

innovation ■ resourcefulness ■ persistence

How California's Senior Centers are meeting today's challenge.



Participants from Centro Latino de San Francisco Community Center crossing the Golden Gate

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON AGING

Since 1973, the California Commission on Aging has served as the principal state advocate for older Californians. **The 25 members of the Commission represent a citizens' voice in government, bringing a range of academic, medical, business and real life experiences to their work.** Commissioners are appointed by the Governor, Senate Rules Committee and the Assembly Speaker.

As an independent state entity, CCoA has the authority to advocate for system improvement that will benefit seniors today and in the future. The CCoA has responsibility to advise the Governor, Legislature and State departments on matters of policy and regulation. The CCoA has a strong focus on legislative action. We have a presence in the State Capitol, position and testify in support of bills, and have a successful track record of CCoA-sponsored bills becoming law.

To carry out its role of providing meaningful policy guidance, the CCoA holds its meetings throughout California. A portion of each meeting is designated for input from older adults and the public on topics of interest. Our findings are used to create briefing documents, to formulate positions on Legislation, and to guide future Commission initiatives.

Recognizing the value of senior centers, in 2008 the CCoA launched a Senior Center Initiative to advance and support centers across the state. The initiative included a stakeholder forum in 2009, independent research into senior centers, and a second forum in November, 2011. CCoA has additionally participated in or led efforts around Fall Prevention, cultural diversity awareness, accessible and affordable housing, older adult mental health, rural health access, fiduciary abuse, assistive technology, the State's Alzheimer's State Plan, long-term care planning, and preparing the State for the baby boom generation.

INNOVATION • RESOURCEFULNESS • PERSISTENCE
How California's Senior Centers are meeting today's challenge

produced by the California Commission on Aging

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funded by SCAN Health Plan

California Commission on Aging

SCAN Health Plan began more than 30 years ago as Senior Care Action Network. Founded by seniors, for seniors, our mission is to help seniors stay healthy and independent – to help them choose how and where they want to live – for as long as possible. Community resources play an important role in helping us meet this mission. That's why our community outreach activities and community giving program focus on supporting access to basic needs such as food and nutrition, encouraging active and healthy lifestyles, engaging older adults in health maintenance, and collaborating with local service partners to meet gaps in community services. We do this in many ways, bringing needed resources to older adults and their network of support throughout California.

FORWARD

By SCAN Health Plan

SCAN Health Plan is pleased to partner with the California Commission on Aging in its efforts to identify senior and community centers that are doing innovative work. We have a common interest in the health and future viability of senior centers – a future that is far from guaranteed.

Today's centers are facing an unprecedented demographic shift in the midst of a challenging economic environment. As budgets for senior centers are being cut, demand for services and more diverse programs are increasing. Not only do centers need to find ways to support more older adults than ever, they need to deliver programs and services that meet the expectations of a changing population; all while also meeting the broader needs of its community.

Whether or not a senior center can survive these demands will depend greatly on how they collaborate and partner with others in the community. They will need to find new direction and innovative, yet practical solutions. We are confident they will – **as you'll see in this report, many already are.**

Much of a center's success can be attributed to its governing board and staff, whether director, administrator, aide or volunteer. These are creative and dedicated individuals. They have to be – it takes creativity to stretch resources to the degree they do! It also takes something else: a true heart for the individuals they are serving. They are there because they care.

The older adults who attend the centers must also be recognized. These are the seniors who are making an effort to stay **engaged and involved in life. In many cases they're looking for ways they, in turn, can give back.**

So what will the "Senior Center of the Future" look like? It will continue to reflect the increasing diversity of the community it serves. But it will also look a lot like the senior centers you see profiled in this report.

SCAN would like to thank the CCoA for honoring and promoting the outstanding efforts made by senior centers to enhance and improve the quality of life for seniors throughout California.

INTRODUCTION

Innovation, Resourcefulness and Persistence is a publication of the California Commission on Aging as part of its ongoing Senior Center Initiative. It chronicles the innovations, creativity, passion and commitment of those who staff and govern California's senior centers. It also creates a snapshot of centers around the state in order to answer the question "How are centers using innovation, resourcefulness and persistence to stay relevant and to move forward in uncertain times?" We also hope that this document is of value to centers that might find themselves vulnerable or struggling.

We began this publication as outside forces collided around California's aging network. The economic downturn crashed budgets, shrank resources and even resulted in center closures. The service array as we knew it became marginalized. Uncertainty is prevalent. Poverty, not just the age criterion, has resulted in new participants seeking services and supports.

With this backdrop -- or maybe because of it -- some centers are showing remarkable innovations by initiating new centers and new programs while responding to new populations. Other centers are maximizing resources, finding different uses for existing spaces, and collaborating in ways to strengthen operations and blend programs. Still other centers are extremely persistent in following their dreams of expansion, launching a stronger advocacy voice and capitalizing on emerging trends.

We have found examples of how health promotion, wellness and athleticism have become incorporated into centers and how, for many, the focus is now on taking services from the center out into the community. We saw great pride in what centers have "always done" at the same time that efforts to redefine their role are underway.

There is evidence that centers took full advantage of the Mental Health Services Act funds and have developed targeted programs. We learned of centers that are moving into the provision of medical services and into models of **service delivery that integrate medical and social components. We found programs that allow an elder's creativity to shine.** We can confirm that centers are embracing diversity. We were not surprised to see that the future success of centers may rest in large part with a cadre of volunteers.

With 700 + centers in California we knew the risk of trying to identify the “best” of the practices. Therefore the Commission opened the self-nomination process for the Innovations Project to all centers in California. We also sought assistance from the two senior center associations in our state, from the Congress of California Seniors and from the 33 Area Agencies on Aging.

Some nominations were complete as submitted. Most nominations were followed by a phone interview. Occasionally the internet was used to further research centers or programs. While regions of California are underrepresented in this document, we were pleased with the level of interest the project generated and in the number of responses we received.

The Commission very much appreciated the center staff that was eager to share their stories and insights, client quotes and photos. We made an effort to include as many vignettes as we could in order to capture the uniqueness of the **state's centers and to demonstrate that California still leads the way in innovative senior center programming.** We are so proud of the good work that has been accomplished by California's senior and community centers.

Take a look for yourself.

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California Commission on Aging

Pasadena Senior Games
Pasadena Senior Center

What do power lifting, a 40k cycling race, basketball shooting, track and field, and feats of strength have in common? These are just a few of the sporting events that adults 50+ and older may participate in at the *Pasadena Senior Games* held by the Pasadena Senior Center. **“We recognize that exercise is a component of healthy aging and it was because of this, and the Pasadena Senior Center’s mission to improve and enrich the lives of seniors, that the Pasadena Senior Games was started,”** noted Cynthia Rosedale, Director of Events and Senior Games. Started in 1993, the Pasadena Senior Games hosted 1,500 seniors participating in 25 sporting events in 2011. The purpose of the Games is to inform and inspire older adults to become fit and engage in a regular program of physical activity and sport. The Senior Games crosses barriers of race, culture and socio-economic background, empowering its athletes to remain independent and engaged in the community.

Funding for the Senior Games comes primarily from event fees, sponsorships, and donations. For organizations interested in creating a Senior Games in their area, a Senior Games Manual was published in 2011 by the National Senior Games Association.

Pasadena Senior Center
85 East Holly St., Pasadena, 91103 Contact: Cynthia Rosedale (626) 685-6724 CynthiaR@pasadenaseniorcenter.org

Creating Art from Experience
LA Art Workshop

Empowering homeless seniors through creative expression is the work of Lillian Abel Calamari and the *Art Workshop* of **SRO Housing Corporation's Project Hotel Alert**. Established in 1992 at St. Vincent's Cardinal Manning Center in Los Angeles, the program was developed to open the world of fine art to elders living on skid row. Education in art history and the work of 19th and 20th century artists paved the way for participants to produce their own artworks inspired by their life experiences. The program has since moved to SRO Housing's artists' lofts, giving artists the creative space where their ideas can blossom. Calamari works with about 15 to 20 seniors in a given year, with SRO Housing providing materials, paints, and Calamari offering the support and encouragement they need to express their emotions. "I take people who have never painted before and urge them to work from their own experience," explained Calamari. The program has changed lives, with an art show in 2003 leading to several participants selling their works and one becoming a professional artist. A documentary on the program aired in July 2011 on Los Angeles' public television channel. The year-round class meets weekly, rain or shine, and Calamari assures that someone will be there to lead the group if she cannot.

