

AGING & independence

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

Giving Thanks for Our Veterans

By Wil Quintong
Director, Office of Military & Veteran Affairs

When George “Dick” Nash, 74, was a child, he remembers being awoken while snoozing on his father’s lap so that they could give up their seat on the train to a Korean War soldier. Less than twenty years later, soldiers returning from the Vietnam War arrived home to much less reverence—and sometimes quite the opposite.

Dick was drafted to serve in Vietnam in 1970 at the age of 25. Like many young American men, he answered the call of duty. Dick served as a helicopter mechanic with the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army. He worked on Chinook helicopters and his division was tasked with restocking the artillery and supplies of soldiers fighting in isolated areas.

The day Dick came home from serving in the Vietnam War was the happiest of his life. Yet, he still remembers the advice of the officer who greeted his plane. After thanking the soldiers for their service, he advised them to get out of their uniforms as quickly as possible and certainly not to hitchhike with them on.

Dick was one of the lucky ones; he got to return home. Fifty-eight thousand Americans lost their lives in Vietnam. Those who did come home were forever changed. “I saw fresh-faced, rosy-cheeked boys out of

Kansas that had never been anywhere expect church on Sunday and the movies on Saturday night, fighting in Vietnam,” Dick laments. Sadly, many of the young men who did survive returned home traumatized by the carnage of war, as well as battling drug addictions. Few services were available to help, and there was little understanding about the impact of trauma. Plus, it didn’t help that the public “didn’t look upon you as a hero...they looked at you as kind of iffy.”



Dick Nash makes keychains to thank Vietnam veterans for their service.

Upon returning home, Dick settled down in the small Southern California desert town

of Baker, working as a communications technician for AT&T. He got married, started a family, and focused on the business of everyday life. But, he confesses, “I was definitely changed by the war. Ever since, I have had an underlying feeling of complete sadness.” At times, he would turn to alcohol to drown out the sadness. Eventually, however, Dick was able to find more productive ways to deal with grief—ways that didn’t involve alcohol and instead focused on making a difference in the lives of others, especially veterans.

One of the most meaningful experiences for Dick has been connecting with veterans who are nearing the end

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of life. He has volunteered for The Elizabeth Hospice and the Twilight Brigade, a non-profit that ensures that veterans who are in the final stages of life do not have to face terminal illness and death alone. “These guys are scared. They are by themselves. We relate instantly,” he explains. Having a fellow veteran to connect with allows people to share things they have never been able to talk about. A hospice patient’s wife once told Dick, “I’ve heard him tell you things he’d never told me and we’ve been married for 40 years!”

In 2008, Dick thought of another way to give back: he began creating beaded keychains for Vietnam veterans and giving them out as a token of appreciation. To date he has given away over 41,000 of them!

Today, unfortunately, Dick has had to scale back some of his volunteer work and is instead fighting a new battle—with cancer. In February, he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, one of the conditions that is presumed to be caused by exposure to the chemical Agent Orange while in Vietnam. He was entitled to compensation and went to the County of San Diego’s Office of Military and Veterans Affairs (OMVA) for assistance. Not only did he receive help in filing his claim, but he received something equally important that he wasn’t expecting: heartfelt gratitude.

During his benefits counseling meeting, the Veterans Service Representative presented Dick with a certificate of appreciation and a commemorative pin as a special acknowledgment of his service in Vietnam. He was deeply touched. “I wasn’t expecting it. I don’t know how to put it into words...it meant a lot. It still means a lot. It is kind of humbling.”

Timothy Mathues, the Veteran Outreach Program Coordinator for the OMVA, learned that another

community was celebrating their Vietnam veterans with a certificate and he quickly got to work creating a customized one for local veterans. He explains, “forty-five years ago when the veterans were coming home they absolutely got zero recognition for their service and their time.” Mathues, a Vietnam veteran himself, wanted to change that.

Presenting certificates has been deeply rewarding for Mathues: “It is the most amazing thing to see the type of emotion that this elicits. People start to cry. They say, ‘thank you so much...no one has ever done anything like this.’” Dick has his certificate proudly on display.

Dick is optimistic regarding his treatment and is looking forward to doing more of what he loves: helping veterans. Spreading the word about available services is a big part of that mission. “I wish everybody knew about the Office of Military & Veterans Affairs and that Vietnam Veterans get the help and services they need.”

