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The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume X, Number 2 • July/August 2023



The 2023 Walk to End Alzheimer's will be held at Valley Strong Ballpark in Visalia.

Walk to End Alzheimer's Set for August 20

Tulare and Kings County residents are encouraged to participate in the Alzheimer's Association's Walk to End Alzheimer's on Sunday, August 20, at Valley Strong Ballpark, home of the Visalia Rawhide, before the team's game with the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes.

"The Rawhide are ecstatic to host the annual Walk to End Alzheimer's at Valley Strong Ballpark this year," said Markus Hagglund, the team's assistant general manager, in our previous article. "Great strides have been made in Alzheimer's research in recent years and that is due in large part to the efforts of the Alzheimer's Association."

"We have had the opportunity to partner with them in recent years and are ecstatic to be able to further use our platform and venue to promote their mission," he added.

"They've been wonderful to work with," said Heather McCarthy, walk manager. "We came up with a proposal and they gave us way more than we asked for."

On Walk Day

Participants will complete a walk and learn about Alzheimer's disease, advocacy opportunities, clinical studies enrollment, and support programs and services from the Alzheimer's Association. Participants will also take part in a tribute ceremony to honor those affected by Alzheimer's disease.

Participants will honor those affected by Alzheimer's with the poignant Promise Garden ceremony – a mission-focused experience that signifies solidarity in the fight against the disease.

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Senior Games to Return to Visalia Nov. 4-5

The City of Visalia Parks and Recreation Department has announced that the 2023 Visalia Senior Games will be held at various venues throughout the city on the weekend of November 4-5. The games will be the first since the pandemic.

"We're really excited," said City of Visalia Recreation Manager Laurissa Roggenkamp. "It's a signature event of ours and we're happy to have it back."

"It's definitely something we've been wanting to do for a while," she said, explaining that her department now has enough staff to plan and run the event.

This year's games "will somewhat mimmick what we've done in the past," she said, but adding that the number of events offered may be less than at the last games held.

"We will bring back the most



The first Visalia Senior Games since the pandemic will be held in November.

popular events first and then go from there," she said.

She encouraged those interested in volunteering, or who have a suggestion for an event, to call (559) 713-4365 or email recreation@visalia.city.

"If they want to be the chair of an event or an official for an

event, that would be great," said Roggenkamp.

Seniors interested in competing need to wait until August 7 when more information will be posted at www.liveandplayvisalia.com.

"We are still putting together events," Roggenkamp said.

Lindsay Senior Center Reopens its Doors

By Larry Kast

Six down, two more to go.

Community Services Employment Training, which manages eight senior centers in Tulare County, has reopened the Lindsay Senior Center as of June 5. That leaves CSET just the Exeter and Goshen Senior Centers as its last two senior centers remaining to be reopened.

"We are changing the number of activities at the site," said Jerel Dutton, assistant director of senior services for CSET. "We will also have other organizations available to make presentations and tables to distribute information and more exercise-type activities."

The Lindsay Senior Center, located at 911 Parkside Ave. in Lindsay, held a grand reopening event that was attended by nearly two dozen seniors who anxiously awaited the return of the programming, as well as the nutrition program, which is free to those ages 60 and over.

"I know the number (of attendees) has been increasing since, with more like 20 to 25 seniors attending," Dutton said. "The word has gotten out in the



CSET reopened the Lindsey Senior Center on June 5.

community so it's been well received."

The center will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with lunch served at 11:30 a.m.

Dutton said it is hoped the remaining two senior centers will open soon, however CSET is not rushing to get them open.

"We are not trying to rush into reopening, we are trying to make sure things at the other centers are running smoothly," he said, adding that while there is no timeline, "we are shooting to reopen Exeter by the end of July."

COVID caused CSET to close all eight senior centers in March 2020, shifting willing seniors to its meal home delivery service until seniors' safety

could be ensured and staff to run the programming could be employed.

"I think (the reopened senior centers) are thriving, and in some cases attendance has increased since COVID," said Raquel Gomez-Collins, division director for community initiatives for CSET. "It's part of health and wellness to be a part of a community. People love to socialize and play bingo and exercise. We are starting to partner with healthcare facilities to provide training, and working with the Lindsay Wellness Center to make sure we aren't duplicating resources."

For more information about the Lindsay Senior Center, call Robert Silveira, center manager at (559) 562-5859.



Kaweah Health Celebrates Healthgrades America’s 100 Best Hospitals Award

On June 6, Healthgrades representatives visited Visalia to recognize Kaweah Health being named one America’s 100 Best Hospitals for 2023. Kaweah Health is one of 20 hospitals in California to receive the distinction, and it is the only hospital in the San Joaquin Valley from Kern to Madera counties to receive the award. This achievement puts Kaweah Health in the top 2% of hospitals nationwide for overall clinical performance across the most common conditions and procedures. Above, Kaweah Health CEO Gary Herbst addressed those attending the celebration.



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VETERANS CORNER

The Chapter 35 Benefit Program



Ken Cruickshank

I want to cover the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program, also known as the Chapter 35 benefit program. This program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans.

Under the program, dependents can receive up to 45 months of educational benefits, which may be used for degree or certificate programs, apprenticeship and on-the-job training; it can apply to correspondence courses for veterans' spouses. Under certain conditions, remedial, deficiency and refresher courses may also be approved. For more information, visit the Veterans Administration (VA) website at www.va.gov and select the Dependents' Educational Assistance link under Veteran Services.

So, who is eligible for these benefits?

If you are the son, daughter, stepchild, adopted child or spouse of a veteran (or in some cases, a servicemember) who:

- Died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability (i.e., a disability resulting from active service in the Armed Forces);
- Died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability existed;
- Is missing in action or has been captured in the line of duty by a hostile force;
- Is being forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power; or
- Is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service-connected, permanent and total disability, and is likely to be discharged for that disability.

There are also specific periods of eligibility that apply to the DEA benefit. Suppose you are the son or daughter of a qualifying veteran and wish to receive benefits for attending school or job training. In that case, you must be between the ages of 18 and 26.

Marital status does not disqualify you from receiving this benefit. If you are within that age group and still in the Armed Forces, the benefit may not be used while on active duty; however, the VA can extend your eligibility period by the number of months and days equal to the time spent on active duty. To receive the benefit, your service discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions, and, in most cases, the VA will not extend your eligibility period beyond your 31st birthday.

Suppose you are the spouse of a qualifying veteran. In that case, the benefits end ten years from the date that the VA finds you eligible, or from the date of the death of your veteran spouse. The exception to this rule is when the veteran is rated permanently and totally disabled (this must occur within three years from the date of military discharge). In such cases, the eligibility period is 20 years from the effective date of the rating. For surviving spouses (spouses of servicemembers who died on active duty), the benefit period ends 20 years from the date of death.

Ken Cruickshank, the Veterans Services Officer for Tulare County, is a retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer. Contact him at the Veterans Services Office at 3348 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia; by phone at (559) 713-2880; or by email at kcruicks@tularecounty.ca.gov



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World Elder Abuse Awareness Day/Month Events Held in Kings and Tulare Counties



Tulare County Supervisors and Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency representatives plant flags in front of Government Plaza in Visalia to mark 2023 World Elder Abuse Awareness Month.

June was World Elder Abuse Awareness Month, and the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and Health & Human Services Agency participated by planting flags in front of Government Plaza in Visalia on May 30.

