

A Leader With Seniority

HEARTFELT DEDICATION TO THE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

BY JESSICA LASKEY
SHOPTALK

Suzanne Olson has one hectic schedule, but you wouldn't know it to talk to her. She's bright, chipper and sounds like she really loves her job as the executive director of sales and marketing for Eskaton, the largest nonprofit provider of senior services in the country.

"I've always had a heart for the nonprofit world," says Olson, a Sacramento native who made her start as the community development manager at the American Cancer Society before joining Eskaton seven years ago. "I really wanted to make a difference on a grand scale.

"Also, my grandfather had a stroke 20 years ago and was in rehab at an Eskaton facility. It was a really tough time for him but he had a great experience—the staff was amazing. Ever since then, Eskaton has had a very positive reputation in my eyes."

Now it's Olson's job to make sure that everyone who comes into contact with her employer has a similar impression. She oversees 19 salespeople, all of the strategic marketing campaigns and all of the advertising for Eskaton's 30-plus residential communities, and still manages to wake up early with her 14-month-old son.

"He's the reason I come to work every day," Olson says, then laughs and adds, "And yes, I live on Starbucks."

Olson sounds perfectly perky, however, when she's discussing



Suzanne Olson is the the executive director of sales and marketing for Eskaton

Eskaton's critical role in caring for America's aging population.

"Everybody, if we're lucky, is going to experience aging," Olson says. "It's something that's happening to us, all day, every day. Over the next 18 years, baby boomers will be turning 65 at a rate of about 8,000 a day.

"Eskaton has offered senior services for over 45 years, but it's our job now to figure out where we go next, to find out what this next generation wants in terms of care. About 95 percent of people in this

region want to age in place, which means they want to remain at home, so we have to continue to develop services to meet those needs."

The field of senior care has changed a lot in the past four and a half decades, both in terms of what kind of care clients want and what they can pay to secure it.

"Cost is a huge factor," Olson confirms. "People in the Silent Generation went through the Depression, so they have savings accounts and great retirement plans. Future generations are saving less

and less. Many don't have 401(k)s. So we're trying to figure out how to still give people the services they need at a lower price point."

Eskaton offers a variety of care options for its clients all over the Greater Sacramento region, including independent living for those who want an independent lifestyle but with the assurance of support if they need it; assisted living for those who need personalized assistance with daily living tasks in the privacy of their own apartments; memory care

for those suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's; rehabilitation and skilled nursing for those who require 24-hour care; and affordable housing options for older adults with limited incomes.

"It's been really fun to watch the industry grow and transition," Olson says. "We're a leader of care, but our nonprofit status is also a big deal. It allows us to really contribute our revenue back into the community. We don't answer to shareholders, so we can make business decisions that are best for the company and our residents and participants."

Are you or a loved one trying to figure out the next step in the aging process? Contact Eskaton at 334-0810 or visit eskaton.org. The Eskaton Administrative Center is at 5105 Manzanita Ave. in Carmichael. ■

IN TUNE FROM page 20

WANDERFUL TIME FOR MAGICIANS

Dinner patrons did some double-takes when spoons levitated and coins disappeared at neighboring dinner tables. It was not Harry Potter's night out. But magic was in the air at Pasquale's restaurant in Carmichael.

Master prestidigitator Kendrick (Ice) McDonald was in Sacramento for sold-out performances at the recent Old Sacramento Magic Festival. Also president of the Society of American Magicians, Los Angeles-based McDonald was feted by Sacramento brethren at the Carmichael dinner.

Tall, dark, mustachioed and immaculate, the award-winning magician performs all over the world.



Famed magician Kendrick "Ice" McDonald (center in jacket) meets fellow conjurers in Carmichael. Saluting the master were (from left) Diane and Allen Greenberg, Elaine and Dale Lorzo, and Debbie and Gary Berard.

He is a hot property in Las Vegas, on cruise ships and for movies. A "magician's magician," the maestro lectures and teaches internationally.

McDonald attempted no illusions at the local celebration in his honor. "It was our job to entertain him," said Sacramento performer Dale Lorzo. "Our guest of honor enjoyed a leisurely night out before three hectic days of performances in Old Sacramento.

"However, like the rest of us, Ice managed to make his plate of pasta disappear." ■

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