

AGING & independence

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

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

By Kim Gallo
Director, Aging & Independence Services

There's nothing like the peace of mind that comes from knowing that your neighbors have your back, especially if you are an older adult who lives alone. Members of the City Heights Village have just that—and the pandemic helped them appreciate just how crucial neighborly support can be.

Villages are local, grassroots, membership-based organizations that support members to successfully age in place using community-based solutions. Each Village looks a bit different and the services and activities they offer vary

based on the number of involved participants, the group's budget, and other factors. The City Heights Village provides opportunities for members to get to know their neighbors and make friends. It relies on help from local community organizations, such as the City Heights Community Development Corporation and the City Heights Town Council, for administrative support.

The City Heights Village was created initially to be an information-sharing hub. When founding member and co-chair Agnes Conradt, 84, was a caregiver to her husband before he passed away, she wasn't aware of the many supportive services that would have made her job easier. "I had to learn the hard way," she says. Now, when she hears about a helpful resource, she wants to share it with others. "That gives me a lot of motivation to share what I know," Agnes notes.

Evie Kosower, 87, also a founding member and co-chair, agrees. As a life-long educator, Evie knows that knowledge is power. She and fellow leaders within the City Heights Village make it their mission to learn about programs

and services that can help their neighbors successfully age in place. They invite speakers from local organizations to present at Village meetings and also email helpful information to members. During the pandemic, the Village transitioned to Zoom meetings and Village leadership continued to share critical resource

information, such as food distribution efforts, COVID-19 safety, and later on, how to access vaccines.

The pandemic made it difficult for older adults to access all of the services they needed. Members of the Village leadership compiled and distributed a roster of members' contact information so that people could reach out for help. Neighbors stepped up to assist one another, such as by driving someone without a ride to a doctor's appointment or picking up someone who was leaving the hospital. Members also ensured that important milestones could be celebrated in a physically-distanced manner, such as by attending a drive-through birthday celebration for a 93-year-old member.

In addition to fulfilling neighbors' everyday needs, the Village also provides a venue for members to come

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Members of the City Heights Village enjoy a virtual holiday party in December 2020. The Village has helped neighbors to feel less isolated during the pandemic.

REGISTER NOW! Virtual Vital Aging 2021: June 24

See page 3 for details!



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO
LIVWELLSD.ORG

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together to discuss important topics, including issues of equity and justice. A group of members recently formed the Racial Equity and Justice Discussion Group, which has been meeting over the past several months to do research on topics pertaining to diversity and inclusion. They discussed issues such as bias—in themselves and in society at large—and how the Village can be inclusive and welcoming to attract a diverse membership that reflects the community’s demographics.

Both Agnes and Evie find that involvement in the Village is both socially and emotionally rewarding. Evie notes, “having a sense of purpose is very important to an older person.” The Village and some of her other projects, such as working on homeless housing issues, have kept her busy during retirement, as well as feeling deeply fulfilled. “It is not, ‘oh, what am I going to do with myself today?’ but rather ‘what can I fit in?’” Evie explains. Agnes’ experience is similar: “I’m never bored and I’m not lonely either!”

A few miles north, members of the Serra Mesa Village also have been supporting one another over the past year. Founded in 2014, the Serra Mesa Village strives to help older adults (55+) live in their homes for as long as possible as they age. In addition to providing practical support to one another, such as giving rides to medical appointments, members also enjoy social connection and participate in enrichment classes. Although the pandemic put a halt to most activities, Village members typically enjoy classes such as ceramics, attend a weekly movie night with popcorn, or participate in holiday card making or other seasonal events. Members also engage in community service activities, such as assisting with a local food pantry. Some members work in a community garden to harvest fruits and vegetables for the food pantry or glean extra fruit from neighborhood trees that would otherwise go to waste.