County leaders encouraged community members to wear purple on June 15, which is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), to promote a better understanding of the abuse and neglect of older persons.

On June 15, the Kings County Commission on Aging held a World Elder Abuse Awareness Event at their senior center in Armona. The free event featured informational booths,

food, games, prizes and a performance by "Elvis."

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was launched on June 15, 2006, by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations.

The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes that affect it.

Purple, traditionally associated with royalty, dignity and respect, was chosen as the color to describe elders.

Tulare County Opens New Public Health Clinic in Visalia

Tulare County Public Health celebrated the grand opening of its new Tulare County Public Health Clinic in Visalia on May 2nd.

The 4,750-square-foot facility is designed to offer specialty services, including various immunizations, tuberculosis treatment and prevention programs, and services for other communicable diseases.

The County of Tulare invest-

ed \$3 million to construct the new clinic, which has three exam rooms, an x-ray room, waiting rooms, and office space.

The clinic will house the Tulare County Public Health Immunization Program in providing various recommended vaccinations and immunizations to residents and those traveling abroad.

The new clinic is located at 2505 N. Dinuba Blvd. in Visalia.



Tulare County Supervisors and public health clinic staff members were in attendance when Tulare County Public Health Director Karen Elliott cut the ribbon of the new Tulare County Public Health Center.



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Beware of the Virtual Kidnapping Ransom Scam

The virtual kidnapping ransom scam typically begins with a phone call saying your family member is being held captive. The caller may allege your granddaughter has been kidnapped and you hear a female screaming in the background.

Another variant of the fraud has a family member being held because he or she caused an auto accident, is injured and won't be allowed to go to the hospital until damages are paid.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation advises that if you receive a phone call from someone who demands payment of a ransom for a kidnapped victim, the following actions should be considered:

- Try to slow the situation down. Request to speak to the victim directly. Ask, "How do I know my loved one is okay?"
- If the callers don't let you speak to the victim, ask them to describe the victim or describe the vehicle the victim drives, if applicable.

- Listen carefully to the voice of the kidnapped victim if he or she speaks.
- Attempt to call, text or contact the alleged victim via social media. Request that the victim call back from his or her cell phone.
- While staying on the line with the alleged kidnappers, try to call the alleged kidnap victim from another phone.

- To buy time, repeat the caller's request and tell them you are writing down the demand.
- Don't directly challenge or argue with the caller. Keep your voice low and steady.
- Request the alleged kidnapper allow the victim to call you back from his or her cell phone.
- At the earliest opportunity, notify your local police department.



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New FHCN Facility Under Construction in Hanford

A new 15,000-square-foot Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) clinic is currently under construction in Hanford.

The Hanford Planning Commission approved the conditional use permit at its April meeting, and construction began this spring.

"Our anticipated opening day is currently slated near the tail end of 2023," said Kerry Hydash, FHCN president and CEO, who was asked if the new facility will replace or expand on the services offered at the health network's current Hanford facility.

"Our new health center on 12th and West Hayden represents an expansion of services that will help to meet the growing demand for quality health care in Kings County," she responded. "Our mission is to provide quality health care for all, and that includes health care services options that are easily accessible. We continue to learn from our new and returning patients throughout Kings County about the health care needs that are most important to them."

"While we are still working to finalize the specifics of what those services will include based on the needs assessment, we're confident in our ability to fortify each patient's



Artist's rendering of the new Family HealthCare Network clinic in Hanford

health care needs on our very first day," she added.

The new facility will be in southwest Hanford.

"The location of this new health center has been strategically chosen to fortify the communities of Hanford and Kings County as a whole, but much like our first Hanford health center, we recognize there is tremendous value in having a health center located near main roadways like Highway 198 and the always busy 12th Avenue," said Hydash.

FHCN has no current plans for future clinics in other Kings County communities.

"Any consideration for future expansion throughout Kings County is dictated first and foremost by the patients we serve," explained Hydash.

"As it stands right now, our new health center is intended to meet the needs that Kings County residents have asked for most frequently."

Instead, FHCN is looking to Tulare County for its next round of projects.

Tulare County Projects

At its June 6th meeting, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved a request from FHCN that the California Municipal Finance Authority issue up to \$40 million in tax-exempt bonds for the following four projects:

- Approximately \$3 million will be used to expand FHCN's current clinic at 12586 Avenue 408 in Orosi by about 9,000 square feet, adding five medical exam rooms, four dental rooms, a larger lobby, a new

breakroom, meeting space and a larger pharmacy;

- About \$3 million will be used to construct an 8,000-square-foot health center on River Island Drive in Springville, which will replace its existing leased facility and will include ten medical exam rooms and two dental rooms;

- About \$5 million will be used to construct a new two-story, 22,000-square-foot administrative building at 409 N. Bridge St. in Visalia, to house about 100 employees and provide space for FHCN's information department and call center; and

- Approximately \$9 million will be used to fund the purchase/renovation or construction of a 25,000-square-foot building at 510 E. School St., Visalia, which will be the service site for FHCN's Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE Program).

"We are thankful for the approval, but it is only another step in the process for FHCN issuing the debt," said Hydash. "The county approval provides FHCN access to tax-exempt interest rates from lenders, but it does not provide the financing or any guarantees for the debt."

A timeline for the projects was presented at the meeting.

(continued on page 18)

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CMS Plans to Ensure Availability of Alzheimer's Drugs

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), announced on June 1st how people can get drugs that may slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease covered by Medicare.

If the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) grants traditional approval, then Medicare will cover it.

"Alzheimer's disease takes a toll on not just the people suffering from the disease but

also on their loved ones and caregivers in a way that almost no other illness does," said Brooks-LaSure. "CMS has always been committed to helping people obtain timely access to innovative treatments that meaningfully improve care and outcomes for this disease. If the FDA grants traditional approval, CMS is prepared to ensure anyone with Medicare Part B who meets the criteria is covered. I'm pleased to make this announcement as part of CMS'

mission to help improve the lives of Americans we serve. I hope we see more private sector partners in this work making their own announcements soon."

The FDA's Peripheral and Central Nervous System Drugs Advisory Committee discussed the results of a confirmatory trial of the Eisai product Leqembi on June 9, with a potential decision on traditional approval possible within weeks. Broader Medicare coverage would begin on the same day the FDA grants traditional approval.

Under CMS' current coverage policy, if FDA grants traditional approval to other drugs in this class they would also be eligible for broader coverage. Currently two drugs in this class have received accelerated approval from the FDA, but no product has received traditional approval.

Medicare will cover drugs with traditional FDA approval when a physician and clinical team participates in the collection of evidence about how these drugs work in the real world, also known as a registry. Clinicians will be able to submit this evidence through a nationwide, CMS-facilitated portal that will be available when any product gains traditional approval and will collect information via an easy-to-use format.

This method, and any others that may follow, will adhere to robust privacy protections in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations. Researchers will have access to the information to conduct studies, furthering knowledge of how these drugs can potentially help people. CMS is working with multiple organizations that are getting ready to open their own registries.

The approach is consistent with CMS' National Coverage Determination. To get Medicare coverage people will need to: be enrolled in Medicare Part B; be diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or early dementia caused by Alzheimer's disease; and have a qualified physician participating in a registry, including the options above, with an appropriate clinical team and follow up care. These criteria are in addition to any label requirements the FDA specifies.