Art Workshop
Project Hotel Alert
354 South Spring Street, Ste. 400, Los Angeles CA 90013
lillianc@srohousing.org

Contact: Lillian Abel Calamari, (213) 229-9672



California Commission on Aging

Restoring Older Adults' Emotional Health

Depression is an ongoing concern for adults as they age, faced with the loss of loved ones, reduced mobility, and fewer life options. Centers have made the most of California's Mental Health Services Act funding, developing a variety of creative approaches to help older adults move beyond their depression through counseling and other supports.

The South Pasadena Senior Center provides educational and recreational services to seniors, including some with complex psychosocial and mental health needs that impact their safety and well-being. Recent system cutbacks eliminated on-site social services previously provided by other agencies. The center addressed this gap through an innovative collaboration that brought together the Senior Citizen's Foundation of South Pasadena, Inc., and the City of South Pasadena with the USC School of Social Work. With \$3,000 provided by the Foundation and the City, the center now offers a part-time placement to a graduate intern, supervised by a licensed social worker. The intern provides information and referral, problem-focused counseling and support groups, and created a database of resources to assist seniors with maintaining independence. A four-week support group called *Lifting the Cloud* was offered to provide participants with tools to cope with depression and thrive. The project continues to be supported and the center will continue to provide mental health services to their clients. "Our center should be a safe haven to help our seniors age with dignity and independence," explains Liliana Torres, Senior Center Manager. Contact: Liliana Torres, (626) 403-7364
ltorres@ci.south-pasadena.ca.us



The San Pedro Service Center offers the *Genesis Program (Geriatric Evaluation Network Encompassing Service Support Program)*. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act, Genesis offers a traditional mental health service for older adults. However, the service delivery of the San Pedro program is unique in that it provides mental health support and services from a bilingual psychiatric social worker on site at the center. Meeting in a space where the older adult is already comfortable helps diffuse the stigma many associate with receiving mental health services and also allows for greater networking of clients into other services the center offers. Home visits are also made for individuals experiencing mobility difficulties. The Genesis Program has been helpful to many seniors and has helped staff identify individuals in need of Adult Protective Services. Contact: Elsie Larriva, (310) 519-6091 elarriva@css.lacounty.gov

A 2009 Community Health Survey conducted by Mission Hospital of Laguna Beach found that depression was a key concern for their community, especially depression in older women. In response to the survey, The Susi Q Senior Center in Laguna Beach offered a pilot program titled *Battling the Blues* to address the needs of isolated older women. The Susi Q received a small grant to help these seniors gain insight, explore options and find solutions for their mental health issues. The program includes one-on-one appointments with a therapist; a sliding scale fee may apply. Qualified individuals receive a maximum of ten to twelve sessions of therapy. Started in April of 2011, the program is already demonstrating success. Fourteen individuals have sought treatment, with seven successfully completing the program and six others still receiving therapy. If necessary, individuals are referred to other therapists or agencies for further treatment. Additional mental health support is available through a bi-monthly support group called *Coffeetalk*, in which participants can share concerns, discuss coping skills, and learn helpful tips in a supportive atmosphere. Contact: Mariann Tracy, (949) 497-2441 mariannt@thesusiq.org



The Lavender Scrolls Project honors program participants by decorating dining hall walls with celebrations of participants' life histories.

Safe, Visible, Celebrated

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Bringing isolated and invisible LGBT elders into the light is the goal of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay. The Alameda County-based project of the non-profit Tides Center works with senior centers to create safe, welcoming places where lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender seniors can find friendship, support, and the guidance they need as they navigate their later years. **A rainbow emblem on the center's front door lets seniors know they are welcome. The LGBT lunch program offered at the North Oakland and Fremont senior centers and the San Leandro Community Church creates just the environment to bring elders together in this supportive community; the project is working to expand to other senior centers in the county.**

Lavender Seniors also trains center staff to work with LGBT elders and to develop policies to protect participants from discrimination. Project director Dan Ashbrook sees the work of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay as helping to implement standards of care for LGBT elders through direct services, outreach, advocacy and education.



Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
1395 Bancroft Ave. San Leandro, CA 94577

Contact: Dan Ashbrook, (510) 667-9655 info@lavenderseniors.org

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Connecting Seniors to Fresh, Healthy Foods

No longer being able to drive and having insufficient resources both contribute to food insecurity and affect the quality of life of older adults. Recognizing the importance of good nutrition, centers have created innovative and cost effective ways to connect people with food while also promoting their independence.

Seniors living in Novato who no longer drive can call *Novato Independent Elders Program* (NIEP), a program of the Margaret Todd Senior Center, **when it's time to re-stock the pantry**. NIEP matches the caller with a volunteer shopper who, on a weekly basis, will grocery shop for the recipient. **The volunteer delivers groceries to the recipient's home**; the recipient writes a check for the cost of the food. Novato Human Needs Center serves as fiscal intermediary. In addition to shopping, the volunteers are trained to observe the home setting and report any condition that

may impact the recipient's safety and welfare. In one instance it was noted that dry brush was surrounding the house, creating a fire hazard. NIEP staff and volunteers coordinated brush removal. Volunteer shoppers receive initial and annual training and must pass a background check and fingerprint screening. Contact: Carol Ann Moore (415) 899-8296, PRCS@novato.org



At the Cathedral Center in Cathedral City, the *Mobile Pantry Project* delivers free food to elders in low-income senior housing. The food is purchased from the regional food bank F.I.N.D. (Food in Need of Distribution) twice monthly, and is immediately transported to the senior housing where resident volunteers (who are also clients) unload, sort, and coordinate distribution. Because food is distributed the same day it is collected, overhead is kept to a minimum and there are no storage concerns. The project emphasizes a streamlined, efficient, money-saving approach with a small staff administering the program at minimal cost and with maximum effect for the clients. The project's \$600-per-month budget is funded through a grant and donations. Contact: John Wisor (760) 321-1548, cathedralcenter37@gmail.com





California Commission on Aging

Helping Seniors to Optimize their Day

People Coordinated Services Senior Multi-Purpose Center

Meeting the needs of a diverse, predominantly low-income senior population in Los Angeles is the strength of **People Coordinated Services of Southern California's Senior Multi-Purpose Centers (PCS)**. Through collaborations with public and private partners, said agency President Virgie Walker, PCS offers its participants services ranging from case management, a variety of classes, transportation, counseling, health education and wellness programs, and nutrition support. A program Walker takes particular pride in is *Field Capable Clinical Services for Older Adults (FCCS)*. Available on-site through an agreement with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH), FCCS provides licensed clinicians who are specially trained to work with older adults. The innovative arrangement makes it easy for center participants to access mental health services without the stigma of going to a traditional mental health office or traveling across town for an appointment. DMH staff provides education and outreach to center participants, building relationships that facilitate the move to clinical services.

Other program highlights are:

- Health seminars and preventive services are provided at no cost through an agreement with a local hospital. The hospital hosts an annual health fair, bringing information on senior health concerns to PCS participants;
- PCS supplements its hot-meal program through an agreement with a local food bank to host a weekly food giveaway that is coordinated by volunteers, helping to assure that seniors have the food they need to stay healthy;
- An intergenerational program draws on tech-savvy youth to help older adults learn computer skills while the seniors provide support for youth as mentors and tutors;
- PCS is also proud of its choir, which is composed of program participants. The choir visits nursing homes and other sites to encourage seniors.

People Coordinated Services Senior Multi-Purpose Centers

Address: 5133 South Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90043

and 2528 West Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90016

Contact: Virgie Walker (323) 735-1231

VWalker@PCS-Socal.org

Honoring Traditions

Many centers take pride in serving their communities' elders with an abiding respect for traditional food, crafts and interests. Supports and service are offered in ways to retain the richness and uniqueness of each culture.

