

# AGING & independence

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

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY: IT'S ESSENTIAL!

By Kim Gallo  
Director, Aging & Independence Services

Older adults and persons with disabilities are essential members of our community—and a large share of the more than four hundred employees of Aging & Independence Services are considered essential workers. In difficult times, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reminded of the critical importance of the social services safety net. AIS staff are proud to be a part of that safety net and continue to work on behalf of the community.

For many, it hasn't been easy. Most staff have had to adapt to working from home. Some suddenly have found themselves surrounded by a new set of "coworkers"—children who haven't been able to go to school, spouses, and roommates all confined to the same space. Others, particularly those who live alone, have had to adjust to working from a completely "empty office" without the company and camaraderie of coworkers beside them. Despite these challenges, AIS staff have remained united in their passion and sense of purpose. They have demonstrated great flexibility and plenty of creativity to reimagine ways to serve.

Under normal circumstances, members of the Outreach & Education team provide in-person presentations to older adults and service providers on community programs and helpful information, such as scam prevention tips and ways to foster good mental health. With the need for social distancing, the team looked for new ways to share information and decided to create videos on topics such as how to remain socially engaged from home and where to find supportive resources, and avoiding scams related to COVID-19. The videos are posted at [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) in the "COVID-19 Community

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Staff from the Aging & Independence Services Community Unit created YouTube Videos while working from home to continue their mission of providing education and resources to older adults and persons with disabilities during COVID-19. Anabel Kuykendall (upper left), Hazel Quinones (upper right), and Matthew Parcasio (lower left), all with the Outreach & Education team. Nancy Garcia (lower right), Community Unit Manager.

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

COVID-19 tests are now available to all members of the community who would like to receive one. To learn more, or to view the up-to-date orders, guidelines, and recommendations from the County's Public Health Officer, visit [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com).



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Resources” section. Outreach & Education team member Anabel Kuykendall hopes that the videos, as well as the other COVID-19 resources, will give community members “the knowledge and confidence to educate themselves, stay connected, and make informed decisions.” She also hopes older adults will be empowered to share best practices with family, friends, and neighbors.

Staff from the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program quickly got to work doing phone call check-ins to clients who receive the program to ensure that they had access to sufficient food and medications. Those who shared any critical needs were connected to resources. Clients who live alone or who were identified as being especially vulnerable were contacted first. To date, over 20,000 IHSS clients have received a check in call.

Many staff have continued to fulfill their typical job duties, albeit in a modified fashion. Case management staff, such as those who work for the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP), Linkages, SOAR, SD-VISA, or FIRST, shifted from in-person client visits to phone calls. They continued to provide critical care coordination activities, ensuring that older adults and those with disabilities can continue to live safely at home—even during a pandemic. Adult Protective Services (APS) staff continued their essential work of investigating allegations of abuse and neglect and providing isolated seniors with connection to basic resources, such as food.

Some staff saw a complete shift in their duties. Community Unit manager, Nancy Garcia, volunteered to help link older adults to food resources. She notes, “Older adults who typically would have gone to a grocery store didn’t

feel safe going out—and we were telling them not to for their safety.” Nancy worked with staff across County departments to develop a food box distribution system. She explains, “In the beginning, it was grassroots social work 101. I would call food pantries, coordinate people to pick up and deliver food boxes.” Partners such as 2-1-1 San Diego, the San Diego Food Bank, Feeding San Diego, and the American Red Cross were—and continue to be—critical in these efforts. Recently, transportation provider FACT has stepped up to provide food box delivery.

Nancy shares, “It is amazing to me how quickly things have been put into place. We have developed systems and done contracting processes with lightning speed in order to get people what they need.” That is a big relief for Nancy. “In the beginning,” she explains, “I was losing sleep. My sense of responsibility was going into high gear. I worried about how we would get food to people stuck at home.”