Registries are common tools in clinical settings that have successfully gathered information on patient outcomes for decades. There is strong precedent for using registries to gather more information on a newly-approved treatment.

For example, when the FDA granted traditional approval to the transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR), CMS required the clinicians and hospitals to participate in a registry to track outcomes. Information gathered from that registry has since been used to further inform Medicare coverage determinations, and to help people and their clinicians make better decisions about whether TAVR is the best treatment for them.

Other registries for drugs that may slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease may become available in the coming weeks and months. Information will be available at www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coverage/Coverage-with-Evidence-Development as studies come online.



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The deadline for the September/October issue is Tuesday, August 15.

AmeriCorps Seniors Want You!

AmeriCorps is looking for senior volunteers in the South Valley.

The AmeriCorps Seniors Program gives individuals aged 55 and up opportunities to become active and make a positive difference in their communities. Volunteers are those who are interested in working with children and adults with disabilities, and are able to serve at least 15 hours a week.

Locally, AmeriCorps Seniors is affiliated with the Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC).

"Both agencies have the same goals of meeting the needs of the community," explained Jean Martens, CVRC Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs Specialist. "CVRC focuses on those individuals who have, or are at risk of having a developmental disability. AmeriCorps Seniors was brought in as a way to increase individual attention, through volunteers, to the individuals CVRC serves."

CVRC also has a Senior Companion Program that is the same as the Foster Grandparent Program except for the ages of the individuals served and the types of activities they might be involved in.

"Foster Grandparents serve kiddos from pre-school until they turn 22," said Martens. "Their focus is more academic/



Foster Grandma Betty and Sam

social skills-related. At 22, when they've aged out of the school system and move on to a workshop/day program, then they can be matched up with a Senior Companion."

Activities then shift from academics to those that help develop vocational, independent living and social skills.

The local AmeriCorps Seniors program covers Kings and Tulare Counties.

"Most of our current volunteers serve either in Visalia or Porterville, with a few in Tulare, a couple in Springville, one in Terra Bella, one in Exeter, and one in Lindsay," said Martens.

A Typical Day

"A typical day for a Foster Grandparent (FG) volunteer would start by coming to school, checking into the office and going to their assigned student's class," said Martens. "The teacher helps the volunteer get acquainted with the classroom routine, the students and the programs for each assigned student."

"Depending on their individual student's needs, the volunteer may work with them on skills such as writing, reading, listening, following directions, getting along with others, communication, etc. A volunteer

is usually found sitting next to their student during group time, ready to help redirect, stay focused, encourage them to participate, and model the task if needed. When students are at recess, the volunteer is welcome to either take a break or hang out on the playground. Being a presence on the playground opens the volunteer up to students campus-wide who might need some 'grandma' time too.

"A Senior Companions (SC) typical day depends on where they serve," Martens continued. "We have volunteers in a large day program, which differs from a small residential home, which is very different from the sub-acute medical facility. Like the FG volunteers, each SC volunteer helps their assigned individuals work toward specific goals."

"In general, an SC volunteer usually spends time with their individual going on walks, chatting, reading, listening to music, dancing, encouraging participation in activities, modeling positive social skills, or practicing life skills such as identifying correct change, making purchases, smart shopping, etc."

Martens made it clear that being a Foster Grandparent is not about being a babysitter.

"Each individual assigned to a volunteer has an Individual

(continued on page 18)



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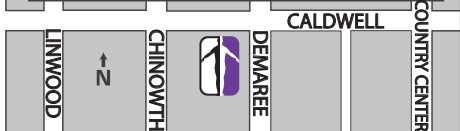
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Protect Yourself! Mosquito Season Has Begun

Mosquito season has officially begun in the South Valley. The first bird to have died from West Nile Virus (WNV) was discovered in Visalia in the middle of June.

The Delta Mosquito & Vector Control District reported that the dead bird was found near West Ferguson Avenue and North Sallee Street.

The district also reported that three mosquito samples testing positive for WNV were collected in east Visalia between East St. Johns Parkway and East Goshen Avenue. (As of June 19, no WNV had been reported in Kings County.)

WNV is transmitted to people and animals through the bite of an infected female mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes then spread WNV to people and other animals by biting them.

Everyone is at risk, but those over 60 are more vulnerable to WNV and the other diseases carried by mosquitoes, said Dr. Mustapha Debboun, general manager of the Delta Mosquito & Vector Control District.

"Their immune system is not as strong as that of a younger person," he explained.

Seniors are also more likely to forget to take the necessary precautions against mosquito bites, including "things as sim-



Take the time to drain any water from pools, birdbaths, pails, tires, cans, bottles and any other water-holding containers, including from under potted plants; and only use repellent that has a registration number from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ple as applying repellent," he said.

Dr. Debboun strongly recommends that seniors take the time to look at a can of repellent before buying it to make sure that is approved by and has a registration number from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which evaluates the safety and effectiveness of each repellent.

"A repellent can go through 10 to 15 years of testing before it gets approved," he said.

"Sometimes people sell gimmicks," he said about some brands of repellents. "(Buyers) need to look at the label."

Making Your Yard Safe

Debboun advises residents to inspect their yards and drain any water from birdbaths, pools, pails, tires, cans, bottles and any other water-holding containers, and from under potted plants.

"If a pail is not covered, mosquitoes will come and lay eggs there," he said.

With the recent rain and flooding, and all the snow that is yet to melt, South Valley residents need to be and stay vigilant. Those living in the eastern valley communities - such as Woodlake, Exeter and Three Rivers - need to be especially

watchful, according to Debboun.

July and August, which normally bring temperatures in the 100s, bring other challenges.

"Normally, mosquitoes develop in 10 days, but they can go from egg to adult in three to five days when the water is warmer," Debboun said. "This means there are more mosquitoes in production. Any given mosquito can lay 200 to 500 eggs in one sitting."

Fortunately, mosquitoes have natural enemies - such as frogs, water beetles, dragonflies and damselflies - that lower their population. There are also fish that feed on mosquito larvae, which is helpful for those who have ponds in their yard.

"If someone has a pond, instead of using a pesticide, they can come here (to the Delta Mosquito & Vector Control District, 1737 W. Houston Ave. in Visalia) and we will give them gambusia affinis, which is known as the mosquito fish."

Other ways to keep your home and yard safe from mosquitoes include:

- Covering up by wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants when mosquitoes are most active;
- Checking window and door

screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home;

- Cleaning and scrubbing pet dishes weekly; and
- Making sure that swimming pools, ponds and fountains have working pumps and regular maintenance.

Neglected swimming pools continue to be a mosquito breeding ground. Neglected swimming pools can be reported anonymously for treatment.

West Nile Virus

While most people infected by WNV will have no symptoms, others will develop fever, headaches, and body aches. Some cases require hospitalization and, in rare cases, death occurs.

People with symptoms should contact their health care provider. Adults over 50 years old and people with compromised immune systems are at increased risk of serious complications.

More Information

For more information about mosquitoes or West Nile Virus, or to request district services in Tulare County, visit www.DeltaMCD.org or call (559) 732-8606.

Kings County residents should call the Kings Mosquito Abatement District at (559) 584-3326.



Dr. Mustapha Debboun, general manager of the Delta Mosquito & Vector Control District

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Juan is such a blessing, he takes the time to explain everything, recommend fertilizer, he does a fabulous job, never breaks anything, or leaves a mess, all while being extremely affordable.