Creating community and a sense of place is the ultimate outcome of senior services offered by the Vietnamese Community of Orange County (VNCOC) through three program sites in Santa Ana, Westminster and Garden Grove. **Originally established as a refugee support program in the late 1970s, VNCOC has served the community's elders with health and social service programs, citizenship classes, language education, and non-emergency medical transportation services. Among the VNCOC's most successful and innovative practices was the development of a partnership that allows the program to serve Vietnamese food at the three dining centers. Working with Community Senior Serve (a non-profit organization) and the Orange County Office on Aging, VNCOC was able to contract with a Vietnamese restaurant to provide federally funded hot meals on a daily basis. The culturally-appropriate meals are a big draw to the community's elders, who have stayed away when attempts were made to turn the program back to a more standard American fare.** Contact: Vi Nguyen, (714) 558-6009 vnguyen@thevncoc.org

For the past 40 years, J-Sei **has been the senior service hub for Japanese Americans in San Francisco's East Bay.** J-Sei has partnered with 18 religious and civic organizations to provide elders with critical services that include center activities, case management, transportation, translation services and friendly visitors. **J-Sei's innovative cultural competency has given older adults a gathering place that is consistent with their language, beliefs and practices. Japanese food is incorporated into nutrition services. Classes in calligraphy, Kime-komi doll-making, quilting and writing based on the internment experience are offered. J-Sei has become the community's trusted resource for senior services. Eighty percent of the center participants are Japanese American, many of whom are Japanese immigrants who speak Japanese as their primary language. The remaining 20 percent are individuals from diverse backgrounds who appreciate the unique setting and cultural experience J-Sei offers. While providing Japanese-specific programming and meals is more expensive than replicating traditional senior center services in the community, the Board of Directors remains committed to the unique niche and importance of this agency.** Contact: Diane Wong, (510) 848-3560 diane@j-sei.org



As a component of their *Healthy Aging Initiative's* **focus on wellness and self managed health care**, YU-AI KAI Japanese American Senior Services in San Jose has partnered with the California Graduate School of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Five Branches University. Seniors receive free acupuncture services from supervised graduate students. A group of recent graduates provides free therapeutic massages. These externships provide students with experience and mentorship, while providing valuable services to YU-AI KAI's seniors. Contact: Sophie Horiuchi-Forrester, (408) 294-2505 Shoriuchi@yuaikai.org



Asian Community Center Program Participants



Creating a New Kind of Center Whistlestop

Jackson Café at Whistlestop in San Rafael offers older adults a healthy, affordable gourmet meal in a friendly, hospitable environment. For nearly six decades, Whistlestop has been a leader in caring for older adults in Marin County so they can live vibrant lives. When Whistlestop and other non-profits in the community found themselves financially challenged, CEO **Joe O’Hehir suggested a collaborative approach. Together with Homeward Bound, an organization that advocates for the homeless and helps reintroduce them to the labor market, Jackson Café went through an extreme makeover. The Café provides the homeless with paid jobs and experience, while ensuring that the older adults have convenient access to healthy and appealing meals. Jackson Café keeps costs down by obtaining some of its menu ingredients from the local food bank, which supplies organic produce from the local farmers market. Jackson Café serves lunch to 75 to 85 people five days a week. By opening up its service to the general public, the café has integrated its older adult clientele with other age groups. O’Hehir credits Jackson Café’s success to the concept of collaboration: Homeward Bound for providing skillful chefs, Whistlestop for funding the operation, and the community for their endless support and contributions.**

Whistlestop
930 Tamalpais Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901 Contact: **Joe O’Hehir** (415) 456-9062 johehir@whistlestop.org

Broadening the Vision of What Centers Do

Centers do much more than providing meals for seniors. Many find ways to meet broader needs of their community, stepping up to pick up the pieces when other community services are lost or by re-focusing their programming. Taking these opportunities opens the center doors to new clients, builds new strengths within the center, and solidifies a new **vision of the center's role in the community.**

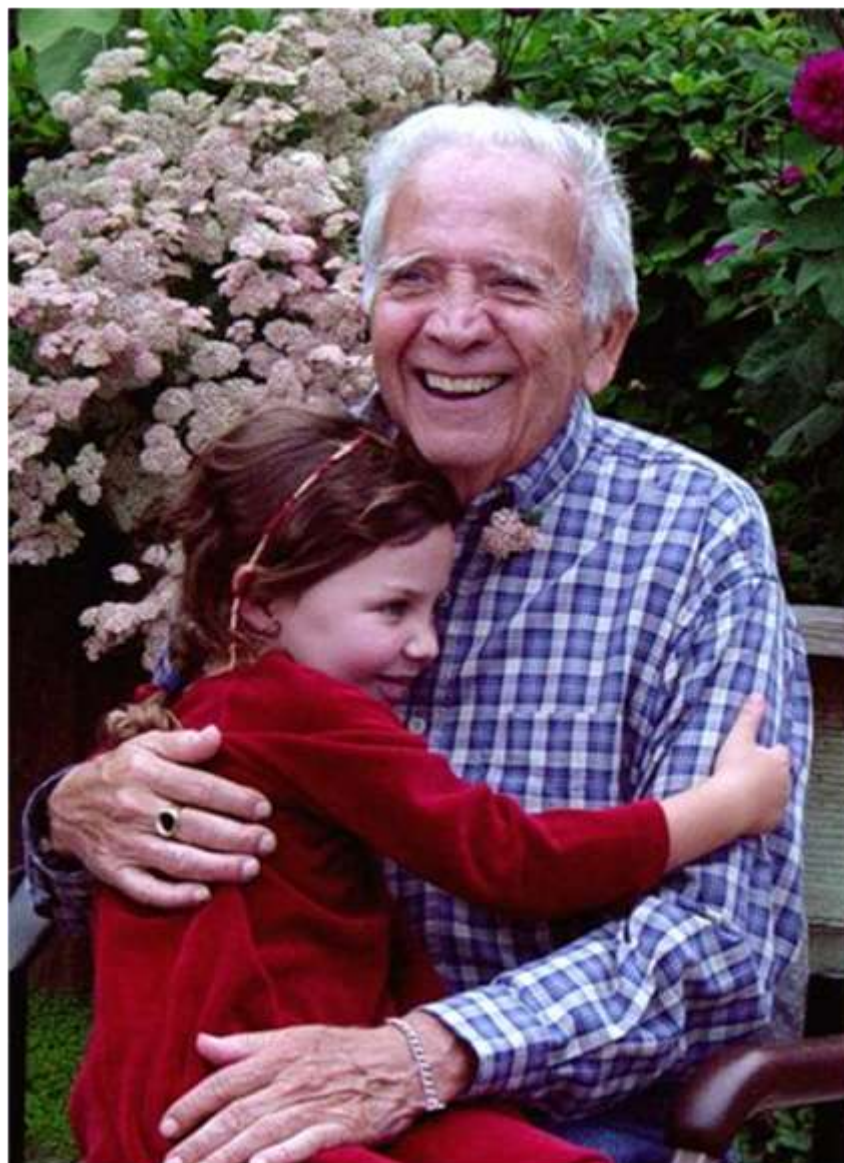
When a neighboring city faced the loss of its 28-year-old Special Needs Afternoon Program, **Redwood City's Veterans Memorial Senior Center (VMSC)** stepped in to help. The program was moved to VMSC, bringing together older adults, participants with special needs and their families through a summer day camp, evening socials, dances and **field trips. The blending of programs has strengthened community's connections to the special needs population** and had a positive impact on all. Contact: Bruce Utecht, (650) 780-7270 butecht@redwoodcity.org

Multicultural, intergenerational, and inclusive describes the programming at the Angelus Plaza Senior Activity Center. **Serving the disabled and the elderly together, the center's focus is on creating a supportive and safe environment** where participants can learn and share through classes and activities taught by both volunteers and paid instructors. Located at the Angelus Plaza affordable housing community for older adults, the center serves clientele from throughout the surrounding neighborhood. Contact: Jeffrey Winston, (213) 623-4352, ext. 308 Jeffrey.winston@rhf.org

Through the initiatives of social acceptance, cultural diversity and preventative health, Community Integration Services Activities Center (CIS) offers a center-based program that promotes health, civic engagement and self-reliance for older adults and adults with disabilities. A non-profit organization in Granada Hills, CIS is multicultural, intergenerational and ability-diverse, serving a **high-needs clientele. CIS's three main service components include** preventive health programs, lifelong learning classes and social and recreational opportunities. Family respite, health education, care coordination and independent living skills training are also provided. The center promotes volunteerism amongst the membership and places people with functional challenges and disabilities in positions of



responsibility to run the Center's programs. Adults of all ages, some with disabilities, serve as ambassadors in the larger community, helping to change attitudes and dispel misperceptions. The CIS Center is a public/private partnership of the Medvedev Family, Verizon Foundation, John Gogian Family Foundation, and SCAN Health Plan. Contact: Bob Erio, (818) 772-1155 berio@cisadp.org



California Commission on Aging

Dementia Care Coalition

Humboldt Senior Resource Center

It all started with the vision of a new adult day health center designed to meet the special needs of Alzheimer's clients in a rural California County. While the Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC) was embarking on a \$5 million capital campaign trail to build a new center, the California Endowment and Smullin Foundation offered funding to support a *Dementia Care Coalition*. One product of the Coalition was to produce a countywide Dementia Care Plan designed to improve access to health care for all adults with dementia, their families and caregivers. The capital campaign was **successful and HSRC's new Alzheimer's Resource Center was opened in 2009. Among other activities, the plan called for** exploration of PACE* as a model that would improve care for adults with dementia and other disabilities. These doors opened when HSRC was asked to be one of three rural agencies in the state to work with On Lok, Inc. to explore the feasibility of bringing PACE to Humboldt County. With a one-year feasibility grant funded by The SCAN Foundation, HSRC has initiated the process to become one of the first rural PACE programs in California.

*PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) provides acute and long-term care services that enable long-term care-qualified individuals to remain in their homes.

Humboldt Senior Resource Center

1910 California Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Contact: Joyce Hayes

(707) 443 - 9747

jhayes@humsenior.org



Intergenerational Community Garden Project
San Marcos Senior Center

The San Marcos Senior Center has a new *Intergenerational Community Garden* project that connects elders and students **from Woodland Park Middle School's 7th and 8th grades** and Special Education classes. The teachers and elders work together to provide students with hands-on experience working in a garden, giving both the opportunity to share their talents and resources in a way that is mutually beneficial to each other and the community. Through their shared work in the garden, students are enhancing their social skills, understanding of nutrition, science skills, and increasing interaction with caring adults. The students take back to their classroom and families the knowledge their elders have shared with them and the mutual benefits a community garden can produce. Cooking and eating the bountiful fruit and vegetables with their families, they are able to share the importance of healthy eating in the home. An additional component of the community garden is a *Photovoice Project* that helps capture the benefits of the garden through the power of photography. Each student and garden is given a camera to record their impressions. Through their own lens, each student captures the growth and development of the garden, continuing to learn and share with others.

San Marcos Senior Center
111 W. Richmar Ave. San Marcos, CA 92069 Contact: Georganne Grotey (760) 744-5535
ggrotey@san-marcos.net

Keeping Seniors Informed

Making health resources available to older adults makes a positive impact on their lives. Senior center directors know the value of helping seniors live healthy lives, whether through classes on healthy living, nutrition counseling, provision of health screenings, or physical activities.

A commitment to healthy aging and preventing older adult obesity has brought the SCAN Senior Resource Center (SRC) accolades from older adults across Ventura County as well as the county's health partnership organization. The group "Advocates for a Lifestyle of Exercise and Nutrition in Ventura County" recently awarded SRC its Health Champion Award for the broad range of health education and healthful living programs the center offers. SRC's



numerous course offerings include Senior Yoga, Tai Chi, Strong Bones, Stretch Band, Movement Disorders, and chronic disease management classes. The nonprofit SCAN Health Plan makes the unique program available to all older adults in Ventura County, not just health plan members. Through community partnerships, SRC offers its participants health screenings for memory, heart disease and stroke. A vigorous outreach program, *Classroom in Community*, is offered free to any senior organization in the county. Another program, *Trading Ages*, trains service providers to be sensitive to the issues of aging, providing simulated experiences of the sensory decline that aging brings.

Contact: Steve Lehman, (805) 658-2182

slehman@scanhealthplan.com

Located in the lobby of the Lakeview Senior Center in Irvine, the *Keen Center for Senior Resources* provides a one-stop location for resources, information and support to Irvine seniors age 50 and older and their support persons. Accessible by telephone, fax, e-mail or in person, the center provides multi-cultural, multi-lingual services offered by trained volunteers and staff. In order to provide for many of these services, partnerships are established with community and nonprofit organizations. Services are available at no charge and include information on assistance programs, support groups, information packets and resource guides, care consultation, volunteer support for medical transportation and friendly visiting, medical equipment loan out, and shared housing and caregiver resources. Contact: Lynne Conger, (949) 724-6913 lconger@ci.irvine.ca.us.

The **City of Pacifica's Senior Services** converted an old storage room into a *Health Education Resource Room* where seniors, their family members and caregivers could obtain written and multi-media materials related to their health concerns. The goal was to provide a comfortable setting where information could be easily found. The center solicited supplies from area hospitals and health care providers who stocked the room with educational materials, furnishings, a weigh scale, brochures and brochure holders. A computer, VCR/DVD player and TV were gleaned from the San Mateo County equipment surplus and a community information board posts information on current course listings, center activity schedules and support groups. Contact: Jim Lange, (650) 738-7352 langej@ci.pacifica.ca.us

“Fue operado de la rodilla, tengo una rodilla plástica y una amiga (voluntaria del centro) me recomendó hacer ejercicios con Siempre Active. Hago los ejercicios de esfuerzo y flexibilidad. Comencé a venir al centro usando bastón y al poco tiempo no lo necesité. Agradezco a este centro todo lo beneficios que he recibido de Siempre Active. Camino mejor y la mente también mejorando.”

Francisco R. (77 yrs)

“I’ve been participating for two years, and I’m definitely stronger than I was, and it helps keep my asthma clear. I think the exercise program is my main effort, and it has been very good all the way through... When I first came here I was very shy, reserved and I got to the point where I could lead the class, and that was an accomplishment for me because I never could lead anything before.”

Edward B. (76 yrs)

Always Active Wellness Program

30th Street Senior Center

Listening to program participants was a key to developing the Always Active Wellness Program of the 30th Street Senior Center of On Lok, Inc. The program is designed to incorporate elements of social, physical and mental wellness in a comprehensive and personalized wellness program that seniors both need and enjoy. Serving a multicultural community meant providing the program in Spanish, English, Chinese, and Tagalog, as well as offering the program in nine locations, each serving a distinct cultural group. Designed in partnership with the University of San Francisco, San Francisco Senior Centers Inc., and the San Francisco Department of Aging, a physician provides authorization for a senior to participate. Quality of life indicators are measured for each participant, helping the program demonstrate its positive impacts on the elders served. An added bonus has been the strengthening of each community by fostering social ties and connections. **“The program has a really large social aspect. People love it,”** noted Valorie Villela, Director of the 30th Street Center. With over 800 members enrolled, overcrowding has become an issue and 30th Street has plans to offer the program at a tenth site in 2012. The sustainability of the program, Ms. Villela noted, is a mixture of having strong academic partnerships, a strong network with an understanding of mutual benefits, and assistance with outreach via partner networks.



30th St. Senior Center

225 30th St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94131

Contact: Valorie Villela

(415) 550-2211

valorie@onlok.org

Overcoming Isolation and Enriching Lives

Senior Center Without Walls

In 2004 Terry Englehart was concerned about the shortage of resources for isolated older adults. Through *Senior Center Without Walls* (SCWW), Englehart was able to create a community for homebound elders using a program of classes and activities conducted over the phone. SCWW is a free service of Episcopal Senior Communities and available to anyone statewide. The program takes its participants on virtual excursions, engages them in friendly conversation, and features an assortment of classes and support groups for those who find it difficult to go to a senior center. Participants connect from the comfort of their home over telephone conference calls. No special equipment is needed and the calls are free-of-charge. A wide variety of offerings, ranging from armchair travel cruises to bird watching, are led by skilled facilitators, many of whom have been participants in the program, fostering a sense of empowerment and kinship.

“Senior Center Without Walls is really about removing the walls between us – creating connections on the phone with people who would otherwise not know each other. This is what SCWW has done for me and others.” ~Rita

Episcopal Senior Communities
114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610
info@seniorcenterwithoutwalls.org

Contact: Terry Englehart (510) 444-5974 or toll-free (877) 797-7299



*“The non-profit world needs to be innovative every day in order to do what works for the community and customers:
Listen to your clients and engage.”*

Peter Rittenhouse, executive director of Joslyn Center

Making Things Happen

The desire to respond to emerging program needs and raise funds for continuing services is a difficult and persistent struggle for centers throughout California. Some centers find solutions by utilizing resources in a new and different way. Some centers adopt a “can do” attitude and incorporate volunteers into the service design.

