



NEIGHBORHOOD CHAT

By Chantal Allan

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Roughly one out of five Americans over the age of 65 suffer from depression, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

While social workers and other experts figure out how to solve this issue, Carlos Jimenez has found his own solution.

Every day, the 69-year-old divorced father leaves his one-bedroom apartment and stands on the sidewalk outside his stately Victorian seniors home.

“You see the weather, the wind, the bright sky, this is very nice,” says Jimenez, leaning on the white fence in front of his home on Menlo Avenue near the University of Southern California. “It’s vitamin for every soul. A lonely soul.”

But Jimenez isn’t lonely when he’s out on the sidewalk. It seems he knows just about every person who walks or drives by. He waves to drivers, hollers a hello when a neighbor passes by on the other sidewalk and gives a quick nod as people speed by on their bicycles.

“When you want to make a good friends, you say ‘hello’ with the possibility these people answer to you,” says Jimenez, who immigrated from Mexico decades ago and has lived on Menlo for almost 25 years. “If this people answer to me, surely I win another friend.”

Neighbors say Jimenez is known around the street as a man who is willing to help anyone.

Jimenez says the reason is simple. When he helps others, he helps himself.

“I believe I am a happy man,” he says as darkness falls and he heads back to his apartment.