

# AGING & independence

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

## A Stroke of Resilience

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

For Lillian Galarza, 2013 started out as a good year. At 59 years old, Lillian was feeling better than she had in a long time. The past few years had been stressful. After several years of juggling work and her doctoral studies in Business Administration, Lillian retired from her training and development job with the County of San Bernardino to focus on completing her Ph.D. The stress had taken a toll and she hadn't always been able to prioritize a healthy lifestyle. A visit to her doctor revealed that her cholesterol was high and she was at risk for diabetes. Lillian improved her diet, began walking daily, and regularly attended Zumba class. Her weight improved and medication helped to manage her cholesterol. Things were finally going well...until in June 2013, suddenly they weren't.

Lillian was shopping after church one Sunday when she felt an intense cramp in her stomach. She proceeded to the restroom, but didn't make it out alone. A woman saw her clutching the sink basin and asked if she was okay. As Lillian started to speak, her words came out slurred, as if she were drugged. The woman called for help and Lillian was taken by ambulance to the hospital. She had suffered a stroke that left her with a limp and severe speech difficulties. Lillian explains, "Everything in my mind was flowing rhythmically, but if I tried to speak at my normal rhythm, words would get jammed at the door."



Lillian Galarza

The months that followed were full of appointments—occupational, speech, and physical therapy—and frustration. While needing to use a walker had been an adjustment, Lillian really felt the sting of her speech challenges.

Lillian had always liked to talk. As the youngest of nine kids, she was the "jokester" of the family. Her husband is the youngest of eleven and also a big talker. The couple has four grown children and eleven grandchildren. "We are a loud, loud family!" Lillian exclaims.

After her stroke, however, Lillian felt extremely self-conscious about her speech. "I didn't want to answer the phone. When we went to stores and needed assistance from staff, I would say to my husband, 'You tell them! You tell them!' My personality changed a lot. I was a lot more withdrawn." Lillian adds, "I lost my voice and me as a person."

After the initial recovery period, Lillian did her best to complete her Ph.D. dissertation. Eventually though, the stress got to be too much and she decided to withdraw from the program. Lillian thought to herself, "What good is this PhD going to do me if I'm putting it on my headstone? I want to live to see more grandbabies!"

Fortunately, as the saying goes, when one door closes,

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another one opens. Lillian had been taking a class in mind-body relaxation at Kaiser. She learned about an opportunity with Aging & Independence Services to become a layperson leader for a similar class that helps people manage chronic conditions and it was offered in Spanish. Although Lillian speaks fluent Spanish, she was hesitant because of her speech challenges, but the leader of her mind-body class encouraged her to take the plunge. She was so glad she did.

Healthier Living classes are six-week courses that help participants to better manage chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, or chronic pain. Participants develop goals, learn new skills, and come up with action plans to help them make positive change in their lives. Group support and problem solving are essential elements of the program.

Lillian enjoyed leading the courses. It got her back up in front of people again—something she had devoted her career to doing. Then, a year after her stroke, Lillian experienced something of a miracle. She went in for an MRI and, upon waking up from sedation, discovered that her speech had returned to normal. While Lillian felt extremely blessed to have regained the ability to speak normally, she believes involvement in the Healthier Living classes was one of the biggest factors in her recovery. She explains, “When you help others or volunteer, it takes your mind off of your own issues.” It also gave her the confidence to pick back up with another passion of hers—coordinating a Spanish-

speaking children’s choir. “Children don’t see any problems—no pity parties. They help you take your mind off of issues.”

In 2015, she learned about a position to become a master trainer and coordinator for the Healthier Living program at Aging & Independence Services. She applied and was offered the position. Today, Lillian is feeling good and continues to enjoy strengthening the Healthier Living program in San Diego. She has provided support to organizations that work with refugees, so now course material is being presented in Somali and Arabic, as well as English and Spanish.

Helping others is good medicine, and Lillian encourages those who have had a stroke or are struggling with chronic conditions to think about ways to contribute to the community. She points to a group of older women that meets at the Fallbrook Library to crochet and knit blankets for homeless women and hurricane victims. “Even if someone can’t speak,” she notes, “maybe they can move their hands, maybe they can walk.”

