

Avenidas names new CEO

Amy Yotopolous, a Palo Alto resident whose career has focused on aging, longevity and caregiving, will become president and CEO of the senior services agency Avenidas.

Yotopolous, who directed the adult day program at Avenidas, now known as the Rose Kleiner Center, from 1999 to 2003, more recently has worked at the Stanford Center on Longevity and, since 2019, as co-founder and manager of the Caregiving Center in the new Stanford Hospital.



Amy Yotopolous

She takes the helm at Avenidas Sept. 1.

"I'm so excited to come full circle in my career, as Avenidas has been an important part of my life for decades," Yotopolous said.

Avenidas board chair Henry Massey said Yotopolous's "years of multi-faceted senior management experience leading strategic development, long range planning and guiding organizations through periods of growth and transition will greatly benefit Avenidas.

"In addition, she understands our mission

on a very personal level, having 10 years of experience as a family caregiver for a loved one with dementia," Massey said.

At the Stanford Center on Longevity, Yotopolous managed the Mind Division, which focuses on research into cognitive health and harnessing the human capital of older people. The Caregiving Center in the new Stanford Hospital is a lounge, health library and referral center for patients and their families, as well as for the general public.

Yotopolous said she became interested in aging issues as an undergraduate at Stanford, where she took classes with psychologist Laura Carstensen, founding director of Stanford's Center on Longevity, and graduated with honors in psychology. She later earned a master's degree in gerontology from the University of Southern California.

At Avenidas, she replaces Amy Andonian, who served from 2014 until leaving last fall. John Sink, vice-president of programs, serves as interim president.

Avenidas operates an adult enrichment center and a Chinese Community Center, both in Palo Alto, as well as an adult day care center, known as the Rose Kleiner Center, in Mountain View. For more information on the agency, go to avenidas.org. ■

— Chris Kenrick

Senior Focus

BUILDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM ... Avenidas Village, a fee-based network for older adults that offers practical help, resources and social connections will hold Zoom coffee chats for prospective members Tuesday, June 8, Thursday, June 17, and Wednesday, June 30. All sessions will be at 10 a.m. To learn more, go to avenidasvillage.org. To register, email dgreenblat@avenidas.org.

RETIREMENT PLANNING ... Retirement coach Lyn Christenson will present a free, online workshop on non-financial aspects of retirement planning on Monday, June 14, at 1:30 p.m. To register for Zoom link, email register@avenidas.org. For more about Christenson, go to retirementlinkages.com.

CONDOR RESTORATION ... Researchers and biologists Chris West and Tiana Williams-Claussen will discuss their work in restoring California condors to the Pacific Northwest in a free Zoom presentation Tuesday, June 15, at 1 p.m. The two will discuss California condor biology, declines and efforts to recover the species from near-extinction as well as the outlook for overall recovery of the species. The talk is part of the "Community Conversations" series of the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center. To register, email Michelle Rosengaus at mrosengaus@paloaltojcc.org.

HELP FOR CAREGIVERS ... Hospice physician Ellen Brown and caregiving researcher and consultant Rita Ghatak will discuss caring for someone with dementia and preserving brain health in a free Zoom presentation Wednesday, June 23, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The event is part of an ongoing forum for caregivers organized by Avenidas social work manager Paula Wolfson, who will moderate. To register for zoom link, go to avenidas.org and click on the registration link, or call 650 289-5400.

FILM ON CAREGIVING ... Mission Hospice & Homecare will present a free, online screening of the 2021 documentary "Caregiver, a Love Story," on Thursday, June 24, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The film, co-directed and co-produced by palliative care physician Jessica Zitter, profiles what happens when 59-year-old Bambi decides to forgo further cancer treatment and die at home and her husband, Rick, leaves his job to become her primary caregiver. For the Zoom link, go to missionhospice.org and click on "events calendar." ■

Items for Senior Focus may be emailed to Palo Alto Weekly Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick at ckenrick@pawebly.com.

What matters in the end

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Shortly before, Marilyn had reviewed the writings of Greek and Roman philosophers on how to live and die well. "For all the philosophical treatises and all the assurances of the medical profession," she writes, "there is no cure for the simple fact that we must leave each other."

The final chapters are written by Irv, recounting the agony of grief and his halting attempts to resume some kind of normal life — including venturing out to a Barron Park Senior Lunch at the Corner Bakery.

After more than 70 years with Marilyn beside him, he struggles with the idea that "something can have value, interest and importance even if I am the only one the experience it, even if there's no Marilyn to share it with.

"It's as if Marilyn's knowing about a happening is necessary to make it truly real," he writes.

He rails at the irrationality of this. "I've been a full-time student, observer and healer of the mind for over 60 years, and it is difficult to tolerate my own mind being

so irrational," he writes.

Reached at his home in late May, two months after the book's publication, Yalom said he's been busy with the "strong feedback," including virtual book talks with large audiences all over the world. The book is licensed for publication in 25 countries, some already in print and others likely between now and the end of next year, according to literary agent Sandra Dijkstra.

Yalom, who turns 90 this month, continues to work on his next book and also to do single-hour therapy consultations.

"I'm growing old now and my memory's beginning to disappear," he said. "I'm not seeing ongoing patients anymore but I think I'm able to do a lot for some people just in the single hour."

His new book is intended as a training manual for young therapists. "I'm always writing, and as long as I'm writing I feel very well," he said.

He also takes walks daily to a nearby park, where he's had bench installed in memory of Marilyn. Yalom said he enjoys sitting on the bench, taking in the surroundings and thinking of her. ■

Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick can be emailed at ckenrick@pawebly.com



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