At 83 years old, I am unable to maintain things the way I used to.

I highly recommend JC's Tree Service.

Gayle Segue - Visalia

References Available
Juan Carlos Delgado
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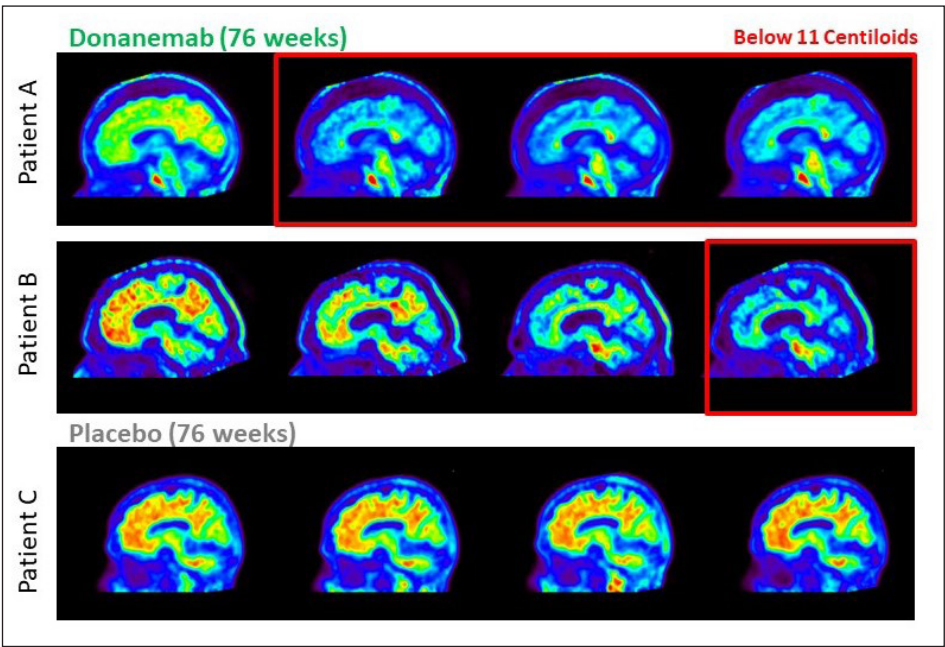
Alzheimer's Association Welcomes Results of New Study

On May 3, Eli Lilly and Company announced positive results of its study showing that Donanemab significantly slowed cognitive and functional decline in people with early symptomatic Alzheimer's disease.

In a press release issued the same day, the Alzheimer's Association "enthusiastically welcomes the robustly positive topline data reported" by Eli Lilly on the TRAILBLAZER-ALZ2 Phase 3 clinical trial of Donanemab for the treatment of early symptomatic Alzheimer's disease."

"These Donanemab Phase 3 results are significant and further underscore the scientific evidence and personal benefit these types of treatments can have when people can get access to them" said Joanne Pike, DrPH, Alzheimer's Association president and CEO. "The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' policy to block Medicare access to Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved Alzheimer's treatments is in stark contrast to scientific evidence, is unprecedented and must be reversed immediately."

The trial met all of its primary and secondary endpoints. Most encouragingly, the company reports that nearly half (47%) of the study participants taking Donanemab had no



Brain scans show clearance of amyloid plaques, in red, in patients A and B, who received Donanemab, compared to higher levels of amyloid in a patient C, who only received a placebo (bottom) in Eli Lilly's trial.

decline of cognition and function for one year (compared to 29% on placebo). Donanemab slowed clinical decline by 35% compared to placebo on the primary outcome measure, and resulted in 40% less decline in the ability to perform activities of daily living.

"These are the strongest phase 3 data for an Alzheimer's treatment to date," said Pike. "This further underscores the inflection point we are at for the Alzheimer's field. The progress we've seen in this class of treatments, as well as the diversification of potential new therapies

over the past few years, provides hope to those impacted by this devastating disease. Yet, Medicare stubbornly continues to block access for the people who could benefit."

For people in the earliest stages of Alzheimer's, these results suggest Donanemab will significantly change the course of the disease. Like the other treatments in its class already approved by the FDA, Aduhelm and Leqembi, these results indicate Donanemab gives people more time at or near their full abilities to participate in daily life, remain independent

and make future health care decisions. Treatments that deliver these benefits are just as valuable as treatments that extend the lives of those with other diseases.

"Medicare beneficiaries living with Alzheimer's, a fatal disease, deserve the same immediate, full coverage under Medicare afforded to those with other diseases," said the Alzheimer's Association release. "As with other anti-amyloid treatments – in fact, every drug – this treatment has side effects. Patients living with a fatal disease should have the opportunity to talk with their doctors to develop a treatment plan that is right for them, including weighing the benefits and risks of approved therapies."

The results of this and other positive trials demonstrate the importance of an early and accurate diagnosis on treatment and health outcomes.

"As we reflect on the importance of the positive results announced today, the Alzheimer's Association remains committed to advancing all potential treatment avenues and exploring methods for combining diverse approaches into combination therapies," stated the release. "There must be access to any approved treatments, as well as quality care and support for all people."



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The robotic capabilities of the da Vinci Xi robotic system, which are controlled by the surgeon, allow for smaller incisions and faster recovery times for patients.

Adventist Health Hanford Adds Robotic Technology to Its Surgical Options

Adventist Health Hanford has expanded patients’ surgical options with the da Vinci Xi robotic system, advancing the technology used in minimally invasive procedures at the hospital.

“The da Vinci Xi system extends surgeons’ vision and reach, using 3D high-definition views and tiny precision instruments,” said Gurvinder Kaur, MD, medical officer for Adventist Health Central Valley Network. “The robotic capabilities, which are controlled 100% by the surgeon, provide the opportunity for smaller incisions and faster recovery times for patients.”

In June, Adventist Health Hanford surgeons began us-

ing the da Vinci for general surgery, gynecology and urology needs, which include enlarged prostates and tumors, kidney surgery, colorectal cancer surgery, hysterectomies and hernia repairs, Kaur said.

Surgeons and surgical staff undergo extensive training before using the system, which has three parts:

- A console, where the surgeon guides the instruments while viewing the patient in high-definition 3D;
- A patient cart at bedside that holds the camera and instruments the surgeon controls from the console; and
- A vision cart that supports the communication and vision systems.

More information about robotic-assisted surgery is at www.AdventistHealth.org/HanfordRobotics.

Adventist Health Hanford is part of Adventist Health Central Valley Network, a group of four hospitals and more than 70 medical offices serving the Central Valley, and Adventist Health, a faith-based, nonprofit, integrated health system serving more than 80 communities on the West Coast and Hawaii with over 400 sites of care.

In the Central Valley, Adventist Health operates hospitals in Hanford, Reedley, Selma and Tulare and medical offices in Kings, Kern, Fresno, Madera and Tulare Counties.

Sleep Apnea Increases Risk of Alzheimer's

A new study published in *Neurology* has found that sleep apnea and a lack of deep sleep may be associated with poorer brain health, leading to increased risks for stroke, Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive decline.

Sleep apnea is a chronic sleep disorder that can also increase other health risks, including cardiovascular disease and hypertension. The research involved looking at sleep factors and biomarkers of brain health and suggests that people with sleep apnea who spend less time in deep sleep are more likely to have brain biomarkers associated with a heightened risk of these conditions.

