

# AGING & independence

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

## Being "Whole": Lessons of Life (with a Disability)

By Kim Gallo  
Director, Aging & Independence Services

From a very young age Sue Madison, 72, has known what it feels like to live life with an extra layer of challenges. As a child, Sue's disability was not highly apparent. She could walk and move around, yet she was always stiff in the morning and had to force her knees to straighten. Going up steps was especially hard. At the age of six, Sue's parents took her from their small, rural town in Minnesota to the "big city" of Minneapolis to consult with doctors. She was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA).

At age 9, Sue's family relocated to Phoenix in hopes that she would benefit from the dry climate. Although it was an era when "you could just grow up and nobody talks about it" other kids eventually started to notice the joint deformities in her hands. Sue was acutely aware that she was starting to look a bit different. While RA did slow Sue down, she was able to live a fairly typical childhood. It wasn't until early adulthood that Sue's mobility struggles became more severe. But if RA has taught her anything, it is the importance of perseverance—a value that has served her well throughout life. It may have taken ten years to earn her college degree, but she stuck with it.

Sue notes that navigating life with a disability can instill positive approaches that can serve one their entire life. "It can have some advantages...you adapt...you figure out how to do things differently, how to use assistive devices and advocate. These experiences develop inner strength

and endurance." While not everyone is equipped (or has the supports) to allow these positives to unfold and to be fully engaged with life, Sue made it a priority to be out in the world, no matter how challenging it was at times. Certainly, there were bumps along the way. In 1979, Sue had double knee replacements and double hip replacements. She spent two months recovering in the hospital. However, those surgeries ended up being an excellent investment. Sue notes, "Today I have doctors that say, 'That hip of yours is older than I am!'"



Sue Madison

Sue enjoyed a rich and meaningful career in the social services sector. She worked at a rape crisis center, an independent living center for those with disabilities, and a friendly visitor program that assisted seniors and people with disabilities. She also had the honor

to serve as the Director for the Governors' Council on Developmental Disabilities in Arizona and to participate in a public policy fellowship for the National Council on Disability in Washington DC. In 2001, Sue moved to San Diego to be closer to her daughter. She finished her career with the City of San Diego, working as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Director.

Sue notes that she personally benefited from being immersed in the disability rights movement which came to life during her career. The movement espoused an empowering message of independence and "Nothing about us, without us." Throughout her life, Sue has remained

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focused on advocating for all people with disabilities at the local, state and national levels. It is this positive mindset that has allowed Sue to welcome the help of assistive devices and the freedom and independence her wheelchair affords her. When she spent a year in Washington DC, Sue invested in a scooter and figured out how to navigate the metro system. Today, Sue is still able to drive on her own using a lift-equipped van to transport her power wheelchair.

While Sue has become quite adept at managing physical limitations and facing losses head-on, there was one transition for which she was not entirely prepared—retirement. Physical and health limitations drove Sue toward retirement, rather than a preference to down shift into a new phase of life. “It was a huge loss,” she admits.

Fortunately, Sue became curious about what this next phase could look like. She asked herself, “So, now what?” While some people immediately jump to the possibly of travel, Sue notes, “It takes a lot of money to travel, especially when you are on a limited income, and many places are still not accessible, so you have to reinvent yourself.” Sue decided to be proactive and take control of her reinvention. She read a lot of books, talked to others who had retired, took online classes, and enrolled in an in-person class at her local senior center. She also was sure to commit to volunteering, an activity she had prioritized even during her working years.

Currently, Sue volunteers with the San Diego Red Cross, one of the many opportunities available through the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), administered by Aging & Independence Services. At the Red Cross, Sue serves on the Disability Integration team for Disaster Services. She helps to ensure that someone who may have access and functional needs, including those living with disabilities, can properly navigate potential shelter sites that could be used in the event of a disaster. The work itself is meaningful, but it is the social connection that really feeds her soul. “I get to be with like-minded people who are giving, giving, giving...good-hearted people,” Sue says.

