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Seniors Enjoy Holiday Lunch Tradition

It's a holiday tradition in the City of Perris—invite senior citizens to a hot lunch and dancing, then present them with some gifts to make Christmas and New Year's a little bit sweeter.

About 75 Perris seniors came to the 2013 Senior Appreciation Luncheon at Bob Glass Gym.

They enjoyed a hot turkey dinner, a music trivia contest and holiday song numbers, visits from members of the City Council and perhaps most importantly, the chance to share a meal among their friends and peers.

The holidays can be a lonely time for seniors, many who live alone, and City Councilman Julio Rodriguez and City Councilwoman Rita Rogers dropped by to wish them all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

"I enjoy seeing the City provide this kind of even for our seniors—they are the backbone of our community," Rodriguez said.

"They have performed a lifetime of commitment not only to our Perris Valley but our country as well."

Rodriguez and Rogers walked from table to table, exchanging greetings, shaking hands and posing for pictures with the senior citizen visitors.

"It's great to be able to support our seniors, it's great to see them all dressed up for the holidays and it's great to see them celebrate the holidays with family and friends," Rogers said.

As a senior herself, Rogers said she knows the importance of the City's Senior Center. The center is a gathering spot for folks to play bingo, shoot pool, eat a hot lunch, watch television and share conversations.

"It provides a great family atmosphere," she said.

John Vaughns, 68, is a regular at the City's holiday luncheon. He also avails himself to the other programs offered at the Perris Senior Center, like the exercise classes, pool-playing and card games like spades and dominoes.

"This is an excellent outing," Vaughns said. "It lets us seniors kick up our heels. I am grateful that the City takes the opportunity to do this for us."

May Lou Mendoza also enjoyed the senior-recognition luncheon.

"This is a chance to get out, enjoy the music, the festivities and the food," she said. "It's a day of celebration and a time to get out and mingle. Sometimes you don't get to go anywhere for the holidays."

Darlene Steele, 61, enjoys exercise classes at the senior center. She and her husband, Les, were avid supporters of the Live Well Perris healthy eating active living initiative, taking part in a walk with the Mayor and attending the recently concluded Winter Workout program. She thanked the City of Perris and its employees for "going out of their way to make us feel welcome."

"This is the only place to live—they really care about people," Darlene Steele said. "I don't want to ever go anywhere else."

The senior luncheon always makes her holiday season a little brighter.

"A lot of seniors do not have the ability to decorate their homes for the holidays," Darlene Steele said. "We get to come here and feel important. It makes us feel that we're part of the community."



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers greets residents Les and Darlene Steele during the recent senior appreciation luncheon.



Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez extends holiday greetings to resident Alice Mangram during the annual senior appreciation luncheon.



Perris employees Cynthia Quintero, Spencer Campbell and Sabrina Chavez work the serving line during the City of Perris annual senior appreciation luncheon.