If a program fits the mission of the Joslyn Center in Palm Desert, “we need to find a way to do it,” says Director Peter Rittenhouse. It was clear from listening to the community that there was a need to reach out to isolated elders. To address that need, the *Telephone Safety Net Program* was started. Trained volunteers telephone isolated elders daily, not only to “check-in” but also to provide companionship. “Finding a way to do it” became important again, when a local hospital cancelled a *Healing Arts Program* that provided art, movement and music therapy to clients. Program leaders and clients stated that this was a valuable service. “It also clearly fit the mission of the Joslyn Center and we needed to listen to our clients, so we made it work,” recalls Rittenhouse, managing resources and volunteers in a way that allowed the program to remain without jeopardizing existing services. Contact: Peter Rittenhouse, (760) 340-3220 peterr@joslyncenter.org

Using what you have is a concept incorporated by the Petaluma Senior Center and their unique approach to fundraising. The center sells wall space to local businesses who advertise their services in “their own rack.” The wall display has raised \$4,000 for the center and eliminated clutter in the lobby area. Contact: Don Streeper, (707) 778-4349, dstreeper@ci.petaluma.ca.us

In Northern California, Shasta Senior Nutrition Services has a similar idea for raising discretionary funds. The center has just begun marketing sign space on the sides of its Meals on Wheels delivery vehicles. Director Debbie McClung believes the effort has potential to bring in \$8,000 annually that could supplement whichever program had the greatest shortfall in a given year. Contact: Debbie McClung, (530) 226-3060 Debbie.mcclung@chw.edu



LAAAC Advocacy Event

California Commission on Aging

Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition (LAAAC)

St. Barnabas Senior Services

Advocacy became a critical need when Los Angeles-area aging service providers encountered an assault on funding for programs serving older adults and people with disabilities. In response, the *Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition* (LAAAC) was formed in 2009 to create a united front. Spearheaded by St. Barnabas Senior Services, Partners in Care Foundation, and AltaMed Health Services Corporation, the LAAAC consists of 19 participants from a diverse array of advocacy groups and senior service organizations. The LAAAC recently hosted a regional advocacy forum to shed light on the impact the dismantling of aging services (exacerbated by the elimination of the ADHC as a Medi-Cal option) will have on the LA County aging service network and the older adult residents of Los Angeles County. The forum, attended by numerous community and legislative leaders, ended with a call to action. Moreover, with a \$25,000 grant from The SCAN Foundation, the LAAAC will host in 2012 a county-wide summit which will result in the development of policy and strategies for change. A summary of recommendations will be distributed to L.A. County supervisorial districts, effectively raising awareness of key issues and building the momentum for change. Among its successes, the LAAAC held an aging summit in the spring of 2010 which resulted in the development of a united advocacy message and aging agenda; **prevented the merger of Los Angeles' Department of Aging with the Department of Parks and Recreation; halted an attempt by L.A. City to increase rent on senior centers; facilitated a bridge loan from L.A. City Council to cover the cost of nutrition services when the State budget was delayed in 2010; and educated members of the Legislature and Administration about the importance of senior programs and services.** Passionate leadership and cohesion have sustained the Coalition and helped it to focus on annual priority areas, recognition of emerging leaders, development of clear roles, and to **keep up the membership's commitment of time, talent and resources.**

St. Barnabas Senior Services

675 S. Carondelet Street, Los Angeles, CA 90057 Contact: Rigo Saborio (213) 388-4444 rsaborio@sbssla.org



California Commission on Aging

Transforming the Experience of Aging

Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center

Definitely NOT your grandma's senior center, the Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center, operated by Senior Community Centers, dispels everything you ever thought you knew about aging. Visitors to the San Diego Center, built in 2010, are amazed when they see the bright, modern design and feel the high energy vibe throughout the building. Seniors of all ages and backgrounds come for the daily meals and stay for so much more. "Our vision is to transform the aging experience into something positive and life-fulfilling," said Gary West of the Gary and Mary West Foundation, whose \$4 million gift was instrumental in making the center and its innovative programming possible.

Three components of the Wellness Center include: (1) *The Senior Nutrition Center*, serving over 750 meals a day, 365 days per year; (2) *The Center for Healthy Aging*, offering seniors access to physical and mental health care, case management, and referrals. **The Center's unique partnership with San Diego State University's College of Health and Human Services provides seniors with health assessments and monitoring in an interdisciplinary "learning laboratory."** The goal is to help students better understand the importance of providing an integrated system of care for older adults while helping train the next generation of geriatric professionals; (3) *The John M. Sachs Lifelong Learning Institute*, offering a variety of classes in the enrichment center, a civic engagement program that matches senior volunteers with opportunities at the Center and in the community, and a Cyber Café that provides an intergenerational experience where seniors learn how to use a computer and receive hands-on training from at-risk high school students.

Senior Community Centers
525 14th Street, Ste. 200, San Diego, CA 92101 Contact: Paul Downey (619) 487-0670
paul.downey@servingseiors.org

The Good of the Garden

Gardens are symbolic of new beginnings, the cycle of life, of healthful food and a healthy lifestyle. For many of California's centers, gardens are a focal point for volunteer activity, a source of nutritious foods, and a place for socialization and healthful activities.

At Cordova Senior Activities Center in Sacramento, gardening has grown into far more than a hobby. Sixteen raised beds make it easier for members of the center's *Green Thumb Garden Club* to work in the garden, which produces food for the center's "*Green Thumb Lunches*" program. The fresh, high quality food has doubled participation in the center's meal programs. Contact: Jenn Taylor, (916) 366-3133 jenn@crpd.com



In the City of Irvine, senior gardens are beneficiaries of a new composting system at the Lakeview Senior Center's kitchen facility. **As part of the city's recycling program, the Lakeview Senior Center's *Elderly Nutrition Program* and *Rose Garden Café* installed high-speed organic waste conversion and reduction equipment.** The equipment reduces kitchen waste into sterile bio-mass and re-usable by-product. Irvine Senior Services will continue to use this compost in senior gardens located throughout the city. Contact: Lynne Conger, (949) 724-6913 lconger@ci.irvine.ca.us

