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Longtime Discovery Center volunteer retiring, moving to Texas to be with family

Senior's greatest joy is working with children
By Sophia Fischer sfischer@theacorn.com



SHE'LL BE MISSED— Anne Organ of Thousand Oaks, left, who's donated her time to the Discovery Center since it launched in 1994, is moving to Texas. Ellen Press, right, oversees the science center's Reading Awakens Young Scientists program.

The three contestants on "Jeopardy" didn't know the answer to the question being asked, but Anne Organ, watching the television game show from her Thousand Oaks home, did.

Organ, who turned 91 on Jan. 5, has been a volunteer with the Discovery Center for Science and Technology in Thousand Oaks for 25 years and says her work with the organization has helped give her great insight on life.

She's not surprised when she can answer game-show questions that others can't.

Through the Discovery Center's Reading Awakens Young Scientists program, Organ has helped students in kindergarten through fourth grade complete a myriad of sciencerelated activities. She's the founding usher and coordinator of the Discovery Center's Science Theatre Programs and helps with events that the center hosts for school groups at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza. She has never missed a show.

She says her greatest joy is working with children.

"It's amazing how their little minds work and the questions that they ask," Organ said. "It's a learning experience for me, too."

But Organ will say goodbye to the Discovery Center when she moves to Texas in February to join her daughter, grandson and greatgrandchildren who moved there from California. She said she enjoys spending time with her two great-grandchildren, who are 3 and 5. "I feel that I should be with them and see them grow."

Organ said she became a Discovery Center volunteer in support of her son's wife, Dr. Linda Organ, a founding board member. Linda Organ credited her mother-in-law with giving a "200 percent effort" every time she volunteers.

"She enjoys talking about the Discovery Center, and she's a magnet for recruiting people to our events and to our ranks," Linda Organ said.

Anne Organ has good things to say about her daughter-in-law as well.

"My daughter-in-law is just an unbelievable genius. Her mind is remarkable. She's quite a person. I'm very proud of her," Anne Organ said. "My son is one in a million, too. He calls me every day. I'm just very blessed."

Organ has lived in Thousand Oaks for 20 years. Originally from Canada, she moved to California in 1939 on a doctor's recommendation that she live in a warmer climate to help her allergies.

"But he didn't say California. He said Tucson, Ariz. But in Canada at that time, whoever heard of Tucson?" Organ said. "You heard of California and Hollywood."

A friend had moved to Burbank and sent Organ a postcard of herself watering her roses in February.

"I said to my husband, 'Honey, why don't we fly south like the birds?'" Organ said.

In California, she re-established the Canadian beauty salon business she'd owned. The shop, called Anne and Arnold's, was on Pico Boulevard and Western Avenue in Los Angeles. After 15 years Organ moved her business to West Los Angeles. She retired at

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Organ said it's been her mission in life to look for the good in people.

"That's what I do with everyone I meet," Organ said. "I try to find something nice in them, and before I know it I've got a new friend. That's my philosophy of life—to learn and to help others."

She is active at the Goebel Senior Center in Thousand Oaks and participates in yoga, sewing and art classes.

She also belongs to B'nai B'rith, a Jewish nonprofit service organization.

Organ said she enjoys baking and made several dozen cakes to give to her fellow Civic Arts Plaza ushers for the holidays.

"I honestly feel that by being active and keeping my mind occupied and doing a lot of reading that I've got all my marbles," Organ said.

Organ, whose eight siblings have all passed away, said keeping busy has been good for her.

"In Texas I hear there's wonderful museums, art galleries and senior centers," Organ said. "I'll get myself involved. I think that's what keeps me alive."

If you'd like to be a volunteer at the Discovery Center, call (805) 879-2021 or visit the website www.discoverycntr.org.