The study included 140 people with an average age of 73, all of whom had obstructive sleep apnea but did not have dementia before the study. Researchers found that for every 10-point decrease in deep sleep, white matter hyperintensities increased, which were the equivalent of being 2.3 years older.

While the study cannot say whether this association causes the alterations or vice versa, diagnosis is critical. There are steps people can take to reduce sleep apnea risks, including lifestyle modifications.



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CALENDAR

July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays

This weekly event is held at the Visalia Veterans Memorial Building, 609 W. Center St., Visalia, Doors open at 11:15 p.m. For more information, call (559) 651-6714.

July 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, 31 - Senior/Adult Aerobics

City of Hanford Parks and Community Services hosts aerobics from 9-10 a.m. at Longfield Center, 560 S. Douty St. in Hanford, three days a week. The monthly cost for those 55+ is \$16. For more info, call (559) 585-2530.

Monday, July 3 - Independence Day Luncheon

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11:30 a.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

July 5, 12, 19, 26 - Bingo

The Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, will host bingo starting at 1 p.m. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. For more info, call (559) 685-2330.

Thursday, July 6 - "I Thought He Was My Ancestor: Avoiding the Six Most Common Genealogy

Mistakes"

The Sequoia Genealogical Society will host this 6 p.m. presentation by genealogist James Baker. Refreshments will follow. The free event will be held at the Tulare Public Library, 475 M St. in Tulare. For more info, call (559) 685-4518.

July 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27 - Zumba

City of Hanford Parks and Community Services hosts Zumba from 6-7 p.m. in Civic Park, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford, twice a week. The monthly cost for those 55+ is \$16. For more information, call (559) 585-2525.

July 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27 - Water Aerobics & Lap Swim

City of Hanford Parks and Community Services hosts these classes at The Hanford Plunge, 415 Ford St., Hanford, twice a week. For fee and other information, call (559) 585-2525.

July 7, 14, 21, 28 - Friday Night Dances

The Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, will host this weekly event from 6-9 p.m. \$10 entry fee. May 2 is a Cinco de Mayo Celebration and May 9 is a Luau. For more information, call (559) 685-2330.

July 7-8 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Yard Sale

Visalia Gleaning Seniors will host this sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Gleaner Yard, 28600 Road 156 in Visalia. For more info, call (559) 733-5352.

Saturday, July 8 - Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk sponsored by Kaweah Health and held at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., Visalia, begins with registration at 8 a.m., followed by a warm-up at 8:15 a.m., and "Talk with a Doc" at 8:30 a.m. The topic this month is "Working with Healthcare Providers." For more information, call (559) 624-2416.

Saturday, July 8 - Community Bingo

Twin Oaks Assisted Living, 999 North M St., Tulare, will host this event featuring free an objective counseling, starting at 2 p.m. Refreshments and snack will be provided. For reservations or more info, call (559) 684-1001.

Wednesday, July 12 - Valley Renal Support Group

The only kidney support group in four counties will meet at Evolution's Gym, 1425 E. Prosperity Ave. in Tulare, from 6:30-8 p.m. The meeting will also be on Zoom. For more information, email Jennifer at meow.2000@yahoo.com.

Saturday, July 15 - Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk, sponsored by Adventist Health and the City of Hanford, will be held at Freedom Park, 2000 9-1/4 Avenue in Hanford, begins with registration at 8:45 a.m., followed the walk and "Talk with a Doc" at 9 a.m. The topic this month is "Pain Management." For more information, visit www.walkwithadoc.org.

Tuesday, July 18 - Visalia Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

Thursday, July 20 - Valley Caregiver Support Group

Valley Caregiver Resource Center will host this session at the Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, from 10-11:30 a.m. For more information, call (559) 224-9154.

Thursday, July 20 - Tulare Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

The First Baptist Church, 469 N. Cherry St., Tulare, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

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TRAVEL

Is an International Group Tour Right for You?

So you finally have the time to see the world, but wonder if going on a tour is something you should actually do.

If you can afford it, the opportunities are there. Several local travel agencies offer tours. Even the Visalia Chamber of Commerce organizes several international tours each year.

For those who feel the time is right to see the Holy Land, Traveler Journeys offers tours that include Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Greece.

"Our tours cover the Exodus through Sinai, Moses leading the tribes to the Promised Land, the Bible stories in Israel, and Paul's journeys in Greece," said Debbie Winsett of Traveler Journeys. "The itineraries for each tour are the same each year, with only minor changes, but we may offer just an Israel tour in one month and all the countries at another time. Travelers can choose to go to just Israel or they can add another country or more to their tour depending on time and financial resources."

But are the tours right for seniors?

"It depends on the tour but many of our travelers are seniors as they seem to have time and financial resources to go on these trips," said Winsett. "We keep

seniors in mind as we are planning so they can do all the activities - assuming they are active and can walk up to three miles per day.

"Typically, our tours have about 70% seniors and the others are pastors or middle-aged people who want to pursue this spiritual journey," she added. "We don't take children as we want the travelers to choose to be on this journey

and we also don't want the kids to disrupt the schedule, or be unhappy visiting museums and sites that may not catch their attention. The combination of ages makes it wonderful as each age group has a lot to share with the others."

The oldest traveler on Traveler Journeys tours is Norris Jernigan, who became 98 in June and has been on every one of their tours.

"He is already registered for 2024 and we are planning a 100th birthday celebration for him in Israel in June 2025," said



International tours are right for many, but not all seniors.

Winsett. "One 78-year-old gentleman hiked all the way to the top of Mt. Sinai with a group a couple years ago and he was so glad he made it to the place where Moses received the Ten Commandments."

An effort is made to accommodate the special needs of seniors on the tours, said Winsett.

"We keep a moderate pace and if someone can't join us for a day due to illness, we let them stay in the hotel or on the cool bus, along with arranging transportation to wherever we are

if they are ready to rejoin the group," she said. "We encourage everyone to purchase travel insurance to cover any medical needs that arise on the trips and the medical services in these countries are very good."

Seniors "do some fun things they otherwise wouldn't likely do," said Winsett, "like ride a raft down the Jordan River, soak in a hot spring, float on the Dead Sea, or get to the top of a mountain for sunrise."

Some of you reading this are probably thinking that tours may sound interesting but, "I'm not sure I can get around easily."

"We do not encourage those with mobility issues to go on the tours," said Winsett. "These countries do not have ADA like in the U.S., so the terrain may not be suitable for everyone. Buses do not have wheelchair lifts and some sites do not have paths to accommodate wheeled transport. We walk about three miles per day - throughout the day, not all at once. We start before 8 a.m. and we finish by 6 p.m. We assess each person before encouraging them to register for the trip as we want everyone to enjoy it fully, but also not compromise the enjoyment of others."

For more information, visit www.travelerjourneys.life.

