

May 5, 2020

To whom it may concern

Please accept this reference letter for Bay Area Older Adults (BAO). Several years ago I was diagnosed with a heart condition. I could not go walking or hiking by myself. My husband works a lot, all of our friends are gone, and we have no one else. I couldn't get out much or afford to go anywhere and eventually became very isolated. The more isolated I became the more depressed I got, a problem a lot of seniors face I learned.

A year ago I went online looking for anything I could do with people around my age and physical activity level. Then I found BAO. They have cultural events, educational lectures, and walks/hikes of different levels. It helps get me out of my isolation, stay active, and have other people to socialize with.

After my open heart surgery last summer, it was important for me to exercise to get back in shape. With BAO programs, someone walks with me so I can safely recover and build my strength.

Even though I cannot go at the same pace as everyone else, someone will always stay with me. One day I could not go very far. Someone walked back with me to make sure I was okay and stayed until the rest of the group got back. The next day someone actually checked on me! There is genuine concern for how I am doing and shows me there really are people out there who still care.

Since then I have continued to participate in BAO classes including laughter yoga and meditation classes. It is through the BAO classes that I came to participate in a meditation group, made some new friends and found new ways to occupy my day. While there is no quick fix for depression or isolation, BAO has truly helped me help myself, become more engaged, active and social.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marie Manning". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marie Manning