

Money Matters: Volunteering may be tax deductible

By Rick Gross

For many people, volunteerism is about more than simply doing something nice – it's about enriching peoples' lives and making the communities where we live and work a better place. But did you know your stewardship and goodwill may also help you reduce your taxes? Gifts given to charity and other expenses related to volunteering may be tax deductible. For the avid volunteer, the savings could be worth the effort to track expenses related to your charity work.

Transportation expenses



While you cannot deduct the time you spend on the road driving to and from volunteer events, you may be able to write-off related expenses, such as parking, tolls and gas directly used in your charity work. It's important to note that you cannot claim costs for car repairs, routine maintenance, registration fees, insurance or depreciation.

If your charity work requires you to travel, you may be able to write-off the amount you spent on public transportation, i.e., bus and subway tickets or taxi fare, airfare, meals and accommodations.

Generally for all travel and driving expenses, the primary purpose of the trip must be to perform services for the charitable organization. A deduction may not be allowed if the trip also includes a significant amount of personal, recreation or vacation activities.

If you'd like to include volunteerism as part of your tax

strategy, keep reliable written records of your expenses, including the total amount incurred. With regard to driving expenses, keep track of the reason you drove and the date you used your car for the charitable activity.

Additional out-of-pocket expenses

If you need to make a purchase to perform your volunteer work, you may be able to claim the purchase as a tax deduction. For example, a committee member might deduct the cost of supplies needed to host an auction. Other expenses could be deductible depending on your situation. As a best practice, keep good records and review them with your tax advisor.

As you tabulate your costs, be aware that the amounts must be:

- Unreimbursed. (If the organization has repaid you for an item, you may not claim it on your tax return.);
- Directly connected with the volunteer services;
- Expenses incurred only because of the volunteer services you gave; and
- Unrelated to personal, living or family expenses (For example, childcare is not an eligible expense you can deduct.)

Financial contributions

Generally speaking, cash donations you make to a qualified charitable organization are deductible if you keep proper records and itemize deductions. Property you donate may be written off as well based on the fair market value of the asset at the time of the donation. Note: Special rules may apply to certain contributions.

If you receive something of value from a charity, such as a benefit dinner or an auction item, you need to subtract the value of the item from the total donation to determine the deductible amount.

As you prepare for tax season, there are a few important things to keep in mind. For you to write-off volunteer expenses or donations to charity, you must itemize deductions on your tax return and keep reliable written records of anything you intend to claim. Also note that you cannot claim a deduction on your tax return for the value of donated time or services. If you're considering deducting volunteer-related expenses or donations on your tax return, meet with a tax advisor to get his or her perspective on your financial situation. You may also refer to IRS publication 526 for guidance on charitable deductions.

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Realities of mental health challenge families

Publisher's note: *This is one of several stories about mental health issues in the Lake Tahoe Basin that will be running through October. The other stories may be accessed from the Home page under Special Projects, then click on Mental Health.*

By Kathryn Reed

It never goes away. That's the reality of living with mental health issues.

Amy Snelson is quick to admit she can't do it alone. It takes the support of her husband, family, friends and NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to help her cope.

She has three sons; all of whom have mental health issues.

“Opening up has been good therapy,” Snelson told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The guilt is horrific. Had I known (the family history), I don’t know if I would have had children.” And with hindsight she wonders if she would have recognized the symptoms earlier.

Her sons are 23, 30 and 32. She lives in South Lake Tahoe with her husband, Gary, who is not the father of her kids. Snelson’s sons live in Southern California. Once a month for a week at a time she goes down there. They are at different levels when it comes to being able to function in society and needing to be institutionalized.

Snelson is actively involved in their lives, advocating for care and yet keeping a respectful distance. While being a parent can be a balancing act even when children are adults without extenuating circumstances, when health issues are involved, grey areas of intervention are even greater.

Then there is the law that can prevent parents from taking action. With one child she is his conservator, so she has more rights. But, still, it’s not always enough.

“Doctors don’t talk. There is never an open discussion and there is supposed to be,” Snelson said. “I’ve asked for a re-evaluation of medications and nothing is happening.”



Her story is not unique. That’s the problem, and the sad reality.

Mental health in this country is not treated the same way as

physical health. A stigma still surrounds matters of the brain. The uninformed believe people have control over mental health, or that it isn't real, or think people are weak, even less than whole.