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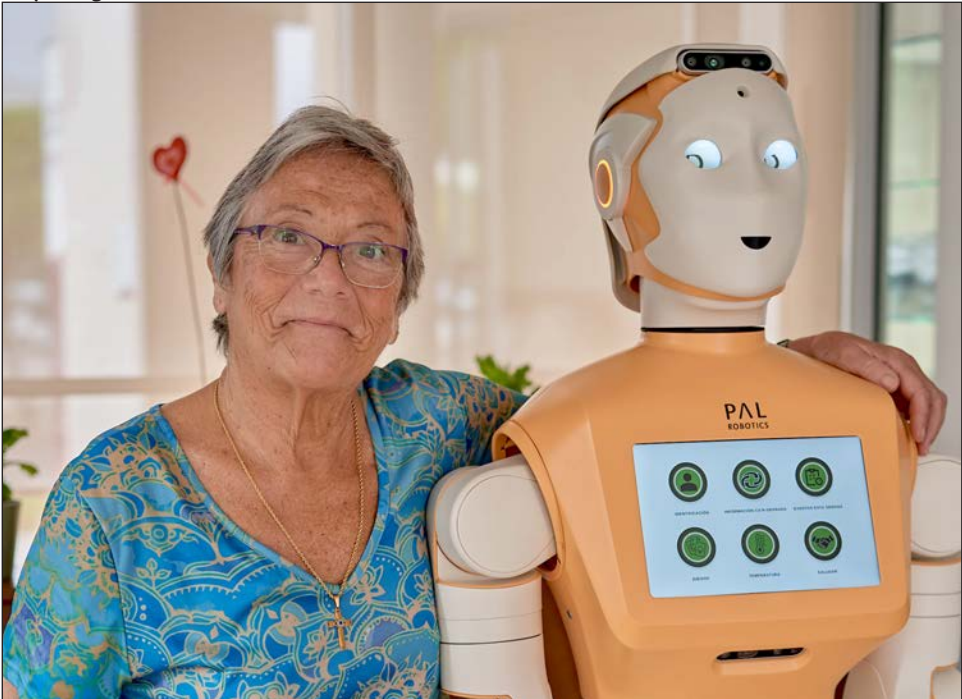
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Project SHAPES' social robot, ARI, makes a friend (above left) and meets with senior residents of Can Granada in Mallorca, Spain (above right). In the photo below, ARI takes a stroll by the pool.

ARI the Social Robot Wants to Make Your Life Easier

Project SHAPES aims to incorporate robotics into assisted living by helping seniors in their daily lives. As part of the project, its social robot, ARI, has been taking part in a pilot program as a home robot in senior housing and residential homes.

SHAPES, which stands for "Smart and Healthy Aging through People Engaging in Supportive Systems," uses digital solutions to create an environment that supports healthy and independent living for older individuals. The overall goal of the project is to assist in healthcare that is personalized to user needs.

The European Union SHAPES project includes 36 partners across Europe working together to develop digital solutions that ensure active aging and a healthy population.

The first implementation of ARI took place at Can Granada, a residence in Mallorca, Spain, with independent accessible homes, fully equipped and adapted for people with reduced mobility.

This project featured ARI joining user Juana, who is 82 years old and living alone. Here, robot ARI supported Juana with activities such as providing verbal reminders of tasks, giving news and updates, and offering assistance such as calling family members.

To prepare for this pilot at Juana's home, PAL Robotics engineers analyzed the environment and demonstrated ARI's different capabilities as a home robot to those involved. In pilots such as this one, the objective has been to test the interaction of robot ARI with users in order to support day-to-day management in senior residences and in private homes.

During these pilots, examples of tasks social robot ARI carried out included:

- Visualising the agenda of the day;
- Sending alerts to caregivers;
- Video calling;
- Playing games (puzzles,



solitaire or finding matching pairs);

- Filling in the weekly menu;
- Voice-based assistant;
- Emotion recognition via TREE Technology; and
- Detecting and monitoring falls.

The main objective of these use cases is to evaluate the user engagement and usefulness of the digital solution developed to assist in cognitive activities. The digital solution used is SciFy's DiAnoia and Memor-i games, integrated within ARI.

"For us at PAL Robotics, we are very happy to have the chance to take part in projects such as SHAPES, as the project pilots help us to be able to push to develop robotics to become more and more useful in helping us in our daily lives," said Gizem Bozdemir, project manager at PAL Robotics.

About ARI

ARI, launched in 2019, is designed to operate in both private and social settings. It can also assist and entertain individuals and groups at events, homes, healthcare facilities, airports and retail locations.

Some of the human-robot interactions ARI offers include meeting and greeting, answering questions, providing information and games through the touchscreen, making phone calls, teleoperation, and entertaining through movements and gestures.

Robot ARI is designed to recognize faces and once it does, it provides a personal interaction to users, such as reminding them to take their medications or about family events. It also offers a series of games designed by specialists to improve memory and cognitive functions.

In addition, ARI is able to detect patient temperatures and act as an alert system to caregivers and medical personnel.

SHAPES is one of a number of collaborative projects that PAL Robotics is involved in. Since 2004, the company has developed state-of-the-art robots specially designed to solve individual users' needs.

PAL Robotics, based in Barcelona, Spain, builds solutions for service industries and research institutions worldwide. The company has partnered in more than 40 collaborative research projects.

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QUAIL CORNER

Be Aware of Possible Chronic Illnesses

Q&A with Kimberly Jensen

What chronic illnesses should I watch out for as I get older?

Seniors who live in the U.S. can expect to live longer than ever before. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), once you pass the age of 65, you can expect to live another 19.3 years.

For many of us, we can expect to manage chronic conditions to stay healthy by making healthy lifestyle choices. The question is, are you among the 41% of people over 65 who can claim their health is very good or excellent?

Your healthcare team can help you to live healthier even if you have a chronic disease.

“**Arthritis** is probably the number one condition that people 65 or older contend with,” says geriatrician Marie Bernard, MD, deputy director of the National Institute on Aging in Bethesda, Maryland. The CDC approximates that arthritis affects 49.7% of seniors over the age of 65. Although it is painful and can often limit mobility, it is imperative to work with your doctor to personalize an activity plan so that you can stay as active as possible.

Heart disease, according to the CDC, remains a leading killer of adults over age 65. This chronic disease affects 37% of men and 26% of women, according to the Federal Interagency Forum of Aging-Related Statistics. Risk factors such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure increase the risk of stroke and heart disease. Healthy eating, while limiting salt, sugar, fat and fried food, can help improve your chances of maintaining a healthy weight and healthier heart as you age.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death among seniors over age 65. The CDC reports that 28% of men and 21% of women are living with cancer. If caught early enough, through mammograms, colonoscopies and skin checks, many types of cancers can be successfully treated. Be proactive in your medical treatment. Make sure to contact your doctor if you see or feel something that doesn't seem normal. Don't stick your head in the sand! Work with your medical team for the best outcome. Excessive smoking and drinking can be the cause of many cancers.

Respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmo-



nary disease (COPD), asthma, bronchitis and emphysema, are the third most common cause of death for those over age 65. The CDC reports that 10% of men and 13% of women are living with asthma, while 10% of men and 11% of women are dealing with chronic bronchitis and emphysema, according to the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics. These chronic diseases make seniors more vulnerable to pneumonia and other respiratory infections.

Alzheimer's Disease and other dementia were the leading cause of death in 2022, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Collectively they accounted for 65,967 deaths, an increase of 11.4% from 2021. Cognitive impairment has a significant impact on chronic illness for seniors across the spectrum. Health and safety issues are impacted, as is self-care and the burden it causes families. Antibodies are reduced as we get older, and they are significantly reduced if you have dementia.

Osteoporosis, or low bone mass, is a major health concern for Americans. The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion estimates that 10 million Americans over age 50 are affected by osteoporosis. The majority are women, but about 2 million are men. Osteoporosis puts seniors at risk for a fracture or breaks that could lead to poor senior health and reduced quality of life.

