

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

IMPROVING QUALITY OF CARE, QUALITY OF LIFE

Founder of program for Alzheimer's patients sees them regain vitality and freedom

Name: W. Major Chance (W. stands for William)

Age: 66

Job: Founder and chief executive of ActivCare Living

Neighborhood: La Jolla

Family: Wife, Judy, two grown daughters and two grandchildren

Act of kindness: Dedicated his career to enhancing quality of life for individuals suffering from memory loss. Chance believes these people should not only have their basic needs met, but also be offered a new life that is comfortable and filled with dignity.

Q: How did you get involved in giving back in this way?

A: It started nearly 25 years ago when I was touring one of the skilled nursing care communities that we managed. It was uncomfortable seeing patients with Alzheimer's disease and dementia physically or chemically restrained due to their tendency to wander. In my view, this was an unacceptable way for a person to spend his or her life. The existing nursing home regulations did not allow for special treatment of these individuals, so I vowed to



W. Major Chance, ActivCare Living make a difference.

I spent the next five years working with the governor's office and officials in Sacramento to develop a program that meets the special needs of those with memory loss. The result was ActivCare, a residential memory care program that incorporates a custom-designed activity schedule for those with memory loss, administered by trained caregivers in specially designed assisted-living communities.

The positive outcomes of programs such as ActivCare ultimately led to the passage of SB 732, a designation in the state statutes that allows assisted-living communities the use of se-

cured perimeters in caring for persons with dementia and memory loss.

Q: What have been your most gratifying moments?

A: I have had the opportunity to see residents at our communities regain their vitality and reclaim their life. Residents have gone from being nearly comatose with psychotropic medications to becoming engaged in activities and allowed the freedom to explore their environments without hindrance. We have also seen a substantial reduction in the use of psychotropic medication and residents that have a renewed sense of purpose. I've enjoyed the gratitude of family members who have seen their loved ones transition from aggressive and agitated behavior into happy, revitalized individuals with higher self-esteem.

With a disease that has no cure, I am gratified at being able to provide a new, enhanced life for those affected with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia and bring hope to their families. It is my passion and it's why I want to get up in the morning.

Nominations wanted

U-T San Diego invites organizations to feature the good work of local people in this space every Sunday. Groups can email nominations for Making a Difference to makingadifference@utsandiego.com.

Q: Who are the people who have most inspired you? Why?

A: I was inspired by Dr. George and Joy Glenner, who developed the very first adult day-care program for those with Alzheimer's, which inspired the foundation for the ActivCare residential memory care program. George Glenner was instrumental in Alzheimer's research, and his compassionate care of those with this devastating disease inspired me to create a residential program that cares for those with memory loss with the same dignity and compassion.

Submitted by ActivCare Living. For more information, call (858) 565-4424 or visit activcareliving.com