Joining the Village has deepened Preston Chipps’, 74, relationship to his community. When Preston first became a member, he admits he was “pretty isolated in terms of social interactions.” Now when he takes walks around his neighborhood he feels connected to his neighbors. “I walk past our members’ houses and I like to say ‘hi,’” he notes. “It opened up a whole new social environment for me.” Even attending routine Village meetings nudges him to live a more engaged life. “People will ask, ‘Have you done anything fun? Where’d you go?’ and it makes me think about what I could do,” Preston says.

When the pandemic hit, preserving social connections was a key goal of the Village. As with the City Heights Village, the Serra Mesa Village turned to Zoom to have weekly meetings. These meetings provided a social outlet during difficult and isolating times. Preston notes, “The meetings are what people looked forward to.” Although it was disappointing to not be able to meet in person, Preston points out that “in some ways these meetings were more intimate as we could see inside each other’s homes.” The virtual meetings ensured that neighbors could check up on one another’s health and allowed for a sharing of crucial information, including details about vaccine clinics. In the beginning, the more tech-savvy members coached those who were less familiar with technology to ensure that everyone who wanted to take part could do so.

Preston’s involvement in the Village has led to his involvement with community committees, such as the County’s Age Well San Diego Health & Community Support Team. Age Well San Diego is the region’s age-friendly communities initiative and part of the County’s comprehensive framework for aging services, the Aging Roadmap (www.livewellsd.org/agingroadmap). At meetings, he learns about resources and programming for older adults, and brings the information back to the Village.

As California begins to open up, Serra Mesa Village members are eager to gather in-person again. They also look forward to working on projects together: advocating for a dedicated senior center and ensuring planes at the local Montgomery Field airport shift to using unleaded gasoline.

The Serra Mesa Village invites residents of Serra Mesa and other communities in the 92123 ZIP code who are 55 or older to join. For more details, visit www.serramesavillage.org or contact Carl at cjdemas@gmail.com or (619) 807-8846.

The City Heights Village invites people of all ages who live in City Heights or surrounding communities to join, including younger adults who want to learn about resources for their parents, or get to know their older adult neighbors. To learn more, visit www.chvillagesd.org or contact Agnes at alconradt@gmail.com or (619) 252-7516.

More information on Villages can be found at:

- Village to Village Network: www.vtvnetwork.org
- VillageCore: <https://villagecore.org/>
- Village Movement California.: <https://villagemovementcalifornia.org/>

In the COMMUNITY

REGISTER NOW! VITAL AGING 2021

Join Aging & Independence Services, in partnership with San Diego Oasis, for *Vital Aging 2021: Resilient & Ready!* This free, virtual conference will feature an inspiring keynote presentation and workshops on topics such as resilience, social connection, technology, equity, and moving forward as the pandemic eases. To register, visit www.VitalAgingSanDiego.com. The keynote speaker will be announced soon at www.SanDiegoOasis.org.

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.



California law defines elder abuse as physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other treatment resulting in harm, pain, or mental suffering to an adult 65 years or older. 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. There are many ways to strengthen our social supports through policies, services, and programs that keep us integrated in our communities as we age.

TAKE ACTION!

- Keep in contact and talk with your older friends, neighbors, and relatives frequently. Ask questions and listen. Be aware and alert for the possibility of abuse.
- Make a commitment to volunteer this year! Help older adults in your community.
- Give a caregiver a break (using proper COVID-19 safety protocols).
- Ask your church or organization to add information about elder abuse to their newsletters.
- Share with your friends and family via social media about WEAAD and spread awareness.



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 and click on “COVID-19 Community Resources.” Or, call the AIS Call Center at **(800) 339-4661**.

ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE BEHIND ON RENT OR UTILITY PAYMENTS

Emergency rent and utility assistance is available for those who have been financially impacted by COVID-19 and are behind on rent/utility payments. Apply now for the County’s Emergency Rent and Utilities Assistance Program (ERAP). Applications will be accepted until funds are no longer available. The County’s ERAP 2021 serves all areas of the San Diego region except for the cities of San Diego and Chula Vista. Residents in those cities must directly apply to the City of San Diego or Chula Vista for assistance. Tenants and landlords throughout the region can visit www.ERAPsandiego.org for information about all three programs and to apply. Those seeking rental assistance must have an income of 80% or less of the Area Median Income (\$67,900 for a one-person household; \$77,600 for a two-person household). To apply for ERAP, please visit www.SDHCD.org. Applications are available online in several languages. If you do not have internet access and need assistance submitting an application, please call **(858) 694-4801**.

