

**Senior Living and Senior Care in Baba
Workshop at the L.A. Sahavas
July 3, 2005**

Facilitated by Sam Ervin and Margaret Magnus

Present: 12 people; see list at end with contact information.

Introduction

Interest in issues of senior living and senior care has been growing among Baba lovers. This interest appears to arise from the aging of the “baby boomer” generation of Baba lovers and their parents as well as the increasing awareness of the need for housing and service provisions of aging members of our Baba family. A detailed article on the subject by Bridget Robinson appeared in the January, 2005 issue of the Love Street Lamp Post, and the Meher Baba Senior Care website provides a forum and chats for those who wish to connect or communicate on the subject:

The goal for this workshop is to discuss the levels and types of concerns about senior living/senior care, to identify some possible answers or approaches and to identify people in this group who would like more information or to connect with others who are working on this.

Major Systems

We discussed some of the major systems that affect well-being and quality of life as we age, and particularly if there is disability and/or chronic illness that limits activities or overburdens resources. These systems include **Housing, Medical/Healthcare, Transportation and Social Services.**

It was generally agreed that thoughtful planning will help in preparing one for these issues, and with the overall concern of how to optimize the personal, governmental and local community resources available. Other key points and ideas included:

There is a general interest in what is happening among Baba lovers nationwide and even worldwide regarding senior living/ senior care.

When considering where to retire to, if a move is contemplated, one might want to check on the availability of services in case of a temporary or permanent disability. This would include things like wheelchair ready transportation, home delivered meals, therapy and rehab programs, in-home services including personal care and homemaker services, shopping services, etc.

Long term care insurance was discussed. It was generally thought to be a good idea, though not affordable to all. It was noted it's best to buy it when healthy, and probably on the

younger side, like 50-60, because it'll be cheaper and if you know you'll need it, or already need it, no-one will sell it to you.

For people 65 or older, Medicare HMOs offer the most benefits, and at modest cost. Where a Social HMO is available, they offer more benefits, especially home and community based services, than other Medicare HMOs. SCAN Health Plan is the only one in California, and other Social HMOs operate in New York City, the Portland, Oregon area and in parts of Nevada.

Anyone eligible for Medicaid should be sure and enroll as soon as possible, as it covers much of what Medicare does not.

If you are eligible for Medicare, be sure and sign up for a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan when open enrollment starts this Fall. Shop for the plan that seems to best fit your needs.

Local senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging and United Ways are good sources of information on a variety of programs and services.

Affordable housing is a big concern. A general preference for having housing available near a major Baba center, like Myrtle Beach or maybe Mariposa or the Heartland Center was expressed. It was suggested housing prices are probably too high around Meher Mount or Meherabode. Pooling resources for several people to rent or buy a larger place might make it more affordable.

In the January issue of the Love Street Lamp Post, Keith Gunn responds to Bridget Robinson's article by suggesting India may be a place for both Indian and non-Indian Baba Lovers to consider developing retirement housing complexes. He discusses locations, climates and amenities that could be appealing and affordable.

A survey on location for senior housing was suggested – where would the most Baba lovers want to have it available?

There may not be enough Baba people wanting pooled or congregate housing in one location for some years to come to justify purchase and maintenance, let alone provision of in-home services. One concept would be to offer housing that is organized and operated by Baba lovers on a non profit basis along lines attempting to reflect Baba values, yet offer housing not only to Baba lovers but to all, as we understand the White Pony Schools operate.

Bring Baba's "selfless service" to care giving.

It was suggested a Baba related Foundation could set up an annuity program, in which one makes a large donation and the Foundation pays you an actuarially determined amount based on that donation for the rest of your life.

Baba lovers in a community could organize a “service bank”, in which one “banks” redeemable service “dollars” in exchange for services one provides to others who need assistance of various kinds.

Resources:

The Meher Baba Senior Care Website is at www.quicktopic.com/28/h/yjgartjufdj. Check out current discussions and future chats.

Ron Festine, former Area Agency on Aging Director in Northern California, is compiling a postal and E-mail list of people interested in Senior Housing issues. He is especially interested in connecting with editors of local Baba Group Newsletters, and he can be reached at rfestine@mac.com,

New in Los Angeles County, and a growing number of places around the country, dial 211 for information on a long list of services in the region. In Los Angeles County, Info-Line is a free directory of just about all services in the region. Community Connection is a new LA County website that will help you search for services of all kinds.

AARP offers the “CARES” program.

Book: 36 Hour Day

Alzheimers Association – local chapters.

www.benefitscheckup.org. This is run by National Council on Aging, and helps one determine nearly all government benefits for which aging individual may be eligible.

“For the rest of human history, there are going to be more older people than young...”
-Dr. Joel Cohen, Professor of Populations, Rockefeller and Columbia Universities

“If you don’t want to be old before your time, be cheerful in deed and word and in appearance—most of all in appearance. It is a divine art to look cheerful, it helps others.”
-Avatar Meher Baba

Workshop Participants who lovingly shared their thoughts and concerns in Beloved Baba’s atmosphere, and expressed interest in more information on Senior Living and Senior Care in Baba’s Love.

Lewis Stickford & Nancy Landolt
Margit Wypyszyk
Georgene Tarbox
Romney Meyran
Margaret Magnus & Sam Ervin

Marcus Swearingen
Mehernoush and Kerry McPhersonkk
Esther Matison
Sarah Dwyer