



Big week for seniors; party starts early

Group dresses up, belts out barbershop tunes

By Liz Harrelson

Local seniors are "clowning around" in preparation for the celebration of a nationally recognized event set to begin today. Seniors at the Avenidas Rose Kleiner Senior Day Health Center in Mountain View dressed in specially designed costumes and strutted their stuff Thursday in recognition of National Adult Day Services Week, which officially begins today and runs through Sept. 27.

Participants look forward to several celebrations a year, but this one - now in it's second year running - is especially dear to their hearts, said Lenny Parks, executive director of the Mountain View center for the last five-and-a-half years. Festivities began on Thursday with a "variety show" where about 20 participants - many of them severely handicapped and between 70- and 90-years-old - strutted their stuff in the way they knew best.

Some dressed as hobos and clowns, while others took a more eclectic approach. Wearing large fabric bowties and hats, a group sang barbershop tunes - until the encore. That's when they swapped hats for baseball caps and led the group of about 55 family members, staff and organizers in singing the song, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

"You could see them up front kind of waving to their relatives," said Park, of the performers. It was just very sweet," said Park. "It showed that seniors can have a fun happy life, even when they have all these handicaps and diseases," Park said. "That's a way of celebrating what these day programs can do for people."

450 Bryant St Palo Alto CA 94301

Phone: (650)2895413

<http://www.avenidas.org>

Adult day health centers such as Avenidas are licensed by the state department of health and offer medical services and therapy in addition to social services. For Misako Sprout and her non-verbal, Alzheimer's-afflicted husband James, being involved with a center that provides both medical facilities and social functions allows them respite.

For others, they call it a club, work or school, and are reluctant to skip it, Park said. "It's less expensive than having help in the home, and you have the socialization," Park said. "It helps the whole family."

This center in Mountain View is one of more than 3,400 adult day services centers operating in the United States, said Kari Martell, communications director for the Avenidas center. Costs for the services range from \$52.50 to \$117.52 per day, depending on the family's income. Patients with Medi-Cal or veterans related services are also eligible to receive help, Martell said.

The weeklong event will continue with organized discussion groups about what it's like to be involved with a senior center, Park said. Members of the public interested in attending the discussion groups may call 650-289-5499.