

AGING & independence

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

Age Your Way

By Kim Gallo
Director, Aging & Independence Services

Jon Ryan, 79, is approaching his “third chapter” in life with the drive and focus one might expect from a Navy veteran and a career-driven former sales manager—he’s goal-oriented, sticks to a healthy routine, and looks for ways to give back.

“I don’t think I ever really retired in my brain,” he jokes. As with many men, Jon felt a strong sense of identity from the roles he assumed during his working years. Jon served in the Navy during the Vietnam War, followed by thirty-five years working for Xerox as a sales manager. As a self-professed “Type-A personality,” Jon could easily have found retirement to be an unpleasant transition had he not approached this new chapter with intention and found meaningful ways to spend his time.

Today, giving back through volunteer work is one of the primary ways Jon spends his time. While no longer a sales manager, Jon knows a thing or two about how to train and motivate folks. Now he transfers much of what he learned on the job to his volunteer work with the USS Midway Museum. The Midway is one of the many volunteer opportunities available through the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), administered by Aging & Independence Services.

Two days each week, Jon boards the ship and gets to work helping the museum to fulfill its mission of preserving the historic ship and the legacy of those who serve, inspire, and educate future generations. Jon is most proud of his service as a volunteer instructor. He helped to set up the program’s current structure. He trains volunteer teams to ensure visitors have “a real positive experience.” That is reflected by the USS Midway’s high marks on the travel advice site Tripadvisor. “We



Jon Ryan fills his post-retirement days with meaningful volunteer work by serving on the USS Midway Museum.

are the number one [activity] on the West Coast,” Jon shares.

But for the Midway to achieve such excellence, volunteers need to be fulfilled, driven, and appreciated. Jon adopted some of the strategies he experienced while in the Navy to motivate volunteers. “All of their hours are a big deal. We drive our volunteers forward that way, with awards and different levels of volunteering. People want to achieve the next thing,” he notes. Over the past fifteen years, Jon has completed 10,000 volunteer hours and counting. For his dedication, Jon was selected to be the docent of the year in 2018 and volunteer of the year in 2019.

As a resident of Coronado, Jon is also passionate about serving his local community. Jon was appointed to serve

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LIVE WELL
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as a Commissioner in the City of Coronado, a role he has held for the past 22 years. “Saving the village charm in Coronado” from poorly planned, unchecked development is one activity that feels very meaningful to him.

While goals and achievement remain an important driver in Jon’s retirement years, he deeply values the relationships in his life. “My family comes first,” he explains. In addition to his wife of forty-five years, Cathy, he has three children and three grandchildren. Jon and Cathy consider themselves fortunate to have a big circle of friends and enjoy being involved in civic clubs, such as Rotary International. Social connections are important to people of all ages, but without the structure of the workplace, some retired adults find they need to make extra effort to make sure friendships are nurtured.

Staying involved and socially engaged are easier to do when one feels good. While we all experience some changes in strength and stamina as we age, regular exercise and a healthy diet help keep our bodies—and minds—healthy for longer. Jon came across the book “Younger Next Year” that really spoke to him regarding how to approach health in his later years. “I have a routine of [exercise] every other day. It is helping a lot,” he says. His advice to others: “stay physically active. It doesn’t matter what it is...walk, swim, but exercise has got to be the number one priority. It doesn’t come last.”

Jon’s “recipe” for retirement is working well for him, but every person’s retirement journey will look different. In recognition of the unique path each older adult is on, this past May the federal Administration on Community Living (ACL) selected “Age My Way” as the theme for Older Americans Month. According to ACL, the 2022 theme is “an opportunity for all of us to explore the

many ways older adults can remain in, and be involved with, their communities.” This includes considering how “planning, participation, accessibility, and making connections all play a role in aging in place – emphasizing that what each person needs and prefers is unique...and there is no ‘right’ way.”

For Jon, “aging his way” can be summed up by a focus on volunteer service, family, friends, healthy choices, and fitness. But there are two final ingredients that tie everything together: a positive attitude and planning ahead. “Everything I did in my life was due to attitude... having a positive attitude.” And a plan. Jon explains, “I get up every day and make my bed. I achieve something right away. Then I set out to do my plan of the day, which always includes exercise and a sensible diet.”

