

Isolation

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Through friends we're able to have a social life."

From there, she told her sister about Stitch, and the two have been going strong in the group ever since.

"There's members all over," Ms. Oliver said. "But I really got involved, I stepped up. Coffees and lunches, right away. That got us to where we are. We've become really good friends with this core group. Each of us will say its changed our lives."

The sisters help plan lunches, dinners, movies, plays, trivia, musicals, hikes, botanical garden visits, and happy hours.

"Once you join Stitch, you don't have to be alone ever again," Ms. Oliver said. "It's really a cool way to not have to do things all by yourself."

According to a meta-analysis co-authored by Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Ph.D., a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Brigham Young University, lack of social connection heightens health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or having alcohol use disorder. She also found loneliness and social isolation are two times as harmful to physical and mental health as obesity.

"There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness significantly increase risk for premature mortality, and the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators," Ms. Holt-Lunstad stated.

In 2018, a Pew Research Center survey of more than 6,000 adults linked frequent loneliness to dissatisfaction with one's family, social and community life. About 28% of those dissatisfied with their family life feel lonely all or most of the time, compared with just 7% of those satisfied with their family life.

Satisfaction with one's social life follows a similar pattern: 26% of those dissatisfied with their social lives are frequently lonely, compared with 5% of those who are satisfied with their social lives. One in five Americans who say they are not satisfied with the quality of life in their local communities feel frequent loneliness, roughly triple the 7% of Americans who are satisfied with the quality of life in their communities.

But through Stitch, Ms. Oliver and Ms. Bloom have

IF YOU GO

What: Stitch Introduction Event
When: 6 p.m. Monday
Where: Gordon Biersch Brewery, 6915 N. 95th Ave., Glendale

a better outlook on their social life.

"The friends," they agreed on what they enjoy most about Stitch. "In a few short months, we have a really good group of friends. Twelve of us. If anyone needs something we are all there. We have so many things in common. We all get along. It's hard to explain but I feel like I've known these women for years and years and it's only been a few months. But we all need that friendship."

Stitch is strictly for people over 50.

"Our members have gone through a unique set of experiences such as becoming empty nesters, losing a partner through divorce or death, or moving cities," Ms. Hadjidemetri said. "We understand this, and want to provide them a community to belong to of like-minded people who can relate to their experiences."

At some point, members can attain the status of a Community Ambassador, someone who is passionate about what Stitch is trying to accomplish, and who would like to be part of growing and building the community in their local area. That means organizing activities that connect like-minded people, and ultimately helping individuals make new and meaningful friendships.

"We tell them to only organize activities that they themselves would like to do," Ms. Hadjidemetri said. "There's no point in them hosting a hiking day if they hate hiking — they wouldn't enjoy the experience and neither will the other community members with them."

Stitch has two types of Community Ambassadors — paid and voluntary. Ms. Oliver and Ms. Bloom are voluntary Ambassadors.

"We would love to be able to attract more voluntary Ambassadors, seeing as we're a not-profitable social enterprise, however we understand that that's not always the case, especially in very new areas."

One of Stitch's goals is to grow and build its community in the West Valley. It has around 250 members living in the West Valley. Most live in Glendale and Peoria, followed by Sun City and Sur-

prise, Ms. Hadjidemetri said.

Part of growing Stitch's presence in the West Valley includes an upcoming introduction event in Glendale. People interested in finding out about Stitch can visit it Gordon Biersch Brewery, 6915 N. 95th Ave. in Glendale, at 6 p.m. Monday.

Ms. Oliver and Ms. Bloom will explain what it takes to be apart of Stitch, how to make an event grow, and how to make an area grow in its reach of new members.

"Debbie and Chris are two of our most amazing Community Ambassadors in Phoenix," Ms. Hadjidemetri said. "They are constantly organizing and hosting activities in their local area (which is the East Valley), and are now wanting to help build our community in the West Valley, wanting nothing in return. They are incredible!"

Ultimately, Stitch wants to grow into Scottsdale, Apache Junction, Peoria, and Sun City to name a few. They want people to know they can download the Stitch app on their smartphones to keep track of events. They also encourage people to sign up if they're not already member, and see how easy it is to create their own event.

"One person can start a lot," Ms. Bloom said.

Even if someone may not be able to get up off the couch, they can still find ways to engage with the Stitch community.

"If they can't get out at all, if they're homebound, there's discussion groups," Ms. Bloom said. "It's like a chat room basically. You get an email every time somebody asks about something."

They noted that even people in their 50s and 60s may have different interests — a decade's worth.

"It's cool for people to be able to set up their own event," Ms. Oliver said, adding that if someone can't find an event they are looking for, they can set it up themselves and see if people with that same interest want to join.

