

A Life Well Lived

An excerpt from "Supercentenarian with Style" by Ree Slocum, published in Willits Weekly, February 10, 2022

Edie Ceccarelli's parents, Agostino and Maria Recagno, emigrated from Italy to Willits and on February 5, 1908, Edith "Edie" became the first child in what turned out to be a family of seven children.

One story about the children's early life that bears repeating was told to this reporter last week by her trustee, Evelyn Persico, wife of Lee Persico, one of Ceccarelli's second cousins:

"Edie used to talk about when they were young and the valley was in agriculture. [Farmers] used to grow potatoes then. Her brothers and sisters would walk out into the fields and dig potatoes for 50 cents a day. They'd bring that money home to their mother. They just felt a lot of pride in helping out with expenses."

Ceccarelli went to grammar school and high school in Willits and graduated in 1927. She found work in a few places around Ukiah and later attended a business college in Eureka. She worked two years in Humboldt County using her business education at a poultry producer then returned to Willits to be with her family and friends, including Brick Keenan, her high school sweetheart.

She worked in Willits for a short time before being employed by the County Recorder's Office in Ukiah. During that time, she stayed with and helped the Eversole family from the Eversole Mortuary, trading her help for room and board. The Eversoles are lifelong friends.

Keenan was in Willits at that time and proposed to the love of his life. They married at the Eversoles' home on November 17, 1933. Soon the couple moved to Santa Rosa when Keenan procured a job at the Press Democrat as a typesetter. They stayed there for 36 years, raising their adopted daughter and making friends, which was easy for Ceccarelli because "she absolutely loved people," Persico said.

Keenan retired in 1971 and the couple moved back to Willits to be with family and friends. Also, Ceccarelli didn't like how big Santa Rosa was getting. In 1984, Keenan passed away, breaking her heart. In 1986, she married Charles Ceccarelli, who died four years later.

Ceccarelli developed a fondness for walking downtown every day, greeting store owners and visiting friends. She was known for "dressing up to the nines" daily, including makeup and jewelry.

The pride and generosity she learned in helping out her family when she and her siblings dug potatoes continued into her later life and extended to her Willits community. "She was a benefactor in a lot of organizations: the hospital foundation, church, Kid's Club, Senior Center, Daily Bread. Lots of them," said Persico, who is now managing Ceccarelli's donations.

Ceccarelli is also known to have helped individuals she befriended in the community with loans or monetary gifts.

Another endearing story was told by Persico and happened when Ceccarelli lived many years on Spruce Street, one of the ways children walked to Brookside School. "The kindergartners and preschoolers walked past Edie's with their moms. Edie would be outside and loved to watch the kids and talk to them. The moms would stop and talk with her, too. She had this little dresser in the back bedroom with a drawer full of things from the dollar store that kids would be drawn to. She'd ask the parents if kids could go in to pick something to take with them. She was a staunch supporter of kids." Many reading this may remember the beautiful and kind older woman who gave them little gifts on their way home from school.

Is there a formula for longevity? A search-engine inquiry will turn up lots of anecdotal information and some scientific research.

Are there any secrets to Ceccarelli's long life? Here are a few quotes and thoughts: "Her [Italian] genes are amazing!" Jill Persico; "Edie was always so healthy and just radiates! She's always been young for her age," Evelyn Persico; she was

known for dancing Read the rest of Birthday Over on Page 4



FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Edie to Celebrate #116

Birthday upcoming on February 5 for Willits woman, who is second-oldest verified living person in the world

Edie Ceccarelli, the eldest person in Willits, in California, and in the United States of America, is also the second-oldest verified living person in the world, and will celebrate her 116th birthday on February 5.

A drive-by parade for the community to celebrate her birthday is set for Sunday, February 4, starting at 1 pm.

To join the parade, go straight at the stop sign at Haehl Creek Drive and Grove Street. Take a left on Grove Street and continue to Edie's address of 414 Grove Street, which will be on your right-hand side.

Drive through with a decorated car (signs, streamers, balloons, flags). Wave as you pass her house to wish her a happy birthday!

Organizers remind the public to please make sure to stay behind the boundary as not to crowd Edie, and to allow her to see the parade, and the parade to see her.

This event is hosted by the Holy Spirit Residential Care Home and the Frank R. Howard Foundation.



Above: Evelyn Persico smiles from behind Edie Ceccarelli, on Monday, January 29, just a few days ahead of Edie's 116 birthday on February 5.

— Maureen Jennison

Photo by Maureen Jennison



Photos by Maureen Jennison



Above, left: Edie Ceccarelli poses in 2023 for her annual pre-birthday portrait by photographer Maureen Jennison. Above right: Edie smiles on her 115th birthday last year as she watches the parade held in her honor.



