

AGING & independence

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

Tech Program will Help Seniors 'Participate in Life'

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

Like other older adults, Jeanie Lemaire, 70, didn't grow up using computers and mobile phones. She recognizes the value of technology and has made some attempts to learn, but beyond making a phone call or sending a text on her smartphone, Jeanie feels a bit lost. "People say 'just experiment,' but it is not in my nature," she explains. "I am a people person but want to be able to participate in the world."



Sergio (left) of the Tech for Seniors program helps Jeanie (right) become acquainted with her new iPad. The South Bay pilot project aims to reduce social isolation and increase digital literacy.

Recently, Jeanie was excited to learn that a new pilot project, Tech for Seniors, would be offered at her senior housing complex, The Salvation Army Silvercrest in Chula Vista. This six-month grant project aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness among lower income older adults in South Bay through the use of technology instruction. The project funded by Community Congregational Development Corporation and is a partnership between the South County Action Network (SoCAN), the health and technology organization Sarsis, and two low-income senior apartment complexes in the South Bay.

Tech for Seniors is giving iPads to 80 participating older adults so they can gain essential basic technology skills to connect with friends and family, as well as access online resources and tools. Intergenerational volunteers (age 18+) and paid staff host small groups and one-on-one activities for participants and engage them with technology. Most of the participants have

been vaccinated against COVID-19, so at this time, the majority of instruction is being conducted one-on-one using proper COVID-19 safety protocols.

In order to keep the iPad once the program ends, each participant must attend instructional classes over the course of six months that cover topics such as cyber safety, social media, and trouble shooting skills. Upon entering the program, participants complete a short skills assessment, which they will take again at the completion. The assessment will provide useful information on the effectiveness of the Tech for Seniors program.

(Continued on page two)

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES:

Visit www.coronavirus-sd.com.



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AIS ADVISORY COUNCIL—AREA PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

Did you know there are older adults in the community who represent your needs on the AIS Advisory Council? Come check out a virtual meeting to learn more about the work they do. At the next meeting on **Monday, April 12 at noon**, attendees will have the opportunity to give feedback on the proposed *Area Plan 2020-2024, Update for the 2021/2022 Fiscal Year*. The Area Plan contains AIS' goals and objectives for services to support older adults and persons living with disabilities. To join by phone, call **(669) 900-9128** (Meeting ID: 992 5390 3588; Meeting password: 251412), or visit <http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov/AISAdvisoryCouncil> to join by video conference (Zoom).

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Jeanie has thus far received her iPad and an introductory lesson. Staff from Sarsis helped participants learn some basic skills, such as how to make a video call. She found the experience to be positive and praised her instructor's patience and positive attitude. "It was an approach of 'how can we help?' with no judgment," she explains. While not everyone in her apartment complex is ready to embrace technology, Jeanie hopes that those in the first Tech for Seniors cohort will ultimately inspire others to become curious and interested as well. She believes it could be similar to how some individuals in her complex were reluctant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at first. However, once those who were hesitant saw that neighbors responded well to the shot and were signing up for their second dose, more were willing to sign up for their first dose. Leading by example can be powerful.

While skipping out on the COVID-19 vaccination could have serious or even deadly consequences for seniors, not having a firm grasp of how technology works can be a risk to health and wellbeing as well. Some older adults are left out of many aspects of daily life and unable to fully participate and share their many gifts with the world.

Jeanie believes that a better grasp of technology will empower older adults to do more for themselves and for others. She notes that many older adults feel left behind, and becoming more proficient in technology will allow her peers to "participate in life as it is today." The implications range from the simple—comparison shopping online for needed goods and services—to the more profound—using one's gifts and skills to make a difference for others. "People all need purpose...people are a resource. You can't pull a dollar bill value on it...seniors have a great amount of information and life experience," Jeanie says.

Being engaged in life and of service to others has the added benefit of keeping one's brain healthy. She

suggests, "how about being out in the world figuring out a situation for a young child in need? That is going to help your brain. The mind has nothing to do but deteriorate if it is idle."

Being idle is definitely not in Jeanie's vocabulary. She dedicates herself to uplifting others, whether that is making a phone call to someone who she suspects might be feeling down, encouraging people to pursue their goals, or sharing a message of gratitude with a customer service representative's supervisor. Her next project will be teaching Tai Chi to other residents in the building, first via the online platform Zoom and then eventually in-person when it is safe to do so. Although she'll need some help to get the technology set up, she is looking forward to the opportunity to become more proficient using Zoom and sharing her skills with others.

Jeanie has lots of life left to live and she is committed to using technology, with the help of the Tech for Seniors project, to help her be more empowered, connected, and engaged. "I'm a baby boomer," Jeanie explains. "We have rock and roll in our history! We aren't going to sit down and play dead for twenty years."

