

## COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL STIMULATION KEY FACTORS TO HEALTHY AGING

Recent statistics on aging show that as many as 45 percent of seniors are divorced, separated or widowed, leaving many to live alone. In addition to these statistics, AARP reports, that nearly 90 percent of seniors want to age in place. These findings are important because older people who live alone are particularly vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness due to the loss of friends and family, of mobility and/or loss of income. With social isolation and loneliness come myriad health issues. Studies have shown a direct correlation between loneliness and disability, cognitive ability, cancer, higher blood pressure, stroke and heart disease.

A recent study by John Capioppo, Director for the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience at the University of Chicago, reveals that older people who are extremely lonely or socially isolated often demonstrate genuine traumatic effects, increasing their chance of premature death by 14 percent.

In addition to physical activity, regular cognitive and social stimulation are key factors to prolonging your health. Engaging your brain in activities such as reading, playing board games, learning a new language, playing a musical instrument or even dancing can improve your cognitive health. Having social connections, whether it is through volunteerism, being active in your church, joining a group based on activities you enjoy (such as playing cards or joining a book club); or making visits to your local senior center can improve your health and improve your chances of longevity. Social activities like these can reduce your risk for Alzheimer's disease, depression, lower blood pressure, osteoporosis and other health conditions.

The City of Claremont has been rated #2 by *Huffington Post* as one of the great College communities in which to retire because of the many great senior services offered to their residents. The Pomona Colleges offers classes to those over the age of 60 which may be audited at no charge. REAL Connections, a membership program of the non-profit Community Senior Services, offers transportation services to residents who are no longer able to drive. REAL Connections also provides weekly and monthly senior outings, such as potlucks, poker and karaoke nights. The Claremont Joslyn Center offers great classes that include walking & biking clubs. If you are looking for a great service organization to volunteer your time and give back to the community, there is Claremont Sunrise Rotary Club. For those seniors who are homebound, Claremont has a great group of volunteers through Community Senior Services who visit and to check in on those who cannot get out. There is something for just about everyone. For more information regarding the full range of senior services in the area, check out the City of Claremont website, [ci.claremont.ca.us](http://ci.claremont.ca.us) and click social support groups or [communityseniorservices.org](http://communityseniorservices.org). If you are new to the area or are a "boomer" wishing to downsize to one of the beautiful retirement communities in Claremont, please do contact me! I will pave the way for your smooth transition into the Claremont Community.



Recent studies show Social Stimulation is a key factor to healthy aging and can reduce the risk of health ailments. Meet REAL Connection Members, (left to right) Mary Schmit; REAL Daughter, Dana Wood; Bill Reed, Elaine DeWitt & Pat Reed at a REAL Connections Monthly Potluck.



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Stats provided by AARP, Tracy Rose, *Aging Health, Liberty Voice* 2/17/14.  
[huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/29/college-towns-draw-retirees](http://huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/29/college-towns-draw-retirees)