BAY AREA OLDER ADULTS (BAO) STORIES, QUOTES AND PHOTOS

Two Shirleys' Story

I was a hike leader in the sweep position for a two-mile walk, one mile of gradual uphill to a panoramic viewpoint and one mile back. Two walkers, Shirley age 79, and Shirley age 85, trudged beside me as we started out on the trail. As we started to climb, one Shirley turned toward me and said, "Anne, you didn't tell us there was going to be a big hill. Look at this hill. We are never going to make it. Aren't we better off going back now? "I promised that I would walk with them, no matter their pace or how often they wanted to stop. "Let's just try it and if you want to turn around at any point, I will take you back." As we walked slowly up the hill, we stopped about every 15 minutes, drank some water, and rested. Time slipped by as we walked and chatted, and I learned their stories of childhoods spent in the Valley of the Hearts Delight. On the way, I learned that Shirley85 had smoked for more than 50 years and had emphysema. I was impressed that she was walking so well. We enjoyed the conversation and the shade of the redwoods. When we made it to the top of the hill and met the rest of the walkers, we did a little jig and took a victory photo for posterity.

Quotes from participants:

"I enjoy having the organized walks to look forward to and as a result of the regular walking, I have become more active in my daily life." —*Lisa*

"BAO has added a dimension to my life that I was lacking. Belonging to BAO has had the effect of feeling like there was a place I could go where "everybody knew my name," like a family. It has become a vital part of the community of people I've come to know. It fills my calendar...my mind...and my heart." —*Sally*

"By regularly participating in the walking programs offered by Bay Area Older Adults, I have successfully lost 20 pounds. I have also brought down my sugar numbers significantly and am now considered to be pre-diabetic." —*Rosa*

"I don't like hiking by myself and so being with the group has motivated me to get out, exercise and enjoy the fresh air. BAOA gets me to go out to parks that I would not visit on my own. BAOA has given me an opportunity to be with a great group of friendly people and I have been made aware of the open space and park system." —*Anne*

"BAO programs are important to me because they keep me hiking outdoors and socially engaged. As I have gotten older, motivating myself to get out socially is more difficult but BAO makes this easy. I probably would not be hiking if I hadn't signed up with BAO." —*Barbara*

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A collage of photos taken from BAO hikes over the years.

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