The easier way to better health.
it only takes enjoying each bite.

Discover how mindful eating is one of the 9 ways to live a healthier life.



SCAN ME

BROUGHT TO MENDOCINO COUNTY BY ADVENTIST HEALTH

mendocinocounty.bluezonesproject.com



REDWOOD MEADOWS

Senior Apartment Community

1475 Baechtel Road | Willits, CA 95490

AVAILABLE NOW:

2 one-bedroom units • 1 two-bedroom unit
• 1 studio unit •

Call now: 707-459-1616

ABOUT AWARENESS IN BODY - MIND - SOUL

Submitted by **Claudia Wenning**
of **Quantum Level Health**

How do we increase awareness about what we need, so that we can live a life in vital balance, fulfillment and joy?

We say that we are spiritual beings – manifested and manifesting in this realm.

We say that we want to love ourselves and each other.

What does this mean for us individually and collectively – and how do we do this?

Do we walk through the day with a bounce in our step, with a clear mind, with passion and purpose and with lightness in our heart?

We are the ones who can adjust the Matrix – we can focus on choices available, rather than focus on circumstances beyond our reach.

We have choices to enhance the quality of our lives.

It is a matter of exercising this freedom of choice:

For the Body:

We choose the food we eat, and the food we take into our body will become the building blocks for our always renewing biochemical structure. We become – and then are – what we eat.

What are our food choices, what are the qualities we would like to take into our physical body?

For the Mind:

We think a thought first, and then we may or may not voice it or act on it, but the thought process alone makes it already part of our mental fabric, of our mental body.

We shape our mental reality through our thoughts.

What if we could disengage from thought patterns that do not serve us anymore?

For the Soul:

We feel emotions and these naturally tend to emote outward from within us.

Whatever we feel, we feel it first before it becomes outward expression.

It has already been part of our emotional "Gestalt," our emotional body.

What if we could disentangle from emotions that keep us in a state of imbalance?

We can invest in change, and the change starts with us.

We can explore new tools and techniques and also get advice from professionals.

Claudia Wenning - Quantum Level Health, (707) 371-6103, www.claudiawenning.com



First 5 Mendocino Hosts Children's Mental Health Conference

Submitted by **First 5 of Mendocino**

Ukiah, California – On March 6 and 7, First 5 Mendocino will host its annual two-day children's mental health summit, "State of the Child," at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center. The free event provides an opportunity for Mendocino County professionals who work with foster youth, foster parents, child caregivers, and community members to engage with nationally recognized and local presenters to gain valuable insights into children's mental health, trauma-informed care, and strategies for promoting resilience in children and youth.

The event will feature keynote presentations, interactive sessions, and networking opportunities, providing a comprehensive platform for learning, collaboration, and professional development. The March 6 agenda will focus on how to support foster children and those at risk of entering the foster care system. The March 7 agenda will offer training for foster parents and caregivers, as well as professionals who work closely with foster youth and their families.

Distinguished presenters include:

Dr. Tina Payne Bryson

Dr. Bryson is a renowned psychotherapist, speaker, and best-selling author who specializes in child development, neuroscience, and parenting. She is the co-author of numerous acclaimed books, including NY Times bestsellers "The Whole-Brain Child" and "No-Drama Discipline," which have revolutionized the way parents and professionals understand and support children's emotional and cognitive development. Dr. Bryson will provide a full-day, interactive learning experience on Wednesday, March 6 titled, "The Power of Showing Up."

Dr. MaryCatherine McDonald

With a wealth of experience as a research professor, author, life coach, and advocate for trauma-informed care, Dr. McDonald brings a unique blend of academic insight and practical wisdom to the summit. Her work focuses on empowering individuals and communities to destigmatize trauma, build resilience, and foster mental well-being. Dr. McDonald will present the opening keynote address on March 7 titled, "Unbroken: The Trauma Response Is Never Wrong," which includes practical strategies for healing from trauma and integrating traumatic experiences in healthier ways.

Georgie Wisen-Vincent

Wisen-Vincent is the current director of the PlayStrong Institute. She is a leading expert in Play Therapy, child development, and mental health, and a dedicated advocate for the needs of children and families. With a passion for promoting holistic approaches to mental health, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the summit. She will speak on resilience-building play, offering hands-on tools for implementing play with children.

Gaelin Elmore

Elmore brings a unique perspective to the summit. As a former NFL football player who overcame significant challenges while growing up in the foster care system, he draws from his personal journey to deliver a compelling presentation titled, "The Power of Choosing Belonging." He focuses on the profound impacts of supportive relationships and the impact "belonging" has on the mental and emotional well-being of children. His inspirational story and insights offer a meaningful testament to the transformative power of resilience, connection, and the human spirit.