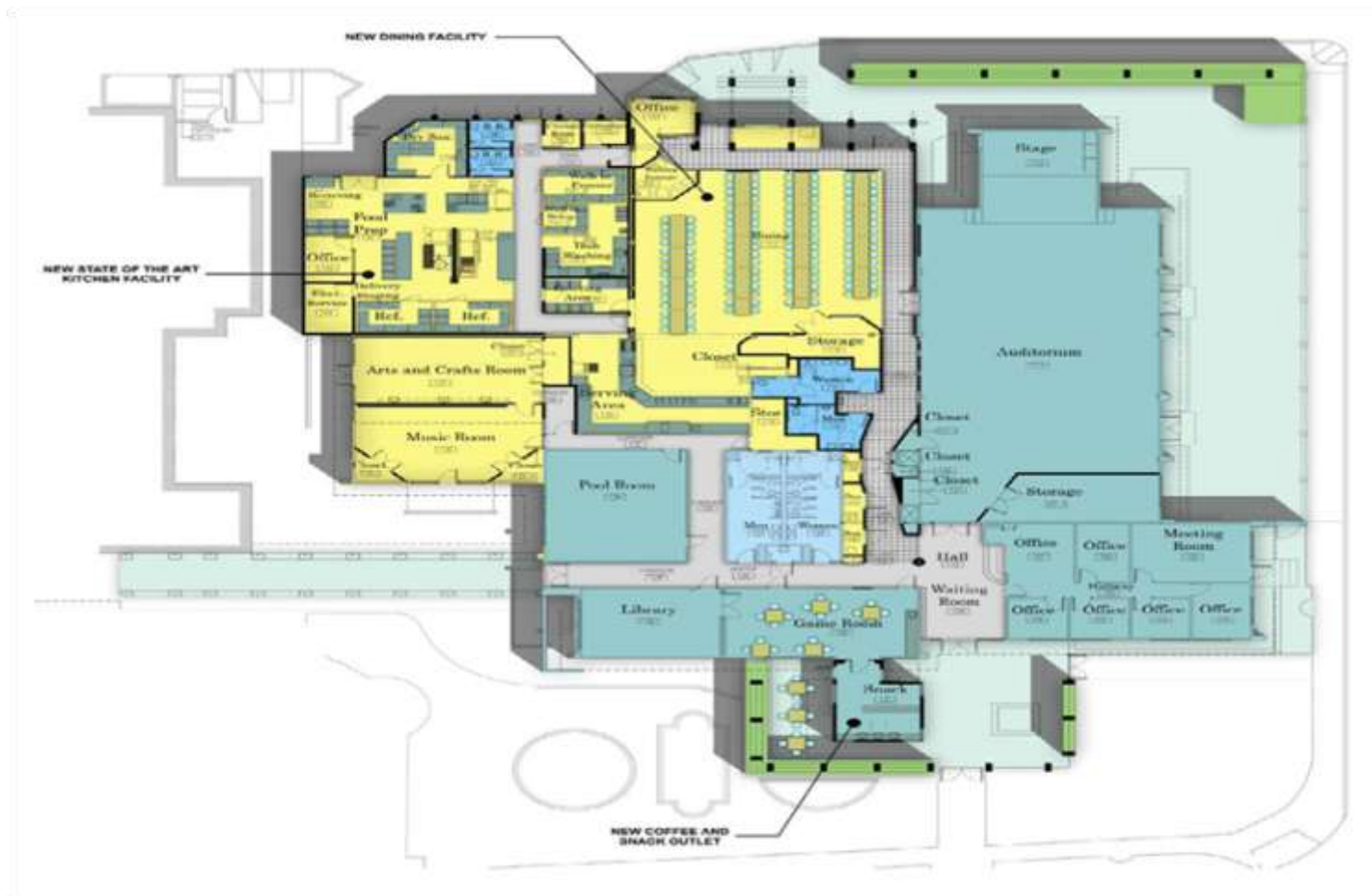
A garden labyrinth is planned as part of the Alicia Broadous-Duncan Multipurpose Senior Center "*VIDA Project*" **outdoor social and fitness center in Pacoima. Designed to provide the center's participants opportunities to socialize and improve their physical health, the *Labyrinth of Life* will combine a series of pathways, signage, benches, and fountains that create an enjoyable setting for seniors to exercise.** Contact: Patricia Austin, (818) 834-6100 paustin@vic-la.org



Elder Volunteers: Sustaining Community While Sharing Wisdom
Karuk Senior Center Program

The northwest corner of California is still considered the frontier, and on the remote Klamath River, it is the Native American community that provides the bulk of services to the broader population. Drawing from tribal tradition, many of the **Karuk Tribe's** Senior Center programs are run by elders, who are viewed in tribal culture as the holders of knowledge, wisdom, and as the leaders of the community. Bringing respected tribal leaders in to help with programming has **strengthened the tribe's senior centers, increasing program participation and broadening the range of services offered.** A computer group, fitness room, tutoring for youth, quilting group, community garden, exercise classes, and library are all active and growing with the help of elder volunteers. In 2000, elders in the community asked the Karuk Tribe to provide support for a congregate meal program. The tribal government won a Community Development Block Grant, allowing for a new building to be constructed in the town of Orleans and enabling the Karuk Senior Center Program to provide nutrition education and meals five days a week at both the Happy Camp and Orleans sites. The program also provides meal deliveries to frail, homebound elders. The Karuk Tribal Council continues to provide funds for the Orleans Center to make **hot meals available to all the community's older adults, regardless of whether they are members of the tribe.**

Karuk Senior Center Program
64101 2nd Ave, Happy Camp, CA 96039 (P.O. Box 1016)
459 Asip Road, Orleans, CA 95556 (P.O. Drawer 249) Contact: Babbie Peterson (530) 627-3056
bpeterson@karuk.us



Jack Crippen Center Expansion Plans

Meeting the Needs of a New and Intergenerational Audience

Jack Crippen Multipurpose Senior Center

The converging challenges of serving a new and growing generation of older adults and strengthening intergenerational programming created a happy collision of events for Marian Last and the Board of the Jack Crippen Multipurpose Senior Center. Located adjacent to the El Monte High School, the aging senior center was in need of renovation and additional space. The way to bring both populations together: the *Kitchen Lobby Expansion Project*. Partly funded with federal Community Development Block Grant dollars, the expansion project will significantly change the existing building, making way



for an internet café, larger meeting spaces, and a professional kitchen designed and equipped for multigenerational meal services. The kitchen program will focus on health and wellness as well as offering educational and culinary training components for the local high school students who could earn high school credits while working there. The kitchen will handle meal preparation for the Crippen Center's Congregate Senior Meal program and the local school youth meal program. A catering component is also planned, providing high school students with work experience in catering outside events in the surrounding community. The kitchen lobby expansion is projected to cost \$3.8 million dollars and fundraising continues.

Jack Crippen Multipurpose Senior Center
3120 N Tyler Ave. El Monte, CA 91731

Contact: Marian Last

(626) 258-8613

mlast@ci.el-monte.ca.us

Community Support for Families and Individuals

As older adults age in place, families often find themselves in the role of caregiver with little or no preparation. Helping these **families care for elderly loved ones has become an important part of many centers' offerings.** From elder day care and respite care to training for caregivers, senior centers are providing much needed guidance and assistance to families facing the challenge of caring for an aging family member.

Collaboration is at the heart of the *Homecoming Transitional Care Program* (HTCP) of the San Francisco Senior Center (SFSC). **Part of San Francisco's Transitional Care Network, HTCP provides services to help older adults bridge the gap between hospital and home.** Started in 2002 by SFSC and the St. Francis Memorial Hospital Foundation, HTCP expanded in 2008 to include seven additional partners, taking the service city-wide. HTCP serves low-income, isolated seniors and persons with disabilities; clients are referred by a hospital discharge planner. An HTCP case manager immediately evaluates the client's needs, **from meal preparation to housekeeping, coordinating up to six weeks of service delivery and following the client's needs throughout the service period.** If additional services are required, HTCP makes the needed referrals. Ongoing training for case managers, discharge planners, families and others helps to further service coordination throughout the community. **HTCP's sustainability is attributed to the collaborative nature of San Francisco's community-based non-profits, working together to help manage seniors' transition from hospital to home.** Contact: Robert Trevorrow, (415) 923-4491 htcp@sfsenior.com

Brain Boosters is an ongoing interactive program designed for older adults with early memory loss or those concerned about their memory. The four-hour classes meet twice a week at the Fairfield Senior Day Program of the Fairfield Senior Center, covering educational topics, social support, physical and mental fitness exercise and creativity. The Brain Boosters program was developed specifically to address the needs of those with early memory loss. Contact: Kristin Einberger, (707) 287-4353 Keinberger81@gmail.com

An annual resource fair is the **Alcosta Senior and Community Center's** answer to the growing needs of adult children who find themselves suddenly serving as primary caregiver for an aging parent. Partnering with the local fire district and private organizations, the San Ramon-based center provides a pancake breakfast and workshops along with information about housing, transportation, leisure, and health. The addition of expert presentations on “Memory Challenges” and other relevant topics offer valuable guidance for seniors and family members alike. Supported by volunteers and service providers, the resource fair’s success has translated into a quarterly speaker series on topics that will assist older adults and their families. Contact: Teri Mountford, (925) 973-3271 tmountford@sanramon.ca.gov





Active Adventures
Goleta Valley Senior Center

Many centers offer trips and excursions for their members ... but how does a small center with one paid staff initiate such a program? Having the freedom to explore and take trips was a priority to members of the Goleta Valley Senior Center. With such limited resources and staff, the center needed to find creative ways to fund their expeditions. **For starters, the members stepped forward as volunteers, agreeing to take responsibility for some of the center's day to day operations in order to free up Director Amy Mallett's time for planning trips and activities.** The next hurdle was to find a vehicle. The answer came when Mallett received the Honda Helpful Award for her work with seniors and her center was a recipient of a Honda Odyssey for use on day trips. For overnight trips, the center works in collaboration with Easy Lift Transportation, Inc., for the use of a larger vehicle at no cost. Members pay for their own admission fees and lodging. Gas and staff time are covered through fundraising. Members have traveled throughout California and to New Orleans for Mardi Gras.

