

# AGING & independence

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

## Giving that Gives Back: Volunteering for Life

By Kim Gallo  
Director, Aging and Adult Services  
Aging & Independence Services

Service to the community has been a lifelong passion for Sal Herrera, 73. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Sal launched a career with the U.S. Postal Service at the age of 18. A year later, he enlisted in the Navy and served for the next four years, first working as an electronics technician and then doing a 10-month tour in Vietnam. Upon his return, he resumed his position with the L.A. Post Office, later moving to San Diego. Along the way, he met his wife of 48 years, Olivia, and had three children. While he found a public service career to be gratifying, much of his free time was also spent doing volunteer work and service activities.

He coached his son's Little League team for many years and was vice president of the San Diego County Baseball Umpires Association. He rounded out his resume as a charity clown and transformed into Santa at Christmastime. "Volunteering has kept my quality of life high," Sal says. "I'm tired, but I'm happy!"

Perhaps Sal's greatest adventure in service began after his retirement in 2007 when he started volunteering on the USS Midway upon the encouragement of a friend. The ship, a Navy aircraft carrier, was commissioned one week after the end of World War II and operated for nearly 50 years. Now the Midway is permanently docked in San Diego and serves as a museum and enduring symbol of American freedom.



Sal Herrera

Sal is one of more than 800 volunteers who serve on the Midway. He is also a member of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a volunteer program for older adults administered by Aging & Independence Services (AIS). RSVP volunteers can choose from more than 90 sites and join 1,200 other local volunteers who are helping to address a variety of community needs, including public safety, social services, environmental awareness, and cultural heritage preservation. Volunteers receive special benefits, such as supplemental insurance and yearly recognition. Potential

volunteers also receive assistance identifying an opportunity that will be a good fit for their interests, skills, and needs.

Sal joined the Midway's Safety Team, the group whose mission is to keep visitors safe. Volunteers on this team perform a number of duties, such as providing oversight, inspecting belongings upon entrance to the ship, and responding to guest accidents and emergencies. This team plays a big role in guest relations. Sal notes, "We are the first ones guests see. We can set the tone. We try to be jovial and welcoming."

The Safety Team turned out to be an excellent fit for

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Sal and he has logged over fifteen thousand volunteer hours. He laughs, “I came. I saw. I never left! I fell in love with Ms. Midway.”

Sal is certainly helping to keep others safe and ensure the smooth operation of the Midway, but he also is contributing to his own health and wellbeing through his service. Research has demonstrated many health benefits to older adult volunteers, including lower mortality rates, reduced depression, less stress, greater functional abilities, and even increased brain functioning. Sal notes that volunteering gives him a reason to get out of bed in the morning because he knows he is going to have some fun. Volunteering on an aircraft carrier ensures that he gets a healthy dose of exercise, too. He quips, “This ship is 1,000 feet long. It is a one football field-length walk to get to the bathroom!”

One of the reasons volunteer work is associated with a sense of wellbeing for older adults is that it builds social connections. It also gives older adults, many of whom feel a loss of role upon retirement, a sense of purpose.

Sal feels a strong sense of gratification in being part of an organization that helps to keep history alive and honors the memory of U.S. veterans. An incident aboard the ship several years ago really brought home the importance of his team and the work they do. It was New Year’s Eve and a guest had fallen at the top of the ship’s bridge. In the process, she broke her nose and dislocated a shoulder. Not only were Safety Team members the first responders to the incident, but Sal stayed with the woman for the two hours required for the fire department to hoist her to safety using a special system of ropes. “That day,” Sal explains, “we found out how important our team was.”

Volunteering has also come with a healthy dose of adventure and excitement, too. Sal has met celebrities and witnessed numerous concerts and high-profile events, including a filming of American Idol. To the delight of his wife, he also was featured in country music singer Brad Paisley’s music video. “All this because I come here,” Sal muses. “The Midway just keeps giving and giving.”