Healthier Living classes are held throughout the county. Visit [healthierlivingsd.org](http://healthierlivingsd.org) for the current schedule. To learn ways to recognize or prevent a stroke, visit the American Heart Association’s website [heart.org](http://heart.org). Knowing your blood pressure numbers is an important step in preventing heart attack or stroke. Join the County of San Diego on February 14 for the Love Your Heart blood pressure screening event. Visit [loveyourheartsd.org](http://loveyourheartsd.org) to learn more.

## HEART HEALTHY RECIPE



Enjoy this recipe for black bean and corn salad from [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)! Made with many colorful ingredients, this salad is full of phytonutrients that help reduce blood pressure and inflammation, is high in fiber, and contains healthy fats.

### Ingredients:

- 5-6 Tbsp fresh lime juice
- 8 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp salt
- Small pinch of ground cayenne pepper

- 2 (15 ounce) cans of black beans (no salt added), rinsed/drained
- 245 g frozen corn kernels (approx. one cup)
- 1 avocado - peeled, pitted, and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 6 green onions, thinly sliced
- 5 tsp chopped fresh cilantro

1. Place lime juice, olive oil, garlic, salt, and cayenne pepper in a small jar. Cover with lid, and shake until ingredients are well mixed.

2. In a salad bowl, combine beans, corn, avocado, bell pepper, tomatoes, green onions, and cilantro. Shake lime dressing, and pour it over the salad. Stir salad to coat vegetables and beans with dressing, and serve.

# In the COMMUNITY

## CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE

Would you like to influence legislation to improve the lives of older adults? The California Senior Legislature (CSL) currently has two Assembly seat vacancies for San Diego County. Candidates must be 55 years of age or older on election day (May 13, 2019), a registered voter, and reside in San Diego County. Interested candidates should go to the CSL website ([4CSL.org](http://4CSL.org)) to obtain the application package, which must be submitted to [Renee.Sherrill@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Renee.Sherrill@sdcounty.ca.gov) by March 31, 2019.

## CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

**Wednesday, February 6 and Wednesday, February 20 from 6-7:30 p.m.-*Support Group for Adult Children Caregivers*** will be held at the North University Community Library, 8820 Judicial Dr., San Diego 92122. The Alzheimer's Association offers facilitated support groups for adult children caregivers of a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Walk-ins are welcome. Call **(800) 272-3900** for details.

**Wednesday, February 20 from 12-1:30 p.m.-*Home Care, Day Care, & Memory Care: What You Need to Know*** will be held at Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego 92107. Is it time for more help? Learn about available care options. Register online at [www.alzsd.org](http://www.alzsd.org) or by calling **(858) 492-4400**.

**Thursday, February 21 from 1-3 p.m.-*Legal & Financial Basics*** will be held at the San Marcos Senior Activity Center, 111 Richmar Ave., San Marcos 92069. Learn from estate/elder law experts about getting legal documents in place and planning for the costs of future care. Register at [www.alzsd.org](http://www.alzsd.org) or call **(858) 492-4400**.

## AGE WELL SAN DIEGO UPDATE-No Fees for Granny Flats

A recent Board of Supervisors' decision paves the way for progress to be made on goals identified by the Age Well San Diego Housing Team. On January 9th, the Board approved a 5-year trial program to waive fees for homeowners in unincorporated areas of the County who want to build accessory dwelling units, commonly known as granny flats.

Age Well San Diego (Age Well) is a community-driven initiative to make our communities even better places in which to age. During the planning phase for Age Well, community members identified affordable housing as a priority for older adults. The Age Well Housing Team is now working with the County's Planning and Development Services to promote affordable housing, including granny flats.

Granny flats' small size (1,200 sq. ft. maximum), combined with the cost-effectiveness of building on previously developed land and using existing infrastructure, makes them an affordable housing option. They are a promising housing strategy for older adults as they can provide multigenerational housing, a residence for a caregiver, or serve as a source of extra income to help older adults stay in their homes. Granny flats increase the stock of affordable housing and could provide more options for older adult renters.