Goleta Valley Senior Center
5679 Hollister Avenue, Goleta, CA 93117 Contact: Amy Mallett (805) 683-1124 AMallett@thegvcc.org

Senior Wellness Center

Assistance League's Hollywood Senior Multipurpose Center

Like many centers, the **Assistance League's Hollywood Senior Multipurpose Center** (HSMPC) experienced the elimination of funding for its Alzheimer's Day Care Program, causing the program to close in July of 2009. The loss of the day program became an opportunity when the center's partnership with the Los Angeles Department of Aging and Partners in Care Foundation helped HSMPC plan and secure funding for a *Senior Fitness Center* and evidence-based wellness program. The day program's space was converted for use as a *Senior Wellness Center*, where health screenings, fitness assessments and monitoring, and related wellness activities are held. The center collaborates with Partners in Care Foundation to offer a number of evidence-based programs. Other programs include Dakim Brain Fitness, Wii games, acupuncture, computer classes, yoga, line dancing, and healthy cooking and nutrition tips. The Senior Wellness Center opened in March of 2011 and currently serves 75 members through its fee-for-service program. Other organizations are now using the HSMPC model to develop their own evidence based wellness programs.

Assistance League's Hollywood Senior Multipurpose Center

1360 North Saint Andrews Place, Hollywood, CA 90028 Contact: Barbara Linski (323) 957-3906
execdir@hsmpc.com



Building Community Awareness and Fiscal Support

Close to 60% of the centers in California are operated by local governments. Fearing real or anticipated reductions in center funding, some communities have responded by forming nonprofit entities to address financial needs both today and into the future. Such public/private partnerships help keep the broader community focused on supporting the valuable role that centers play.

Assuring the survival of the Healdsburg Senior Center was the rationale for forming the Healdsburg Senior Center Volunteers, Inc., a non-profit organization that is better known today as the *Friends of the Healdsburg Senior Center* (Friends). Fearing that budget cuts might force the small city of Healdsburg to relinquish control over its senior center, a group of volunteers from the center and from the greater community joined forces to assure that the seniors would have their center and the programs they relied upon. The Friends support center activities with proceeds from a consignment boutique within the center, through fund-raising activities and with grant funds. The group has financed physical improvements at **the center and equipment purchases that fall outside the center's regular budget**. More recently the Friends have focused on filling specific needs, such as replacing TVs, purchasing new computers, covering the cost of instructors, and underwriting the cost of activities so that no senior will be **excluded**. **The Friends support and coordinate the center's social activities, paying for part or all of the facility's events.** Comprised of about 30 individuals and run by a Board of Directors, the Friends organization has succeeded in creating a sound financial and volunteer base that assures the senior center will remain open should municipal support one day disappear. Contact: Sonja Drown, (707) 431-3324, sdrown@ci.healdsburg.ca.us



Participants of the Healdsburg Senior Center try out new laptop computers purchased by the Friends of the Healdsburg Senior Center.

The *Huntington Beach Council on Aging* (HBCOA) is a private non-profit organization dedicated to responding to the evolving needs of the senior citizens of Huntington Beach through advocacy and direct action. The HBCOA not only partners with the City of Huntington Beach Senior Services, but also **“helps bring everybody in the community to the table,”** notes Randy Pesqueira, director of Michael E. Rodgers Seniors Center. Fundraising helps the HBCOA raise approximately \$100,000 per year, which they use to help sponsor a variety of events at Michael Rodgers, as well as conferences, continuing education, and safety-net services. In addition, **the HBCOA also works closely with the City’s Senior Outreach, assisting the frail elderly to remain independent in their homes.** The HBCOA directly funds: one part-time care manger; a rescue alert program that provides low-income seniors with emergency responders; and direct assistance to individuals in the form of grants. The HBCOA was also responsible for the advocacy that resulted in the Senior Outreach Transportation Program, called *Surf City Seniors on the Go!* Today, Huntington Beach Seniors age 55 and over can travel anywhere in the city free of charge. Contact: Randy Pesqueira, (714) 536-5543 rpesqueira@surfcity-hb.org



The Claremont Joslyn Center is the beneficiary of *The Claremont Senior Foundation (CSF)*, a 501(c)3 corporation that administers a combination of endowment and investment funds. The organization was formed to utilize unspent funds following a successful capital campaign and an endowment fund drive which continued to draw contributions to benefit **senior programs.** Through CSF’s ongoing fundraising, the organization provides about \$35,000 annually to support senior programs, with stipulations that the money cannot be spent on staffing or on facilities. CSF’s board draws broadly from the Claremont community, including investment professionals, community members, older adults, and members of the local Committee on Aging. Contact: Ali Martinez, (909) 399-5488 amartinez@ci.claremont.ca.us



Chair Yoga is part of LGBT Center of the Desert's programming.

Expanding Services to the Entire Community
LGBT Community Center of the Desert

After 10 years of offering services to older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members, the Board of Directors of the Golden Rainbow Center in Palm Springs announced recently that it will be expanding its outreach and programming to the entire LGBT community. From its creation 10 years ago with only a handful of programs, the Center now occupies two buildings and offers over 40 programs. "While maintaining and strengthening an array of senior education, social and fitness services, the center has undertaken a major expansion of its counseling program to serve community members of all ages with depression, as well as group and couples counseling. In addition, a youth crisis initiative has been launched, along with a focused outreach effort to women, people of color and the transgender community," says John O'Connor, Executive Director. To reflect these changes, the Board has also approved a name change to The LGBT Community Center of the Desert, thereby creating a destination point for all generations of the LGBT community.

Community Center of the Desert
611 S. Palm Canyon, #201, Palm Springs CA 92264 Contact: **John O'Connor, (760) 416-7790** Johnno@grcps.org



ACC participants enjoy a range of activities



Building Community at Asian Community Center
Asian Community Center of Sacramento Valley, Inc.

Asian Community Center (ACC) of Sacramento Valley is a thriving nonprofit, whose innovations and success stem from partnerships established with hundreds of volunteers who provide the core services for their community. A majority of **400 ACC volunteers are over 60 years of age and members of ACC.** **“Sharing leadership and day-to-day operational responsibilities with volunteers helps to foster both a sense of community as well as sustain programming,”** Donna Yee, Chief Executive Officer of ACC explained. Many of the volunteers have not had previous positions of leadership in their communities, and volunteering provides members an opportunity to share their wisdom and support their peers in a comfortable, non-hierarchical setting. **“When we help, we are helping to build community,”** said Yee. Sustained since 2003, three volunteer supportive programs include:

- *ACC Rides* - a service for those who may not otherwise transport themselves - trained drivers, escorts and dispatchers provide over 3,000 rides monthly.
- *Respite and Caregiver Cooperative* - a service to prevent caregiver isolation through support and respite. Volunteer family caregivers, from 10 to 80 years of age, provide day respite for 50 families annually. Volunteers build relationships over time with the caregiver and care-receiver. ACC also incorporates AmeriCorps volunteers who extend center-based respite into home settings for several families.
- *Lifelong Learning & Wellness Program* - a program that utilizes peer volunteers to teach many of the 50 weekly classes, including tai chi, yoga, ballroom dancing, cooking demonstrations, and computer programs.

Asian Community Center of Sacramento Valley, Inc.
7311 Greenhaven Drive, Suite 187, Sacramento, CA 95831 Contact: Donna L. Yee (916) 394-6399 dly@accsv.org

Promoting Senior Health

Senior centers play a vital role in keeping their participants healthy and active. For seniors with limited resources, the health education and activity programming centers provide is especially important, often offering the only opportunity these individuals have to learn about managing chronic conditions or engage in physical activities. The range of health programs vary from center to center, but for centers everywhere, the universal goal is to help their participants live fully engaged and independent lives.

The city of Riverside adopted a resolution to become a *Healthy Eating, Active Living* (H.E.A.L) city which promotes policies and practices that tackle obesity and support healthy lifestyles. In order to improve health and decrease the rate of obesity in seniors living in Riverside, the Janet Goeske Foundation and Senior Center designed an innovative, **prevention project called “Fit, Fresh, and Fun at Fifty.”** This three-part education program includes an educational nutrition program, a senior health fair, and fitness activities and classes that work cohesively to meet this objective. Contact: Judith Vails, (951) 840-3905 jvails@iamjgf.org

Partnering has enabled La Verne Community Center to offer engaging, high quality wellness programming for seniors in times of limited resources. The center has created partnerships with local colleges, companies and non-profit organizations in order to provide a series of diverse programs for their seniors. The center offers a series of free fitness and wellness programs, including *Bone Builders*, a program designed to help seniors build stronger bones and reduce osteoarthritis. Contact: Nikole Bresciani, (909) 596-8777 nbresciani@ci.la-verne.ca.us



Olympic medalist (Tokyo Games, 1964) Marilyn White, center, credits her continued good health to Inglewood Senior Center's *Be Well* program. Ms. White is pictured with Olympic medalists John Carlos and Sherry Sherard.