People need not wait until retirement to experience the joys of service. Sal is eager to show youth the value

### SAVE THE DATE: VITAL AGING 2019

The Vital Aging conference brings older adults together for an enjoyable day of education and inspiration on topics pertaining to healthy aging. Vital Aging 2019 will be held on **Wednesday, June 19** at two locations: San Diego and Escondido.

Details on registration and the event venues will be available in the next edition of *Aging & Independence*, and will also be posted on [www.AISevents.org](http://www.AISevents.org) starting in early May.

of volunteer work. He joined one of the Midway’s intergenerational projects, Project SAVE (Serve and Volunteer Everyday). Through a collaboration with Kearny High School, Midway volunteers are each assigned a small group of students who are in the school’s digital media program. Volunteers discuss their life experiences, emphasize the value of volunteer service, and simply connect with the youth. The students prepare a multimedia project based on what they have learned and share their work at a reception aboard the Midway.

Sal has found the program to be enriching for all involved. Students are in awe when he describes the historical events he has witnessed—Vietnam, the space program, civil rights—and in turn, he gets the satisfaction of inspiring young minds. “I get the smiles,” he explains. “They are like sponges, pulling it all in. Oh, what a feeling. I made my day and theirs!”

Sal has been with the Midway now for 12 years. He proudly wears his ten-year recognition pin. His goal is to make it to at least twenty years of service and ultimately, serve as long as he possibly can. He hopes others will look for a volunteer opportunity that is just as satisfying for them. “If it is not the Midway, find something!” he urges. “There are people out there who need help. Yes, you are giving, but you are also taking back. It is a shared thing. A super win-win situation. There’s something for everyone.”

Adults 50 and over can explore numerous community volunteer options, including serving on the Midway, by calling the AIS senior volunteer programs office at **(858) 505-6399**.

# In the COMMUNITY

## SENIOR CARE COACHING CLINICS

Do you have questions on how to go about finding quality senior care or resources? Attend a free, “pop-up” senior care coaching clinic staffed by a gerontologist from Consumer Advocates for RCFE Reform (CARR). To make an appointment, call **(619) 540-1648**. Clinic locations and dates:

**Balboa Park Club**, 2150 Pan American Rd. W, San Diego 92101. Thurs, April 25 and May 23, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

**Balboa Park Senior Lounge**, 1650 El Prado, San Diego 92101. Fri., April 12 and May 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**La Jolla Community Center**, 6811 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla 92037. Mon., May 6 and June 3, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**San Ysidro Senior Center**, 136 Park Ave., San Ysidro 92173. Thurs., May 1 and June 5, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

## AIS ADVISORY COUNCIL—PUBLIC HEARING

Did you know that there are older adults in the community who represent your needs on the AIS Advisory Council? Come check out a meeting to learn more about the work they do. At the next meeting on **Monday, April 8 at noon**, there will be a public hearing on the update to the Area Plan, the document that guides the goals and priorities for AIS and is a product of community feedback every four years. The meeting will be held at AIS, 5560 Overland Ave., Ste. 310, San Diego 92123.

## FREE SMOKE ALARMS FOR SENIORS

Smoke alarms save lives. National safety statistics show that adults age 65 and older are two times more likely to perish in a home fire than any other segment of the population. The Burn Institute, a local non-profit, wants to keep seniors safe. If you are a homeowner over the age of 62, they will install free smoke alarms in your residence that adhere to the California Health and Safety Code. These free smoke alarms are equipped with 10-year lithium batteries. Don't get up on a ladder and risk falling—let trained professionals do it for you at no cost. Email [mdelveaux@burninstitute.org](mailto:mdelveaux@burninstitute.org) or call **(858) 541-2277** to schedule your free smoke alarm installation today.

## TOOL TO LOCATE QUALITY ASSISTED LIVING

Accepting that a loved one can no longer be safely cared for at home can be difficult. For those who are looking to identify quality assisted living facilities, Choose Well may be able to help.

