

# inTENTions



TAOS ELDERS & NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

Summer 2018



## OUR VISION:

A community of elders and neighbors supporting one another

## OUR MISSION:

To connect elders to resources needed to maintain comfortable, dignified, vibrant lives in their homes and community.

## “Don’t Let Your Heart Get Small.”

At the March 22<sup>nd</sup> bi-monthly TENT public meeting, to a room filled to capacity with an eager audience, Rose Gordon, Spiritual Care Counselor and Manager of Volunteer services at the Hospice of Mountain Home Health, recounted her recent five-week experience working with the Ganga Prem Hospice in Rishikesh, India. She told of her travels—the sights and sounds she encountered and the impressions she carried away. She talked of how, in India, more so than in the West, people’s lives encompass the entirety of existence—that immediately next to a luxury hotel is the very opposite: the garbage dump. Rose believes that in India there seems to be more realization and acceptance that life runs the gamut from beauty to ugliness, from joy to suffering. And that beauty in India is not dependent on perfection.

In her hospice and restorative justice work, Rose has learned that painful events in our lives can cause us to shrink into ourselves and turn away from suffering - when we experience loss and disappointment we tend to withdraw.



(Photo courtesy of Terry Thompson)

Rose quoted the Dalai Lama’s teaching: “We can let the circumstances of our lives burden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us, and make us kinder. You always have the choice.”

Similarly, Dag Hammarskjöld taught that:

*“Each day the first day: each day a life. Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and give back. It must be held out empty—for the past must only be reflected in its polish, its shape, its capacity.”*

(Continued on next page.)

### “Don’t Let Your Heart Get Small.” (Continued)

While visiting a small Bon monastery in India, Rose got a phone call from a friend saying that she had been diagnosed with cancer. In her conversation with Geshe la, the elderly lama of the monastery, Rose mentioned her friend’s illness. In response the Geshe la said:

*“Tell her don’t despair. Tell her be strong. Have courage. Illness comes to all of us, it does not care if we are rich or poor, old or young, live in the city or the country. Tell her, ‘Don’t let your heart get small.’”*

Even while afraid of suffering, we can realize that it is possible to move through it to joy. The root of the word courage is the Latin word for “heart” and compassion comes from the heart. If you can greet your suffering with compassion, you can access courage. Suffering is not a punishment or someone’s fault. It’s a fact of being alive.

At the same time, while we strive for compassion we must remember that we can’t fix all the sufferings of others.

Rose illustrated these concepts by talking about two individuals she worked with in India. At the Ganga Prem Hospice there was a seventeen-year-old boy with throat cancer. A previous surgery to replace his larynx had not gone well, and he was waiting for another surgical procedure that would enable him

to talk. Despite his own situation, he was always looking for a way to be of use to others. His indomitable spirit for life and a flexibility of heart enabled him to cry while at the same time not sacrificing his capacity to experience and share laughter.

Rose visited Venu who had studied classical Indian arts and had been a dancer and singer. She had two sons and a daughter in college; had left her abusive husband and was now very ill with a large tumor on her neck. Neighbors had stopped visiting her because they were afraid of the bad luck they believed cancer carried. Venu knew she would die soon and was very worried about her sons and daughter. The daughter, Gehana, said, “my mother is my life.” She was her mother’s primary caregiver. Although deeply grieving her mother’s impending death she could courageously acknowledge that “this is life.” She knew that meeting the challenges of pain and illness, death and suffering are part of the whole; she was neither bitter nor self-pitying.

Rose encapsulated her talk with: “There is not just the beauty of perfection, but the beauty of life’s wholeness and fullness.” She shared photographs of her trip attesting to the beauty she found in her experience.

—Lois West, Rose Gordon, Marianne Furedi

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



TENT Special September Public Meeting:  
Launch preparation and information  
Wednesday September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 pm

A little something different is in store for you at this meeting. The format will be, *Ask the Board: what is TENT all about and what’s in it for me?* You may know that we plan to open for business on October 1st.

Many of you will already have volunteered and received volunteer training and have been screened with a background check. Others of you are right now working on membership, publicity, marketing, and fundraising.

Finally others will have joined by paying their membership dues ahead of opening day. But for those who need more information we are going to answer questions and have the usual good conversation, cookies and lemonade at Valverde Common House.

## INSURANCE – DON'T TURN AWAY YET!

Nobody loves it, everybody has to have it. Sometimes you have to have it because somebody else said so. (How dare they?) It's always better to have it if and when you need it.

In the next series of articles, I'll talk about the what, why and how much of different kinds of insurance and, I hope, take the edge off your least favorite purchase.

By this time in our lives, we all probably have the basics – auto, home, life and, if we've reached 65, some form of Medicare.

The state you live in requires that you buy auto insurance. Why? Because if you crash or just bend a fender on your car, you could cause injuries and/or financial harm to somebody else. I know, you don't intend to do that. Me neither, but I've done it anyway — oops. We know crashes happen and the “perps” hardly ever intend to cause them. Within your required auto policy, there are decisions you get to make about what and how much coverage to have. More on that later.