A 2018 California law made it easier for homeowners to build granny flats, and the County's decision goes one step further, providing a financial incentive. The Board decision included funding of \$11 million to offset the funds lost in previously expected fees. The fee waiver is timely, given the region's housing affordability crisis. In 2016, more than 40% of senior households in San Diego County spent more than 30% of their income on housing, which means less money for necessities such as food and medical care. The Age Well Housing Team is currently developing educational materials to assist homeowners interested in building a granny flat.

To get involved with any of the Age Well teams (Housing, Health & Community Support, Social Participation, Transportation, or Dementia-Friendly), email Christy Patch at [christina.patch@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:christina.patch@sdcounty.ca.gov).

## VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

The February 2019 Volunteer of the Month is Mary L. Brown. She was nominated by Rosemary Pope, Executive Director of the Fourth District Seniors Resource Center (FDSRC). Mary is a dynamic and energetic volunteer who just turned 89 years old! She has been volunteering for FDSRC for more than 15 years.



Mary L. Brown

Currently, Mary serves in several volunteer roles at FDSRC, including as a yoga instructor for a very popular class. She also uses her skills from her work as a Registered Nurse to conduct monthly blood pressure monitoring checks. She is serious about her own health--and that of others--and she embodies this in her own lifestyle. Mary is a great role model of healthy living for us all.

At the age of 50, Mary was introduced to yoga and running. She became a member of the US Olympics Relay Team and in 1994 she passed the Olympic torch through San Diego. After retiring at the age of 65, she learned to swim and competed in triathlons. After that, Mary was a member of a cycling team that rode across America, from Irvine, CA to Savannah, GA.

In addition to her health-related pursuits and contributions to FDSRC, Mary also volunteers in several other capacities, such as lending support to fundraising efforts and being a member of the Speakers Bureau. As a speaker, she goes into the community and does outreach to let residents know about the resources that are available through the center and other community agencies. Mary is also involved with organizing and serving as a hostess for plays performed by the Old Globe Theater at FDSRC.

Mary had been serving her community faithfully for years with much humility and little fanfare. However, in 2017, the 79th Assembly District awarded Mary the "Outstanding Woman of the Year Award". This award was well deserved, as Mary gives so much to better the lives of others. Thank you, Mary, for all that you do!

## RIDES & SMILES VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Rides & Smiles, part of the On the Go transportation program of Jewish Family Service, provides safe and reliable transportation to older adults with the help of volunteer drivers.

Volunteer drivers are needed to ensure that riders remain active, healthy, and connected to their community. Drivers commit to providing at least two rides per month for a minimum of three months. Responsibilities include:

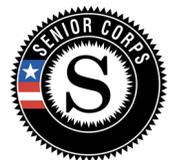
- Accepting rides that work for your schedule using a web-based scheduling system (7 days a week, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.)
- Providing a clean, well-maintained vehicle and observing the "rules of the road"
- Providing friendly conversation during transport

Become part of the On the Go family and enrich the lives of older adults! Volunteer drivers must be between the ages of 25 and 79, punctual, and enjoy driving and meeting new people. A valid driver's license and current auto insurance are required. Prospective volunteers need to fill out an application, attend a 1-hour orientation, consent to a DMV record report and background check, and provide copies of their license/insurance.

For more information, call **(858) 505-6399**, or email [MaryAnne.Briggs@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:MaryAnne.Briggs@sdcounty.ca.gov).



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

## ALZHEIMER'S SAN DIEGO

Let's talk about Alzheimer's. It can be a scary subject. Right now, there are more than 84,000 people living with Alzheimer's or a related dementia in San Diego County. There is currently no effective treatment or known cure, so those numbers are only going to increase until a major medical breakthrough occurs. But thanks to non-profits such as Alzheimer's San Diego, local families don't have to face this disease alone.