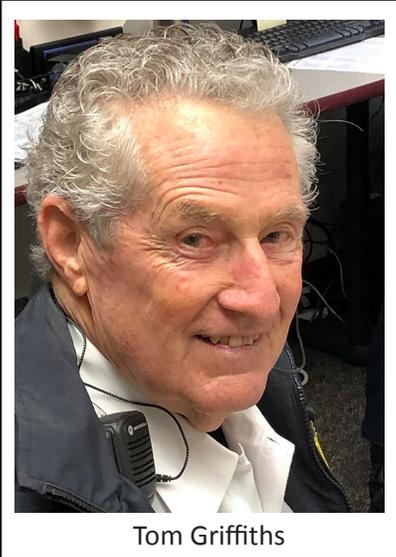
Choose Well is a free, innovative, web-based program sponsored by the County of San Diego that helps older adults and their families make informed decisions when selecting assisted living facilities. Visit [www.choosewellsandiego.org](http://www.choosewellsandiego.org) to discover specially evaluated Choose Well facilities that have voluntarily agreed to be scored on 11 measures of quality. Call **(619) 795-2165** or email [choosewellsandiego@gmail.com](mailto:choosewellsandiego@gmail.com) for details.

## AGE WELL SAN DIEGO UPDATE: DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY

Age Well San Diego (Age Well) is a community-driven initiative to make our communities even better places in which to age. The Dementia-Friendly team has been hard at work spreading the word about how the community can become dementia-friendly, or more understanding and accommodating of those living with dementia:

- 1) **Recognize the signs of someone with dementia:** memory loss, difficulty with familiar tasks, confusion with time or place, and trouble with visual and spatial perception. By recognizing that someone is living with dementia, you can respond with compassion and communicate effectively.
- 2) **Communicate effectively:** Smile and make eye contact, speak clearly and calmly using simple sentences, ask one question at a time, allow time for the person to respond, and seek to understand the person's reality and feelings.
- 3) **Design supportive environments and materials:** families, businesses, and organizations can use high-contrast colors, clear and simple signage, and create quiet zones with less stimulation to address visual and spatial difficulties.
- 4) **Learn more and educate others:** Visit [www.dementiafriendsusa.org](http://www.dementiafriendsusa.org) and become a Dementia Friend! Contact Jenna Guerrero at [Jenna.Guerrero@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Jenna.Guerrero@sdcounty.ca.gov) to learn more about in-person Dementia Friends sessions.

## VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



Tom Griffiths

Tom Griffiths is the April 2019 Volunteer of the Month. He is the assistant administrator at the San Diego County Sheriff's Department North Coastal Command Station. Tom was nominated by the site administrator, Bill Simon.

Tom has lived a life full of service to others. After graduating from

Miami University, Tom joined the U.S. Marine Corps and trained as a pilot. He served in Japan and Vietnam. During his year in Vietnam, Tom flew approximately 200 missions. After leaving the military, he was a pilot for Continental Airlines for 36 years.

Tom began volunteering with the Sheriff's Department in 2003 and has served continuously for more than 15 years. He has been the Tuesday patrol leader since 2006 and was the field training officer from 2016–2017. Tom became the assistant administrator of this site about a year ago.

Tom stands out because of his knowledge, quick wit, and great sense of humor. In addition to being really fun to be around, Tom is said to have an all-encompassing working knowledge of all the aspects of the Senior Volunteer job. He is always ready and willing to teach others and he happily shares his knowledge with his colleagues.

Tom lives in the area where he serves. So, he routinely makes a big difference in his own community while genuinely enjoying his interactions with his fellow volunteers and with community members.

Bill Simon says, "Tom is absolutely dedicated to the job and is just one of the most honest and decent folks I have ever met."

Thanks, Tom, for all that you do!

## SENIOR GLEANERS MARKS 25 YEARS FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Senior Gleaners of San Diego County, an active partner of RSVP/SVA, is celebrating its 25th anniversary as a nonprofit. The organization increases food security by using volunteers aged 55+ to pick surplus fruits and vegetables from backyards and orchards and retrieve unsold food from numerous stores.