What can be worse is the treatment once families start to get help.

"It's been a difficult journey because the mental health community is not cooperative," Snelson said. "Once they get someone stabilized, they kick them out."

Snelson has learned to be persistent, to keep pushing.

A family history of mental illness is common. So is having some traumatic event trigger an episode. That event can be anything from a car accident to being rejected by friends to violence.

Snelson's oldest son has been diagnosed as with paranoia schizophrenia; this was 11 years ago. His biggest delusion is that he believes his food has been poisoned. He's 6-feet-tall and weighs 121 pounds.

Her middle son tried to hang himself when he was in eighth grade. Of the three, he showed the earliest signs that something wasn't quite right. He deals with severe depression, but believes he can overcome this on his own.

The youngest has schizophrenia affective disorder.

There isn't a day that goes by that Snelson doesn't think about her kids. And many days she simply breaks down. She admits the stress affects her marriage, that she didn't expect to be buying her kids clothes and giving them gas money as this stage in their lives.

To help herself cope Snelson is involved in NAMI, which has a chapter on the South Shore. She also surrounds herself with positive people. She reads as much as she can; learning about

her sons' illnesses, how to cope and ideas for working within the system. She also sees a therapist.

"The biggest things today I need to work on is I feel embarrassed and I feel guilty for being embarrassed," Snelson said. "How can a mother let her child wear dirty clothes or have body odor?"

And, yet, they are adults and she can only do so much.

"My fear is what will happen when I'm dead in terms of their living situation," Snelson said.

'Great Pumpkin' celebration at Nevada farms

Two Northern Nevada farms will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the animated classic "It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown" with custom Peanuts themed corn mazes. Lattin Farms in Fallon and the Lazy P farm in Winnemucca, are among nearly 100 farms selected for the honor.

Lattin Farms built the first corn maze in Nevada in 1998. Since then, more than 200, 000 visitors have worked their way through the twists and turns.

Working with Utah-based The MAiZE, Inc. the world's largest cornfield maze consulting and design business, both farms have their own unique maze highlighting Peanuts characters. Lattin Farms' maze features Snoopy as the World War 1 Flying Ace, while Lazy P depicts Charlie Brown, Snoopy and Linus awaiting the Great Pumpkin in a pumpkin patch. Both farms will also host screenings of the animated film during the month of

October.

The fall festivities at Lattin Farms begin Sept. 30, with the opening of the corn maze. Additional information is **online**.

Lazy P Farm in Winnemucca will debut this year's corn maze Oct. 1. Additional information is available **online**.

Road Beat: Camry quality continues to shine



The Toyota Camry continues to evolve and be at the top of its class. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Now in about its eighth generation, the Camry, which holds the title of the largest selling American made car in the U.S. (about 430,000 annually), is one of Toyota's bread and butter vehicles. It has the reputation of being bullet-proof among its quality attributes.

Having tested several recent models, it is understandable. While it may not be the best handling, most economical or best performing in its midsize class, it still is always at the top of the sales charts because of its quality reputation and because since most drivers don't track their vehicles on the weekends or engage in autocross and club racing events, drivers appreciate the Camry's features of comfort and quiet while still performing well in other categories. Toyota Camry is, as Bob Lutz said 10 years ago, a default brand or model. It has such a reputation; buyers don't think about other brands as the Camry has the aura of being a great car. And it is.

Face-lifted in 2015, the Camry has an overall pleasing appearance, but the front end still looks like a big frown. From the side and rear it looks great. Another issue I have is the new side view window line, while better looking than before, it uses a metal applique behind the rear window to lengthen the line instead of more side glass. Size-wise, the Camry defines the class with a 109-inch wheelbase and a length of 191 inches. Width is 72 inches while the Camry stands 58 inches tall. Camry has a very low coefficient of drag of 0.27.

Under the hood is a Toyota synergy system of combining a four cylinder DOHC, 16 valve gas engine that puts out 156 hp at 5,700 rpm plus 156 pounds of twist at 4,500 rpm with a 141 hp electric motor (at 4,500 rpm) and 199 pounds of twist at 0-1,500 rpm. But the combined power is not 297 hp (156+141), it is a more modest 200 hp. The reason being a limitation on the electrical energy output of the nickel-metal hydride battery of just 44 hp. By tightly controlling battery discharge and recharge rates the Toyota hybrid batteries

almost last indefinitely, probably outlasting the rest of the car.