Volunteer work is great for Sue’s wellbeing, but it is only one piece of the puzzle. “We are whole people,” Sue notes. “Body, mind, and soul.” To take care of her body, Sue goes to the pool weekly and exercises. She watches her diet and gives herself permission to rest.

Social connection is a priority as well. Sue nurtures her marriage and family, regularly goes to lunch with

girlfriends, and enjoys video-chatting with her 11-year-old grandson to help strengthen his reading skills. She enjoys meeting new people and learning new things by taking classes through organizations such as San Diego Oasis or the community college district.

To keep her spirits healthy, Sue meditates regularly and writes poetry. She reminds herself to be grateful for the blessings all around her. “I like to just go out and bask in the sun for 10 minutes,” Sue shares. She also cultivates healthy thought patterns and strives to “be kind and gentle to others as well as kind and gentle to [my]self.”

Retirement hasn’t been all smooth sailing, however. Over time, Sue has realized the importance of being honest with herself about how she is doing. She shares, “The biggest thing that I learned—and I’m still learning it—is admit when I’m having [trouble]. Admit if I’m not feeling good.” Sue notes that often this is the first step to feeling better and it can be helpful to share these feelings with a trusted person. Sometimes, professional support is called for. When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit and Sue lost the majority of her social outlets due to lockdowns, she found the experience to be emotionally “devastating.” She decided to pursue telehealth and booked weekly sessions with an online therapist. The process helped Sue to cope and to feel more connected and hopeful.

Living with a degenerative condition and the process of getting older are both replete with losses. Yet, Sue’s life is a testament to the fact that losses needn’t equate to despair. Her strategy of acceptance involves processing the loss and then adapting by asking, “What CAN I do?” Maybe I can still do something that used to take me two minutes, except now it takes 20 minutes. The opportunity is going down the road differently, but it’s still good [to go down the road]!”

As Sue ventures along her life’s path, she strives to live more in the moment, savoring all that she can and looking for ways to give back. “I am grateful for every day,” she shares. “I am really grateful for my life.”

For information on programs and services that can help older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers get the support they need for today or their next chapter, visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov) or call the AIS Call Center at (800) 339-4661. For details on volunteer opportunities available through RSVP, visit [www.seniervolunteersd.org](http://www.seniervolunteersd.org) or call (858) 505-6399.

# In the COMMUNITY

## AFFORDABLE INTERNET FOR QUALIFYING HOUSEHOLDS

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a U.S. government program that helps many low income households pay for broadband service and Internet connected devices. Those who participate in certain government assistance programs (e.g., Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), etc.) or the Lifeline phone benefit are eligible for ACP. You are also eligible if your income is 200% or less than the Federal Poverty Guidelines ( \$27,180 for a 1-person household, \$36,620 for a 2-person household). If eligible, you could receive up to a \$30/month discount on your Internet service through a participating provider in your area and a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50). To learn more about ACP or to apply, visit [www.affordableconnectivity.gov](http://www.affordableconnectivity.gov). For additional information on additional resources for getting connected to the Internet in San Diego County, visit <https://getconnected.sandag.org>.

## MEDI-CAL FOR ADULTS 50+

As of May 1, California residents who are 50 years of age or older who meet all Medi-Cal eligibility criteria are now able to get full scope Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status (undocumented older adults may now qualify if they meet all other eligibility criteria). Other people get to keep more property (like money in checking or savings accounts) while staying on Medi-Cal. For more details on Medi-Cal including eligibility, visit [www.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov), click on the “I want to...” tab, and then select “Medi-Cal” under the “Apply” heading. You may also call **(866) 262-9881**.

## UPDATES TO EVICTION MORATORIA IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Statewide COVID-19 tenant protections expired on June 30, 2022. The City of San Diego currently has a temporary moratorium on no-fault evictions, which will remain in effect until September 30, 2022, or 60 days after the end of the local state of emergency, whichever occurs first. The City of San Diego also has a Non-Payment of Rent Eviction Moratorium, which will help certain eligible tenants whose income and ability to pay rent have been substantially affected by COVID-19. The moratorium prevents eviction for nonpayment of rent from July 1, 2022 forward, and will be in effect until 60 days after the Mayor of San Diego lifts the local state of emergency.