Since 1994, Senior Gleaners have collected 7.5 million pounds of food that would otherwise have been wasted. All food is donated to the San Diego Food Bank and similar agencies.

The organization is currently looking for volunteers who are willing to haul food in their own vehicles. Drivers need to be willing to haul about 300 pounds for a distance of 20-30 miles to recipient agencies.

In addition, Senior Gleaners is looking for individuals to join the board of directors. Candidates need to have a strong interest in the group's mission. Experience with legal issues, finances, fundraising, or advertising is a plus.

Volunteers are always needed for a variety of tasks and new sources of produce are also welcome. Contact Senior Gleaners at **(619) 633-9180** or **sdgleaners@aol.com**. Learn more at **www.seniorgleanerssdco.org**.



SENIOR VOLUNTEERS  
IN ACTION



### Give. Grow. Volunteer.

Are you looking for a flexible volunteer opportunity to feed your mind, body, and spirit while serving the community? Aging & Independence Services can help! Through Senior Volunteers in Action (SVA) and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), you can make an impact in rewarding fields such as law enforcement, senior services, youth mentorship, museums and the arts, and more. Contact the senior volunteer programs office today at **(858) 505-6399**.



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## MEALS ON WHEELS SAN DIEGO: MORE THAN A MEAL

For 59 years, Meals on Wheels San Diego County has been a vital part of San Diego's community safety net serving older adults in their homes. Services include the delivery of up to two meals a day by a caring volunteer, daily in-home social visits and wellness checks, and referrals to other social service providers when necessary. In 2018, Meals on Wheels delivered meals to over 3,115 seniors throughout every part of San Diego County.



Since 2010, the number of seniors in the county has doubled and many of these seniors experience chronic illnesses and disabilities making activities of daily living difficult. As people age, many become homebound, whether temporarily due to an accident or illness, or permanently. Becoming homebound prevents people from performing some of the most basic activities of daily living such as obtaining food, accessing healthcare or support services, and engaging in social activities. Homebound, low-income seniors are at significantly higher risk for both malnutrition and social isolation than higher income, mobile seniors. Inadequate nutrition and loneliness often lead to overall diminished health status, as well as an increased likelihood of hospitalization and institutionalization.

Meals on Wheels strives to keep seniors independent. The organization helps to reduce risk factors for malnourishment, safety concerns, and psychosocial decline by providing meals delivered by caring, trained individuals who develop ongoing relationships with these seniors. Meals on Wheels is one of the only organizations in the county that provides this comprehensive, relationship-based service at an affordable cost with daily meal delivery that includes weekends and holidays.

Meals on Wheels is able to ensure every senior on the program receives, at a minimum, a 60% subsidy for the

*Each month, Aging & Independence Services acknowledges a Live Well San Diego partner—an organization in our community that is committed to the vision of a region that is building better health, living safely, and thriving. To learn more about Live Well San Diego or to become a partner, visit [www.livewellsd.org](http://www.livewellsd.org).*

cost of meals, with many seniors receiving additional discounts. There are no eligibility requirements to receive meals other than to be over the age of 60, or a disabled veteran of any age. Meals on Wheels is powered by an incredible system of over 3,000 volunteers who donate their time to ensure meals are delivered every day of the week. Without this network of volunteers, Meals on Wheels simply would not be able to afford to continue the important work of helping keep seniors healthy and independent. To learn more about Meals on Wheels' programs, volunteer opportunities, events, or to support the mission, call **1-800-5-SENIOR** or visit [www.meals-on-wheels.org](http://www.meals-on-wheels.org).



## JOIN THE FEELING FIT CLUB

The Feeling Fit Club is a free functional fitness program for older adults focusing on aerobic endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance. With more than 30 locations across San Diego County, there is sure to be one near you. The Feeling Fit Club episodes are also available on television and online. For class schedules, locations, and additional information, visit [www.HealthierLivingSD.org](http://www.HealthierLivingSD.org) or call (858) 495-5500.



## CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

**Saturday, April 13 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.-*CaregiverSD Community Expo*** will be held at Liberty Station, 2641 Truxton Rd., San Diego 92106. This fun and informal gathering for caregivers, family members, and friends will offer seminars, exhibitors, and the opportunity to connect with other caregivers and helpful organizations. For more information, visit [www.caregiverSD.com](http://www.caregiverSD.com).

**Wednesday, April 24 from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.-*The Caregiver's Journey: Parkinson's Disease*** will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church, 760 1st Ave., Chula Vista 91910. This conference will provide educational workshops, community resource tables, refreshments, opportunity drawings, and free respite for your loved one with pre-registration. Although content focuses on the needs of those caring for a loved one with Parkinson's, all caregivers are welcome to attend. To register, visit [www.bit.ly/ParkinsonsCaregivers](http://www.bit.ly/ParkinsonsCaregivers) or call Southern Caregiver Resource Center at (800) 827-1008.

**Thursdays, May 9, 16, and 23 from 10-11:30 a.m.-*Living with Alzheimer's: Early Stage and Early Onset*** will be held at the Alzheimer's Association, 5075 Shoreham Pl., Ste. 240, San Diego 92122. This workshop series is for people living with Alzheimer's or related dementia and their care partner. Those with dementia will learn about available resources, coping with changes, and daily strategies. Care partners will learn about developing a care team, legal and financial planning, coping strategies, and more. Registration and pre-assessment are required. Contact Alejandra Pulido at [apulido@alz.org](mailto:apulido@alz.org) or (619) 678-8322 ext. 8172.

**Thursday, May 2-*Communication Skills*** will be held at Tri-City Wellness & Fitness Center, 6250 El Camino Real, Carlsbad 92009. Develop new skills and strategies for connecting and communicating more effectively with a person experiencing memory loss. Learn how to respond when interactions are challenging. Register at [www.alzsd.org](http://www.alzsd.org) or call (858) 492-4400.

## HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

These free, interactive, and goal-oriented workshops help people manage their health conditions.

***Healthier Living with Diabetes:*** April 5-May 10 (Fridays), 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Poway Library, 13137 Poway Rd., Poway 92064. Okay to begin on April 12.

***Healthier Living with Diabetes:*** April 19-May 24 (Fridays), 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Sustaining Grace Outreach Center, 9950 Campo Rd., Spring Valley 91950.

Visit [www.HealthierLivingSD.org](http://www.HealthierLivingSD.org), or call (858) 495-5500 to leave a message and learn more.

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## APRIL 8, MONDAY 12:30 P.M.

**Communication with Technology** classes will be held on Mondays throughout April (except 4/1) at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Public Library, 9005 Aero Dr., San Diego 92123. The classes cover technology topics such as the cloud, Apple and Microsoft tools, Google, photography on your mobile device, and more. For details, call (858) 573-1396.

## APRIL 12, FRIDAY 10 A.M.

**Watercolor for Beginners** will be held at the Alpine Branch Library, 1752 Alpine Blvd., Alpine, 91901. Freestyle with basic techniques. Space is limited; the first 18 people to arrive will be accommodated. All supplies provided. For details, call (619) 445-4221.

## APRIL 16, TUESDAY 10-11:30 A.M.

The **Senior Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Starter Kit Giveaway** event will be held at the Carlsbad Senior Center, 799 Pine Ave., Carlsbad 92008. Learn about types of emergencies, how to make a plan, and what the community is doing to prepare. The first 80 seniors to register and attend will receive a free emergency “go-bag” starter kit. To RSVP, call the senior center at (760) 891-8176 or visit [www.thefoundationforseniorwellbeing.com](http://www.thefoundationforseniorwellbeing.com).