Alzheimer's San Diego is a local nonprofit organization. It helps San Diegans through free and innovative programs designed for people living with dementia and their families, and through community education. The agency is also working to make Alzheimer's a disease of the past, by connecting people to clinical trials and funding research for a cure.

The staff at Alzheimer's San Diego knows that people can still live well after a diagnosis, and empowers them to play an active role in planning their own future care. One of those people who refused to let a diagnosis stop her is 71-year-old Deborah Gould.

Deborah has Alzheimer's disease – and she wants everyone to know about it. She was diagnosed in 2016, a fact she shares as plainly as she would the day of the week. To some, her candor could be jarring. After all, Alzheimer's is a disease many struggle to discuss openly.

“If you have Alzheimer's, everyone thinks you don't even know the difference between night and day, and they don't look at you in the eye,” she explains.

Over the last two years, Alzheimer's San Diego has been a place of refuge for Deborah and her family. She and her husband, Greg, enrolled in Take Charge—a special

*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).*



Alzheimer's San Diego clients Deborah and Greg Gould.

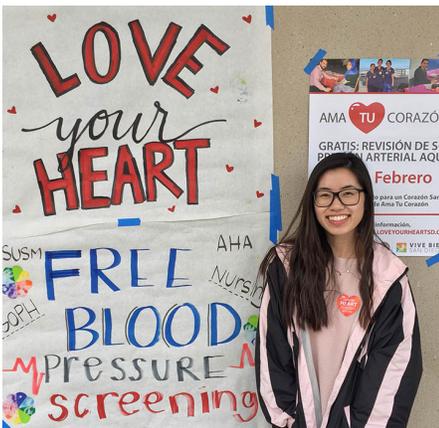
5-week program that helps those recently diagnosed and their care partners plan for the road ahead. They are regulars at the early-stage support group, and have formed a strong bond with other couples they've met there. Greg has also attended several caregiving education classes, where he's gotten the tools he needs to be a strong partner for Deborah.

In addition, Alzheimer's San Diego provides memory screenings to the public, social activities and outings for those living with dementia and their care partners, and so much more. All services are free of charge. If you or someone you know is dealing with memory issues, call Alzheimer's San Diego to speak with a dementia expert at (858) 492-4400 or visit [www.alzsd.org](http://www.alzsd.org).



## STILL TIME TO GET A FLU SHOT

Flu season typically peaks between December and February most years, but it can last as late as May in the United States. The best way to prevent catching the flu is to get the flu vaccine every year. If you have not yet received your flu vaccine, it is not too late! The vaccine is available at many retail pharmacies and physician offices. To find a site for a flu shot, call **2-1-1** or visit [www.sdiz.org](http://www.sdiz.org).



## LOVE YOUR HEART

### CHECK YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE ON VALENTINE'S DAY

Love Your Heart is an annual event in which organizations from across the U.S. and Mexico join together to provide FREE blood pressure screenings to the public on Valentine's Day, February 14.

Last year's Love Your Heart event helped over 36,000 people get to know their blood pressure numbers and take charge of their own heart health.

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked. Heart disease can be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions.

Visit [LoveYourHeartSD.org](http://LoveYourHeartSD.org) for more information and to find a screening site near you.

## HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

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

***Una Vida Más Saludable con Dolor Crónico (Healthier Living with Chronic Pain in Spanish):*** Febrero 7-Marzo 14 (Los Jueves), 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. en la Casa Familiar, 1901 Del Sur Blvd., San Ysidro 92173. En el segundo piso. Para inscribirse llame: Maria, **(619) 250-4703**.

***Healthier Living with Diabetes:*** February 21-March 28 (Thursdays), 12:30-3 p.m. at the Jewish Family Service College Avenue Center/Temple Emanu-El, 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120.

***Manejo Personal de la Diabetes (Healthier Living with Diabetes in Spanish):*** Febrero 25-Abril 1 (Los Lunes), 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. en la Casa Familiar, 212 W. Hall Dr., Rec. #1, San Ysidro 92173. Para inscribirse llame: Maria, **(619) 250-4703**.

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

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY 7, THURSDAY 4-5 P.M.