Contact Elder Law & Advocacy at **(858) 565-1392** for guidance on federal, state, and local eviction moratoria updates and how they affect your rights as a tenant, as well as other protections to assist at-risk tenants.

## CARE MANAGEMENT: MULTI-PURPOSE SENIOR SERVICE PROGRAM

Sometimes staying independent in one's home means getting help. That extra help with bill paying, shopping, laundry, and other tasks can keep someone from needing to live in a nursing home. If you or a loved one are age 65+, eligible for Medi-Cal, and need assistance to continue living safely at home, consider applying for the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP). MSSP care managers work with the client, family members, and medical team to find and coordinate services in the home. Through the timely use of services, MSSP protects frail older adults and helps them live at home for longer.



Care management services include: a comprehensive health and psychosocial assessment; care planning with the client and family; arrangement of services; coordination of care with other community agencies; some limited payment of in-home services; monthly phone contact; quarterly home visits; and ongoing monitoring/phone contacts as needed.

For more information on MSSP or to apply, contact the AIS Call Center at **(800) 339-4661** M-F from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.





## VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



Norm Rentle

Norman “Norm” Rentle is the RSVP volunteer of the month for August. He was nominated by Kyle Telleson, Assistant Administrator with California Highway Patrol’s Senior Volunteer Program in Oceanside. Norm is part of a group of amazing senior volunteers who patrol the community and provide officer assistance. Norm has been part of the program for over 22 years and has surpassed ten thousand hours of service, which is an equivalent number of hours to someone working a full-time job for five years.

Norm’s commitment to volunteer service, along with his leadership skills and all around friendly demeanor, makes him stand out. As a retired Navy officer, a dedicated Shriner, a past Senior Volunteer Program

Administrator, and a mentor to all those who served with him over the years, Norm has been and continues to be a role model for those who serve our nation and the community.

Kyle notes, “As a new[er] volunteer to our unit, I circle the dates I get to work with Norm on my calendar—not only as a chance to learn more about our program, but the opportunity to hang out with a really great man.”

Congratulations, Norm, and thank you for your service! You are an asset to our community.



## “LIVE THE ADVENTURE” AT THE USS MIDWAY MUSEUM

Join the USS Midway Museum’s dynamic team to support the aircraft carrier museum, an exciting visitor destination for people from around the world. There are several meaningful volunteer assignments to choose from for veterans and civilians alike. Opportunities include working on the following teams or tasks:

- Docent
- Safety
- Guest Services
- Exhibit Support
- Data Entry
- Restoration and Maintenance



If you’re a “people person,” volunteering on the Midway is a great opportunity to share in the passion of having fun, while building a greater sense of community. For details on how to volunteer on the Midway, or to explore additional volunteer opportunities, email [Armida.Martinez@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Armida.Martinez@sdcounty.ca.gov) or call (858) 505-6399.

# SEPTEMBER 18

## LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO 5K



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LiveWellSD5K.com



In partnership with 211 San Diego, the annual Live Well San Diego 5k and Fitness Challenge brings thousands of San Diegans together in support of a healthy, safe, and thriving San Diego County.

The **free, intergenerational** Live Well San Diego 5K & Kids 1-Mile Fun Run will be taking place on **Sunday, September 18, 2022** at Waterfront Park Downtown, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego 92101.

The 5K will start at 7:30 a.m. and the 1-Mile Fun Run will start at 8:30 a.m. The event is appropriate for all ages and a variety of fitness levels. You may walk or jog and have the option to receive an official (chip) time. Every participant will receive a finisher medal and a free Live Well San Diego 5K retro t-shirt! Enjoy a post-race party and community EXPO.

For more details or to register for the 5K and access training resources, visit <http://livewellsd5k.com>.



LIVEWELLSD5K.COM

### TRAINING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

**5K Fitness Challenge:** The 5K Fitness Challenge is designed to help you prepare to walk or run in the 5K race on September 18. Sign up to receive weekly emails or texts with exercise tips, encouragement, and notifications about the week's training plan and upcoming fitness meet-ups (Aug. 15-Sept. 19)!