Helping older adults to manage chronic disease and maintain their health is the role of *Be Well Senior Fitness and Nutrition Education Program*, an innovative health education program of the City of Inglewood Senior Center. A collaboration of the Los Angeles County Area Agency on Aging and others, with funding from the California Wellness Foundation, the *Be Well* program provides ambulatory adults over age 60 with health and wellness classes that have been proven to reduce participants' use of emergency room, hospital, and skilled nursing services when compared with high risk seniors that did not participate in the program. The program utilizes a bi-lingual dietician. Inglewood's *Be Well* program is the winner of the National Association of Counties 2011 Achievement Award as a real world example of how healthy lifestyle education can enhance the quality of seniors' lives. Contact: Skip Halloran, (310) 412-4381 shalloran@cityofinglewood.org

Joslyn Players
Joslyn Center

Formed in 1999, *The Joslyn Players* is a company of actors, singers and dancers who have created a dramatic and musical theatre organization. The Palm Desert-based program's primary goal is to provide a forum for the development and performance of new and revived plays, musical revues and book musicals that are performed predominantly by seniors 55 and older who are both professional and non-professional actors. What started as a banquet hall/auditorium at the center has evolved into the Joslyn Center Theatre with the addition of sound and lighting systems, an extended stage, risers and comfortable chairs for the audience.

There was only one production in 1999; today there is a wide variety of entertainment that includes weekly cabaret performances, semi-annual stage plays, classical music performances and big band concerts. The performing arts program is an important and vital part of the Joslyn calendar.

Joslyn Center
73750 Catalina Way, Palm Desert, CA 92260
peterr@joslyncenter.org

Contact: Peter Rittenhouse (760) 340-3220



Dangerous Women is a past theatrical offering of the Joslyn Players.

Empowering Seniors Through Civic Engagement and Advocacy

Senior Community Centers

In a program designed to build social capital among its clients, Senior Community Centers (SCC) of San Diego has developed a *Civic Engagement Program* that **highlights seniors' strengths rather than needs or weaknesses**. By discovering their talents, knowledge, skills and abilities, the program encourages older adults to form new relationships and participate in meaningful activities to enhance the quality of their lives and give back to the community. In weekly civic engagement classes held at the Wellness Center, older adults identify and address community needs, receive training in advocacy skills, and volunteer at local community organizations.

Part of SCC's civic engagement efforts focus on advocacy in the broader community. *Seniors First San Diego* is SCC's countywide coalition of seniors, people who care for seniors and providers, organized to be the voice for seniors on issues of concern. Seniors First San Diego aims to depict positive aging and encourages young adults who are caregivers to voice **their concerns to help shape policies that affect seniors now and in the future.** SCC's regular advocacy workshops also include Advocacy 101 for Organizations. Through presentations, SCC educates and engages the public on issues facing older adults. The opportunities for civic engagement are critical components of aging successfully, helping reinforce the **value of elders' lives and allowing them to give back to their community.**

Senior Community Centers
525 14th Street, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92101 Contact: Paul Downey (619) 487-0650
pauldowney@servingseiors.org

“Seniors First San Diego is our network of neighbors, seniors and organizations combating ageism, promoting positive depictions of aging and engaging seniors to become advocates.”

Paul Downey, President and CEO, Senior and
Community Centers of San Diego

Enjoying the “Senior Moment”

Mizell Senior Center

Thanks to a generous grant from the Auen Foundation, the Mizell Senior Center broadcasts “*The Senior Moment*,” a monthly segment that airs on the Coachella Valley’s Joey English Radio Show. Dedicated to the issues important to the region’s growing older adult population, The Senior Moment features news and information pertinent to the health, welfare and social life of today’s modern older adult, including programs at various senior centers, community activities and relevant discussion topics. Jack Newby, program director from the Mizell Center reviews the coming month’s activities at all the area’s senior centers on each segment. The remainder of the hour is a mix of educational and informative discussion on topics to enrich seniors’ lives. “This is an innovative, fun way to reach the mature adults in our community with relevant and timely information that will make a difference in their lives,” said Catharine Reed, senior program officer for the Auen Foundation, which supports charitable programs and services aimed at meeting the social needs of mature adults and their families. The Senior Moment segment was the brainchild of radio host Joey English, who worked with the Auen Foundation to fund the project.

The Mizell Senior Center
480 South Sunrise Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Contact: Ginny Foat

(760) 323-5689

ginnyf@mizell.org



Host Joey English listens as Jack Newby previews upcoming senior center events.

Out & About would like to recognize Bill Thomson for his dedication to the Encinitas Senior Center Out & About Transportation Program. Bill began as a volunteer driver in June of 2007. He is currently assigned 12 passengers and last month drove a total of 618 miles. Bill has lived in Encinitas for 31 years. He is married with 4 grown children, 5 grandchildren, and 1 great grandchild. Before retiring and becoming a volunteer driver, he was a Senior Vice President of the Environmental Division of Genstar Corporation.

Passenger Helen said:

"Bill is very good at giving me help and advice. I rely on Bill's expertise in many areas in addition to helping me get around town."

Getting There

One of the biggest challenges of aging is the loss of mobility, whether from chronic conditions or the loss of a driver's license. Older adults often feel trapped in their homes unless affordable transportation options exist, especially in rural areas where transportation services can be very rare. Senior Centers across California meet this challenge through an array of transportation services, from community paratransit service or rides to and from center activities, to utilizing volunteer drivers to chauffeur seniors to appointments, shopping, and more. The role of the senior bus cannot be minimized, providing a lifeline for those who are isolated and without alternative resources.

Getting seniors to the center, not only for a great lunch but for the social aspect that is so necessary, was the vision of the Live Oak Seniors, Inc. Using a donated bus and an operational grant from the California Department of Transportation, the center in Clearlake Oaks operates its private bus to transport older adults and those living in remote locations to the center. There is no charge for the ride. Contact: Pat Grabham, (707) 998-1950 liveoak-pat@mchsi.com

Bringing adults with transportation needs together with people who have an interest in volunteering has proven to be an outstanding success for the *Out & About Program* of the Encinitas Senior Center. Launched in 2002 to provide specialized transportation using volunteer drivers, the program that began with two drivers serving four senior passengers now serves 105 passengers through the services of 62 volunteer drivers. Volunteers come from throughout the community, and center staff has reached out to such diverse organizations as the PTA and the nearby Marine **Base to build the program's ranks.** Volunteers receive mileage reimbursement at the federal mileage rate. For qualifying seniors, transportation services are free and provide the opportunity for socialization, friendship and personalized door-to-door transportation to grocery stores, doctor's appointments and much more. Contact: Gail Dupler, (760) 943-2256 gdupler@cityofencinitas.org



Serge and Frank enjoy the community environment created at the Castro Street Senior Center.

Feeling Welcome
Castro Street Senior Center

Many LGBT seniors in the neighborhood of the Castro Street Senior Center were uncomfortable attending a senior center, unsure whether they would be welcomed into the community. The goal for Patrick Larkin when he came on board as the ED of the Center was to ensure that all seniors would feel welcomed and supported in the community of the Center. In collaboration with Open House, the Castro Street Senior Center is providing a discussion group on topics of interest. Panel topics have included being gay in Cuba and transgender. When New Leaf, an organization that provided many services for LGBT shut down, the collaboration of the Castro Street Center and Open House grew to provide an integration of services to support the LGBT community of seniors. Creative writing classes, film screenings, exercise classes and participation in the annual Gay Pride Parade have helped to provide an environment where members could feel welcome and raise awareness of LGBT seniors . This successful model has been replicated in other centers.

Castro Street Senior Center
110 Diamond St., San Francisco, 94114

Contact: Patrick Larkin

(415) 863-3507

plarkin@ggsenior.org

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