No matter our age, it is important to think about how we’d like our future to look—and sharing our vision with loved ones and support people. While life can be unpredictable, identifying what is most important can help keep us on track and focused on creating a fulfilling future—whether it is today, tomorrow, a year from now, or in ten years. Although it can take time to figure out a plan, as the saying goes, “today is the first day of the rest of your life.” Age your way.

Jon offers a suggestion for starting off the next phase of life’s journey on the right foot: “wake up, make your bed, and put a smile on your face!”

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 or call the AIS Call Center at (800) 339-4661. For details on volunteer opportunities available through RSVP, visit www.seniorvolunteersd.org or call (858) 505-6399.

TOOL TO LOCATE QUALITY ASSISTED LIVING

Accepting that a loved one can no longer be safely cared for at home can be difficult. For those who are looking to identify quality assisted living facilities, Choose Well may be able to help. Choose Well is a free, innovative, web-based tool sponsored by the County of San Diego that helps older adults and their families make informed decisions when selecting assisted living facilities. Visit <https://choosewellsandiego.org> to discover specially evaluated Choose Well facilities that have voluntarily agreed to be scored on 11 measures of quality.



Choose Well

Helping Families Find Distinguished Assisted Living Facilities

In the COMMUNITY

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 will be able to get full scope Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status (i.e., undocumented older adults may now qualify if they meet all other eligibility criteria). Other people will 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, click on the “I want to...” tab, and then select “Medi-Cal” under the “Apply” heading. You may also call **(866) 262-9881** for more information.

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 or call **2-1-1** to locate a Cool Zone near you.



UPDATE FROM HICAP ON MEDICARE, MEDI-CAL, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Elder Law & Advocacy’s HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) provides free and unbiased help to Medicare beneficiaries. HICAP counselors can give you the information you need to make an informed decision about your healthcare choices.

In July, the Medi-Cal and Medicare Savings Programs asset limit is increasing significantly, so many Medicare beneficiaries who didn’t previously qualify may now qualify for help with Medicare’s premiums, deductibles, copays, and Rx costs. Applications submitted in June or later will be reviewed under the new higher asset limits. For help figuring out if you should apply, call HICAP at (800) 434-0222 or (858) 565-8772, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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 and 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

Robert (Bob) Scinta, a volunteer with Senior Gleaners of San Diego, is the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Volunteer of the Month for June 2022. Bob was nominated by Nancy Chen, of the Northern Group of Senior Gleaners.

The mission of Senior Gleaners is to provide quality food otherwise wasted to those needing it most while giving meaningful activity to seniors. Bob’s primary volunteer role is to rescue unsold groceries for delivery to food banks and pantries. He also gleanes fruit from backyards and orchards to help feed the hungry.

Bob jumped in with both feet when the pandemic was raging and began gleaning. Shortly after, he began picking up unsold groceries from stores. He took a driver training course to become a van driver and also completed a food safety course to be a certified food handler. So far this year, Bob has contributed to 32 events with 120 hours donated so far.

Bob is consistent, dependable, friendly, and an all-around nice guy who is dedicated to the Senior Gleaners’ mission. Bob was a nurse during his career and wanted an opportunity to give back during retirement. A long time ago, a client and former gleaner had spoken with Bob about Senior Gleaners. The conversation must have struck a chord because years later, Bob signed up. In addition to the satisfaction he gets from lending a helping hand, Bob uses his gleaning as an opportunity to set an example for his teenage daughter about the importance of service to the community. She has accompanied him on some gleaning outings.



Nancy Chen says, “Since the start of our food rescue from the two Vons stores in Carmel Valley and Del Mar on July 9, 2021, Bob has never missed a single Friday—that’s real dedication! Bob’s positive attitude and commitment to Senior Gleaners makes him stand out in the crowd.” Another staff member, Trixxie Land, says, “Bob has a great can-do demeanor. He makes sure he understands the assignment, and he always passes on his knowledge to others.”

Thank you, Bob, for your years of dedicated service! Your passion for volunteering shows in your commitment to this work!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE JCC MACCABI GAMES AND ACCESS

The JCC Maccabi Games® and JCC Maccabi Access are being hosted in our fine city this summer from July 31–August 5. The JCC Maccabi Games® is an international athletic competition for Jewish teenagers run much like the Olympics. Athletes can compete against other teens from all over the United States as well as delegations from Israel, Great Britain, Mexico, Canada, and more! In addition to athletic competitions, teens participate in social activities and community service projects. The JCC Maccabi Access program is a new experience for Jewish teens with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

Coaches, delegation heads, parents, and spectators will also be involved in this community-wide event, and hundreds of volunteers like you are needed to help make it all happen. There are 1,500 volunteer shifts that need to be filled across the five-day event in areas and roles such as: community service project assistance, scorekeeping at athletic competitions, meal service, greeting people at the airport, guiding people at special events, and helping teens with cognitive or developmental challenges to succeed in their efforts. There’s something for everyone!