**Daily Training Plan:** This 5-week training plan is designed to help you slowly increase your physical activity to prepare to run or walk in the Live Well San Diego 5K Race. No matter how you exercise, the training plan can help you get there!

**Live Meet-Ups:** Don't go it alone! Sirius Fitness and County Parks will be hosting running, biking, and hiking meet-ups throughout the month to help you get active and share a workout with others.

Visit <http://livewellsd5k.com> to access these resources and sign up for the 5K.



## HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

These free, interactive, and goal-oriented workshops focus on support, skill development, sharing, and building confidence to manage chronic conditions, such as arthritis, depression, heart disease, or diabetes. For more details or to register for the classes below, email [HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov) or call (858) 495-5500.

**September 15 - October 20 (Thursdays)**, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the San Marcos Branch Library, 2 Civic Center Drive, San Marcos 92069.

**September 28-November 2 (Wednesdays)**, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the Spring Valley Branch Library, 836 Kempton Street, Spring Valley, CA91977.

## HUMAN MONKEYPOX-BE AWARE, KNOW SIGNS, LOWER RISK

Monkeypox is spreading throughout the United States and as of mid-August, more than 134 cases had been reported in the San Diego region. Monkeypox spreads between people primarily through direct contact with infectious sores, scabs, or body fluids. It may also be spread through contaminated clothing, bedding, or towels (i.e., via fomites). Most people get well from monkeypox without needing any medicines or other treatment. If you think you have the monkeypox rash and want to get tested, contact your healthcare provider. If you do not have a provider, call 2-1-1. For more information on monkeypox, visit [www.SanDiegoCounty.gov/monkeypoxsd](http://www.SanDiegoCounty.gov/monkeypoxsd).

## COVID-19 PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

COVID-19 continues to be widespread in our region. The County encourages individuals to get all of the vaccines and boosters for which they are eligible. If you have COVID-19, ask your doctor about getting treatment with antiviral pills. If you do not have a healthcare provider, you can call 2-1-1 to find one. You can also call a Monoclonal Antibody Regional Center at (619) 685-2500 to access the antiviral Paxlovid or monoclonal antibody treatment. For more information on COVID-19, including vaccination and treatment, visit [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com).

## CHALLENGE CENTER CLASSES FOR SENIORS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Challenge Center of La Mesa offers a variety of classes and programs to assist older adults and people of all ages with disabilities to transform their quality of life and increase wellness and independence. Some of the Center's class options include Balance & Conditioning, Aquatics, and the 5-week Age-ility class, which helps seniors to improve agility, power, and balance to reduce their risk of falls and serious injury. Call the Challenge Center for more details, including cost, and how to reserve your spot (619) 667-8644.

## COOL ZONES FOR HOT DAYS

Each summer, older adults are encouraged to beat the heat by visiting Cool Zones throughout the county. These air-conditioned sites welcome older adults and persons with disabilities free of charge. Some offer social opportunities, meals, or other resources. The effects of heat can be greater on older adults and their bodies may not provide the same warning signs as they did at younger ages. Visit [www.CoolZones.org](http://www.CoolZones.org) or call 2-1-1 to locate a Cool Zone near you.

**Free Transportation:** People in San Diego County unable to get to a Cool Zone location without transportation assistance can call 2-1-1 to be connected to a transportation or rideshare service at no cost.

**Free Electric Fans for Eligible Homebound Individuals:** The County of San Diego, in partnership with SDG&E, provides free electric fans to homebound older adults age 60+ and people with disabilities who are living on limited incomes. To be eligible, a resident must not have access to air-conditioning at their home. To learn more or to request a fan, please call 2-1-1 or visit [www.surveymonkey.com/r/CoolZonesFanProgram](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CoolZonesFanProgram) to complete a fan eligibility survey.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## AUGUST 23, TUESDAY 12-2 P.M.

Palomar Health will be hosting a **Body Composition Screening** at the Poway Library, 13137 Poway Rd., Poway 92064. Are you curious about your body composition, body mass, calorie intake, and bone mass? For details on obtaining a one-on-one screening, call **(858) 513-2900**.

