

2007

**Assisted
Living**

**Innovations
in Quality**

California Assisted Living

CALA

Association

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California Assisted Living Association

Assisted Living – Innovations in Quality

Fall 2007

ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

Interesting and stimulating activity programs are an important part of any assisted living or dementia care program. Going beyond the obvious and truly engaging residents' minds, spirits and bodies as a way to enhance quality of life is easier said than done. Many however, are doing an exceptional job... Are you? CALA's 2007 Assisted Living – Innovations in Quality (AL-IQ) program will recognize exceptional activity programs for both assisted living and dementia care. Tell us what makes your program exceptional and how it has benefited your residents!

AL-IQ Highlights:

- Entries are due by **July 1, 2007**.
- Honoree will be announced and recognized at CALA's Fall Conference.
- Honoree will be invited to lead an educational session at the Conference.
- Submissions to the selection committee will be anonymous (no reference to community, company, or individuals).

To Participate:

- Limit the entry to no more than **six pages** including attachments, if any.
- Complete, sign, and submit the **AL-IQ Cover Sheet** with the entry.
- Do not include information that identifies the provider, residents, or staff on the entry.
- Submit your entry no later than **July 1, 2007**.
- **Mail six copies** of your entry or **email one copy** to:

CALA
455 Capitol Mall, Suite 604
Sacramento, CA 95814

Email: jmt@CAassistedliving.org

Members of the California Assisted Living Association (CALA) are committed to providing residents with quality care and quality of life. To meet this commitment, CALA members design, implement, and carry out innovative programs. CALA's *Assisted Living – Innovations in Quality (AL-IQ)* award program recognizes and promotes those programs and policies that result in enhanced quality of care and quality of life for assisted living residents in California. All CALA members, regardless of size, location, or affiliation are strongly encouraged to participate. Contact Jan Trifiro at 916-448-1900 with any questions.

AL-IQ Entry Format:

Please address the following issues and include attachments if appropriate. Please do not identify the name of your community, organization, staff or residents. Instead, please refer to "our community," "our organization," etc. Remember to limit the entry to no more than six pages, including attachments. Scoring will be weighted as follows:

- **Program Description and Goal(s)** (30 points) – Describe your program. What goal(s) did you establish? How was the program developed/implemented? Who was involved? Why is it exceptional?
- **Outcomes** (40 points) – How do you know your program works? Please address the impact on staff, residents, and family members. What were the costs? How does your evaluation and outcome relate to the goals you established?
- **Sustainability** (15 points) – How long has this program been in place? Who is responsible for it? How often is it evaluated? What changes, if any, have been made over time and why?
- **Replication** (15 points) – What advice would you provide to those wanting to implement a similar program?

Review and Selection Process:

All entries received by **July 1, 2007** will be assigned a number and submitted to the Selection Committee without reference to your community, organization, staff, or residents. The Selection Committee will then review the entries and select no more than two honorees.

AL-IQ honorees will be:

- Recognized at the CALA Fall Conference.
- Invited to conduct a breakout session at the Fall Conference.
- The subject of an article in the *CALA Bulletin*.
- Recognized on the CALA website (www.CAassistedliving.org)



**Assisted
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**2007 Honoree for
Assisted Living Activity Programs**

***“Health and Nutrition
Incentive Program”***

*Summerville at Tarzana
Emeritus Assisted Living*

Health and Nutrition Incentive Program

Description

The benefits of a regular exercise and balanced nutrition for seniors are well documented and include improvements in blood pressure, arthritis, cholesterol and weight loss to name just a few. Consistent exercise may even reduce mortality rates among the elderly.

Even with all these positive outcomes, motivating residents in an Assisted Living community to exercise and make healthy food choices can still be challenging. There are many barriers that discourage residents from participating in these activities including the perception that one's health is too poor, a lack of attainable health and fitness goals, limited short-term memory and lack of encouragement from family members and friends.

