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The newspaper  
for the new  
millennium

June 20, 2017

## Helping Seniors Build Strong, Meaningful Friendships

SUBMITTED BY GUS NODAL

Making new friends as we get older can be especially difficult, considering most seniors no longer have a ready-made pool of classmates or colleagues with whom to share interests and connections.

Struggling to make friends later in life—especially when retired or disabled—can lead to isolation and loneliness and affects health and well-being. Information published in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests that loneliness in older persons increases the risks of early death.

To help seniors build strong, meaningful friendships, On Lok Lifeways' Peralta PACE Center in Fremont

features a year-round calendar of recreational, social and cultural activities.

Among the seniors who have found their best friends at the Peralta PACE Center are Khin Khin and Su Li. The pair are Burmese and Chinese, respectively, but even though they don't speak the same language, over the last three years they have forged a strong bond. They always sit next to each other and communicate through their love of art and other activities at the Center.

Mary and Chu Wan, both Cantonese speakers, are another close pair. They can always be found together, talking, knitting, and even singing. They are considered the leaders of the group and can always be counted on to offer a helping hand.

If you would like to find out more about On Lok job opportunities, volunteering, or just visiting our centers, visit <https://www.onlok.org>

**Peralta PACE Center**  
3683 Peralta Blvd., Fremont  
(510) 250-7525

**San Jose PACE Center**  
299 Stockton Ave., San Jose  
(408) 260-5562