

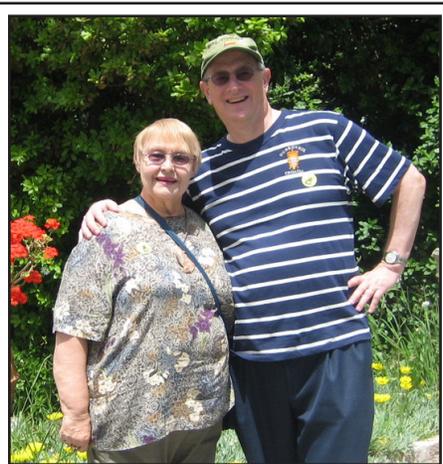
AGING & independence

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

Aging In Place: It Takes a Village

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

For forty years, Marc (72) and Grazia (82) Narkus-Kramer enjoyed rich and rewarding lives in Maryland near Washington D.C. The couple had married in 1975, welcomed a daughter in 1977, and each pursued satisfying careers. Marc, who earned a master's degree in physics, worked in the field of air traffic management, and Grazia worked for the federal government's Office of Personnel Management. Ten years ago the couple relocated to a retirement community where a strong network of friends kept them busy.



Grazia and Marc Narkus-Kramer

After a vacation to Hawaii a couple of years ago, Grazia declared to Marc, "We're moving!" It was time for a change. Not only were harsh winters hard on her arthritis, but being amongst the beautiful Hawaiian foliage reminded Grazia how much she missed gardening. At their retirement community condominium, Grazia no longer had a garden of her own to tend.

Marc and Grazia set out to find a new place to live that they could call home for the rest of their lives. The couple started researching communities across the country that would meet their needs. Marc wanted to live in a big city with a robust music community and a Unitarian Universalist fellowship. They settled on San Diego. Marc and Grazia visited some big retirement communities, but none of the options felt quite right. Aside from the hefty price tags, the couple had a feeling of "we're not ready

for this." Most of the units were very small and Marc wondered, "What are we going to do with my piano? And what about Grazia's gardening?"

From their research, however, Marc and Grazia knew that there was another option: living in a community with a Village support network. They had heard about Tierrasanta Village and decided to check it out.

Tierrasanta Village of San Diego (TVSD) is a grassroots, membership-based organization that is dedicated to helping Tierrasanta residents who are

50+ successfully age in their homes and live life to the fullest. The non-profit provides a wide variety of social activities as well as concierge services, such as assistance with transportation and shopping.

Marc and Grazia showed up at one of the Village monthly meetings. "We got a really warm welcome," Marc says. Living somewhere with a strong sense of community was essential for Grazia, something she had learned the value of as a child growing up in Lithuania. During World War II, there wasn't much food or fuel in the cities, so Grazia's family relocated to the countryside. Villagers pooled their resources to help each other during harvest time. Later, Grazia's family found themselves in a displaced persons camp where, despite being malnourished, the children lived stimulating lives with the out-of-work

(Continued on page two)



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO
LIVWELLSD.ORG

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adults providing rich artistic, athletic, and intellectual activities. Grazia had been on the search for that same feeling of community depth ever since being relocated to the United States as a teenager.

Tierrasanta Village promised the same sense of vibrancy and network of neighbors helping neighbors that Grazia had known as a child. The couple took the plunge and purchased a single-story home in Tierrasanta that would be easy for Grazia to navigate with her walker. About nine months ago they moved in.

The couple is loving their new life in Tierrasanta and connecting with their Village neighbors. From potlucks to museum trips, a “Lunch Bunch” group and regular lectures, the Village provides ample opportunities for social, cultural, and intellectual connection. For now, the Village serves as a social network, but if some day either Grazia or Marc need more support that is non-medical in nature, the Village may be able to help. A unique aspect of the Village model is that it uses a “time bank” system of bartering. Members can earn credits for helping out their neighbors, say by giving a ride to the airport, and later can use the credits they earned on different services, such as assistance with grocery shopping after a hospital stay.