RSVP/SVA VOLUNTEER STATIONS BEGIN TO WELCOME BACK VOLUNTEERS

Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has started to ease in San Diego County and most older adults have had the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Senior Volunteers in Action (SVA) sites are beginning to welcome back volunteers. Individuals wishing to volunteer are encouraged to be fully vaccinated prior to resuming their previous role or taking on a new role. Sites must adhere to state and local guidance. For more information on current opportunities, email Myles.Field@sdcounty.ca.gov or call (858) 495-5039.

FEEDING SAN DIEGO



Since the pandemic hit in March 2020, Feeding San Diego has been hard at work responding to the increased need for food assistance throughout San Diego County. Feeding San Diego has distributed 32 million meals to the community. Many people who are currently facing hunger are experiencing food insecurity for the first time, and while this crisis is easing, there is still much work to be done. Feeding San Diego could not accomplish what it does, or have stepped up to serve the community during the pandemic, without volunteers.

Feeding San Diego is currently recruiting for recurring volunteers who can commit to a consistent schedule, front desk volunteers to support the front desk in the evenings and on weekends, volunteer ambassadors to support community outreach events safely, and volunteers to support the CalFresh team. Feeding San Diego has updated its volunteer policies in accordance with the County’s safe reopening guidelines. For opportunities, email Myles.Field@sdcounty.ca.gov or call (858) 495-5039.

AMERICAN RED CROSS



The American Red Cross exists to provide compassionate care to those in need. Generous donors, volunteers, and employees are part of a nationwide network committed to preventing and relieving suffering here at home, across the country and around the world. In San Diego and Imperial Counties, the Red Cross empowers ordinary people to perform extraordinary acts in emergency situations. Whether it’s a wildfire or a home fire, a call for blood, or a call from a service member or military family in need, the Red Cross is there, providing help and hope when it’s needed most. All Red Cross assistance is free.

The Red Cross welcomes new volunteers every day! RSVP volunteers can support the Red Cross mission by responding to local disasters, providing sheltering coordination, distributing food, supporting families recovering from home fires, and more! For details, email Myles.Field@sdcounty.ca.gov or call (858) 495-5039.

HOST HOMES VOLUNTEER HOUSING PROGRAM

Home Start offers a variety of volunteer opportunities through RSVP to support their mission of preventing child abuse and strengthening families and communities. One current opportunity that is not associated with RSVP, but is open to community members is Host Homes, a volunteer housing program that matches volunteer “Hosts” with transitional aged youth (age 18-24) at risk of homelessness in San Diego, many who are exiting the foster care system. Hosts are required to complete a background check, TB clearance, interview, and home visit to get started. Hosts may take part in monthly support meetings and receive a \$500 monthly stipend to defray the costs of having a housemate.

Many of the clients in this program are enrolled in classes at local universities or GED programs, or are starting their careers in the workforce. Participants check in regularly with a case manager to ensure their needs are being met, and that they’re working toward their goal of independent and sustainable housing. This is a wonderful opportunity to help assist in bridging the gap between homelessness and permanent stable housing—with the opportunity to make a new lifelong friend. For more information, please contact Kimberly Linman at klinman@home-start.org.



CONGRATULATIONS TO PUBLIC HEALTH CHAMPIONS!



During the most challenging public health crisis in the world, it's more important than ever to celebrate public health. That's why the County recently honored hundreds of people and organizations for their hard work to keep our residents and communities safe, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This is the 20th year the County has presented the annual awards, which embody the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision to promote healthy, safe, and thriving communities.