On Veterans Day and all year round, the County of San Diego gives thanks for our veterans.

OFFICE OF MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Office of Military & Veterans Affairs (OMVA) provides a variety of services for veterans, their dependents, and survivors who are entitled to benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the State of California, and other agencies. Services include: comprehensive benefits counseling; claims preparation, submission, follow up, and appeal, if appropriate; processing of applications for the State College Tuition Fee Waiver for dependents of eligible veterans; and information and referral.

For more information or to make an appointment, call **(858) 694-3222** or email sdcvso.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov.



VETERANS FORUM

Active duty service members, veterans, service providers, and community members are invited to the County of San Diego’s 2018 Veterans Forum on **Thursday, November 8 from 9-11 a.m.** at the North Inland Live Well Center, 649 W. Mission Ave., Escondido 92025. This year’s theme is *Uncommon Heroes, Common Virtues* with a special focus on honoring our Vietnam veterans. Speakers will also address innovations in the diagnosis and treatment of service-related injuries. Light refreshments will be served. To register for this free event, visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/VetForum2018 or call **(760) 967-4504**.

In the COMMUNITY

FLU: KNOW THE FACTS

Flu season is here. The flu spreads easily and can make you very sick; it even can be fatal. Last flu season in San Diego County was one of the worst on record:

20,883 TOTAL REPORTED FLU CASES	342 TOTAL REPORTED FLU DEATHS
RATES OF ILLNESS WERE 4 TIMES GREATER FOR THOSE AGE 60+	87% OF DEATHS OCCURRED IN THOSE AGE 65+

Older adults are at high risk of developing serious complications from flu, like pneumonia. People with health conditions such as heart disease, asthma, diabetes or kidney disease are at high risk, too.

This flu season, don't take chances with your health. Here's a list of steps you should take:

- Get the flu vaccine.
- If you are age 65+, get the pneumococcal vaccine.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm.
- Stay home when you're sick.

You can get a flu shot at doctors' offices, clinics, retail pharmacies, and other locations around the county. If you don't know where to get a flu shot, you can call **2-1-1** or visit **www.sdiz.org**.

TECHNOLOGY FAIR

The Get Connected Fair, a free opportunity to learn more about technology, will be held on **Monday, November 12 from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.** at the Oasis Grossmont Lifelong Learning Center, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942. Brief "tech talk" workshops on a variety of topics will be offered. To RSVP, call **(619) 881-6262** or visit **www.SanDiegoOasis.org** and register for class #80 (non-Oasis members will need to register for a free account). A free shuttle will run from North County. Call **(760) 796-6020** for shuttle details.

AIS WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR

AIS is excited to announce that Kim Gallo has been selected as our new Director! Kim has worked for the County since 1999 in various roles, including as the Executive Director of First 5 San Diego, Group Human Resources Director for the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), and in roles with the Department of Human Resources. Most recently, Kim has been serving as the Director of Regional Operations for the East/North Central Regions of HHSA. Kim is looking forward to serving older adults and persons with disabilities in her new role.

EVENTS ADDRESSING END-OF-LIFE ISSUES

Sunday, November 18 from 1:30-3:30 p.m.-A presentation on *Preparing for Dementia and Avoiding Medically Futile Care* will be held at the Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino del Rio South, San Diego 92108. Join health law professor and bioethicist Thad Mason Pope for a talk on medical decision making and patient rights at the end of life. For more information, call **(619) 233-4418**.

Saturday, December 1 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.-A presentation on *End-of-Life Planning and Choices* will be held at the Grossmont Healthcare District Conference Center, 9001 Wakarusa St., La Mesa 91942. 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 Nov. 29 to **eruiz@compassionandchoices.org**.

JOIN AN AGE WELL THEME TEAM

Age Well San Diego (Age Well) is the County's plan to help improve the quality of life for older adults in San Diego County. Professionals and community members are coming together monthly to work on goals within five "theme teams": Dementia-Friendly, Health & Community Support, Housing, Social Participation, and Transportation. New participants are welcome. For details, contact Christy Patch at **Christina.Patch@sdcounty.ca.gov** or **(858) 495-5037**.

SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Bonnie Brown, November Volunteer of the Month. She was nominated by Laurie Switzer, Director of Volunteer Programs at the USS Midway Museum.



Bonnie Brown

Bonnie serves as a volunteer Lead Librarian, as well as a docent, at the USS Midway. Library work has been a passion for most of her life. Growing up in a large family of share-croppers in Arkansas, Bonnie was the first woman in her family to graduate from high school. Her father took great pride in this accomplishment and took her to see the Dean of Students at Arkansas State

University (ASU), where she was offered admission. He negotiated her tuition through government assistance and a work-study deal that paid 50 cents an hour to work in the library.

Bonnie went on to have a 20-year career in the Cubic Corporation engineering library. She then earned a master's degree and finished her career at the Institute for Defense Analysis. In 2007, six months after retiring, Bonnie learned about the Midway Museum and started volunteering in the library. In 2009, she also became a docent. Bonnie eventually became the Quality Assurance Lead for the cataloging database.

Bonnie has made significant contributions to the Midway, including bringing in the practice of library science. She has increased staffing at the library, improved training and management, and expanded the services and practices of this valuable museum resource. As a docent, she is wonderful to work with and is truly appreciated for her generous support.

Bonnie is known for being compassionate, dedicated, professional, and generous. She stands out as one of the USS Midway's outstanding volunteers.

Thank you Bonnie, for all that you have contributed to the Midway Museum and to the community!



VOLUNTEER WITH THE FOUNDATION FOR SENIOR WELLBEING

Would you love to help seniors? The Foundation for Senior Wellbeing links seniors, caregivers, families, and those who serve them to resources in Escondido, San Marcos, Vista, and beyond.

The Foundation is dedicated to improving seniors' quality of life by providing referrals to available resources in the areas of housing, home repair, transportation, food and nutritional needs, emergency assistance, medical or mental health issues, legal issues, and more. Information is shared by phone, or in person, and is provided by specially trained staff and volunteers. Center volunteers follow up on every inquiry to confirm results.

Volunteer for the Information Resource Center (IRC). The Foundation provides training and support for IRC volunteers. For more information, please contact Mary Anne at the senior volunteer programs office (858) 505-6399, or 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

BRAILLE INSTITUTE

With approximately 50,000 San Diegans experiencing vision difficulties, Braille Institute's free services are very much in demand in the community.

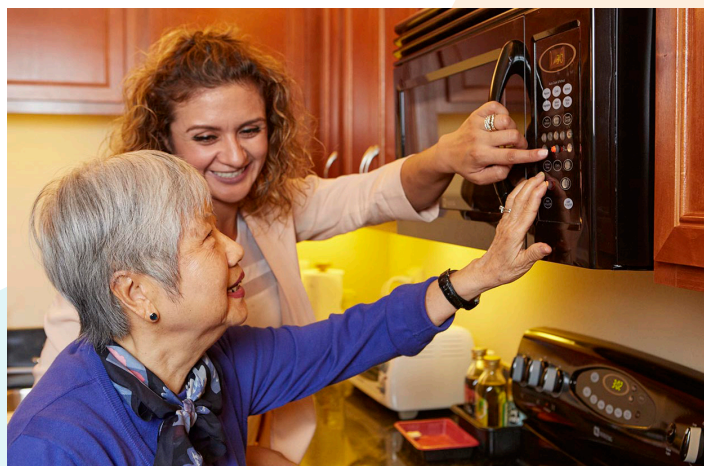
Since 1919, the mission of Braille Institute has been to empower the visually impaired to live independently and to teach more than just braille. Regardless of where someone may be on the vision loss spectrum, comprehensive services are provided to address the various needs of individuals with visual impairment.

When glasses can no longer correct working vision, individuals often take the first step to come into Braille Institute for a free one-hour low vision consultation. The specialist provides a functional vision assessment and offers recommendations regarding lighting, contrast, or magnification to maximize remaining vision. This one-on-one consultation helps to provide improvements with daily tasks at home, school, the workplace, or anywhere else.

