

Pioneer in Health Ministries Movement Shares Her Talents with the Wheat Ridge Board of Directors

Early in her nursing career, Lois Peacock realized that health care was more than taking care of sick people in the hospital. A key component, she believed, was helping people to stay healthy. Little did she know then that she would become a leader in a national movement now known as health ministry.



Lois Peacock

"I believe that God is forever preparing us for ministry that needs to be done," says Lois.

In 1990, the San Francisco resident was offered the opportunity to establish a health ministry program in the San Francisco Bay Area. Lois served as the executive director of Bay Area Health Ministries for more than a decade. During that time, over 200 congregations of various denominations began health ministry programs throughout Northern California. During that same period, a national movement was happening. Lois, along with leaders around the country, including Sister June Wilkerson from the west coast and Dr. Tom Droege at the Carter Center in Atlanta, were working together to establish the Health Ministries Association (HMA), a national nonprofit organization. The concept that evolved was that other health professionals, as well as parish nurses, were important participants in promotion of health and wellness in the faith community. For her tireless dedication to the health

ministry movement, Lois was honored with the 2006 HMA Wilkerson-Droege Award.

Lois continues to work with Lutheran Social Services of Northern California and serves on the Board of Directors of Wheat Ridge Ministries. "Both organizations do such a great job of doing the work that one of us could not do alone," she says. Lois' expertise in the health ministry movement is a great benefit to Wheat Ridge, which provides start-up support and resources to organizations that promote health and wellness.

"Wheat Ridge has a terrific Board of Directors," Lois says. "The Board has wise people from different walks of life. It is not all clergy or all lay people. I love the pan-Lutheran part of it and am honored to be a part of it," Lois adds. "I feel very strongly that serving on a board, especially a nonprofit board, is a real honor and responsibility. We, as board members, have to be the first ones ready to support the organization before we can expect anyone else to do so."

Now retired, Lois and her husband, Gordon, a retired obstetrician-gynecologist, have taken up a "second career," she jokes. The couple has a vineyard and winery on Sonoma Mountain, an hour north of San Francisco. About 12 to 15 years ago, they purchased a ranch there and planted grapes and olive trees. While it is "work," she says, it offers relaxation to a couple that have dedicated themselves to service to others.

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