## AUGUST 25, THURSDAY 5:30-8 P.M.

Hear the latest findings in dementia research and brain health at the **Alzheimer's Association Research Town Hall** to be held at the Handlery Hotel San Diego, Crystal Ballroom, 950 Hotel Circle North, San Diego 92108. Find out what the future holds for new discoveries and treatments. Open to all. Free parking. Check-in and hors d'oeuvres begin at 5:30. Programming begins at 6:30. To RSVP, visit <https://bit.ly/3x6UIZ9> or call **(800) 272-3900**.

## AUGUST 29, MONDAY 10-2:30 P.M.

**Taste of Oasis** will be held at San Diego Oasis, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942. Meet and chat with instructors at this free open house while enjoying coffee, nibbles, and fitness demos. No RSVP required. Visit [www.sandiegooasis.org](http://www.sandiegooasis.org) or call **(619) 881-6262** for details.

## AUGUST 31, WEDNESDAY 10 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

An **Online Caregiver Conference:**

**"Healthy Boundaries"** will be offered by the Caregiver Coalition of San Diego. Hear from expert speakers how to set personal boundaries and incorporate self-care for improved mental health. To register, click [here](#). For more details, visit [www.caregivercoalitionsd.org](http://www.caregivercoalitionsd.org).

## SEPTEMBER 8, THURSDAY 11:30 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

A free, in-person class, **Chair Yoga**, will be held at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch, 9005 Aero Drive, San Diego 92123. For details call **(858) 573-1396** or visit [www.sandiego.gov/public-library/news-events](http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/news-events).

## SEPTEMBER 9, FRIDAY 10-11:30 A.M.

A free in-person class, **Maintaining Your Brain Health**, will be hosted by Alzheimer's San Diego at the Scripps Miramar Library, 10301 Scripps Lake Dr., San Diego 92131. Learn about the latest research on lifestyle changes and strategies that everyone can use to maintain their brain health. To RSVP, visit [www.alzsd.org/classes](http://www.alzsd.org/classes) or call **(858) 492-4400**.

## SEPTEMBER 15, THURSDAY 1-3 P.M.

**Vintage Movie Thursdays** are held at the Crest Library, 105 Juanita Lane, El Cajon 92021. Join other classic movie enthusiasts to discover or re-discover films mostly from the 40's, 50's, 60's, and 70's. Refreshments and snacks are provided. For details, contact Hugo at **(619) 442-7083**.

## SEPTEMBER 16, FRIDAY 10-11 A.M.

**Meditation for Relaxation** will be

held at the Paradise Hills Library, 5922 Rancho Hills Dr., San Diego 92139. Reduce stress and cultivate calm at these Friday morning classes. For this week, also learn how to make bath bombs! Learn how to combine a few simple ingredients to make your own custom bath bombs to help you relax and unwind! For details, call **(619) 527-3461** or email [pgrattan@sandiego.gov](mailto:pgrattan@sandiego.gov).

## SEPTEMBER 17, SATURDAY 5:30-8:30 P.M.

Enjoy an evening of visual art, live music, and refreshments as the City of Encinitas art spaces and local art galleries swing open their doors for **Art Night Encinitas**. A variety of venues will host music, talks, and display art, including Encinitas City Hall, the Encinitas Library, and several galleries. Free shuttles will transport attendees between venues. For details, visit [www.encinitasca.gov/artnight](http://www.encinitasca.gov/artnight).

## SEPTEMBER 22, THURSDAY 8:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

A free event, **Fall Prevention is a Team Effort**, will be held at Park De La Cruz Community Center, 3901 Landis Street, San Diego 92105. The event will include expert speakers, free wellness assessments, and a fall prevention resource fair. Registration is encouraged at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPAD2022](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPAD2022) or by calling **(858) 495-5500**.

### SEND IN YOUR ITEMS

We welcome your contributions to this monthly calendar. Email [sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov).

## AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

P.O. Box 23217  
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 (800) 339-4661

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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:

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- 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.



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[www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov)



COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT ■ HEALTH INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

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