Help make lasting memories for the teens and families coming from around the US, Canada, Israel, Mexico, Great Britain, and other countries, and for those participating from San Diego. Sign up by visiting jcmaccabisd.org to fill out the Volunteer Interest Form.

For details on additional volunteer opportunities, email Armida.Martinez@sdcounty.ca.gov or call (858) 505-6399.



ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY: BUILDING STRONG SUPPORT FOR ELDERS

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations (UN) launched the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15, 2006 in an effort to unite communities around the world in raising awareness about elder abuse. When we come together, we can prevent elder abuse from happening and put support services in place to address elder abuse.

California law defines elder abuse as physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other treatment resulting in harm, pain, or mental suffering to an adult 60 years or older. Every year an estimated 1 in 10 older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In addition to being a clear violation of the American commitment to justice for all, elder abuse is an issue with many consequences for our society. There are many ways to strengthen our social supports through policies, services, and programs that keep us integrated in our communities as we age.

TAKE ACTION!

- Keep in contact and talk with your older friends, neighbors, and relatives frequently. Ask questions and listen. Be aware and alert for the possibility of abuse.
- Make a commitment to volunteer this year! Help older adults in your community.
- Give a caregiver a respite break.
- Ask your church or organization to add information about elder abuse in their newsletters or during a service.
- Share with your friends and family via social media about elder abuse prevention and awareness.

SEEK HELP

If you have concerns about an older adult, or suspect possible elder abuse, call the AIS Call Center at **(800) 339-4661**. If you are an older adult, one of the best ways to avoid becoming a victim of elder abuse is to stay connected to others. For information about opportunities to stay connected through health promotion and volunteer programs, access to transportation, or phone call reassurance programs, visit www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov or call **(800) 339-4661**.

My community,
Your community,
OUR community –
free of elder abuse!



#WEAAD

NCEA
National Center on Elder Abuse

HEALTHIER LIVING CLASSES

These free, interactive, and goal-oriented virtual workshops focus on support, skill development, sharing, and building confidence to manage diabetes.

Healthier Living with Diabetes: July 8 - August 12 (Fridays), 9-11:30 a.m. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3aeJLwK> or call (858) 495-5500.

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Prevention for Immunocompromised People: In addition to vaccination, the monoclonal antibody injection Evusheld, is available for people with moderate or severe immunosuppression or those who have had a severe allergic reaction to COVID-19 vaccine. Evusheld reduces the relative risk of getting COVID by up to 77% and must be given BEFORE a person has been exposed or infected. Persons eligible include those who: are receiving active cancer treatment, received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system, and those who have moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome). Evusheld can be found at hospital systems, medical groups, and community health centers using the therapeutics locator at <https://covid-19-therapeutics-locator-dhhs.hub.arcgis.com>. You may also talk to your doctor or call (800) 232-0233.

Treatment for Older Adults, Others at High-Risk: If you are at risk for severe complications and you test positive for COVID-19, it is important to get treatment right away, even if your initial symptoms are mild. Factors associated with a higher risk for Severe COVID-19 include: age 65+; BMI \geq 25; physical inactivity; diabetes; chronic heart, kidney, lung, and liver conditions; cancer; neurologic conditions such as dementia; smoking (current and former); use of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive medications.

Monoclonal antibody treatments, such as the oral antiviral medication Paxlovid, may be available at your doctor's office. If your doctor or health system does not offer treatment, the County and its partners have several Monoclonal Antibody Regional Centers (MARC) where you can get treatment at no cost regardless of health insurance or immigration status. You may call the MARC sites at (619) 685-2500 to schedule an appointment.

For more information on COVID-19, including prevention and treatment, visit www.coronavirus-sd.com or call 2-1-1.

RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS OF THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Health Awareness Month. If you are caring for someone living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, there are resources that can support you in your important role as a caregiver:

Caregiver Handbook: a collection of information and tools to help caregivers address common needs, communicate with healthcare providers, access valuable local resources, prioritize self-care, and much more! To download the handbook, visit www.caregivercoalitionsd.org/resources.

