

said. But the program has seemed to help stabilize the mental health of seniors in the wake of the wildfire. This makes sense, considering that studies indicate when people engage in productive activities with others they tend to have a greater sense of well-being and purpose, and even live longer.

When people act withdrawn, frustrated or overwhelmed, center staff work with them to help them relax and feel more comfortable, Puckett said. In turn, this support has helped families.

For Rose Nystrom, the center provided a safe place for her mother, Gladys Brewer, to stay while they dealt with the aftermath of the disaster—both had lived in Paradise. Brewer came to the center frequently for six weeks before moving into an independent living facility in Chico.

Nystrom said her mother was apprehensive at first, but staff was “so welcoming and so attentive” that it didn’t take long for her to feel comfortable.

“They were just so kind to her. They tried to meet her needs and do things with her that she was

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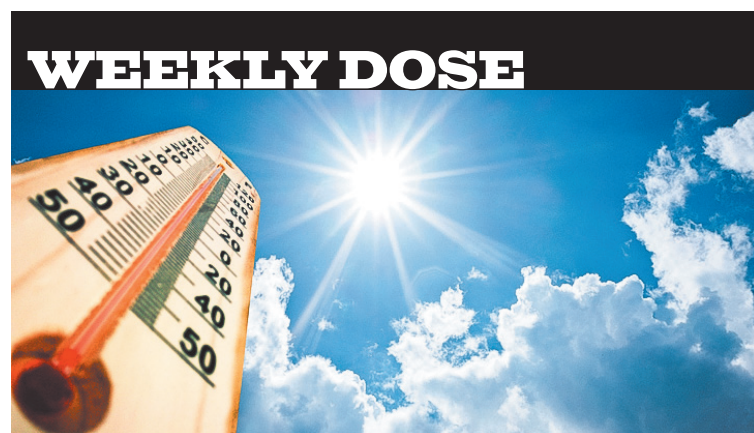
capable of doing,” she said. “It was just a really difficult time and it was so helpful to me to be able to have that resource available.”

Moving forward, the center will be adding more seniors into its program: It recently received approximately \$25,000 from the North Valley Community Foundation to provide services to senior Camp Fire survivors who cannot afford the cost of the program and do not qualify for Medi-Cal.

Puckett said the center’s biggest hurdle is bringing on more social work and nursing staff. The organization will continue to seek funding to meet the community need.

“Our goal is to provide as much stability and safety for people as we can,” she said, “to have [our center] be as enriching and wonderful, full of sharing and friendship and love as we possibly can, no matter what’s going on in the community around us.” □

This guy saves you money.



Summertime sadness

The majority of people with the form of depression known as seasonal affective disorder experience it during the winter months. But summer depression—or “reverse seasonal affective disorder”—exists and is more difficult to diagnose. Part of the problem is biological—research has shown that too much sunlight can interfere with the production of melatonin and serotonin, which can interrupt sleep and cause mood disorders. And though some like it hot, temps in the triple digits can cause overheating, lethargy and exhaustion, which affects normal routines like exercising and cooking at home. The summer blues also can be psychological, as people struggle with body image issues and compare their experience of the season to that of others. If you recognize some of these symptoms, get out of the heat and out of your head. Be kind to yourself and remember that it will rain again before you know it.

Source: Healthline



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