As the lead for the Older Adult & Disability Sector of the County's COVID-19 Response, Aging & Independence Services had the opportunity to nominate organizations that made a particular impact over the past year. The following organizations are recipients of the Public Health Champion awards. For the complete list of all the sectors' awardees, and to view the Public Health Champions video, click [here](#).

- **211 San Diego:** The staff of 211 San Diego went above and beyond in supporting the needs of San Diego's older adults and residents living with disabilities. Throughout the year, 211 staff actively worked with the Older Adult & Disability Sector Support Team to identify needs of the community and implement new, creative processes and resources to support vulnerable populations, from food to vaccines.
- **Facilitated Access to Coordinated Transportation:** FACT has worked creatively with the Older Adult & Disability Sector Support Team and partners to provide food box delivery to thousands of vulnerable residents, and also worked with the Age Well Transportation Team to revise the Ride Well guide to educate the public on transportation options during the pandemic.
- **Jewish Family Service:** The team at JFS greatly increased meal provision to vulnerable older adults and has provided dementia-friendly vaccination events for the community.
- **American Red Cross:** ARC has been a wonderful partner during the pandemic – they provided free storage for food boxes so the boxes could be delivered to disabled and other vulnerable residents.
- **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster:** VOAD was instrumental in the success of several projects to deliver food boxes to thousands of vulnerable residents.
- **Serving Seniors:** The team at Serving Seniors greatly increased meal provision to older adults and has provided several vaccination clinics in accessible locations.
- **St. Paul's Senior Services:** The team at St. Paul's has implemented senior and disability-friendly vaccine clinics to ensure that vulnerable residents have access.
- **San Diego Regional Center:** The staff at the Regional Center were instrumental in helping to identify the needs of individuals with disabilities and share key information and resources.

Ride Well to Age Well Guide

COVID-19 Special Edition



A resource guide to transportation services for San Diego County residents during COVID-19

Provided by members of the Age Well San Diego Transportation Theme Team



Thank you to the 2021 Public Health Champions and all of the people and organizations that have helped the community during the pandemic!

EVENING HOURS, NO APPOINTMENTS NEEDED FOR COVID-19 VACCINES

To help make vaccination more convenient, the County is offering extended hours at some vaccination sites. In addition, appointments are not required (but available if preferred) at County vaccination sites. For more information on vaccinations, visit www.coronavirus-sd.com/vaccine.

SENIOR/DISABILITY VACCINE ASSISTANCE

If you need assistance with making a COVID-19 vaccination appointment or arranging transportation to a vaccine site, call **2-1-1**. In addition, homebound individuals who are unable to visit a vaccination site may call **2-1-1** to register for an in-home vaccine.

HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

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

Healthier Living with Diabetes: June 18-July 23 (Fridays), 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Hosted by Aging & Independence Services via the Zoom virtual platform. For more details or to register, visit www.healthierlivingsd.org or call **(619) 495-7296**.

SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Individuals, organizations, and communities join together across the country in the month of May to show support and bring awareness to the importance of mental health. The 2021 theme, “Hope for Change,” encouraged reflecting on the growth we have experienced, as well as being empowered to face change in the future with hope as our guiding principle. The County and community partners hosted events to recognize “May is Mental Health Month.” However, mental health support is important all year long. If you or someone you care about is in crisis or would like behavioral health resources or support, please call the Access and Crisis line at **(888) 724-7240** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Calls are answered by experienced counselors, with assistance available in over 150 languages.



FALLING ABATEMENT AND LEARNING LANDING STRATEGIES (F.A.L.L.S. CLASS)

It's not just fall prevention...it's total fall risk management! Join the Challenge Center's F.A.L.L.S. class to learn about how to prevent falls, recover if you are on the floor, and reduce your risk of injury with various falling techniques. You will also learn power, agility, and balance strategies, discover how to make your home safer, and receive a report card on your performance and improvement. The course incorporates professional crash mats to assist with learning. Instruction and practice will be guided by a licensed physical therapist. Courses will be held two times per week for 90 minutes at the Challenge Center, 5540 Lake Park Way, La Mesa 91942 and will start soon. Dates and times are still to be determined. The class series is being offered for \$25 with agreement to use non-identifying data for research. Call **(619) 667-8644** or email info@challengecenter.org to be put on the priority list.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Please note: To ensure a timely and relevant calendar, the online and printed versions of this calendar may vary.