Camry hybrid outperforms its conventional counterpart with a significantly quicker 0-60 mph run of 6.79 seconds putting the Camry in a class of very high performance automobiles. Passing performance in simulated 50-70 mph runs required 4.03 seconds on level ground and a very quick 5.42 seconds up a 6-7 percent grade. The standard four cylinder Camry SE had times of 7.47, 3.99 and 6.19 seconds respectively. With the Hybrid, the kick in of the electric boost sometimes took a tenth or two, sort of like turbo lag, but once online, this hybrid scoots.

I also found while braking is linear, the throttle wasn't, sometimes giving you more power from the engine room than desired. I am sure that this just requires some more miles to dialing in the right amount of acceleration. The only other niggle is feeling a tish of roughness from tip in when the gas engine comes online. But this condition now affects most cars including BMW which have auto engine stop and start features. There is no question this new hybrid is a solid performer.



Specifications

Price (base including transportation) XLE \$30,140 to over \$35 large loaded up.

Engines

2.5L, DOHC 16 valve inline four 156 hp @ 5,700 rpm

156 lbs.-ft. of torque @
4,500 rpm

Electric system

141 hp electric motor @
4,500 rpm

199 lb.-ft. of torque from
0-1,500 rpm

244.8V, 6.5 a/h nickel metal
hydride battery; max voltage
output 650

About 44 hp of energy

Combined power output 200 hp

Transmissions

CVT

Configuration

Transverse front
engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 109.3 inches

Length 190.9 inches

Width 71.7 inches

Height 57.9 inches

Track (f/r) 62.4/62.0 inches

Ground clearance 6.1 inches

Weight 3,305 pounds

Tow capacity 1,000 pounds

Passenger volume 102.7 cubic
feet

Trunk capacity 13.1 cubic
feet

Fuel capacity 17.0

Steering lock to lock 2.85
turns

Turning circle 36.7 feet

Wheel sizes 7X17 inches
alloy

Tires 215/55X17

Co efficient of drag 0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 6.79 seconds

50-70 mph 4.03 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 5.42 seconds

Top speed Do you think that any of the prior nine or so million Camry buyers in the United States really care (except for the NASCAR drivers)? But without intervention electronic or otherwise even the four cylinder should top out at close to 130 mph (but not with me in the car).

Fuel economy EPA rated at 40/38/40 mpg city/highway/combined.

Expect to achieve 40 mpg in overall driving and 43 mpg plus on the highway at legal speeds.

But its fuel economy as to why most people opt for the Camry Hybrid. EPA rated at 40/38/40 mpg city/highway/combine fuel economy, you can expect to do a little better. Overall the Camry averaged between 38-40 mpg mostly in rural country driving, but its highway fuel economy averaged on a two way run at 70 mph 43.3 mpg. In a run to South Lake Tahoe and back to Placerville the Camry averaged 40.4 mpg. Those numbers show a 5-10 percent improvement over the EPA test cycle. In fact, when reviewing the recent Camry SE test fuel economy numbers, overall mileage was up by almost 10 mpg and highway mileage was up by 4-5 mpg.

My XLE tester came standard 17 inch alloys and 215/55 rubber instead of the LE's 16-inch steel wheels and 205/65 shoes. The SE model also gets the upgraded wheels and tires. If you like good handling, opt for the XLE or SE. Suspension is MacPherson struts up front and a fully independent multilink system in the rear. Steering is performed by an electric rack that is less than three turns lock to lock. I have driven hundreds of different cars and I have to tell you unless you are doing club racing or auto crossing, the handling of this hybrid is impressive. Body roll is well controlled, understeer in mild and it has plenty of grip. In my trip up Highway 50 and other twisties, this hybrid handled so well at even slightly supra legal speeds it might impress Kyle Busch. Wait a minute, Busch drives a Camry in NASCAR racing even though NASCARs are anything but a stock car. Ninety-nine percent of all drivers will be impressed by this Camry's handling.

