating the restoration of Charles II to throne. Followers within the procession carry sprigs of oak, recalling the story that in exile King Charles hid in an oak tree to avoid capture by his enemies.

It is important to remember that without 'The Merry Monarch' May Day celebrations might have come to a premature end in 1660.

The Health Benefits of Dancing

by Rosheen Toal

The health benefits of dancing for seniors range from improving your physical health to creating strong social connections that increase your sense of well-being. Dance isn't just a social activity. It is actively used by the medical community as a form of therapy. In the 1940s, Marian Chance taught dance to traumatized veterans of World War II, helping them express their emotions and work through trauma and stress.

Today, dance is used to treat conditions ranging from eating disorders to depression. Dancing, however, does not benefit only young people. The health benefits of dancing for seniors range from improving your physical health to creating strong social connections that increase your sense of happiness and well-being.

As you age, your body loses muscle mass, coordination, and balance, making you more likely to fall and injure yourself in the course of everyday activities. Dancing can help counteract this decline.

Research has found that dancing improves strength and muscle function in older adults, as well as increasing balance and flexibility, leading to better stability and fewer injuries. Dancing can also improve your cardiovascular health, which will decrease your chances of developing heart disease.

And in one study, healthy older adults who participated in a six-week dance program showed improved posture, reaction times, and motor performance.

The health benefits of dancing for seniors don't depend on doing a specific type of dance. A review of multiple studies on dancing and aging found that any style of dance can help maintain or even improve muscle strength, balance, endurance, and other forms of physical health in older adults.

One group of researchers even found that people engaged in social or group dancing experience less pain, a particular benefit for seniors who often have to deal with increasing physical discomfort.

The impact on your health doesn't stop with the dancing itself. Once you become physically active, research has shown that you are more likely to engage in other healthy behaviours.



This could include keeping up with medication, engaging in social activities, and eating a nutritious diet, all of which will improve your quality of life and health as you age.

Keeping you physically strong isn't the only benefit dancing provides. It can also improve your social and emotional health. When researchers interviewed thirty women over age 60 about the impact that their line dancing hobby had on their life, the women were enthusiastic about the activity. The majority agreed that dancing helped them become more involved in their communities, encouraged them to participate in charitable and group activities, and provided a space for self-expression and personal development. "Life without line dancing and... other activities," one woman said, "would be too dreadful to imagine." These social benefits of dancing have been replicated in multiple cultures and countries.

Even among seniors with poor mental health, dancing can make a difference. Social dancing, studies have found, improves positive feelings, behaviour, and communication among patients with dementia, though this and other studies have shown that these improvements depend on the activity being led by caretakers who foster a creative and supportive environment.



***You go girls
and boys!!***

Recipe

...Springtime Strawberry and Ricotta Muffins

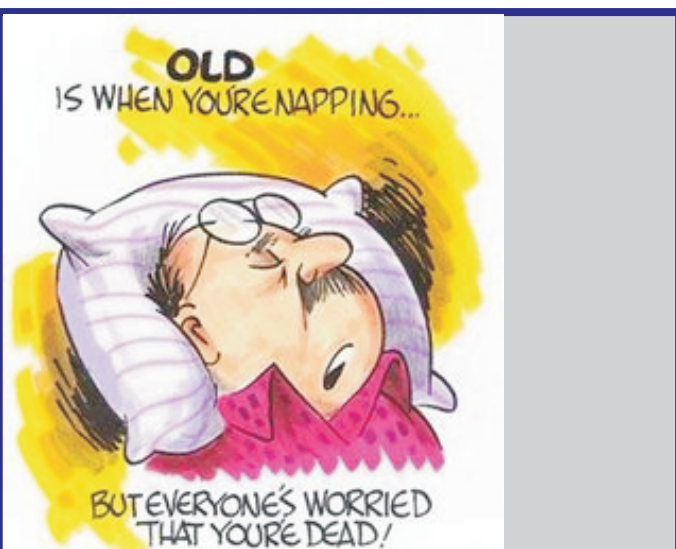
Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup (½ stick) melted and cooled butter
- ½ cup cold water
- 1 cup washed, stemmed and chopped strawberries
- 1 cup ricotta cheese

Method

Pre-heat oven to 375°.

1. Spray muffin pans with non-stick spray.
2. Sift all dry ingredients together into a large bowl.
3. Add eggs, butter and water and stir gently only until the dry ingredients are almost all moistened.
4. Add strawberries and ricotta and continue to mix gently until incorporated. Be careful not to over-mix.
5. Spoon or scoop into prepared muffin pans, filling them about ¾ full.
6. Bake for about 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
7. Allow to cool for a few minutes before removing from pan.
8. Serve warm.



I DON'T DO DRUGS...



I GET THE SAME EFFECT BY STANDING UP FAST!

Carer OF THE MONTH CONGRATULATIONS !!



**Carer of the Month for APRIL was awarded to
Stephanie Butler !!**

*This is one way we recognise the hard work and commitment of our wonderful team who dedicate themselves to providing remarkable levels of care.
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If you have any comments, anything you would like to share, some interesting information or some positive words of inspiration... please call or email me – sharan@constantiacare.co.uk