

Santa Monica Rotarians, WISE & Healthy Aging Hand Out Valentine's Day Goodies



WISE & Healthy Aging affiliates and Santa Monica Rotarians delivered 100 Valentine's Day gift bags to senior citizens on Saturday.

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Corina Munn/Staff Writer

This past Valentine's Day, a group of about 30 volunteers – comprised of Santa Monica Rotarians and WISE & Healthy Aging affiliates – embodied the spirit of the love-centered holiday by delivering treats to the homes of local senior citizens.

After congregating in the early morning to finish assembling the Valentine's gift bags, the group split

into smaller teams to deliver the bags of candies to senior citizens' residences throughout Santa Monica.

As a nonprofit social services organization, WISE & Healthy Aging has the mission to "enhance the independence, dignity, and quality of life of older adults through leadership, advocacy, and innovative services." The organization seeks to "provide and promote health and human services and programs to enhance healthy aging."

In an effort to spread a little more love to the older adult community, each volunteer spent a couple of hours on the morning of Valentine's Day either driving or walking to a designated list of residences, knocking on doors and hand-delivering a bag of goodies to start off the recipient's day on a cheerful note.

Every group was met with excitement at the door as the Valentine's packages were received with much gratitude and

appreciativeness.

“It’s the first time that we’ve collaborated with the Santa Monica Rotarians to do something a little different and special for our seniors,” said Catherine Jonas, director of the WISE & Healthy Aging Adult Day Service Center. “We’ve put together packages and have delivered them to older adults who live in Santa Monica, many of whom are isolated, live alone, or don’t have family.”

Jonas helps promote a “safe and healthy environment for those with dementia and Alzheimer’s” by providing respite for family members at the Adult Day Service Center.

“I’m an honored employee of WISE & Healthy Aging,” Jonas

said. “It was really wonderful to get to knock on doors and have them open to greet someone who lives alone in Santa Monica. It’s been a great day.”

Barbara Browning, WISE & Healthy Aging board member and long-time volunteer, elaborated on her experience serving with alongside the Santa Monica Rotarians on Valentine’s Day.

“The older adults are always so appreciative of everything we do for them,” Browning said. “Working with the Rotary Club on this project was just so exciting, to see that there are people other from us at WISE that truly care and what to reach out to them.”

Santa Monica Rotary Club President George Collins served

as a member of a delivery team on the morning of Valentine’s Day as he traveled from residence to residence presenting the goodie bags to the older adults.

“At first, I thought that it would be a feel-good type of activity for the people who are giving the gifts, but it turned out that it was not,” Collins said. “We really did, I believe, make a difference in the days of these seniors.”

WISE & Healthy Aging is located at 1527 4th St. in Santa Monica.

For more information on WISE & Healthy Aging, visit wiseandhealthyaging.org.

For more information on the Santa Monica Rotary Club, visit rotaryclubofsantamonica.org.