But its ride and quiet where the Camry Hybrid shines. Even my brother whose normal ride is an almost new near luxury sporting sedan was impressed with its ability to handle bumps and its anechoic chamber quiet. On smooth roads while doing about 48 mph on pure electric (it's about the max speed on pure electric) Camry becomes a magic carpet. There is no tach so engine speed at 70 mph is unknown, but considering its fuel economy it's probably below 2,000 rpm.

Of course, safety is second to none with four wheel discs brakes and all the safety acronyms including smart stop technology. My tester had the Advanced Tech Package (\$750) which gets you the pre-collision system, lane departure alert, radar cruise and auto high beams (great head lights, too). Blind spot detection and rear cross traffic alert was in another package (\$500).

Inside was a standard leather trimmed interior and sublime seating. The instrument panel was pretty standard nowadays with a Hybrid info gauge taking the place of the tach which is separated from the large speedo by an info center and trip

computer. The center stack, HVAC and sound system is a snap to use. Rear seating is good for three June Taylor dancers. About the only compromise for the hybrid system is the trunk which is 13 cubic feet (the battery system takes up a couple cubic feet).

Sticker shock is not that bad even though this is a partially electrified vehicle. A base LE is just \$26,790 plus the train fare (\$865) from Georgetown Kentucky. Step up to the SE (recommended) and the sticker rises to a reasonable \$27,995 and my leather loaded XLE stickers at \$30,140. My tester had about \$4K in options including its Ruby Flare Pearl paint (\$395) bring the total to \$35,800 all in. Now understand that is only about \$2K more than the Prius I just tested (it was about \$33,800) and a nicely equipped SE with the same options as this XLE would sticker for less than the Prius. Sure the Prius gets about 10 more mpg, but 40 plus mpg day in and day out is still excellent fuel economy. And the SE gets to 60 mph over 4 seconds quicker and accelerates up a steep grade in half the time.

Unless 50 mpg is a must, the Camry Hybrid SE, which is about the same price as a Prius, would be far and away my choice. It so much more car for the money. And it's still a Toyota using the same power system.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Truckee K-9, handler earn top honor

Truckee police Officer Andrew Holbrook and Trax have been named the top narcotics competitor of the year by the Western States Police Canine Association.

Holbrook and Trax competed in five of the six K-9 trials this year. They earned eight awards, including two overall first place finishes.

Trax joined the Truckee Police Department in the fall 2013 when he was 2.

Researchers confront an epidemic of loneliness

By Katie Hafner, New York Times

The woman on the other end of the phone spoke lightheartedly of spring and of her 81st birthday the previous week.

"Who did you celebrate with, Beryl?" asked Alison, whose job was to offer a kind ear.

"No one, I..."

And with that, Beryl's cheer turned to despair.

Her voice began to quaver as she acknowledged that she had been alone at home not just on her birthday, but for days and days. The telephone conversation was the first time she had spoken in more than a week.

About 10,000 similar calls come in weekly to an unassuming office building in this seaside town at the northwest reaches of England, which houses the Silver Line Helpline, a 24-hour call center for older adults seeking to fill a basic need: contact with other people.

Researchers have found mounting evidence linking loneliness to physical illness and to functional and cognitive decline. As a predictor of early death, loneliness eclipses obesity.

Read the whole story

9 projects highlighted for environmental excellence

Nine projects were awarded Best in Basin awards this week from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The program recognizes and showcases projects that demonstrate exceptional planning and implementation and compatibility with Lake Tahoe's environment and communities.

Winners are:

Granlibakken – energy upgrades: Working with Sierra Business Council, Placer County, and the mPOWER program, Granlibakken upgraded its heating and air conditioning systems and kitchen

appliances with more energy-efficient units. The project results in an estimated 43 percent reduction in energy use and annual savings up to \$44,000. The resort has also been recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy as one of its Better Buildings Challenge showcase projects.

Bijou Bike Park – South Lake Tahoe: Volunteers with the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association, and Elite Trax built this highly-popular recreation site. The bike park includes a world class BMX track, two pump tracks, three slopestyle jump lines, and a perimeter of loop trail—all nestled in five acres of forested land in Bijou Community Park, a convenient location in the center of the South Lake Tahoe community.

Central Incline Village Phase II Water Quality Improvement: Washoe County and partners installed infiltration basins, sediment cans, inlets, and infiltration galleries, pervious concrete road shoulders, filters, and monitoring equipment to reduce stormwater pollution in 244 acres of Incline Village.