To overcome these issues we created a health and fitness incentive program designed to reward residents for making healthy choices. Residents received points for attending exercise and nutrient classes, taking a walk or making a healthy food choice. The contest ran for six weeks (April 19th, through May 31st). Prizes were given to the top three participants. Those not finishing in the top three were given "Golden Tickets" they could use like money toward prizes.

Qualifying activities included chair exercise, healthy snacking and cooking demonstration, blood pressure check, resident council, stretching, morning stroll, and destination walks. Residents were also given credit when they chose a fruit plate as an entrée or dessert.

Prior to the launch of the program, letters were sent to family members and loved ones announcing the contest. We invited them to the kick-off event and enlisted their help in encouraging contest participation. Many family members did actively encourage their loved ones to participate. One family member showed up for exercise activities to act as a "work-out buddy".

The kick-off event was held as a special night-time activity. We featured a personal trainer as our speaker. Her presentation was both informative and interactive. She spoke about talking to your doctor about exercise, setting appropriate fitness goals, and exercising while respecting one's physical limitations. She finished with a brief exercise demonstration that residents participated in. Each person that attended received a folder containing the contest description and rules as well as articles on balance, flexibility, and other related health topics.

Residents were encouraged to complete a personal goal sheet outlining their reasons for participating or their personal fitness goals. We were pleasantly

surprised that nearly half of our participants completed these goal sheets. Goals ranged a great deal — one person wanted to win the contest, many mentioned maintaining a healthy body and mind, and some were very specific wanting to get out of a chair by themselves. The goal sheets were typed and returned to the residents so they could be used as a daily reminder to make healthy choices.

As a reminder and to stimulate excitement around the contest, large boards were created and hung in the dining room hallway. Qualifying activities were listed across the top with resident names down the side. As residents attended activities they got a blue square, if they performed a "make-up" activity like going on a walk or exercising in their room they received an orange square. The boards became quite popular and were a focal point of the contest.

An award ceremony was held the day after the contest ended. Residents were asked to bring any "Golden Tickets" they had earned. Special recognition was given to twelve residents who made outstanding efforts. The three residents with the highest activity or "make-up activity" attendance were awarded prizes. Everyone else was given, a golden ticket for each activity they attended. Residents used their tickets to order prizes such as T-shirts, visors, cup coolers, journals and other items.

Goals and Outcomes

This program was designed to encourage residents to increase their physical activity. The measurable goals of this program were to:

- Increase participation in fitness and nutrition activities.
- Increase the number of fitness and nutrition activities that a resident participated in on a weekly basis.
- Increase the number of healthy food choices made by residents.

Other results we were hoping for, but are difficult to measure include:

- Healthier eating habits.
- Increased confidence among residents in their physical abilities.
- Enthusiasm for exercise and nutrition activities.

Increased Participation in Fitness and Nutrition Activities

The results of the contest were outstanding. Over fifty percent of our community participated in a qualifying activity at least once during the six week content and over thirty percent of our community participated in more than one activity a week.

Prior to the launch of the program, chair exercises averaged eight participants on weekdays and five participants on weekends. Over the period of the contest, weekday chair exercise attendance grew to an average of fifteen people and on weekends to thirteen. Although the contest has only been over for one month the post-results are very promising. Weekday chair exercise classes continue to average fifteen participants and weekend classes are now averaging fourteen people.

Increase the number of fitness and nutrition activities that a resident participated in on a weekly basis.

Weekly Fitness and Nutrition Activity Participation

The contest also affected the number of times per week residents participated in fitness and nutrition related activities. Eighteen percent of our community attended an average of four or more health or nutrition related activities a week during the contest. Thirteen percent attended an average of six or more activities a week.

Even though the contest is over weekly participation seems to be holding with seventeen percent of our community attending an average of four or more of activities a week and thirteen percent attending six or more activities a week.

Healthy Food Choices

During the period of the contest fruit consumption doubled. Most of our community was very interested in collecting "Golden Tickets" and willing to choose fruit over the daily dessert. Although post-contest fruit consumption slowly declined back to its original levels, the contest proved to be a powerful motivator to change eating habits.