If you work with foster youth in a professional capacity in Mendocino County and would like to attend the conference, which is part of First 5's "State of the Child" Training Series, you can register by emailing megan@first5mendo.org.



At left: Tina Tedeschi and Sara Grusky are set up at the Mobile Apothecary for consultations. Above: Herbalist and farmer Sara Grusky of Green Uprising Farm and the Mendocino Community Wellness Collective offers herbal remedy advice at the Farmers Market. At right: This sign outside the entrance to the Farmers Market welcomes people to ask questions and receive consultations on the use of herbs.



Mobile Apothecary

Local herbalists and alternative medicine practitioners offer free consultations at Farmers Market and from their trailer that travels throughout Mendocino County

Mendocino Herb Guild and their offshoot, the Mendocino Community Wellness Collective have partnered together to form groups of practitioners of alternative medicine to educate people on the efficacy and use of herbs.

The Mendocino Community Wellness Collective has recently purchased and outfitted a trailer, a "Mobile Apothecary" with the aim of bringing their knowledge of herbal remedies to all corners of the county.

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

"This is the culmination of a lot of people and organizations' work over a number of years," explained herbalist and farmer Sara Grusky. "It's a project that is a mobile herbal clinic that moves around to different places in the county, places where people gather that don't necessarily have easy access to a lot of health care services."

"We've been at food banks. We've been at the Episcopal Church when they're doing the Willits Daily Bread food program there. We were at the Senior Center for a while. We were at the Food Bank in Laytonville at Harwood Hall. We were at the Feed Store in Laytonville. They are a hub since Geiger's closed down. They have a farm stand there. We were there for part of the summer. We've been here at the Little Lake Grange at the Farmers Market for two months."

"Because it's winter and it seems to be raining about four days of every week, and it's cold, we're inside for the winter. We're looking for other places to set up as well, if people would like to host us. We've been responding to invitations. During the summer we went to some Big Time events with the tribes. We really are open to going wherever we might be invited, where people feel there is an interest and a need for herbal medicine."

Currently, setting up their indoor clinic just in front of the doors to the Willits Farmers Market on Thursdays, the Wellness Collective, offers "free herbal teas, blood pressure testing, free herbal consultations where you can sit down and have a full intake," continued Grusky. "We have short slots that are about 15 minutes and we have 45-minute appointments for a complete herbal intake."

"We have a wide range of volunteers that include herbalists, that include people trained in various herbal traditions, in traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, and in Western eclectic herbalism. So, there's a lot of different schools of herbalism. Then we have people who are naturopathic doctors, like Claudia Wenning, and osteopathic doctors. We have a lot of volunteers and support from people who cut across several different herbal traditions."

Prana, who works with the Wellness Collective, as well as the Grateful Gleaners, and can be seen in the upcoming

production of "The Rocky Horror Show" at the Willits Community Theatre, likes the accessibility of herbs.

"Anyone can grow their own medicine in their backyard," Prana said. "There are a lot of plants that we can grow here in Mendocino County that have a wide variety of medicinal purposes as well as wild plants that we can harvest, for building strength, for fighting bacteria, for calming. The California State Flower is the California poppy. All parts of that plant have medicinal properties."

The Mendocino Community Wellness Collective is not a group of weekend hobbyists. Several of them have studied their craft for several years and have matriculated from various specific courses.

Autumn Whitaker is a certified clinical herbalist. "I did two years of the initial program down at the California School of Herbal Studies. Then I was part of an advanced clinic program for two years."

Prana studied at the California School of Herbal Studies in Forestville. "I also did the East-West Herb Program which is Michael Tierra's school. I studied here in town with Beth Riedel. In addition to her herb walks, for a while she was teaching body systems, the endocrine, vascular, respiratory, and medicines that were good for those."

All the members have extensive knowledge on the subject of herbs and are willing to share that education with others.

The Wellness Collective and the Herb Guild are part of a larger international organization, Herbalists Without Borders, "which is an amazing organization," explained Grusky, "that provides free herbal medicine to community groups through donations from some of the big herbal and wellness companies. We get medicines from them and we also got a grant from the Community Foundation [of Mendocino County], who has been supporting us to do this work."



Above: Prana, of the Mendocino Community Wellness Collective, pours a cup of herbal tea for Ree Slocum. At left: Sonja Marie Burgal answers questions from a Farmers Market attendee. Below, left: A poster board gives a short primer on the medicinal plants of the area. Below, right: An herbal tea of Hawthorne berry, tulsi, lemon balm, ginger and lemon is available for free.

