

Cecil Bernstein

“The Senior Center gave me hope, it made me feel that I was still a viable person, that I could still help people. When I come here I have quality of life.”

— *Cecil Bernstein*



CECIL BERNSTEIN

Cecil Bernstein, 90, has worked as a volunteer at the Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center for more than eight years. Bernstein is quick to tell anyone who asks, “the Senior Center saved my life.”

“Things in my life were not going well, there were a lot of problems,” she said. “I called a crisis center and told them I wanted to end my life.”

As part of the center’s intervention Bernstein was referred to the SCV Senior Center.

Today, Bernstein, volunteers at the Senior Center five days a week, four hours a day. She greets visitors, passes out information, signs seniors up for the lunch and health programs and performs dozens of other tasks that help the Senior Center run smoothly.

“When I came here, I told them to keep me busy,” she said. Robin Clough, SCV Senior Center Volunteer & Recreation Coordinator, found plenty of work for Bernstein.

“Boy, does she keep me busy. She keeps me busy every minute,” she said. “She did save my life.”

Bernstein, a former junior high school office manager, volunteered for educational nonprofits in the San Fernando Valley for 16 years prior to retirement and her move to the Santa Clarita Valley.

Returning to volunteer activities was a significant factor in improving her quality of life.

In addition to her other duties, Bernstein is the cashier coordinator and totals up volunteer time sheets each month, as well as keeping track of the daily cash.

When Bernstein turned 90 she asked her doctors if she should “slow up.”

“They told me, no, no, keep doing what you’re doing,” she said. “My primary doctor told me, this is why you are still alive, keep going. So I’m keeping going.”

Bernstein is very enthusiastic in giving the Senior Center high marks.

“This center has brought life to so many people,” she said. “I’ve registered a lot of people who come in here depressed. But this is where you come to get away from loneliness and to keep your brain active.

There’s music, you make friends and you can forget your problems for awhile.”

In addition, Bernstein said the Senior Center “offers something for everyone.”

“If you can’t find something here, I don’t know where you’re going to find it,” she said.

Bernstein is the mother of three children and has six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

The Senior Center gave me hope, it made me feel that I was still a viable person, that I could still help people,” she said. “When I come here I have quality of life.”