For those who love reading but may be experiencing difficulty due to vision loss, Braille Institute's award-winning library can help. With access to more than 800,000 books on audio, in braille, and in large print, and free digital audio machines, library patrons can listen to classic titles as well as current bestsellers in the comfort of their home. Or, for those interested in how technology can provide new tools to ease the impact of vision loss, the technology center, Connection Pointe, teaches the latest in mainstream and accessible technology. This state-of-the-art technology center offers opportunities to learn how to use adaptive devices such as smartphones, tablets, voice output software,



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.



and much more. These tools help people with low to no vision stay connected to the world around them and remain independent.

Students can also enroll in small group classes to stay active and pursue their passions. In Daily Living classes such as home management, personal management, and cooking, students learn how they can continue daily living activities with new techniques or tools. For example, students are taught how to mark and label things so they can independently retrieve clothing, food, or household items. Safe kitchen skills are taught in the center kitchen with fun and easy recipes. Arts & Healthy Living courses include topics such as painting, knitting, singing, gardening, yoga, and dance. Classes are available to satisfy the many unique interests of students including playing bridge, discussing current events, exploring travel, and more.

Whatever your age or stage of vision loss, Braille Institute's programs and services can help you and your loved ones live well with vision loss. All Braille Institute services are completely free of charge. To learn more about Braille Institute, including volunteer opportunities and ways to support the visually impaired, please call (858) 452-1111 or visit www.brailleinstitute.org.

CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

Thursday, November 8 from 2:30-4 p.m.-*Resources and Tools for Family Caregivers* will be held at the Sharp Grossmont Brier Patch Campus, 9000 Wakarusa St., Room 13/14, La Mesa 91942. Family caregivers will learn about health and community resources, support groups, and the emotional elements of caring for a loved one through the holidays. To RSVP, call **(800) 827-4277** or visit **www.sharp.com/classes**.

Thursday, November 15 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.-*Caregiver Skills Clinic: Helping with Medications* will be held at Alzheimer's San Diego, 6632 Convoy Ct., San Diego 92111. This workshop will give families the chance to get the same hands-on training as professional caregivers. Register online at **www.alzsd.org** or by calling **858-492-4400**.

Wednesday, November 28 from 1-2:30 p.m.-*Memory Loss 101* will be held at the Oceanside Public Library-Mission Branch, 3861-B Mission Ave., Oceanside 92058. This presentation provides a comprehensive overview of memory loss, Alzheimer's, and other types of dementia. Learn about risk factors, common symptoms, and resources for help. Register online at **www.alzsd.org** or by calling **858-492-4400**.

STOP THE BLEED TRAINING

The Aging & Independence Services Health Promotion Committee is hosting a ***STOP THE BLEED*** training on **Tuesday, November 13 from 2:30-3:15 p.m.** at the County Operations Center, 5560 Overland Ave., Ste. 310, San Diego 92123. Professionals and other community members are welcome to attend.

Injuries from man-made and natural disasters often include severe bleeding that, if left unattended, can result in death. ***STOP THE BLEED*** teaches basic skills that could save a life! Like CPR, this training allows trainees to provide immediate, frontline aid until first responders arrive. Training will be provided by Dr. Jay Doucet, the Interim Trauma Chief for UC San Diego Health's Trauma Division. To learn more about what to do in the event of a bleeding emergency, visit **www.bleedingcontrol.org**. For questions on the training or the Health Promotion Committee, email **Carolyn.Proskow@sdcounty.ca.gov** or call **(858) 495-5998**.

SPOTLIGHT ON FALL PREVENTION

One in four older adults (65+) falls each year. The good news is that many falls are preventable and you can reduce your risk of falling:

- **Stay active** to improve your strength, flexibility, and balance. Walking, dancing, Tai Chi, and exercise classes are all good ways to improve your health.
- **Talk with your doctor** about health issues such as osteoporosis, your Vitamin D level, medications, difficulty with hearing or vision, or if you feel faint, off-balance, or dizzy. Your doctor or pharmacist can also look at your medications to check for side effects that can affect your risk of falling.
- **Have your vision checked** at least one time each year by a professional.
- **Make your home safer:** remove things you could trip or slip on, maintain good lighting and nightlights, and install strong grab bars and handrails. Our eyes often need more light as we age.
- For more tips, visit: **www.SanDiegoFallPrevention.org**. If you would like to schedule a fall prevention presentation for your organization, email **Carolyn.Proskow@sdcounty.ca.gov** or call **(858) 495-5998**.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 7, WEDNESDAY 11:30 A.M.-1 P.M.