Tech for Seniors is one of several innovative projects that the South County Action Network (SoCAN) members work on each year. SoCAN meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 1-2:30pm via Microsoft Teams. Both professionals and community members are invited to attend.

Tech for Seniors is currently recruiting adult volunteers of all ages to assist participants with technology instruction. For more information on SoCAN, the Tech for Seniors program, or how to become a volunteer, contact Anabel Kuykendall at Anabel.Kuykendall@sdcounty.ca.gov or **(619) 731-3140**.

In the COMMUNITY

CDC GUIDANCE FOR THOSE WHO ARE FULLY VACCINATED

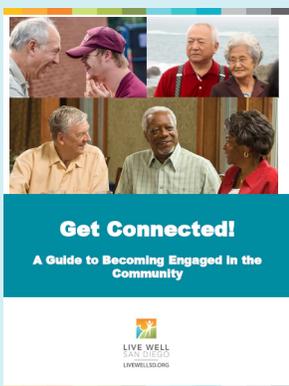
As more businesses and activities open up, it is still important to prioritize COVID-19 safety, even for those who are fully vaccinated (you are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine). According to the CDC (as of April 2), fully vaccinated people:

- May gather indoors with other **fully vaccinated** people without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart (private events).
- May gather indoors with unvaccinated people from **one** other household (e.g., relatives who live together) without masks or staying 6 feet apart, **unless** any of those people, or those they live with have an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (includes older adults 65+).
- Should still **avoid medium or large-sized gatherings**.
- Should still take preventative steps like **wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces** when:
 - In public
 - Gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one household
 - Visiting with an unvaccinated person who is at increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (includes older adults 65+).

Each day, thousands of San Diegans receive the COVID-19 vaccine and in the months to come we hope to be able to achieve herd immunity. Although there is light at the end of the tunnel, now is not the time to let up our guard. New variants of the virus continue to spread and pose a danger to the progress we have made thus far. Together we can continue to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19 and allow our lives to increasingly return to normal. To see more guidance for fully vaccinated individuals, visit www.cdc.gov/covid-19.

JOIN IN AN INTERGENERATIONAL VIRTUAL CHAT

Would you like to be part of a fun opportunity to mentor and connect with college students via Zoom? An Intergenerational Virtual Chat Group will begin on **Friday, May 7 from 1-2 p.m.** and will meet once a week for 4-5 weeks, giving older and younger adults the chance to engage in facilitated discussions on a variety of interesting topics. This effort is being spearheaded by Carrefour Companions, an organization formed by a current UCSD student and a UCSD graduate. The goal is to support older adults in our community through innovative, interpersonal connections. If interested in this chat group or others in the future, please contact Pam Plimpton, AIS Intergenerational Coordinator, at pam.plimpton@sdcounty.ca.gov or **(858) 495- 5769** to learn more.



AGE WELL RESOURCE ADDRESSES SOCIAL ISOLATION

Feeling a sense of connection and belonging is important for all of us and can positively impact our health. To help address social isolation, the Age Well San Diego Social Participation Team created ***Get Connected! A Guide to Becoming Engaged in the Community***. Specially adapted to be relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, the guide provides resources and strategies to help you get connected, whether you feel lonely, want to build connections to prevent loneliness, or are trying to help someone you know become more socially connected.

To access the guide, visit www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov, click on “COVID-19 Community Resources” and then “Social Engagement.”



NORTH COUNTY RESOURCE CENTER OFFERS GUIDANCE AND CONNECTION

Despite the pandemic, seniors in North County have continued to receive information and support from the Foundation for Senior Wellbeing's Senior Information Resource Center. The Center provides information about resources in the areas of housing, home repair, transportation, food/nutrition needs, emergency assistance, medical and mental health issues, legal issues, and more. While the physical office closed in March 2020, the team has continued to provide support by phone, email, and through virtual meetings. Staff are available to help clients (seniors, their families, and friends) Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The resource center's Program Coordinator, Becky Noel, provides patient and empathic service as she researches and recommends suitable resources. She follows up on every inquiry to confirm results. To reach the Senior Information Resource Center, call **(844) 654-INFO (4636)** or email fswinresourcecenter@gmail.com.

In addition to the support offered through the Senior Information Resource Center, the Foundation hosts weekly Zoom meetings called "Coffee Connection." The meetings help to keep older adults connected to others and occur on Zoom each Friday at 10 a.m. These sessions help seniors connect and learn about interesting topics relevant to successful aging, such as online activities, community programs, and helpful resources. The moderators keep it upbeat and positive as the discussion focuses on ways to cope during the pandemic.