Also during the contest we launched a new class titled "Healthy Snacking and Cooking Demonstration" the goal of the class is to educate our community on nutrition issues, demonstrate simple snack recipes that they could make in their rooms, and show that healthy snacks can be delicious. The class is held twice a month and has an average attendance of seventeen percent of our community. Residents seem to enjoy learning and exchanging information about nutrition and they look forward to sampling the healthy snacks at the end of the period.

Other Results

One resident had been a regular attendee at chair exercises until a back injury and subsequent operation made it painful for him to attend. He didn't believe he could safely participate and dropped out of the classes. When the contest began, surprisingly he began showing up to class. With help from the instructor,

he modified exercises and sat on a couch to provide cushion for his back. As the contest went on his attendance in program activities increased (see table one below)

In addition he began going on a daily walk, something he had not done since his surgery. By the end of the six weeks, this resident had accumulated the most points and was awarded first place. He was visibly moved when he was given his award and has continued to be regular at exercise ever since.

Another resident had never attended a chair exercise class during the three years he has been a part of our community. When the contest began, he was very vocal about his desire to win. He switched to eating fruit for dessert so he could collect "Golden Tickets". Taking note of the contest board, hanging in the dining room, he wanted to know how he could get blue marks on the board next to his name. After learning he would need to attend chair exercises, he started to attend. A few weeks later he began going on short walks. He didn't win the contest but managed to collect the most "Golden Tickets". He continued attending class for about a week or so after the contest ended. Although, the effects of the contest were not long term for this resident the contest did motivate him to change, if only for a short time.

Family members also played a key role in the contest. The loved ones that attended the kick-off event were instrumental in helping residents create personal fitness goals and reminding them to attend activities. A number of residents commented that their son or daughter had asked them to participate or reminded them to come to class. One resident's son showed up for a number of exercise activities to ensure his mother's attendance.

During the six week period of the contest we distributed over a thousand "Golden Tickets". Our activity room was filled to capacity for the award ceremony to announce the winners. Everyone was delighted for the top three to be awarded their prizes. After the top participants were honored, residents were able to "purchase" their prizes using their tickets. Forty seven of these prizes were distributed eleven t-shirts, eighteen journals, three storage boxes, six cup coolers, eight lipstick cases and one visor.

Table 1 — One Resident's Average Weekly Participation

	Percent
Week 1	40%
Week 2	45%
Week 3	83%
Week 4	100%
Week 5	63%
Week 6	80%
Week 7	100%

Costs

We employed creativity to keep program costs to a minimum. Where ever possible, we took advantage of resources already in place to promote the program. We informed residents about the program using our monthly newsletter, daily schedules and in house flyers. Copies of articles and "Golden Tickets" were made in house. For the contest boards, we re-used foam boards and had Excel spreadsheets enlarged in black and white at Kinkos. Promotional "hand-exercisers" were donated by the friend of a resident.

To create "Golden Ticket" prizes, we purchased items from dollar and craft stores, and used clear labels to "Brand" them. T-shirts were purchased on sale from a local drug store and ink-jet color transfers were used to mark them with our program logo. Our community was delighted with there prizes and proudly wear their t-shirts or display their journals.

Table 2 — Program Costs

Item	Dollars
Mailing to family members	\$100
Speaker for kick-off	\$100
Folders and article copies	\$75
Two program results boards	\$40
Top 3 prizes (\$50 Restaurant gift certificate, \$30 manicure/pedicure gift certificate, \$20 healthy snacking basket)	\$100
"Golden Ticket Prizes" — \$1 each (Lipstick cases, journals, storage boxes, cup coolers and visor)	\$45
T-Shirts — \$2 each	\$25
Miscellaneous supplies clear labels, foam letter stickers, markers, t-shirt transfers, etc.	\$100
Total Cost	\$585

Lessons Learned

Based on the success of this program we plan to make it an annual event. Some residents found the concept a little difficult to understand in the

beginning. However, by the end everyone understood. We expect that participation rates will be even higher the next time around.

We believe involving family members in the contest was a key factor in its success. The next time around we plan to send another mailing to family members about half-way through, letting them know how its going and how important their encouragement is to their loved one.