A free “lunch and learn” presentation, *Medi-Cal 101*, will be held at St. Paul’s PACE, 1306 Broadway, El Cajon 92021. Learn to navigate the Medi-Cal system and ask questions about Medi-Cal benefits. Lunch provided. Learn about PACE and go on a tour of the PACE Nemeth Day Center. RSVP by Nov. 5 to Lizette Galindo at (619) 677-3838 or lgalindo@stpaulseniors.org.

NOVEMBER 7, WEDNESDAY 1:30-2:30 P.M.

A class, *Diabetes: The Power of Lifestyle Change*, will be held at the Grossmont Health Care District Conference Center, 9001 Wakarusa St. La Mesa 91942. A certified diabetes educator will talk about diabetes and how proper nutrition can make a difference in improving your health. To RSVP, call (800) 827-4277 or visit www.sharp.com/classes.

NOVEMBER 9, FRIDAY 12:30 P.M.

Make new friends at the *Mah Jongg Club* at the San Marcos Library, 2 Civic Center Dr., San Marcos 92069. Mah Jongg is a game of chance and strategy. Learn to play or hone your skills. For details, call (760) 891-3000.

NOVEMBER 10, SATURDAY 9-10:30 A.M.

Now is the time you can make changes to your Medicare plan. A presentation

by Scripps Health, *8 Tips to Get the Most Out of Medicare* will be held at the Radisson Hotel San Diego-Rancho Bernardo, 11520 West Bernardo Ct., San Diego 92127. Scripps Medicare experts will be on hand to answer questions about your circumstances. To register, call (800) 727-4777.

NOVEMBER 10, SATURDAY 2:30 P.M.

An inspiring talk by Lily Zhou, author of *Life After War: Journey to Thrive*, will be held at the La Jolla/Riford Library, 7555 Draper Ave., La Jolla 92037. In the book, Lily shares her own stories to help and inspire our heroes to live a beautiful life after war. For details, call (858) 552-1657.

NOVEMBER 14, WEDNESDAY 12-1 P.M.

Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season will be held at the Point Loma Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego 92107. Those who have lost a loved one will gain new insights and identify strategies for coping in the holiday season. To RSVP, call (800) 827-4277 or visit www.sharp.com/classes.

NOVEMBER 16, FRIDAY 10:30 A.M.-12 P.M.

An informative, interactive lecture and discussion on *Current Events* (e.g. elections, court cases, foreign affairs, etc.) will be held at Braille Institute, 4555 Executive Dr., San Diego 92121. Facilitator Rick LeVine, an attorney

and former newscaster, will provide an unbiased look at “what’s news.” The class, offered by Oasis, costs \$12. Register for class #304. Call (619) 881-6262 or visit www.SanDiegoOasis.org.

NOVEMBER 21, WEDNESDAY 12 P.M.

A *Thanksgiving Lunch with Musical Entertainment* will be held at the College Avenue Center, 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120. Give thanks and enjoy a bountiful turkey lucheon with all of the trimmings. Afterwards, delight to the sounds of the Sophisticats. For details, call (858) 637-3273 or email Elissa at elissal@jfsd.org.

NOVEMBER 26, MONDAY 2-3:30 P.M.

The Uniqueness of San Diego will be held at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, 9005 Aero Dr., San Diego 92123. Dr. Phillip Pryde, author of *San Diego: An Introduction to the Region*, will deliver an engaging presentation on why San Diego is arguably America’s most unique county. For details, call (858) 573-1396.

NOVEMBER 27, TUESDAY 1-2:30 P.M.

A presentation about advance health care directives, *It’s About You: Who Will Make Your Medical Decisions?*, will be held at the Pomerado Outpatient Pavilion, 15611 Pomerado Rd., Poway 92064. To register, visit www.palomarhealth.org or call (800) 628-2880.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council will meet on Monday, November 5 at AIS: 5560 Overland Ave., 3rd Floor, San Diego 92123.

SEND IN YOUR ITEMS

This monthly calendar welcomes your contributions. Just send items by the 1st of each month preceding the issue date to: 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

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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