"Chris and I don't feel we're doing it ourselves," Ms. Oliver said. "We have the support of our East Valley groups. Andrew and Ana are emails away — and several hours."

"There are lots of people out there like us that need this."

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Mueller

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TV sound bites to fuel a Democratic impeachment push nor comfort to Republicans striving to undermine his investigation's credibility. But his comments grew more animated by the afternoon, when he sounded the alarm on future Russian election interference. He said he feared a new normal of American campaigns accepting foreign help.

He condemned Mr. Trump's praise of WikiLeaks, which released Democratic emails stolen by Russia. And he said of the interference by Russians and others: "They are doing it while we sit here. And they expect to do it during the next campaign."

His report, he said, should live on after him and his team.

"We spent substantial time assuring the integrity of the report, understanding that it would be our living message to those who come after us," Mr. Mueller said. "But it also is a signal, a flag to those of us who have some responsibility in this area to exercise those responsibilities swiftly and don't let this

problem continue to linger as it has over so many years.

Mr. Trump, claiming vindication despite the renewal of serious allegations, focused on his own political fortunes rather than such broader issues.

"This was a devastating day for the Democrats," he said. "The Democrats had nothing and now they have less than nothing."

Mr. Mueller was reluctant to stray beyond his lengthy written report, but that didn't stop Republicans and Democrats from laboring to extract new details.

Mr. Trump's GOP allies tried to cast the former special counsel and his prosecutors as politically motivated. They referred repeatedly to what they consider the improper opening of the investigation.

Democrats, meanwhile, sought to emphasize the most incendiary findings of Mr. Mueller's 448-page report and weaken Mr. Trump's reelection prospects in ways Mr. Mueller's book-length report did not.

They hoped that even if his testimony did not inspire impeachment demands — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has made clear she will not pursue impeachment,

for now — Mr. Mueller could nonetheless unambiguously spell out questionable, norm-shattering actions by the president.

The prosecutor who endured nearly seven hours of hearings was a less forceful public presence than the man who steered the FBI through the Sept. 11 attacks and the 12 years after that. But Mr. Mueller, 74, was nonetheless skilled enough in the ways of Washington to avoid being goaded into leading questions he didn't want to answer.

Mr. Mueller frequently gave single-word answers to questions, even when given opportunities to crystallize allegations of obstruction of justice against the president. He referred time and again to the wording in his report.

Was the president lying when he said he had no business ties to Russia? "I'm not going to go into the details of the report along those lines," Mr. Mueller said.

Did you develop any sort of conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia? "Again," Mr. Mueller said, "I pass on answering."

But he was unflinching on the most-critical matters, showing flashes of personality and emotion.

OBITUARY



Harriett Elizabeth Coburn VanNortwick
1928-2019

Harriett "Hattie" passed away at home on Sunday, July 21, 2019. She was surrounded by family and the memories of 90 years well-lived.

Born, Harriett Elizabeth Coburn, Hattie spent her youth in Robersonville, NC, "puttin' in" tobacco and being whistled at by that handsome boy working at the "fillin' station," her future husband, Davis. She graduated from Robersonville High School and Atlantic Christian College. On November 21, 1948, Harriett married her sweetheart, Davis M. VanNortwick.

In 1953, this country girl from North Carolina boarded a plane alone and flew



cross country to the territory of Alaska to join her husband who was serving the U.S. Army in Fairbanks. Here she began her life as a military spouse and quickly learned that her high heels were not practical in the snow.

As a military wife, Harriett embodied the ethic, "service before self." Everywhere she went, she made home, and she never met a stranger. She was enormously proud of her husband's service to his country and together they passed their desire to serve on to their children.

She traveled the world with her family as a homemaker, community volunteer, and tourist: North Carolina, Alaska, Oklahoma, Texas, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Arizona, Kwajalein Marshall Islands, Japan, Central America, and Europe.

Harriett is survived by

her three children and their spouses:

Eric D. VanNortwick, USN Ret, and wife, Debbie; Elaine VanNortwick Snyder and husband, Karl, USN, Ret; Amy VanNortwick Arwood, USAF Ret and husband, Sam, USAF Ret.

She is also survived by her loving sister, Carolyn and her husband, Glenn Whitehurst; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and numerous adoring cousins, nieces, nephews; and an infinite number of life long friends around the world.

Harriett was preceded in death by her husband in 2008. They laughed together for 60 years. Today they are dancing together again.

A memorial service will be held this Friday, July 26th at 2:00 P.M. at Camino del Sol Funeral Chapel, 13738 W. Camino del Sol, Sun City West, AZ 85375. www.caminodecsol.com

An internment service will be held at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date when she will be laid to rest with her husband.

Please consider donations in Harriett's memory to the Grandview Terrace Employee Appreciation Fund at 14515 W. Granite Valley Dr., Sun City West AZ 85375.