A *Chinese New Year Celebration* will be held by the Panda Bridge Troupe at San Diego Oasis, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., Ste. 269, La Mesa 91942. Students will perform dances and attendees can enjoy a tea ceremony, ink-making demonstration, and Bamboo ink painting. Free. Register for class #588 at [www.SanDiegoOasis.org](http://www.SanDiegoOasis.org) or call (619) 881-6262.

## FEBRUARY 7, THURSDAY 5:30-6:30 P.M.

A workshop, *Healthy Living for Your Body & Brain: Tips from the Latest Research*, will be held at Coronado Retirement Village, 299 Prospect Pl., Coronado 92118. Learn from the Alzheimer's Association about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement. Register at <https://bit.ly/2rLZFVO> or call (800) 272-3900.

## FEBRUARY 11, MONDAY 12:30-2:30 P.M.

A *4-week Beginning Computer Course* will be held at the College Avenue Center, 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120. Become familiar with using a mouse and keyboard; learn about file management, how to navigate the internet, and how to use Google and Gmail. Each class is hands on. Meets on Feb. 11, 18, 25, and Mar. 4. For details, call (858) 637-3273.

## FEBRUARY 13, WEDNESDAY 9 A.M.-12 P.M.

*Insurance Counseling* by the Health Insurance Advocacy Program (HICAP) will be offered at the Sharp Senior Health Center, 4320 Genesee Ave., #104, San Diego 92117. Receive free information about Medicare, supplement insurance, and long-term care insurance from trained volunteer counselors. Appointment required. Call HICAP at (800) 434-0222.

## FEBRUARY 14, THURSDAY 10-11 A.M.

Learn how to improve your heart health at *Maintaining a Healthy Heart*. This class will be held at the Grossmont HealthCare District Conference Center, 9001 Wakarusa St., La Mesa 91942. A Sharp Rehab exercise specialist will go over the steps you can take to maintain a healthy heart. Discover the effects of stress, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and more. To RSVP, call (800) 827-4277 or visit [www.sharp.com/classes](http://www.sharp.com/classes).

## FEBRUARY 15, FRIDAY 10 A.M.-12 P.M.

A workshop on *Using Android Smartphones after Significant Vision Loss* will be held at San Diego Center for the Blind, 5922 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego 92115. This class will cover using the calendar, setting up alerts, and phone organization. Suggested donation of \$10. For details or to reserve a seat, call (619) 583-1542 or email Roxane at [rsoucy@sdcdb.org](mailto:rsoucy@sdcdb.org).

## FEBRUARY 17, SUNDAY 1-2 P.M.

Celebrate your love for reading at the *Reading Rocks! Adult Painted Rock Craft* workshop at the Poway Library, 13137 Poway Rd., Poway 92064. You will paint rocks to keep and decorate your home. Explore literary themes, mandalas, or create your own style. All materials are provided and no registration is necessary. For details, call (858) 513-2900.

## FEBRUARY 21, THURSDAY 10-11:30 A.M.

A presentation on *End-of-Life Planning and Choices* will be held at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Public Library, 9005 Aero Dr., San Diego 92123. Learn about "Do Not Resuscitate" orders, Advance Health Care Directives (AHCD), Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST), hospice, palliative care, and the End of Life Option Act. RSVP by Feb. 19 to [eruiz@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:eruiz@compassionandchoices.org).

## FEBRUARY 23, SATURDAY 10 A.M.-5 P.M.

Prepare and file your Federal and State income taxes for free with the Turbo Tax Free File Program at the Oceanside Civic Center Library, 330 N. Coast Hwy., Oceanside 92054. Volunteers and experts will be on hand to provide assistance to qualified individuals. For more information and to make an appointment, call (888) 268-1666.

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council will meet on Monday, February 11 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).

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT ■ HEALTH INDEPENDENCE SERVICES ■ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ■ PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY ■



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

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**



HOME-BASED SERVICES ■ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ■



*Aging & Independence*™ is published monthly by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services. The purpose is to inform and recognize older adults, volunteers, and community partners.

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