## APRIL 17, WEDNESDAY 1 P.M.

A cooking class, **Fahrenheit 641**, will be held at the San Marcos Branch Library, 2 Civic Center Dr., San Marcos 92069. This instructional cooking class features healthy, easy recipes. To register, call (760) 891-3000.

## APRIL 18, THURSDAY 10-11 A.M.

**Remembering Our Parents**, a class covering the unique aspects of parent loss, will be held at the Point Loma/Hervey Branch Library, 3701 Voltaire St., San Diego 92107. Learn coping skills from a Sharp HospiceCare bereavement counselor and discover a sense of hope. To RSVP, visit [www.sharp.com/classes](http://www.sharp.com/classes) or call (800) 827-4277.

## APRIL 25, THURSDAY 12:45 P.M.

A presentation, **Real Problems: Crash Course in Citizen Journalism**, will be held at the College Avenue Center, 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120. Join the Director of Op-Ed at the San Diego Union-Tribune for a discussion about journalism and honest news reporting. For details, call (858) 637-3270.

## APRIL 26, FRIDAY 10-11 A.M.

A class, **Finding Reliable Health Information**, will be held at the at the Grossmont Healthcare District

Conference Center, 9001 Wakarusa St., La Mesa 91942. Learn how to research a variety of health issues and how to decide which sites to trust. To RSVP, visit [www.sharp.com/classes](http://www.sharp.com/classes) or call (800) 827-4277.

## APRIL 27, SATURDAY 9 A.M.-12 P.M.

A **Financial and Estate Planning** workshop will be held at St. Paul's PACE, 1306 Broadway, El Cajon 92021. This presentation will help you to assess your finances, plan for future care, and learn about types of insurance. Light breakfast provided. RSVP to Linda Spence at [lsponce@stpaulseniors.org](mailto:lsponce@stpaulseniors.org) or (619) 239-2097.

## APRIL 29, MONDAY 10 A.M.-12 P.M.

**Maintaining Your Brain Health** will be held at the South Bay Family YMCA, 1201 Paseo Magda, Chula Vista 91910. Hear the latest research on lifestyle changes and strategies to help maintain your brain health. Register at [www.alzsd.org](http://www.alzsd.org) or call (858) 492-4400.

## MAY 3, FRIDAY 9:30 A.M.-1 P.M.

The San Diego Oasis **Travel Palooza** event will be held at the Lifelong Learning Center, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., Ste. 269, La Mesa 91942. Special speakers, travel-related vendors, and more! Visit [www.SanDiegoOasis.org](http://www.SanDiegoOasis.org) or call (619) 881-6262 for details.

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council will meet at noon on Monday, April 8 at AIS: 5560 Overland Ave., 3rd Floor, San Diego 92123.

### SEND IN YOUR ITEMS

We welcome your contributions to this monthly calendar. Just send items by the 1st of each month preceding the issue date to: [sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov).

**AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES**

P.O. Box 23217  
 San Diego, CA 92193-3217  
 (800) 339-4661

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## When You Don't Know Where To Turn Turn To Us!



Whether the need is for assessment, service referrals, or follow-up, with just one phone call, you or a loved one can receive help for:

- Seniors
- Those requiring home-based care to prevent institutionalization
- Disabled adults
- Abused adults

As a public agency, we provide comprehensive information and impartial assistance free of charge to county residents. Since 1974, people have been turning to us at Aging & Independence Services. You can too.

**Call Toll Free: (800) 510-2020**  
[www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov)

If calling from an area code out of San Diego County, call: **(800) 339-4661**

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Chief Administrative Officer  
 Helen Robbins-Meyer

Director, Health & Human Services Agency  
 Nick Macchione

Director, Aging and Adult Services  
 Aging & Independence Services  
 Kimberly Gallo

Editor, Sarah "Sally" Jackson  
[sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Calendar information is welcome and must be submitted before the 1st of the month preceding the issue date. Submit to: Editor *Aging & Independence*, P.O. Box 23217, San Diego, CA 92193. Or, submit by email to: [sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov)

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