JUNE 12, SATURDAY 10 A.M.-12 P.M.

Join Alzheimer's San Diego for a free, virtual event: ***Date With A Cure***. Our county is home to some of the best and brightest Alzheimer's researchers and institutions. This event provides an opportunity to get your questions about dementia answered by the very experts working to find a cure. Visit www.alzsd.org/services/education or call (858) 492-4400 to RSVP.

JUNE 15, TUESDAY 10 A.M.-12 P.M.

A free, online class, ***Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors*** will be offered by the Alzheimer's Association. Learn to decode behavioral messages, identify common behavior triggers, and discover strategies to help intervene with some of the most common behavioral challenges of Alzheimer's disease. To register, visit www.alz.org/sandiego/events and click on "Educational Programs" or call (800) 272-3900.

JUNE 16, WEDNESDAY 9:30-10:30 A.M.

A virtual discussion group on ***The Prescription and Opioid Epidemic*** will be hosted by the Carlsbad Senior Center. Participants will be emailed a link to a video lecture provided by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego to view on their own. Participants

will have the opportunity to discuss what they learned from the video lecture. To register, visit www.CarlsbadConnect.org and enter activity code 11619. For details, call (760) 602-4650.

JUNE 17, THURSDAY 10-11:30 A.M.

A free, webinar, ***Using Movement & Motion for Quality of Life***, will be held by Alzheimer's San Diego. In this special workshop, caregivers will learn ideas and techniques for incorporating movement and physical activity into daily care to promote health, well-being, and connection. Visit www.alzsd.org/services/education or call (858) 492-4400 to RSVP.

JUNE 23, WEDNESDAY 9:30-10:30 A.M.

A virtual discussion group on ***The Fascinating Lives of America's First Ladies*** will be hosted by the Carlsbad Senior Center. Participants will be emailed a link to a video lecture provided by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego to view on their own. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss what they learned from the video lecture. To register, visit www.CarlsbadConnect.org and enter activity code 11619. For details, call (760) 602-4650.

JUNE 24, THURSDAY 8:30 A.M.

Join Aging & Independence Services, in partnership with San Diego Oasis, for ***Vital Aging 2021: Resilient & Ready!*** This virtual conference will feature an inspiring

keynote presentation and workshops on topics such as resilience, social connection, technology, equity, and moving forward as the pandemic eases. Register at www.VitalAgingSanDiego.com.

JUNE 24, THURSDAY 3:30-5:30 P.M.

St. Paul's PACE El Cajon is hosting its drive-through ***Summer Fan Drive***. Bring a new fan to donate to frail seniors so that they can beat the heat this summer and receive a free bag of goodies. RSVP to Lizette at (619) 869-1788 or lgalindo@stpaulseniors.org. If you are unable to attend but would still like to donate, drop off your donation to any St. Paul's PACE location (San Diego, Chula Vista, El Cajon, or Encinitas). Call (619) 869-1788 for details.

JUNE 28, MONDAY 1-2 P.M.

A free, online class, ***Cox Presents: Instagram for Newbies*** (course #108), will be offered by San Diego Oasis and provided free of charge by Cox Communications. Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social media app. It's a fast and easy way to share photos and videos. Learn how to: upload photos, share with others, look at others' postings, and more. Have your smart phone ready to use during class. Visit www.SanDiegoOasis.org or call (619) 881-6262 to RSVP.

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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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) 339-4661**
www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov



COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT ▪ HEALTH INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

HOME-BASED SERVICES ▪ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

▪ INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ▪ PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY ▪



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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