

Judy Phillips Doesn't Miss Much at Walnut Village

At Walnut Village and beyond, resident Judy Phillips wears many hats and has many passions.



Once a month you can find her in the community's billiards room taking lessons. Then she puts those lessons to use three times a week with her classmates. She plays in the Walnut Village chime choir and is a singer in both the Walnut Village Chorale and the Long Beach chapter of the "Sweet Adelines," a group of female "barbershop" singers. She played the double bass as a member of the Boulder Philharmonic when she lived in Colorado. She loves entertaining in Walnut Village's famous "birthday shows" and a few years ago, she started a support group among residents who were caring for their spouses.

"Yes, you could say I'm involved," Judy said with a smile. "I moved here when I was 72 so for the past 12 years I've had plenty of time to have fun. When my friends say they are not ready to move to a retirement community, I tell them they do not know what they are missing out on, particularly here. When I first thought about moving to a retirement community, I thought I would be spending much of my time in my apartment working on my genealogy. But when I got here, I found a world of new ideas, activities and adventures to explore, some I never anticipated or imagined."

One of those projects is her involvement with the Walnut Village Earthquake Committee. Like many residents, Judy wants to make a difference in her retirement and is able to do so at the Village. With a master's degree in psychology, she worked for years as part of a stress management team for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) where she supported FEMA employees deployed during natural disasters and other emergency situations like the 1994 Northridge earthquake. With that experience, it was natural for her to chair the Earthquake Committee, a resident-run cohort that coordinates earthquake preparedness with staff and fellow residents.

"I love organizing things," Judy said. "It's a great use of my time and the group who are part of the committee are amazing."

Although Walnut Village is not on any fault lines, it was constructed to withstand earthquakes, a feature not applicable to many older private homes. Judy coordinates drills with about 40 other residents on the team, including during the Great ShakeOut, an earthquake preparedness drill held

each year on the third Thursday of October. "Our goal is to locate every resident and make sure they're okay," she said.

If there was only one thing she could emphasize to residents, it is the importance of being prepared. Judy's work and the work of the Earthquake Committee have gone a long way to making this a reality at Walnut Village.

"Of course, Walnut Village has a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan in the event of any emergency like an earthquake, however, resident involvement only makes that plan better," said Executive Director Nadine Roisman. "They are a very passionate group in and out of Walnut Village. Those passions make our community the perfect place to pursue boundless opportunities."