Marc is involved in the Care Committee, which plans health-related educational presentations and workshops, checks in on neighbors, and provides information to

members. He researches timely topics that may be of interest to members and writes articles to share what he’s learned, such as recent changes to Medicare. As someone who is newly retired, the Village is helping him stay active and engaged, though he finds plenty else to do, including playing piano with a local string quartet and writing a book on management complexity.

Marc and Grazia are just two of the over 110 members who are contributing to and reaping the benefits of Village life. Keeping the Village running smoothly is an intensive effort, however, especially as there is only one part-time paid staff person. Joyce Muinos, President of the TVSD Board of Directors, has found it satisfying to be involved in the day-to-day operations of the Village. She notes, “You retire and you lose a little bit of your identity.” Committing to a meaningful community effort such as the Village really bolsters participants’ sense of purpose. Joyce adds, “I’ve watched people take on leadership roles in committees for the Village and they just blossom...it is so nice when you are helping your neighbors and you can see it.” Marc and Grazia couldn’t agree more.

To learn more about TVSD, visit www.tierrasantavillage.org. Villages in various stages of development also exist in Scripps Ranch, Serra Mesa, Carlsbad, and City Heights. To learn more about Villages and efforts to expand this important community model, visit www.villagecore.org.

AGE WELL SAN DIEGO UPDATE—VILLAGE SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS!

Older adults overwhelmingly want to stay in their homes and neighborhoods as they age. However, it isn’t always easy for older adults to get the support they might need, such as transportation or assistance with meals after a hospital stay. “Villages,” which are grassroots, community-based support systems, can help.

The Age Well San Diego Health & Community Support theme team, with support from Aging & Independence Services, VillageCore, and AARP, hosted a Village Movement Symposium on January 28 with more than 130 people in attendance. The Symposium provided education about the potential benefits of Villages and showcased successes of existing local Villages. The next step will be working with interested stakeholders to develop a new pilot project Village in San Diego County!

LAUNCHING VILLAGES IN SAN DIEGO—MARCH 25

Are you interested in learning how to start a Village in your community? Or, do you work with an organization that would like to help support a new Village? If so, attend the *Launching Villages in San Diego meeting* on **Monday, March 25** at the County Operations Center, 5500 Overland Ave., Ste. 120, San Diego 92123. Topics of discussion will include: how to start a Village, key success factors, funding models, and more! For details, contact Matthew Parcasio at **(858) 505-6435** or Matthew.Parcasio@sdcounty.ca.gov.

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) to obtain the application package, which must be submitted to Renee.Sherrill@sdcounty.ca.gov by March 31, 2019.

INTERGENERATIONAL GAMES

Intergenerational (IG) Games offer adults and youth the opportunity to connect, while having fun engaging in easy and noncompetitive fitness and wellness activities, such as ring toss and disc golf. The next IG Games event will be held on **Thursday, April 4 from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.** at the San Marcos Senior Activity Center, 111 Richmar Ave., San Marcos 92069. After the morning's activities, enjoy lunch and an intergenerational movie! To register, visit www.san-marcos.net/adults50+ or call (760) 744-5535.

FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE

The AARP® Tax-Aide program offers free, individualized tax preparation for taxpayers with low-to-moderate incomes. Nearly 20 sites across San Diego County host the program. For details or to find a location near you, visit www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide/.

DRIVER SAFETY COURSES

The AARP® Smart Driver Course is offered at several locations throughout San Diego County. Some upcoming course locations and dates include:

La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center: 8450 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa 91942; Tues., March 19 and Tues., March 26 from 12-4:30 p.m.

Norman Park Senior Center: 270 F St., Chula Vista 91910; Tues., April 9 and Tues., April 23 from 1-5:30 p.m.

Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church: 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego 92107. Tues., March 26 and Tues., April 2 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

To register, visit www.AARP.org/auto/driversafety or call the AARP® Information Center at (619) 641-7020. Courses are \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. An online course is also available.

SENIORS COMPUTER GROUP

For 34 years, the Seniors Computer Group of San Diego has been helping older adults learn how to use computers and technology, such as smart phones, effectively and safely. Open to all ages, and free to visitors.

Meetings are held each Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m. in the Wesley Palms retirement community, 2404 Loring St., San Diego 92109 (Pacific Beach area). Coffee and tea are provided free of charge. For details, call Tom Sprague at (858) 459-9065 or visit www.scgsd.org.

KINSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Are you raising a grandchild or young relative? Join us on **Saturday, April 6 from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.** at Foothills Church, 365 W. Bradley Ave., El Cajon 92020, for a free symposium tailored to the needs of relative caregivers. Learn about local resources and hear from speakers on topics such as building resilient children, adverse childhood experiences, drug prevention, and more. Teens are invited to attend a special program just for them! Childcare, breakfast, and lunch will be provided free to those who pre-register. To register, visit 211sandiego.org/grandparents or call 2-1-1.



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Barbara McPheron is the Volunteer of the Month for March 2019. She was nominated by Cindi Robertson of the Alpine Community Center. Barbara is a volunteer with the senior program and assists with a variety of tasks, such as setting up chairs for the exercise class and making sure that the senior lunch program runs smoothly.



Barbara McPheron

Barbara regularly goes above and beyond to enrich the lives of the Alpine Community Center's visitors. For example, the center has games for older adults to play before they have lunch. A local grocery store delivers baked goods which are served as snacks during these games. Barbara receives these food items, divides them up into individual portions, and then distributes them to the seniors as they enjoy the games. Barbara also inventories the prizes for the games and even goes out to purchase additional prizes when more are needed.

In addition, Barbara volunteers with the emergency food pantry. She gathers items from food banks all over East County and brings the food to the center to restock their supply.

Barbara has been described as “selfless, helpful, caring, dedicated and loyal.” She is known for being kind, reliable, and always willing to help—wherever and whenever she is needed.

Barbara volunteers twice a week, every week and says that her favorite part of volunteering is helping others and seeing them happy.

Cindi summed it up best when she said: “Our senior program and emergency food pantry would not run without Barbara. Alpine Community Center is so grateful to have her”.

Congratulations and thank you, Barbara, for making a difference!

BECOME A JOY MAKER!

Making Music for Health and Happiness
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Through the power of music, Resounding Joy reduces pain, increases joy, and improves the lives of people of all ages. Their powerful and cost-effective music therapy programs benefit low-income and underserved communities. Resounding Joy's services are provided to veterans, teen parents bonding with their babies, older adults, and hospitalized children and their families.

Joy Maker volunteers are the many hands that help the small Resounding Joy staff make events and programs a success. As music therapy advocates of all ages, Joy Makers help Resounding Joy make music for health and happiness. In the process, Joy Maker volunteers deepen their understanding of—and appreciation for—music therapy.

Become a Joy Maker! Volunteers are needed to provide assistance with administrative matters, volunteer coordination, and support with events and fundraising. Volunteers with skills such as program management, volunteer management, marketing, and photography are particularly needed. Joy Maker volunteer schedules are flexible. Some projects require a background check. For more information, call (858) 505-6399 or email 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

THE SKINNY GENE PROJECT

Approximately 46% of San Diegans are living with pre-diabetes and are on the path to type 2 diabetes. A healthy intervention is exactly what our community needs. Fortunately, one is already underway.

The Skinny Gene Project is an award winning local non-profit organization on a mission to prevent type 2 diabetes from continuing to impede our families and communities from living well. Given the strong correlation between genetics and risk for type 2 diabetes, the organization’s message is simple; your genes may define who you are, but your choices can ultimately define what you can be. In this case, by preventing the progression of prediabetes into full-blown type 2, the Skinny Gene Project aims to help San Diegans be diabetes-free.