If you have a home with a mortgage, the mortgage company requires you to have insurance on the structure. Why? Because they have a financial interest in your home. If it's damaged or destroyed (by any number of perils listed in your policy), they need to get the mortgage paid off or the home rebuilt and the mortgage payments continued. Again, you get to make decisions about many of the details of coverage. Later . . .

There are other less-basic, but equally-important types of insurance that, if you don't have them, could make you very unhappy if certain tragedies occur. This could include life insurance, disability (if you're still working), personal articles, personal liability umbrella, landlord (for rental properties) and others. Your insurance agent's job is to ask you questions about your life situation and to provide some education with facts, figures and more questions to help you understand your needs and what you can do about them. You get

to decide (1) what your risks are, (2) what risks you are willing to pay for yourself and what risks you want your insurance company to pay for and (3) if you get insurance, what coverages and amounts you want in your policy. Now you get to balance your educated guesswork with your bankbook.

So there's a common-sense overview for you. Next article will be about your car insurance.

— Nancy Ewing, Retired, State Farm Insurance

## PREPARE FOR YOUR CARE

University of California has a program [PrepareForYourCare.org](http://PrepareForYourCare.org)

for elders to prepare for the care that we might need as we become less able to care for ourselves. They have a nice web site complete with videos to explain and encourage you to prepare. They have forms for you to record your choices and help you discuss your decisions with your family and medical providers. The material is available in Spanish as well as English.

The preparation process is divided into simple, yet helpful steps:

1. Choose a medical decision maker
2. Decide what matters most in life
3. Chose flexibility for your decision maker
4. Tell others about your medical wishes
5. Ask doctors the right questions

The process can be done alone with the help of the forms and videos. It can also be done in a group, with a toolkit for group movie events. A group of my neighbors are working through this preparation together, spread over a couple of months. I have personally worked through and filled the forms.

The forms help with documenting your choices as you work through the preparation. They also include an Advanced Directive that is specific to New Mexico and available in either Spanish or English.

I strongly recommend this.

## A Big ‘Thank You’

TENT recently received two grants from generous Taos organizations. Taos Milagro Rotary awarded us \$1,000 at a breakfast meeting on 16 June, presented to Bette Myerson and Jim Ludden by Yale Jones. The Unitarian Congregation of Taos awarded \$400 to TENT about the same time.

These two grants will help us get started by October 2018.

— Jim Ludden

## Volunteer Update

Hello current and future TENT Volunteers!

Some of you, who had expressed interest in Volunteering for Taos Elders and Neighbors Together, have already gotten telephone calls and or emails from me asking if you are still on board and if you could help us in our gearing-up-for-launch process. I asked if you’d make the same sort of calls to our wider volunteer circle to see if the people who signed up with us over a year ago are still committed to our goal; additionally do they know of Taoseños who would benefit from membership in TENT and be interested in signing up as TENT members.

We’ve had great support from a number of people who have been helping us develop and grow—in no particular order: Paul Richard, our valiant editor; Terry Thompson, photographer extraordinaire; Debbie Branom, publicity; Margery Reading, community outreach advisor; Lois West, reporter and photographer; Rhonda Wyche, outreach & recruitment wonder; Nancy Ewing, wordsmith; Jack Barrett, connections... Thank you to the aforementioned—and a special thanks to all my telephone & email respondents for your good will and good humor! So, readers of *inTENTions*—be prepared for this next stage in our “growth and development”—and expect contact! We look forward to getting to know you better and being available to give and receive support.

With the warmest and best wishes,  
Marianne Furedi

Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator,  
TENT Board Member, mfuredi@gmail.com

## At our next event . . . Prisca Winslow

My hope is by offering a brief experience of Awareness Through Movement® and sharing a few stories, we can have a conversation around how The Feldenkrais Method® can be useful in improving our ability to listen to and know ourselves and others. I have personally felt and observed in others how developing awareness and exploring choices of how we move and feel contributes to being more comfortable and independent regardless of how physically able or comfortable we actually are. Before we meet, as an introduction, a quote from Moshe Feldenkrais, 1904-1980:

*“I believe that the unity of mind and body is an objective reality. They are not just parts somehow related to each other, but an inseparable whole while functioning. A brain without a body could not think.”*

Prisca Winslow, like everyone else, began her life exploring movement. She has continued to do so through a variety of dance forms, Feldenkrais, and intermittently with intriguing and challenging forms of movement arts. In 1983, after she tried, for four years, other methods and therapies to heal from chronic ankle and back pain, The Feldenkrais Method quickly brought her to enjoy again what she has always loved... Dance. The process continues to be expansive and rewarding and she is excited to share her learning with others.

A Guild-Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner®, Prisca has presented Awareness Through Movement classes and workshops for performing artists, equestrians, athletes, and the general public since 1989. She enjoys an individual hands-on Functional Integration® practice in Taos and is the continuity Assistant Trainer for two Santa Fe Feldenkrais Practitioner Training Programs.

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Presentation to be held on July 12th, 2:30pm  
at 405 Valverde Commons Dr, Taos.