Diabetes affects 25% of Americans ages 65 and older, according to the CDC, making it a significant health risk. The CDC data shows that diabetes is the eighth leading cause of death in America. It is the number one cause of kidney failure, lower limb amputations and adult blindness. It can be identified and addressed early with simple blood tests for blood sugar levels. The sooner you know that you have or are at risk for diabetes, the sooner you can make changes to control the disease and improve your long-term outlook.

Flu and pneumonia are not classified as chronic conditions, however, these infections are among the top eight causes of death in people over

age 65, according to the CDC. Due to lower immune systems and existing respiratory issues, seniors are more vulnerable to these diseases and less able to fight them off. Many medical professionals advise getting an annual flu shot and getting the pneumonia vaccine, if recommended by your doctor, to prevent these infections and their life-threatening complications.

Falls requiring emergency room care increase with age. The CDC reports that each year, 2.5 million people aged 65 and older are treated in emergency departments because of falls. That's more than any other age group. One out of four older adults will fall each year in the United States, making falls a public health concern, particularly among the aging population. About 36 million falls are reported among older adults each year – resulting in more than 32,000 deaths. Being aware that most falls occur in your own home is important. Tripping hazards, including area rugs, slippery floors and pets are some of the most important hazards to be aware of.

Depression is unfortunately too common among those 65 and older. According to the American Psychological Association, 15 to 20% of Americans over 65 have experienced significant depression. This is a huge threat to senior health as depression can lower immunity and compromise a person's ability to fight infections.

It is suggested to treat depression with medication and therapy. Another way to improve a senior's quality of life is to increase physical activity. It has been reported that 59.4% of adults 65 and older don't meet CDC recommendations for exercise.

Many seniors are isolated in their homes and are limited to social interaction and socialization. According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, seniors report spending only 8 to 11% of their free time with family and friends. That is not enough!

A study published in 2019 in the *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* found that older adults who interacted with people beyond their usual social circle of family and close friends were more likely to have higher levels of physical activity, greater positive moods and fewer negative feelings. The more active we are socially, the more we can help focus on what makes us happy and not what makes us depressed.

Healthy teeth and gums are important for a senior's health.

(continued on page 20)



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Two Nigerian Nationals Plead Guilty to Fraud Scheme that Defrauded Elderly in U.S.

Two Nigerian nationals who were extradited to the United States from the United Kingdom pleaded guilty to operating a transnational inheritance fraud scheme.

According to court documents, Jerry Chucks Ozor, 43, and Iheanyichukwu Jonathan Abraham, 44, were part of a group of fraudsters that sent personalized letters to elderly victims in the United States, falsely claiming that the sender was a representative of a bank in Spain and that the recipient was entitled to receive a multimillion-dollar inheritance left for the recipient by a family member who had died years before in Spain.

Victims were told that before they could receive their purported inheritance, they were required to send money for delivery fees, taxes and payments to avoid questioning from government authorities. Victims sent money to the defendants through a complex web of U.S.-based former victims.

The defendants convinced these former victims to receive money from new victims and then forward the fraud proceeds to others (thereby serving as so-called “money mules”). In pleading guilty, the defendants admitted to defrauding over \$6 million from more than 400 victims, many of whom were elderly or otherwise vulnerable.

“The Justice Department’s Consumer Protection Branch will pursue, prosecute and secure the convictions of transnational criminals responsible for defrauding U.S. consumers, wherever they are located. I thank the United Kingdom’s National Crime Agency for its extensive efforts in helping to ensure that these defendants are held accountable here in the United States,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brian M. Boynton, head of the Justice Department’s Civil Division. “The Justice Department and U.S. law enforcement will continue to work closely with law enforcement partners across the globe to bring to justice criminals who attempt to defraud U.S. victims from outside the United States.”

“The U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) has a long tradition of protecting American citizens from these types of schemes and bringing those responsible to justice,” said Postal Inspector in Charge Juan A. Vargas of the USPIS Miami Division. “These guilty pleas are a testament to the dedicated partnership between the Department of Justice’s Consumer Protection Branch, Homeland Security



Investigations (HSI), and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to protect our citizens from these scams.”

“These guilty pleas are a result of the unwavering commitment and countless hours spent by HSI and our law enforcement partners to ensure that this investigation led the extradition of the two Nigerian nationals,” said Special Agent in Charge Scott Brown of HSI Arizona. “Operating a transnational inheritance fraud scheme that targets the elderly is not only morally reprehensible, it also undermines the financial systems we use and depend upon. I thank everyone who worked on this case. These two defendants are one step closer to facing much-deserved prison time.”

On May 18, Ozor pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. Abraham pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud earlier today. Ozor is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Kathleen M. Williams on July 27. Judge Williams will sentence Abraham on

Aug. 9. Both defendants face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

The Consumer Protection Branch, USPIS and HSI are investigating the case.

Senior trial attorney Phil Toomajian and trial attorneys Josh Rothman and Brianna Gardner of the Civil Division’s Consumer Protection Branch are prosecuting the case. The Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida, Europol, and authorities from the U.K., Spain and Portugal all provided critical assistance.

If you or someone you know is age 60 or older and has been a victim of financial fraud, call the National Elder Fraud Hotline: 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311).

This Justice Department hotline, managed by the Office for Victims of Crime, is staffed by experienced professionals who provide personalized support to callers by assessing the needs of the victim and identifying relevant next steps. Case managers will identify appropriate reporting agencies, provide information to callers to assist them in reporting, connect callers directly with appropriate agencies, and provide resources and referrals, on a case-by-case basis.

Reporting is the first step. Reporting can help authorities identify those who commit fraud and reporting certain financial losses due to fraud as soon as possible can increase the likelihood of recovering losses. The hotline is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. English, Spanish and other languages are available.

More information about the department’s efforts to help American seniors is available on its Elder Justice Initiative webpage. For more information about the Consumer Protection Branch and its enforcement efforts, visit its website at www.justice.gov/civil/consumer-protection-branch.

Elder fraud complaints may be filed with the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov or at 877-FTC-HELP. The Justice Department provides a variety of resources relating to elder fraud victimization through its Office for Victims of Crime, which can be reached at www.ovc.gov.

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New TV Show Focuses on Senior Bachelors

After more than 20 years of fostering young love on "The Bachelor," "The Bachelorette" and "Bachelor in Paradise," "The Golden Bachelor" showcases a whole new kind of love story - one for the golden years. On this all-new unscripted series, one hopeless romantic is given a second chance at love in the search for a partner with whom to share the sunset years of life. The women arriving at the mansion have a lifetime of experience, living through love, loss and laughter, hoping for a spark that ignites a future full of endless possibilities. In the end, will our Golden man turn the page to start a new chapter with the woman of his dreams? "The Golden Bachelor" is produced by Warner Bros. Unscripted Television in association with Warner Horizon. For more information, follow "The Golden Bachelor" (#TheGoldenBachelor) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

New FHCN Facility...

(continued from page 5)

The Cutler-Orosi funding for a major expansion of the current health center is expected to be completed in June 2024. The Springville health center is expected to be finished in June 2024. The Visalia Bridge Street Administration construction, which began in late 2022, is expected to be completed in November. The Visalia PACE project, which started in late 2022, is expected to be done in December. "Our consideration for a private placement debt issuance began due to the large number of construction and renovation projects currently underway by FHCN," said Hydash. "Discussions with a placement agent started in late 2022 in lieu of doing multiple individual bank loans for these projects."

