Celebrating Mexican Independence Day â?? at a mostly Asian senior center?

Description

OUR COLUMNS

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â??We love celebrating everyoneâ??s holiday. The ethnicities really mix here,â?• said Flordeliza Nagar, left, with her friend Betty So. (Photos by Judy Goddess)

Most of the 60 or more seniors who regularly attend the OMI Senior Center are Asian, but that didnâ??t prevent Tiffany Huynh, the program coordinator, from organizing a celebration for Mexican Independence Day.

Five, maybe 10 of our members are Latino, but everyone enjoys celebrations,â?• Huynh said.

â??We love celebrating everyoneâ??s holiday. The ethnicities really mix here,â?• said Flordeliza Nagar, one of the regulars and a Filipina. â??We celebrate so many holidays: Filipino Independence

Day, African-American holidays, Chinese New Year, Filipino New Year, Christmas, July 4, and every month there are birthdays with cake and a party.â?•

The center celebrated Mexican Independence Day on Sept. 14. The large community room was decorated with Mexican paper banners, while sombreros and miniature Mexican flags graced the tables. Lunch was fajitas, black beans and tortillas.

Huynh had recruited a speaker to talk about the holiday and had translated his material into a fact sheet in Chinese for those who wanted more information.

After lunch and the presentation, volunteers and staff dished out Mexican party food: taco chips, salsa and guacamole.

Unlike some senior centers where there are two distinct crowds â?? the lunch crowd and those who only participate in the activities â?? most of the seniors at OMI stay for the full day, with a large number volunteering their services as lunchtime aides.

The sombreros, flags, and cut-outs will soon be stored away as the center prepares for the Moon Festival on Tuesday, Sept. 25. â??Weâ??ll have dances and costumes. It will be really special,â?• Huynh said.

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Scanning Those Memories

San Francisco Community Living Campaign staffers help seniors at the I. T. Bookman Center scan their important photos, old greeting cards and other documents into digital images.

On Friday Sept. 14, the San Francisco Community Living Campaign held a scanning event for seniors at the I. T. Bookman Center. Participants waited their turn to scan photos, family recipes and greeting cards from long-gone friends and relatives. Willie and Tommie Collie sat together as they scanned 80

photos to present to their grandson on his 18th birthday. When asked if she was going to print the photos, Willie held up the flash drive: â??Iâ??m just going to give this thing to him; kids know how to use it,â?• she said.

The organizationâ??s next free scanning event will be on Nov. 7, 1 â?? 4 p.m. at the Ocean View Library, 345 Randolph St. Everyone â?? young and old â?? is invited. Even some three-dimensional objects can be scanned.

The OMI Food Network

Volunteers power the OMI Food Network. Every Wednesday morning by 8 a.m., a stalwart and cheery group of eight to 10 volunteers arrive at the I. T. Bookman Center, ready to unload, pack and deliver the groceries trucked to the center by the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank.

â??Weâ??re almost at capacity,â?• said Deb Glen, OMI food network organizer. â??We have 78 households on our grocery delivery list and we can deliver to 80.â?•

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Top row left to right: Reggie Williams, Johnnie Evans, Saralyn Archie and Leroy Lindo. Bottom row left to right: Dante Glen, Scott Craig, Ned Reese, William Reese and Deb Glen.

Food and delivery are free to any low-income neighborhood resident not on another food program who is still able to prepare meals or who has a caregiver who cooks, but has problems standing in line and shopping. Proof of residence and income is required to participate.

Fruit, bread, potatoes, onions and, vegetables are always included in the grocery bags. On occasion, the Food Bank delivers cookies, sandwich meats, or other treats are included. And then thereâ??s

always something more.

â??We donâ??t only deliver food, we deliver friendship,â?• said Saralynn Archie, a longtime volunteer who looks forward to seeing all the families on her route. â??I know them; theyâ??re my friends and the parents of my friends. Iâ??ve been visiting their kitchens for a long time.â?•

If you know someone you think may be eligible for the food program, contact Deb Glen at 415-846-7717.

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