Photos by Mathew Caine

Founder of Caring Kitchen leaves NCO after 36 years

Submitted by **North Coast Opportunities, Inc.**

April Cunningham, founder of Caring Kitchen, a program that delivers nutritious meals to individuals and families facing cancer while providing community teenagers the opportunity to learn about nutrition, retired from North Coast Opportunities on January 18 after 36 years of service.

"I'm going to really miss working [at NCO]," Cunningham said. "I love my job. It made a big difference in my life."

Cunningham said she was thankful to finish her time with NCO at Caring Kitchen. The opportunity it provided her to make connections with amazing people and to positively impact the community was extremely rewarding, she said.

Caring Kitchen is a CERES Project affiliate program, and Cunningham, and co-founder Tarney Sheldon founded the program six years ago after attending a training offered by the CERES Project in Sebastopol.

Cunningham said the reason she co-founded the project was because of her belief in the idea that food is medicine. She said her experience cooking meals for close friends who were in the midst of medical crises and witnessing the positive effect nutritious meals had on them solidified this belief for her.

Over six years, the program has provided roughly 2,400 meals to 600 patients and their families while educating 120 teen volunteers, according to Allegra Foley, the project manager of Community Wellness Ukiah.

Representatives from the Cancer Resource Centers of Mendocino County said they spoke on behalf of all the patients the meals had helped when they expressed their overflowing gratitude for Cunningham's work at her retirement party.

Cunningham said one of the stories that stuck with her most was from a woman who opened her Caring Kitchen delivery to find a flower Cunningham left on all summer food deliveries. The woman said that just the fact that the flower was on the meal made her realize she should make an effort to eat it because it was clear that so much love had gone into preparing it.

"I cook with my eyes," Cunningham said. "It has to be appealing because [cancer] patients often struggle to eat."

Cunningham started working for NCO in 1988 as a cook for NCO's Head Start Child Development Program before eventually becoming the food program coordinator for the program.

As program coordinator, she oversaw Head Start's expansion from six to 13 locations and wrote a curriculum called "Food for Thought" designed to teach preschool children math, science, and literacy through food. The California Department of Education published this curriculum and integrated it into children's education throughout the state.

Working with Head Start was "very fun," Cunningham said. "I was very passionate about helping children by changing their eating habits, and now I do the same thing for cancer patients."

Cunningham worked at Head Start for 25 years and then helped local individuals, organizations, and schools access and prepare local produce through a series of farm to fork and farm to school grants before starting Caring Kitchen.

"April's contribution to providing nourishing foods to young and old across Mendocino County is a beautiful legacy," NCO CEO Patty Bruder said. "Her focus and dedication to teaching others about the healing nature of food will be felt for generations to come."

Cunningham said she is leaving Caring Kitchen in good hands with the remaining four members of her team and the nearly 50 volunteers that make the organization run.

"I have so much respect for our volunteers," Cunningham said. "I have so much confidence in them... They make (the program) run. Their commitment makes it move forward."

NCO is the Community Action Agency that serves Lake and Mendocino counties, as well as parts of Humboldt, Sonoma, Del Norte, and Solano counties. NCO reacts and adjusts to community needs, including disaster response and recovery.

For more information visit www.ncoinc.org or call (707) 467-3200.

Hospice of Ukiah

Community Supported Hospice & Palliative Care

Your donations help more than you know...

For over 40 years, we have provided professional end of life and comfort care to our community, all free of charge and unrestricted. We can do this because of **your** generosity.

We would like to keep going for another 40 years. With your support [we will](http://www.hospiceofukiah.com).

It's easy to donate online! www.hospiceofukiah.com

hospiceofukiah.com 620 S. Dora St., Suite 101, Ukiah, CA 95482

Providing Quality Primary Care to all ages of the people of Northern Mendocino County Since 1978

LONG VALLEY HEALTH CENTER

Medical • Dental • Behavioral Health • Chiropractic
Telehealth • Case Management • Transportation

50 Branscomb Road, Laytonville
707-984-6131
www.longvalley.org

Don't Forget Valentine's Day
February 14

See's Candy available at the Senior Center.

To order and make arrangements for pick call 459-6826.
1501 BAECHTEL RD. • WILLITS

It's important to take care of your health, and that starts with understanding your health risks and recommended screenings at each stage of life.

WOMEN'S HEALTH Healthy at Every Stage

Yearly visits are the best way to detect any changes in your health before they develop into bigger issues. We're here to care for you.