Dementia-Friendly Activities Toolkit: includes activities and resources that support the needs of people living with dementia and make it easier for them to remain engaged in pleasurable and interesting activities, such as creative coloring and musical memories reminiscence. To download the toolkit, visit www.bit.ly/dementia-friendlysd.org.

Communication Tip Card: designed to help caregivers facilitate positive and compassionate interactions between the person with dementia and members of the community. To download, visit www.bit.ly/dementia-friendlysd.org.

All of these materials are available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. To request a print copy, e-mail AISAlzheimer.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

JULY 14, THURSDAY 1-2 P.M.

Offered in-person or online, **9 Must Have Strategies for Living Well While Living Longer** (Course #511), will be held at San Diego Oasis, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942. Geropsychologist Dr. Joe Casciani brings an uplifting perspective on aging successfully, overcoming obstacles, and the resilience needed to start new chapters. Cost: \$12. Visit www.sandiegooasis.org or call (619) 881-6262 to RSVP.

JULY 16, SATURDAY 10 A.M.-1 P.M.

A **Gardening Exchange** will be held at the Rancho Peñasquitos Branch Library, 13330 Salmon River Rd., San Diego 92129. Stop and Swap: Seeds, Plants, Veggies, Fruits, Flowers and More! Too many zucchinis or cut flowers? Succulents getting too big? Fruits and veggies galore? Bring your garden's extras to share with other gardeners in the community. Everything is free! For more details, call (858) 538-8159.

JULY 16, SATURDAY 2-3:30 P.M.

A free workshop, **Summer Learning for Adults-Zentangle**, will be held at the Poway Branch Library, 13137 Poway Rd., Poway 92064. Zentangle is an easy, fun, and relaxing art technique to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. Call (858) 513-2900 ext. 3, or visit the front desk to reserve a spot.

JULY 19, TUESDAY 1-2 P.M.

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

JULY 20, WEDNESDAY 10 A.M.-12 P.M.

A **Health Care Decision-Making 2022 Seminar: Planting Now for the Journey Ahead** will be held at Paradise Village, 2700 E. 4th St., National City 91950 on the Activity Deck. Learn from experts in the field of advance care planning at this free event. To RSVP, visit www.sharp.com/classes or call (800) 827-4277.

JULY 27, WEDNESDAY 1-3 P.M.

A free workshop, **Summer Learning: Paint 'n Gab for Adults**, will be held at the San Marcos Branch Library, 2 Civic Center Dr., San Marcos 92069. Enjoy a session of painting and chatting with others. All supplies will be provided. Space is limited. To RSVP, call (760) 891-3000 and select Option 3.

JULY 27, WEDNESDAY 6 P.M.

A free class, **Sharp Healthcare: Understanding Medicare**, will be held at the Sharp Corporate Office

Auditorium, 8695 Spectrum Center Blvd., San Diego 92123. Learn how Medicare works in clear language. Hear about Medicare Parts A and B, special enrollment requirements if you start using Medicare after age 65, and more To RSVP, visit www.sharp.com/health-classes or call (800) 827-4277.

AUGUST 3-31, WEDNESDAYS 9:30 A.M.

An **Interntational Folk Dancing** class (Course #226), will be held on Wednesdays in August at San Diego Oasis, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942. Join in for traditional dances from Eastern Europe and around the world. Cost: \$30. To RSVP, visit www.sandiegooasis.org or call (619) 881-6262.

AUGUST 12, FRIDAY 10-11:30 A.M.

A free, in-person presentation, **Care Options: Residential Placement**, will be hosted by Alzheimer's San Diego and held at the Scripps-Miramar Library, 10301 Scripps Lake Dr., San Diego, 92131. Whether you're looking at placement options now or planning ahead, learn about the different types of residential settings (including assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing facilities), what they cost, and how to choose what's best for your situation. To RSVP, visit www.alzsd.org/services/education or call (858) 492-4400.

SEND IN YOUR ITEMS

We welcome your contributions to this monthly calendar. Email sarah.jackson@sdcounty.ca.gov.



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- Seniors
- Disabled adults
- Abused adults
- Those requiring home-based care to prevent institutionalization

As a public agency, we provide comprehensive information and impartial assistance free of charge to county residents. Since 1974, people have been turning to us at Aging & Independence Services. You can too.



Call Toll Free: **(800) 339-4661**
www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov



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