**KEVIN YOUNG**  805-637-2048

Community Partners in Caring, Santa Maria, CA

Interview: Jan. 26, 2024

1st draft sent: Jan. 30, 2024

2nd draft sent:  Feb. 1, 2024

FINAL: Feb. 12, 2024

Kevin has been a volunteer for Community Partners in Caring for three years. He drives seniors to medical appointments, shopping, or doing other errands with them one to two times a week. “There is a list on the website of seniors needing rides I can choose from, depending on my schedule. I usually spend 1 ½ hours on each trip. When I take them shopping, I go into the store and shop along with them, pushing the cart down the aisles, grabbing food items from the shelves, talking about each item, bantering with them, carrying the bags to my car, and bringing the bags into their house. Many use a cane or walker but can manage a shopping trip. I enjoy making a personal connection, improving their lives in a small way.”

Like many volunteers, Kevin’s motivation to help others is based on a value system that is rooted in service. He's been a family caregiver. He follows his religious beliefs. He wants to emanate positivity, and he practices leadership.

“There are four main reasons I volunteer. The first reason is to honor my mom’s memory, who passed away 2 years ago. During Covid, I moved in with her for a year as her primary caregiver. I could see how getting her out of the house and driving her around seeing the town was such a joy to her. Having someone who could drive her to shopping and appointments allowed her to stay in her house longer.

“The second reason for volunteering is my belief in karma. I use it as my moral compass and to guide my actions. I believe that when I do a good deed, it not only helps the world in a positive way now, but it also affects my future lives when I will be reborn as well. I’ve had a tremendously fortunate life, perhaps because of my past lives, and if I keep up beneficial actions, my future selves will also benefit.

“The third reason is my belief that helping others attracts good things in my life. The spiritual center I attend, [www.sbunity.org](http://www.sbunity.org/), teaches us that the Universe responds to your commands. You get what you put out there in terms of your thoughts, speech, and actions—you attract what you concentrate on. There is a spiritual connection to volunteering that makes me feel I am attracting all that is good in the world by acting in a good way.

“And finally, a fourth reason I volunteer is that I want to be a leader who ‘walks the walk and talks the talk’. I want to be the light in the world. I want to show my family how it is to help others, hoping they will, too. My kids, my friends, and my coworkers all see what I’m doing and maybe that will motivate them to help the world in their own way.”

Kevin mentioned he has also seen firsthand the impact of how illness can affect a family. “When my father died from lymphoma, I was at his bedside to help keep him calm and comfortable during his end time. Through my volunteering, I’ve become more compassionate and empathetic about seeing these seniors, some of whom are dealing with random, terrible diseases. Volunteering has become grounding for me, and I appreciate my good health even more.

“One memorable client I drive around has intestinal cancer that limits her diet to bland foods, yet when I take her shopping, she has a positive outlook and demeanor. What a lesson for me! I try to banter with her back and forth to keep her laughing and engaged. I know she doesn’t get out much. I take another client, who lives in my neighborhood, to physical therapy appointments as she battles back from surgery. While I have benefitted from a close and loving family, most people I drive around live alone without family to help them.”

Kevin is also on the board of directors of three nonprofits. At the Unity Spiritual Center of Santa Barbara, he helps manage finances and activities that help people’s spiritual growth and positive outlook. At Club West ([www.clubwesttrack.org](http://www.clubwesttrack.org/)) he helps support the running community in Santa Barbara by organizing track meets and running races for kids and adults. At Our Mesa Neighborhood, Inc. ([www.ourmesaneighborhoodinc.org](http://www.ourmesaneighborhoodinc.org/)), Kevin helps manage the neighborhood organization that improves the area where he lives, putting on events, cleanups, fundraisers, and meetings.

When Kevin isn’t working or volunteering, he takes two-month trips twice a year, exploring the mountain ranges of the world. He’s been an avid hiker since his father took him hiking and climbing in Switzerland at age 18. Fifty years later, he has explored the Pyrenees (completing the GR10 and 11 long-distance trails), the French Alps (GR5 trail from Lac Leman to the Mediterranean), the Swiss Alps (Chamonix to Zermatt, Altdorf to Gstaad…) Austrian Alps, the Italian Dolomites (AV 1-3, Merano Hohenweg), Patagonia (Torres del Paine, Fitzroy), and the Himalayas (Everest and Annapurna regions). Kevin’s wife Berni often joins him in the last few weeks of his trips, the last two times to do riverboat cruises on the Rhine and Danube rivers. “I usually hike and travel alone 80% of the time and maybe 20% of the time I hike with friends or family. My last trip was to Western Europe last September and October. We went to five countries in two months: Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. My daughter joined me in a rental car for three weeks of hiking and climbing via ferratas\*.”

“My life is full. Now that I am semi-retired and the kids have moved away, I have more free time. I like to spend it with my wife, two daughters, two grandsons, and the rest of my family. I also like to give back to others who are elderly or less fortunate than I am. I know I’ll be there someday too.”