MCHC HEALTH CENTERS
HILLSIDE | DORA ST | LITTLE LAKE | LAKEVIEW

(707) 456-9600
LITTLE LAKE HEALTH CENTER
45 HAZEL STREET, WILLITS
mchcinc.org

We accept Medi-Cal, Medicare, Partnership and other insurance. MCHC HEALTH CENTERS IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Howard Hospital Environmental Services team honored as 'Platinum Plus'

Submitted by **Adventist Health Howard Memorial**

Adventist Health Howard Memorial is excited to announce that the Environmental Services team has been named with the prestigious honor of being recognized and earning the status of "Platinum Plus" for their work cleaning Howard Memorial hospital each day. "Based on several criteria from this past fiscal year, ranging from patient experience, audit scores, safety ratings, and a budget analysis our team achieved this award."

With over 30 other hospitals in the region to be considered and over 200 other hospitals across the United States taken into account, Howard Memorial achieved this very high honor. "I want to thank everyone for their continued hard work in the EVS department as we're excited to share and celebrate with our team," said Danny Vitaine, Environmental Services manager for Howard Memorial.

Administrator Linda Givens echoed these sentiments, saying each time a bed is vacated, each room has to be carefully cleaned. She noted how amazingly fast, efficient, and well EVS turns over rooms that need to be fully cleaned so the hospital can make them available for a patient in need. "You make the difference, and every time we ready a room, I know you do a meticulous job to ensure the safety of our patients."

Adventist Health Howard Memorial is proud of the work the EVS team is doing to keep the hospital clean, running well, and safe, and so that patients see the work being put in each day as they enter the hospital. The team across Howard thanks them for all they do for their patients and community as they accept this prestigious award.

at community dances that she attended well into her 100s – at 104 she placed an ad in the paper that said she was looking for a dance partner; she enjoys red wine at dinner; she was known to walk in town every day until sometime before 107 when she moved to the care home; she was

enthusiastic with a positive attitude on life.

Whatever has helped this supercentenarian stay with us so long is an inspiration and testament to living a healthy, generously spirited and active life in a community of like-minded friends and family.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Harrah Senior Center Menu for February 2024 Lunch for All Ages			1 French Dip Au Jus Loaded Mashed Potatoes	2 Stuffed Peppers Rice Roll
5 Spaghetti W/ Meat Sauce Garlic Bread	6 Turkey Club Sub San. Pickle Chips 	7 Ground Beef Tacos Rice & Beans 	8 Sausage Pepperoni Olive Stromboli Green Salad	9 Ground Sirloin Mashed Potatoes Gravy Veggies/Roll
12 Cheese Burger Mac & Cheese Pickle	13 Fish Tacos Rice & Beans 	14 Beef Stroganoff Veggies Roll	15 Chicken Teriyaki Stir- Fry 	16 Lasagna W/ Meat Sauce Garlic Bread
19 Asian Chicken San. Coleslaw	20 Salisbury Steak Mashed Potatoes Veggies /Roll	21 Chicken Ala King Mashed Potatoes Roll	22 Philly Cheese Steak Chips 	23 Turkey Mashed Potatoes Cranberry Veggies/ Roll
26 Mushroom Burger Pickle Chips 	27 Turkey Tetrazzini 	28 Country Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes	29 Muenster Chicken W/ Mushrooms & Noodles	Lunch from 12 to 12:45 pm; \$8; 1501 Baechtel Road

YOGA | PILATES | ZUMBA | STRENGTH & MUCH MORE



FLOURISH & FLOW
 — MENDO —
 WELLNESS & FITNESS STUDIO

1726 S MAIN ST STE B., WILLITS, CA (707) 750-9515

Claudia Wenning
Quantum Level Health

Holistic
 Health Consultant
 PhD Natural Medicine,
 Traditional Naturopath
 Functional Medicine Practitioner,
 FMP

707-371-6103
 claudia@claudiawenning.com
 www.claudiiawenning.com

Lisa Mace, Movement Therapist
 Feldenkrais/Myofascial Release/Exercise

Specializing in Hands-on Health
 707-354-3717
 macemoving@gmail.com
 32 E. San Francisco Ave. Willits



You're made for living a happy, fulfilling life.

That's why we have top experts for all your healthcare needs, no matter your age or stage of life. We're proud to offer you more choices, expanded access and higher quality care in Mendocino County, as demonstrated by our Planetree Gold Certification for excellence in patient-centered care. We're not just here to put more years in your life, we're here to put more life in your years.

Services provided by Adventist Health Howard Memorial:

- Addiction Medicine
- General Surgery
- Orthopedics
- Pediatrics
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Primary Care

Learn more at AdventistHealthHowardMemorial.org