They invite you to join each Friday at 10 a.m.! These free meetings are for seniors (age 55+) only and they require advance registration to participate. Sign up by visiting www.fswb.com, click on "Events" and then click on "Coffee Connection." Here you will be given a link to complete a Zoom registration form for the event series. Once you complete the form you will get an email with details about how to join on Fridays at 10 am. For questions or assistance, please call the Hotline, **(844) 654-INFO (4636)**.

To learn more about the Foundation for Senior Wellbeing, a Senior Volunteers in Action (SVA) site, visit www.fswb.com. Volunteers are still serving remotely. For opportunities, email Myles.Field@sdcounty.ca.gov or call **(858) 495-5039**.

SDPD Northern Division RSVP Volunteers Show Appreciation for Police Officers

The San Diego Police Department's (SDPD) Northern Division, as well as the San Diego Police Foundation, recently received a loving donation from the Northern Division RSVP Volunteers. The goal was to show support for the dedicated professionals who work at SDPD Northern Division and to support the work of the San Diego Police Foundation.

The volunteers raised a total of \$3,300 from other fellow RSVP volunteers, of which \$1,500 was given as an unrestricted donation to the San Diego Police Foundation. Also, the Northern Division was gifted with \$1,800 to use for anything they needed, which the division staff decided to use for the purchase of new chairs for all of the detectives. The detectives are now more comfortable at their workstations!

In addition, RSVP volunteers solicited donations (cash and merchandise) from the rest of the team to make gift baskets as holiday gifts to the officers. The officers were given raffle tickets and had the chance to win 14 "themed" baskets (Patriotic, Picnic Time, Reindeer Christmas, etc.), which were assembled by the volunteers and contained a wide variety of items, including gift cards.

We at the AIS Senior Volunteer Programs Office are proud to showcase the efforts of the Northern Division volunteers. Volunteerism can take many forms and these volunteers have demonstrated how resilient and caring our active community of volunteers continues to be, in spite of COVID-19. Thank you to all the volunteers who continue to do what you can to serve and stay engaged in the community!



This Padres -themed basket was one of 14 baskets assembled by RSVP volunteers for San Diego Police Department's Northern Division officers.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY COALITION FOR IMPROVING END-OF-LIFE CARE

The San Diego County Coalition for Improving End-of-Life Care was founded over twenty years ago in response to the Bill Moyers' PBS Series "On Our Own Terms" with the goal of improving awareness of end-of-life issues within the community.

The non-profit Coalition is a proud *Live Well San Diego* partner that is working to improve the quality of life for those who are facing the end of their lives. The Coalition's vision is that seriously ill and dying persons in San Diego County will have access to services ministering to their physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. Also, residents of San Diego County will have had conversations with their families and physicians about end-of-life wishes and there will be systems in place to ensure the documentation, communication, and honoring of those wishes across all settings.

The Coalition's diverse membership is comprised of concerned citizens who have experienced or been affected by end-of-life issues, as well as a variety of healthcare professionals, social workers, educators, attorneys, faith community leaders, funeral directors, consumer advocates, and others.

As part of the national movement to re-evaluate how our society cares for critically and terminally ill patients and their loved ones, the Coalition seeks to break the silence which surrounds this subject and to bring openness, education, and awareness. The Coalition is working to change attitudes that will allow more people to see the dying process as a normal part of living. To this end, the organization partners with community organizations, faith communities, and professionals in order to bring increased awareness and an opportunity for dialogue and education on these important issues. The Coalition hosts panels, discussion events, and conferences that address end-of-life issues, and participates in community health fairs. The organization lists relevant community events and an extensive resources list for patients, families, and professionals on their website.

To learn more about the San Diego County Coalition for Improving End-of-Life Care, visit www.sdcoalition.org or email sdcoalition@yahoo.com.

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.



San Diego County Coalition for Improving End-of-Life Care members celebrate the organization's recognition as a *Live Well San Diego* partner in 2019.



**SAN DIEGO COUNTY COALITION FOR
IMPROVING END OF LIFE CARE**

EXPANDING COVID-19 VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

As of April 1, 2021, all adults 50 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. As of April 15, anyone over the age of 16 will be eligible to be vaccinated. For more information on vaccinations, visit www.VaccinationSuperStation.com.

SENIOR/DISABILITY VACCINE ASSISTANCE

- **Scheduling Assistance:** If you are age 65 and older and do not have access to a computer or someone to assist you with scheduling a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, you may call **2-1-1** and they will help you.
- **Transportation Assistance:** If you need transportation to a vaccine site, see the blue box below or call **2-1-1** for assistance.
- **Homebound Vaccination Assistance:** If you are homebound (any age) and need assistance getting a vaccination, call **2-1-1**. Please note that the County is ramping up its ability to provide vaccines for homebound adults, and we ask for your patience.