Sawmill 2B Bike Path and Erosion Control Project: El Dorado County and partners built 1.2 miles of Class 1 bikeway, completing an important transportation link connecting South Lake Tahoe and Meyers. The bikeway connects neighborhoods, schools, and popular recreation sites. The project included water quality improvement features to reduce erosion and stormwater pollution and also thinned thick forested areas along the bikeway to help reduce wildfire risk.

Middle Rosewood Creek Area A Stream Environment Zone Restoration: Nevada Tahoe Conservation District and its partners restored more than 2,100 feet of stream channel and floodplain to improve water quality, fish passage, and wildlife habitat. This stretch of Middle Rosewood Creek was severely degraded before the project and had the potential to deliver thousands of cubic yards of sediment into Lake Tahoe over the next two decades, making it a high-priority restoration area.

Lower Chipmunk and Outfall Water Quality Improvement: Placer County and partners completed this project to capture stormwater and reduce sediment loads from Lower Chipmunk Street, Brockway Vista East, and Highway 28 that previously washed into Lake Tahoe.

Incline Creek Restoration, Highway 28 Culvert: Incline Village General Improvement District and its partners relined and upgraded this culvert to prolong its service life and also improve fish passage, stream habitat, and water quality. Before the project, the culvert dropped water more than four feet down on the other side. The project built a series of riffle and pool step sections to gradually raise the stream bed up to the culvert, creating low-flow fish passage for longer periods of migration.

Lake Forest Water Quality Improvement: Placer County and partners improved water quality and erosion control and restored stream environment zones in a 173-acre area around Lake Forest Beach. The project installed filters, drop inlets, sediment cans, and curb and gutter to reduce stormwater pollution, upgraded compacted dirt road shoulders with pervious concrete that allows for stormwater infiltration and roadside parking at this popular recreation site, and also restored a wet meadow area.

Angora Burn Area Restoration Phase III: Following the Angora Fire in 2007, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit took immediate steps to manage the 3,100 acre burn area to address immediate erosion risks. Over the last nine years the Forest Service, working with community and government partners, has reforested 672 acres, restored 44 acres of aspen and meadow, completed 1,400 acres of fuels reduction and forest thinning to reduce wildfire risk, relocated roads and trails out of stream zones and upgraded them with best management practices, installed new wayfinding signage for better recreation access, and restored 2,000 feet of stream channel.

Multi-tasking machine keeps slots players in their seats

By Nicole Raz, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A one-stop gambling slot machine that allows players to book a sports bet or print a tax form was unveiled Monday at the Global Gaming Expo.

JCM Global debuted the multi-tasking machine on the first day of G2E at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, showcasing a new technology that also has the capability to buy and redeem lottery tickets or enable real-time currency exchange, among other versatile uses – all without having players leave their seat.

“Why do we make people stand up and go across the room and find another room to go make a sports wager? Why do we send them off to go to the bingo hall? We make people do all these different things that people who like to play slot machines would like to do when they could do it from the same device,” said Tom Nieman, vice president of worldwide marketing at JCM global.

Read the whole story

Palliative care a bridge to

end of life care

By Susan Wood

Ask anyone who's been diagnosed with a terminal illness and they'll tell you in some ways their life stopped then.

There are things to deal with that become a full-time job for most people. This means arranging doctors' visits, dealing with insurance companies, receiving social assistance, learning the keys to transportation, getting referrals, conducting pain management and even tapping into mental health services.

All these duties and tactics require professional help because a clear head and undaunted resolve may not be the immediate reaction from a vulnerable person hearing the "c" word for the first time.

Palliative care, as it is called, is a fairly new discipline that demonstrates the evolution of health care. It's a full service realm that provides a little TLC and empowerment at the same time. The terminally ill don't have to feel like their life is over.

Instead, there's often a new character-building beginning that serves to inform the patient in ways that never before existed. And without the fear of the unknown and having an army of support, the patients' confidence is enhanced.

"It's very much a team approach to medicine," said Sherellen Gerhart, who returned to the Barton Health System to serve as the lead palliative care physician after working in the Bay Area. She had worked for Barton between 2007 and 2010 as a hospitalist.

"It's been my favorite place to work. I should have never left. I really missed being here," Gerhart told *Lake Tahoe*

News.