Unfortunately, the pandemic is far from over. Even as businesses start to open up, the Public Health Officer still strongly recommends that older adults, and others who may be especially vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, stay home. In good times and bad, AIS staff are committed to our mission of supporting older adults and persons with disabilities in our community. It is our privilege to serve.

For more information on resources, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) and click on the link at the top of the page titled “COVID-19 Community Resources.” You will find resources to assist with food, transportation to essential services, mental health support, pet food, physical fitness, social engagement, and more. For assistance, call **2-1-1** or the AIS Call Center at **(800) 339-4661**.

## STILL TIME TO COMPLETE THE 2020 CENSUS!

Every 10 years the federal government is mandated by the U.S. Constitution to count all persons living in the United States through the decennial Census. A Census undercount for a region could result in the loss of precious dollars for public services for a decade. From schools, to transportation, to representation in Congress, our participation can shape the future of the San Diego region for the next 10 years. Over the past couple of months, each household should have received a letter with a unique ID to use when filling out the questionnaire.

If you have not yet completed the Census, please do so today! If you did not receive or have misplaced the invitation letter with your unique ID, you can respond online now without an ID. Go to [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov). Click “Start Questionnaire.” Select the link that says, “If you do not have a Census ID, click here.” It is located below the Census ID login field.

Be counted in 2020. Help ensure our community receives crucial funding by participating in the U.S. Census. Learn more at [2020census.gov](http://2020census.gov) or [CountMe2020.org](http://CountMe2020.org).

# In the COMMUNITY

## BUILDING STRONG SUPPORT FOR ELDER: WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations (UN) launched the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15, 2006 in an effort to unite communities around the world in raising awareness about elder abuse. When we come together, we can prevent elder abuse from happening and put support services in place to address elder abuse.



Elder abuse is widespread. Every year an estimated 1 in 10 older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In addition to being a clear violation of the American commitment to justice for all, elder abuse is an issue with many consequences for our society. Its effects on our communities range from public health to economic issues. The good news is that we can prevent and address elder abuse. There are many ways to strengthen our social supports through policies, services, and programs that keep us integrated in our communities as we age.

### BE A “SENTINEL”

- Keep in contact and talk with your older friends, neighbors, and relatives frequently
- Be aware and alert for the possibility of abuse
- Look around and take note of what may be happening with your older neighbors and acquaintances
- Ask questions and listen

### CULTIVATE AND ENCOURAGE HEALTHY ATTITUDES ON AGING

Every day, in subtle and obvious ways, older adults are marginalized and even dismissed, in our society. We see it in statements like “over the hill” or “I’m having a senior moment.” It’s in our actions, when we automatically talk louder to an older person or talk about that person in front of them instead of addressing him or her directly. And it’s in our attitudes when we view older people as incompetent or that being young is good, but being old is sad.



Ageism blinds us to the benefits and strengths of aging and increases our fears of growing older. Worse yet, ageism also creates a culture that ignores and tolerates elder abuse and allows the abuse of older adults to continue. We can all play a role in combating ageism by supporting programs and policies that help to maintain the quality of life for older adults, choosing our words carefully, increasing intergenerational understanding, examining our own beliefs, and adopting healthy attitudes. As with many aspects of life, there are both “good” and “bad” parts of aging. We can all work to shine more light on the positive opportunities, such as the recognizing that older adults make significant contributions to society. Life affords people of all ages to socially and emotionally grow, develop, and cultivate meaningful relationships.



### SEEK HELP

If you have concerns about an older adult, or suspect possible elder abuse, call the AIS Call Center at **(800) 339-4661**.

If you are an older adult, one of the best ways to avoid becoming a victim of elder abuse is to stay connected to others. For information about opportunities to stay connected through health promotion programs, social engagement opportunities, access to transportation, or daily phone call reassurance programs, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) and click on “COVID-19 Community Resources.” Or, call the AIS Call Center at **(800) 339-4661**.



## CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL (CHP)-EL CAJON SENIOR VOLUNTEERS SHOW KINDNESS DURING COVID-19

Senior volunteers love what they do and miss serving their community. Jan Gray, a volunteer with CHP-El Cajon, and Sergeant Mateo, who coordinates volunteers at CHP-El Cajon, agree that the volunteers and officers/staff at the station are a very tight knit group with deep appreciation for one another. The stay-at-home orders have been hard on everyone and volunteers have not been able to perform their normal duties. Sgt. Mateo says, “there is separation anxiety on both sides, as we really are like family.” Still, senior volunteers have found ways to do what they do best—supporting El Cajon CHP!



Senior volunteer Adam Klarer wanted to find a way to show appreciation for the officers, clerical staff, and maintenance workers at the station. Adam, along with three other senior volunteers, Greg Menne, Jan Gray, and Dick Laycock, formed a small committee to provide meals for officers and staff of the three work shifts on April 8th. With donations collected from other senior volunteers, they were able to purchase and deliver meals from three local restaurants, as a special treat for all employees.



During normal times, the senior volunteers help the officers and public in a variety of ways such as processing paperwork, helping to install child safety seats, receiving traffic complaints from the public and entering them into the tracking system, and being a presence in the community. Sergeant Mateo notes, “You never know how good you have it, until it’s gone. The senior volunteers perform all of their duties happily, enthusiastically, with smiles on their faces, and from the goodness of their hearts.”

Captain Fouyer, the CHP-El Cajon Commander, agrees and states “the senior volunteer program is very beneficial for all those involved, and the volunteers are missed every day.” Thank you to this very special group of people who exemplify the value of senior volunteerism!

## VOLUNTEER FROM HOME

Participate in “Joyful Jingles,” which are calls to isolated individuals who are homebound or currently unable to receive visitors. Volunteers will chat with someone or play a song that can be shared on social media. If you would like to participate in this fun activity and bring joy to others, email [volunteers@resoundingjoyinc.org](mailto:volunteers@resoundingjoyinc.org).



## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION-REIMAGINED

Volunteer recognition events planned for May had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These events are held each year to honor the very special senior volunteers serving our communities in San Diego County. Staff are working to find new ways to recognize volunteers. As we work through the details, please know that you are all in our hearts. Your presence in the community is missed and we look forward to the time when you are all safely able to resume your volunteer activities.

## VOLUNTEER STORIES

If you are a senior volunteer enrolled in our RSVP program or a volunteer administrator from a partner site, we want to hear from you. What have you done during the stay at home orders? Maybe you have learned a new skill, helped a neighbor, or sewed masks. Please share your activities and any acts of kindness with us. We care about you and would love to hear about what you have been up. Share your story by emailing Mary Anne Briggs at [maryanne.briggs@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:maryanne.briggs@sdcounty.ca.gov) or by calling (858) 505-6399.



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC (SDG&E)

Every summer, SDG&E partners with the County of San Diego on the Cool Zones program. Air-conditioned facilities, such as libraries and community centers, volunteer to participate as Cool Zones so older adults and people with disabilities can escape the heat. These sites help people save on their energy costs while also conserving energy for the entire community. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are changes to the Cool Zones program. As of June 15, a limited number of sites will be open with modifications to protect health. Visit [coolzones.org](http://coolzones.org) or call Aging & Independence Services at **(800) 339-4661** for the latest information.

As part of the Cool Zones program, SDG&E and the County also make available a limited supply of free electric fans for distribution to those who live on limited income. To be eligible, a resident must not have access to an air-conditioned space at their home or apartment building. To learn more about the fan program or to request a fan, call Aging & Independence Services at **(800) 339-4661**.

*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).*



## Bill Discounts and Support for Those Affected by the Pandemic

Energy bill discount programs are available to support income-qualified customers year-round. Many people who previously did not qualify for these income-based programs may now be eligible due to lost wages from the coronavirus pandemic. Even those who are receiving unemployment benefits may be eligible for California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program, which provides a 30% or more discount on monthly bills. Qualification is based on participation in certain public assistance programs or household income as of today. Also, other programs are available to provide assistance to those struggling to pay their energy bill. Call SDG&E’s Customer Contact Center at **(800) 411-7343** to learn more and make payment arrangements.