RIDES TO VACCINE APPOINTMENTS

Metropolitan Transit System (MTS): MTS is providing free transit rides to and from Vaccination Super Stations, hospitals, and other community immunization locations. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination appointment is required. MTS Access customers can call **(800) 921-9664** to schedule a ride to drop-off locations only.

Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation (FACT): Provides rides to and from vaccination sites for a small fee. Available for walk through sites only. Drop-off and pick-up rides must be scheduled separately. Call **(888) 924-3228** to schedule a ride.

Medi-Cal Transportation Services: Medi-Cal managed health care plan members may contact their health plan for information about free rides to and from vaccine appointments.

HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

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

Healthier Living with Chronic Conditions: April 28-June 2 (Wednesdays), 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Hosted by Aging & Independence Services via the Zoom virtual platform. For more information, or to register, visit healthierliving.hhsa@sdcountry.ca.gov or call **(619) 495-7296**.

Healthier Living with Chronic Conditions: April 29-June 3 (Thursdays), 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Hosted by Aging & Independence Services via the Zoom virtual platform. For more information, or to register, visit healthierliving.hhsa@sdcountry.ca.gov or call **(619) 495-7296**.

Healthier Living with Diabetes: May 11-June 15 (Thursdays), 3-5:30 pm. Hosted by Sustaining Grace via the Zoom virtual platform. For more details or to register, email office@susgrace-outreach.org or call **(619) 401-4006**.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Please note: Due to the pandemic, all classes and events listed below are online. To ensure a timely and relevant calendar, the online and printed versions of this calendar may vary.

APRIL 13, TUESDAY 1-2 P.M.

A free, online class, *Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body*, will be offered by the Alzheimer's Association. Learn about research on diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement. Use hands-on tools to help you create a plan for healthy aging. To register, call (800) 272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/sandiego/events and click on "Educational Programs."

APRIL 14, WEDNESDAY 9:30 A.M.-12 P.M.

Join the Caregiver Coalition of San Diego for a free, online conference: *Practical Tools & Resources for Caregivers of Persons with Alzheimer's and Other Dementia Causing Diseases*. The conference includes educational sessions, virtual resource rooms, and advice from local experts. Registration is required. Visit www.alzsd.org/services/education or call (858) 492-4400.

APRIL 22, THURSDAY 2-3:30 P.M.

A free, virtual workshop, *Understanding How Medicare Works*, will be offered by Sharp HealthCare. If you're turning 65, or you're still working and planning to retire soon, it's time to start thinking about Medicare and your coverage options. To register, visit www.sharp.com/classes or call (800) 827-4277.

APRIL 22, THURSDAY 2:30-3:30 P.M.

A free, online class, *Nutritional Solutions for Fatigue, Anxiety and Depression* (course #447), will be hosted by the San Diego Public Library as part of the Lectures at the Library: Your Health Series in partnership with San Diego Oasis. Learn from a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist about diet, supplements, and lifestyle hacks that can renew your energy, rebuild your mental outlook, and restore your optimism. Registrants must sign up for a free MyOasis account. To register, visit www.SanDiegoOasis.org or call (619) 881-6262.

APRIL 30, FRIDAY 1-2 P.M.

An online class, *Aging: Mind Over Matter* (course #463), will be hosted by San Diego Oasis. Studies show that people who have a positive attitude toward aging live more than seven years longer than those with a negative attitude. Positive attitude toward one's aging has a greater impact on survival than gender, loneliness, smoking, and exercise. Hear what "attitude expert," Candace Shivers, has learned from her research and life experiences, as well as tips to shift your attitude. To register, visit www.SanDiegoOasis.org or call (619) 881-6262.

MAY 10, MONDAY 5:30-6:30 P.M.

A free, virtual *Advance Care Planning Workshop and Discussion* will be hosted on the 2nd Monday of each month by Compassion and Choices. Learn about advance

directives, POLST, Do Not Resuscitate (DNR), and other aspects of medical end-of-life planning and choices. To register, call (232) 430-0777 or email Ichinchilla@compassionandchoices.org.

MAY 13, THURSDAY 10-11:30 A.M.

A free, online class, *Cox Presents: Streaming Options 101* (course #134), will be offered by San Diego Oasis and provided free of charge by Cox Communications. Streaming means listening to music or watching video in 'real time' instead of downloading a file to your computer and watching it later. Learn about the different ways to get content onto your TV, the basic requirements of your Internet service, devices which enable streaming, and some of the popular choices for streaming movies, shows, and music. Visit www.SanDiegoOasis.org or call (619) 881-6262 to RSVP.

MAY 19, WEDNESDAY 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

A free, virtual aging conference, *Self-Care for the Mind, Body, and Soul*, will be hosted by Sharp HealthCare. Hear from healthcare experts on mental wellness, managing loneliness, and more. Learn about helpful community resources. To register, visit www.sharp.com/classes or call (800) 827-4277.

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.



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