The Skinny Gene Project is a local provider of the National Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) lifestyle change program, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This year-long program helps participants make lifestyle changes that have been shown to reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 58%.

Like the name “gene” implies, the Skinny Gene Project is rooted in science. Its program is modeled after a 15-year study that shows we can prevent type 2 diabetes. The solution isn’t a pill or radical procedure, but rather learning how to eat and exercise our way into better health. By helping San Diegans reverse the behaviors that lead to obesity and chronic disease, the Skinny Gene Project is not just addressing the diabetes epidemic. This evidence-based lifestyle program also gives participants tools they need to create the quality of life they deserve. Since 2014, the Skinny Gene Project has successfully

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.

helped hundreds of San Diegans reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

A successful program is only one part of the solution, however; equally important is ensuring the diabetes prevention program is accessible to all and fits the cultural needs of our very diverse San Diego community. Fortunately, recent developments have brought us closer to creating a solution to the diabetes epidemic that our community so desperately needs.

As of January 2019, this evidence-based diabetes prevention program is a covered benefit for those with Medicare, Medi-Cal, and most commercial insurance. In addition, the Skinny Gene Project, along with the new Prevention Alliance, formed by the Multicultural Health Foundation, is working to train program leaders who will help reach diverse, underserved communities. Finally, thanks to a collaboration with Champions For Health’s Project Access, as well as with the help of volunteers and charitable donations, our uninsured neighbors now also have the opportunity to receive diabetes prevention programming.

To learn more about the Skinny Gene Project, including how to enroll in the diabetes prevention program, become a lifestyle coach, or volunteer, call **(619) 793-2010** or visit www.skinnygeneproject.org.



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DANCE FOR ALL ABILITIES

Join the Wheelchair Dancers Organization on Saturdays in March for Dance It Out, an adaptive fitness class for all abilities. The class will be held each Saturday from 10-10:45 a.m. at the **Dance for 2 Studio, 7528 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., San Diego 92111**. Exercise and have fun dancing to over 20 styles of dance from around the world. No charge. All ages and abilities are welcome, whether you are a walker (able-bodied) or a roller (using a wheelchair). For details, contact Beverly Weurding at **(858) 573-1571** or visit **www.wheelchairdancers.org**.



The Wheelchair Dancers Organization hosts a variety of fun classes and events throughout the year.

CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, March 13 from 10-11 a.m.-*Managing Caregiver Stress* will be held at Southern Caregiver Resource Center, 3675 Ruffin Rd., San Diego 92123. Explore different methods that can reduce stress levels and obtain helpful resources. To register, visit **www.bit.ly/LearnStress** or call **(800) 827-1008**.

Thursday, March 14 from 10-11:30 a.m.-*Adjusting to Life with Dementia* will be held at Tri-City Wellness & Fitness Center, 6250 El Camino Real, Carlsbad 92009. A class for individuals with early-stage memory loss and their care partners. Learn strategies for coping with daily challenges, enhancing safety and well-being, and planning for the future. Register at **www.alzsd.org** or call **(858) 492-4400**.

Tuesday, March 26 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.-*LGBT Community Forum: Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia, and Memory Loss* will be held at the San Diego LGBT Center, 3909 Centre St., San Diego 92103. Join the Alzheimer's Association for an interactive forum. Learn about brain health and changes as we age. Hot dinner provided. RSVP to (800) 272-3900 or by visiting **www.bit.ly/2PSXfP5**.

Friday, March 29 from 1-2:30 p.m.-*Home Care, Day Care, Memory Care* will be held at the Grossmont HealthCare District Conference Center, 9001 Wakarusa St., La Mesa 91942. Is it time for more help? Learn about the range of available care options, what they cost, and how to access them. Make informed decisions about getting help at home, placement, and community services. To RSVP, visit **www.sharp.com/classes** or call **(800) 827-4277**.

HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

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

Manejo Personal de la Diabetes (Healthier Living with Diabetes in Spanish): Marzo 13-Abril 17 (los miércoles), 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. en la Lincoln Acres Library, 2725 Granger Ave., National City 91950. Para inscribirse llame: **(619) 475-9880**.

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. Call (858) 495-5500 to register.

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MARCH 12, TUESDAY 9-9:45 A.M.

Get some fresh air while improving your balance, flexibility, and strength, at the ***Longevity Stick Class***, held each Tuesday and Thursday morning in the park adjacent to the Norman Park Senior Center, 270 F Street, Chula Vista 91910. Using a long stick, participants not only exercise but improve their mental focus and breathing capacity. Perfect for those with limited mobility. For details, call (619) 409-1931.

MARCH 12, TUESDAY 5:30 P.M.

A ***Writing Workshop*** will be held on Tuesday evenings in March at Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Public Library, 9005 Aero Dr., San Diego 92123. Learn how to write newspaper articles, autobiographies, fiction, and more. Geared toward those 55+. For details, call (858) 573-1396.

MARCH 16, SATURDAY 1-3 P.M.

Seniors Have Talent!, the 45th Annual Senior Talent Show presented by the City of San Diego's Senior Citizen Services, will be held at Patrick Henry High School's Performing Arts Center at 6702 Wandermere Dr., San Diego 92120. Tickets: \$7 for online purchase (order at www.SDRecConnect.com and use code 59678) and \$10 at the door. For details, call (619) 236-6905.

MARCH 17, SUNDAY 1:30-3:30 P.M.

A workshop, ***Heart Failure and End of Life Choices***, will be held at the Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino del Rio South, San Diego 92108. Hear from an expert panel of hospice care physicians and a retired cardiologist discuss questions such as: what is heart failure? What can be done for it? How does one make end-of-life choices? Free. For details, call (619) 665-5981.

MARCH 18, MONDAY 2-3:30 P.M.

A class, ***How to Get Restful, Refreshing Sleep***, will be held at the Oasis Grossmont Learning Center, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., Ste. 269, La Mesa 91942. Deep, restful sleep is essential to our physical and mental well-being. Learn tips to get restful sleep and how sleep disorders like sleep apnea and insomnia are diagnosed and treated. Free. Register for class #268 at www.SanDiegoOasis.org or call (619) 881-6262.

MARCH 20, WEDNESDAY 12-2 P.M.

Do you live with dizziness or imbalance? Attend a free ***Fall Prevention and Balance Screening Workshop*** at Point Loma Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego 92107. Learn risk factors and health concerns regarding balance. To RSVP, call (800) 827-4277 or visit www.sharp.com/classes.

MARCH 20, WEDNESDAY 12:45 P.M.

A workshop, ***All About Technological Assistive Devices***, will be held at the College Avenue Center, 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120. Learn about technologies such as Siri, Alexa, Google Home, Apple Watch, and Fitbit. Call (858) 637-3725 to reserve your spot.

MARCH 26, WEDNESDAY 10 A.M.

A screening of the documentary, ***Lives Well Lived***, will be shown at the Lawrence Family JCC, 4126 Executive Dr., La Jolla 92037. The film celebrates the incredible wit and wisdom of adults 75 to 100 years old who are living their lives to the fullest. Hear insights to living a meaningful life. Free. RSVP by March 20 to (858) 362-1141.

APRIL 3, WEDNESDAY 9:30 A.M.-3 P.M.

Health and Wellness in Aging: Know Your Options, an aging conference, will be held at the Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego 92107. As we age, we experience changes in our mind, body, finances, and spirit. Learn about options and discover resources. Continental breakfast and lunch provided. To RSVP, call (800) 827-4277 or visit www.sharp.com/classes.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council will meet 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.

AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

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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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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

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