## Energy Savings Tips

- Adjust the thermostat. Adjust up in the summer and shut off when not in use. Even a few degrees can significantly reduce air conditioning costs.
- Block direct sunlight in the summer. Close window coverings, or shade exposed windows with solar shade screens, reflective films, awnings or trees.
- Power down. Turn off or set equipment to power down when not in use.
- Lower your water heater thermostat to 120°F. The manufacturer’s setting is usually 140°F.

## More Information

To learn more about energy bill payment assistance programs, visit [sdge.com/assistance](http://sdge.com/assistance). To learn more about energy savings tips, visit [sdge.com/saving-tips-your-home](http://sdge.com/saving-tips-your-home). For more information on the Cool Zones program, as well as tips to stay cool at home, visit [coolzones.org](http://coolzones.org).

## FOOD RESOURCES

A variety of resources are available to ensure that older adults and those with disabilities are able to access healthy, nutritious food during these difficult times. Visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) and click on the link at the top of the page titled “Community Resources for Older Adults During COVID-19.” If finances are tight, check out the “Non-Profit Food Assistance” page. There you will find free food resources. You may also call **2-1-1**.

If you have funds to pay for food, but would like to try commercial delivery options, check out the “Commercial Food Service” link. Learn about how to use online commercial food delivery services, such as UberEats and Doordash, with step-by-step instructional videos. There is also information on other services, including a free grocery delivery service provided to residents in the Greater Fallbrook Area by the Foundation for Senior Care (residents pay for the groceries only).

## GREAT PLATES DELIVERED PROGRAM EXTENDED

AIS is excited to announce that the Great Plates Delivered program has been extended until July 10. This program helps older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic by delivering meals to their homes. Following federal guidelines, the program is intended for seniors who are not currently receiving or eligible for any other federal nutrition benefits, such as Cal Fresh or the Senior Nutrition Program. To learn more about Great Plates, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) and click on the “Great Plates Delivered Meal Program” button at the top of the page. Or, call **(800) 339-4661** and select option “7.”

## MYPLATE FOOD PLANNING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) shares the following food planning tips:

- **Check what you have at home first.** Take a look at the foods you already have in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry before you make a list; make sure to look at expiration dates and best by dates. This can help you plan meals around what you already have, and will help you limit the number of trips to the grocery store and avoid spending money on items you don't need.
- **Make a shopping list.** Shopping may feel more stressful at this time. Make a list ahead of time to stay focused, get the items you need, and keep your shopping trip short.
- **Explore your shopping options.** Many grocery stores offer in-store pickup, curbside pickup, or delivery. Third party options also exist for grocery store delivery. You may find these services helpful during times of social distancing. Check if your store delivers or has early shopping hours just for older adults.
- **How much should I buy?** Buy what you and your family need at this time, and resist the urge to buy in much larger quantities. Prepare a shopping list that will cover you and everyone in your household for 2 weeks.
- **Include fresh, frozen, and non-perishable items.** Plan for a mix of fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable foods. Eat your fresh food first. Stock your freezer and pantry with items you can eat in the second week and beyond.
- **What foods should I buy?** Choose a mix of shelf-stable, frozen, and fresh foods. Examples of shelf-stable include pastas, rice, legumes, nut butters, and dried and canned goods. With fresh foods, buy a variety in quantities that you would normally buy.
- **What should I make?** You may feel inclined to try a new recipe or experiment with new flavors to keep things interesting. For others, sticking to simple items or familiar foods and tastes provides comfort. Bon appétit!