Working at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek comes with prestige, but job satisfaction and practicing your passion mean something to this practitioner. Gerhart may be characterized as an up-close-and-personal doctor who has leaned in her career toward wanting to work in geriatric care – not exactly the sexiest discipline of health, but rewarding nonetheless.

“The trend for medicine has focused on improving the quality of care, particularly in oncology, because it’s so complicated,” she said. “People find that when things are complicated, they don’t get their needs met.”

When palliative care does transform into hospice – which emphasizes comfort as one nears death, Barton has a long history of operating a department with that prognosis and mission in mind.

“End of life issues are difficult to talk about anyway,” Gerhart said. “And it’s time we recognize that patient suffering is not acceptable. We have to find processes to deal with that.”

Few locals may know this like Barton’s director of Home Health, Hospice and Palliative Care Barbara Kaufman.

Through the years, Kaufman has seen changes in health care moving toward more of a holistic approach in which care coordination is the general rule.

“With palliative care, we talk to the patient to find out what their goals of treatment are. This empowers the patient and family to understand the disease more,” she said. “And regardless of the need, we help guide and navigate them through the complex health care system.

“This is the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done in life – my

true passion,” Kaufman said. “It’s quite humbling to be part of the process. For me personally, every patient has touched my life.”

So there’s something to be said for gaining wisdom from the terminally ill. They know how to cherish life when they feel theirs is getting away from them.

The difference is palliative care still provides hope. Hospice, to be summoned in the last months of one’s life, provides comfort in the surrender.

Palliative care and hospice are similar in philosophy.

“What separates the two is that palliative care can be delivered concurrently with other disease-modifying treatments and interventions in what some refer to as ‘curative’ care,” said Jon Radulovic, spokesman for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in Alexandria, Va. “In fact, anyone with a serious illness, regardless of life expectancy, can receive palliative care.”

It often transitions into the need for hospice.

“There has been a growth in hospital-based palliative care programs over the past decade, which represents important progress made in caring for the whole person,” Radulovic told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Both disciplines have become extremely necessary in today’s world in which the call for a more seamless continuum of care from diagnosis of death is overwhelming.

Death and the threat thereof is such a major part of life with an aging population that a movement is now in place in which seriously ill patients are using a template to write a last letter while they’re healthy.

It’s called the Stanford Friends and Family Letter Project. The idea is for letter writers to complete seven life review

tasks – acknowledging important people in their lives, remembering treasured moments, apologizing to those they may have hurt, forgiving those who have hurt them and saying thank you, I love you and goodbye.

The project featured this month in the New York Times highlighted many examples of people overcoming regret and professing true love.

Some are complex. Others are simple – including one from a man who wrote to his daughter: “I’m sorry that I wasn’t there when you were growing up.”

The project is catching on fast, according to the founder VJ Periyakoil.

“There are millions of Americans living with serious illness, and this number is expected to more than double over the next 25 years with the aging of the baby boomers. Most seriously ill people will spend some time in the hospital over the course of their illness, and a majority of their time will be spent in their communities,” Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care Diane Meier told *Lake Tahoe News* from her New York City office.

Meier has been on the forefront of the new discipline as the founder and director of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute from 1997-2011. She was named one of 20 people who make health care better in the United States by HealthLeaders Media 2010. Two years later, she was awarded the American Cancer Society’s medal of honor in recognition of her pioneering spirit.

The center where Meier works is devoted to increasing the number and quality of palliative care programs in the nation.

Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe opened its department a few months ago and has already started to accept patients. All patients seeking palliative care require a

referral from a physician. They can be seen at the care center on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 1pm. Hospital consultations will be provided by Gerhart and Allison Steinmetz, a doctor with Barton Family Medicine.

For more information, Gerhart will make a presentation on Oct. 31 called What is Palliative Care? The classes are slated from 1-3pm at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

Activity trackers may undermine weight loss efforts

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Wearable activity monitors can count your steps and track your movements, but they don't, apparently, help you lose weight. In fact, you might lose more weight without them.

The finding comes from a study published in JAMA that found dieting adults who wore activity monitors for 18 months lost significantly fewer pounds over that time than those who did not.

The results suggest that activity monitors may not change our behavior in the way we expected, and raise interesting questions about the tangled relationships between exercise, eating, our willpower and our waistlines.

Read the whole story