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**Please note: Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all of the classes and events listed below are offered online.**

## **JUNE 27, SATURDAY 10-11 A.M.**

The Alzheimer's Association is hosting a webinar, ***Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body***. Learn about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement, and use hands-on tools to help you incorporate these recommendations into a plan for healthy aging. To register, visit [alz.org/crf](http://alz.org/crf) or call (800) 272-3900.

## **JUNE 27, SATURDAY 10 A.M.-12 P.M.**

This year, Alzheimer's San Diego's ***Date With A Cure*** is going virtual! San Diego County is home to some of the best and brightest Alzheimer's researchers and institutions. This free event provides a rare opportunity to get your questions about dementia answered—by the very experts working to find a cure. Pre-registration is required. To RSVP, visit [www.alzsd.org/events/date-with-a-cure/](http://www.alzsd.org/events/date-with-a-cure/).

## **JUNE 29, MONDAY 10-11 A.M.**

An online class, ***Becoming More Confident with a Purpose***, will be offered by Oasis Instructor Laura Diaz, a Board Certified Coach. This class will cover discuss the

hero's journey and your own heroic journey in becoming more confident. Explore optimism, purpose, mindset and leadership qualities that contribute to building self-confidence and being an expression of the best version of yourself. Cost: \$10. To register for this course (#355), visit [www.SanDiegoOasis.org](http://www.SanDiegoOasis.org). For details, call (619) 881-6262.

## **JUNE 29, MONDAY 1-2 P.M.**

***The New Retirement Reality*** online course is designed for those who are worried they might outlive their retirement savings. Revisit many of the traditional retirement assumptions and come away with a new understanding of the current issues you should be thinking about in your retirement plan. Cost: \$10. To register for this course (#374), visit [www.SanDiegoOasis.org](http://www.SanDiegoOasis.org). For details, call (619) 881-6262.

## **JUNE 30, TUESDAY 10-11 A.M.**

An online course, ***Dementia 101***, will be offered by Alzheimer's San Diego. This class will provide a comprehensive overview of memory loss, Mild Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementias. Learn about risk factors, common symptoms, and resources for help. To register, visit [www.alzsd.org/services/education/](http://www.alzsd.org/services/education/).

## **JUNE 30, TUESDAY 10-11:30 A.M.**

An online class, ***Dismantling Racism One Insight at a Time***, will be offered by Oasis instructor Peter Bolland, a college professor of philosophy and humanities. The U.S. is finally coming to terms with racism in authentic, meaningful, and transformative ways. In this session, we will do the important work of examining unconscious bias, the untold history of supremacy, and the promise of America. Cost: \$15. To register for this course (#321), visit [www.SanDiegoOasis.org](http://www.SanDiegoOasis.org). For details, call (619) 881-6262.

## **JULY 2, THURSDAY 2-3:30 P.M.**

Learn the facts about Medicare in a free online class, ***Understanding How Medicare Works***, designed for those who are turning 65 or retiring. Register with Sharp by June 29. To RSVP, visit [www.sharp.com/classes](http://www.sharp.com/classes) or call (800) 827-4277.

## **JULY 8, WEDNESDAY 1-2:30 P.M.**

Enjoy a virtual cooking class! Chef Cyndi, a personal chef for seniors, will discuss various favorites and highlight dishes with a live demonstration. On the menu is curry grilled chicken and a surprise item! Cost: \$10. To register for this course (#382), visit [www.SanDiegoOasis.org](http://www.SanDiegoOasis.org). For details, call (619) 881-6262.

## ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council is hosting a virtual meeting on **Monday, June 22 at 10:30 a.m.** Attendees will have the opportunity to give feedback on the proposed Area Plan for 2020-2024. The Area Plan contains AIS's goals and objectives for services to support older adults and persons with disabilities. To join by phone, call (415) 655-0001 and enter access code 287 448 851. Or, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov/AISAdvisoryCouncil](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov/AISAdvisoryCouncil) to join by video conference (WebEx).



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



HOME-BASED SERVICES ▪ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

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) 339-4661**  
[www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov)



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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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