AmeriCorps...

(continued from page 7) ual Education Plan for those under age 22, or an Individual Program Plan for those 22 and over. These plans are developed during annual meetings with the individual being served, their family members, CVRC case manager and teacher/site supervisor, etc. Progress on prior year goals are assessed and new goals are set for the coming year.

"Volunteers give their assigned individuals that extra one-on-one time and attention they wouldn't otherwise have to help them reach these goals by focusing on the smaller, day-to-day steps it takes to get there," said Martens. "Volunteers make their presence purposeful in other ways as well, such as modeling healthy social behaviors and boundaries, being available to listen, mentor and encourage, and being a consistent positive person in the lives of those they serve. This has a ripple effect to the other children in class and on the school campus, who gravitate to the 'grandmas' for some attention or a much needed pat on the back/high five or hug."

Reasons for Volunteering

Martens started with CVRC in 1990 as a case manager and has been working with the organization in some capacity ever since. "I continue to do this because I believe in the program design, to create a win-win situation which benefits everyone involved - from our lower income seniors, the children and adults they serve, and the teachers and site supervisors who open their doors to us," she explained. "More than that though, I keep doing this because it's an honor. Each of the volunteers is a testament to how much someone with so little can give so much when it comes from the heart. Each of them is a blessing to me, to the program and to the individuals they serve. I have come to feel very protective of my group and strive to do what I can to give as much to them as they give to others."



Cricket Walters (at left) with a now-former volunteer, Joy.

Cricket Walters has been with AmeriCorps for more than 13 years. "A really good friend of mine was a Foster Grandparent and told me, 'You get paid for it!'" said Walters. "I didn't care about getting paid; I just wanted to do it." Before working with AmeriCorps, she had been volunteering time as a foster grandparent at El Diamante School in Visalia. She had also been giving her time - for 22 years - to the Miracle League, an organization that runs a softball league for mentally or physically challenged children and adults eight weeks a year. She still works with them, saying with pride that, "We had 14 teams this year." She enjoys being a Foster Grandparent and she likes those she works with.

"I think it's better than being a 'foster grandparent' in the school system, she explained. "You have a better chance to work with more people - with the adults who need it as well as the children who need it. "They're wonderful people," she added. "They might have a disability, but they're supergreat." Walters also enjoys how AmeriCorps keeps her busy. "If I just stayed at home, I probably would have been dead by now," she said. "I have to be active all the time." For more information about AmeriCorps, including the tax-free monthly stipend offered to qualifying individuals, call (559) 738-2207 or visit www.cvrc.org/senior-corps.

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Isolation can put someone's mental health at risk.

Potential Mental Health Problems for Older Adults

We live in an era where people talk openly about mental health more than ever before. And yet, according to Mental Health America, 68% of older adults know little or nothing about depression.

It's a statistic that's particularly troubling as seniors are prone to a variety of factors unique to their demographic that can put them at risk for a mental health concern:

- The passing of a spouse, partner, sibling(s), family members or long-time friends;
- Concerns about their own health, both physical and cognitive;
- Fear of falling;
- Isolation and loneliness among older adults who live alone;
- Side effects from medications; and
- Concerns about losing independence.

It's important for loved ones to pay careful attention to the possibility of mental health concerns in older adults. It could come quickly in the aftermath of a big life change, or simply grow gradually over time. Among the warning signs:

- Heightened stress or worry;
- Increased negativity, anger or irritability;
- Feelings of hopelessness;
- Trouble sleeping;
- Changes in appetite;
- New or unexplained physical symptoms, such as muscle tension or pain, shaking or sweating; and
- Deterioration in hygiene.

If you notice a change in demeanor in a loved one, particularly if it persists, then it's worth starting a conversation.

It's also important to involve their physician, who can track physical changes, reconsider

medications and has knowledge of their history. A physician might also be able to recommend a trusted mental health specialist.

Along with involving professionals, there are a few things you can do to help your loved one:

- Encourage them to start, or increase, a physical fitness program, which can have a tangible effect on mental health for people of all ages;
- Re-ignite their interest in a long-time hobby or passion; or
- Join your loved one in a community volunteer project. Find a cause important to them and help at events.

Mental Health

If you have a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease or dementia and their condition is progressing, it's important to be as aware of their mental health as other symptoms, and work with an expert to help them.

The National Institute of Mental Health has criteria for diagnosing depression in those with memory loss, which along with changes in mood include two of the following symptoms occurring over a period of weeks, or even longer:

- Isolation, and withdrawing from activities and social opportunities;
- Changes in appetite;
- Poor sleep and increased fatigue;
- Increased agitation or irritability;
- Excessive guilt; or
- Recurring thoughts or discussion of death.

This article is courtesy of Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia. To learn more about their wellness programming or community, or to book a tour, visit prestigecare.com/Visalia or call (559) 735-0828.

CALENDAR

(continued from page 13)

Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11:30 a.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

Tuesday, August 22 - Professional Summit for Senior Living Professionals

The Aging Network California will host this event at the Wyndham Hotel in Visalia. (For more information, see "Aging Network California to Host Professional Summit in Visalia" at www.thegoodlivesv.com.)

Tuesday, August 22 - Medicare Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program

HICAP will host this event, featuring free and objective counseling, at the Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, from noon to 1 p.m. For more info, call 1-800-434-0222.

Thursday, August 24 - Summer Lovin' Dance

This event, featuring live music by Ruth & the Kernel, will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$7 per person. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

September 13-17 - Tulare County Fair

The 2022 Tulare County Fair will feature new attractions, live entertainment, the popular Destruction Derby, fun fair food, livestock competitions, "The Central Valley's Makers Market" and more. For more information, visit www.tcfair.org or call (559) 686-4707.

Friday, October 6 - Love Your Neighbor - 14th Annual Celebration

Hands in the Community is sponsoring this event at the Visalia Convention Center. For more information, call (559) 625-3822, ext. 100.

November 4-5 - Visalia Senior Games

The first Senior Games in the South Valley since the pandemic will be held the first weekend of November. (For more information, see article on page 1.)

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is Tuesday, August 15th



Alta Healthcare District donated \$73,992 to support its Senior Services and Meals on Wheels programs in the South Valley.

Alta Healthcare District Grant to Combat Local Food Insecurity

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) received a \$73,992 grant from Alta Healthcare District to support its Senior Services and Meals on Wheels programs. Funds will be used for the purchase of meals provided to eligible seniors aged 60 and older residing in the Alta Healthcare District, which includes the communities of London, Monson, Sultana, Orosi, Cutler, Yettem and Dinuba.

"We are extremely grateful for the generous support and continued partnership of the Alta Healthcare District," said Jerel Dutton, assistant director of senior services at CSET. "Together we help keep local seniors from experiencing food insecurity while connecting them to essential resources that support their quality of life."

CSET operates eight senior centers in Tulare County, including the Cutler Senior Center at 12691 Ave. 408. It is anticipated that the Cutler Senior Center will gradually reach an average of 400 hot meals per month in 2023, including an additional 600 frozen meals delivered to seniors in the Alta District.

Hot lunches are provided

to local seniors at the center on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 11:30 a.m.

In addition to nutritious meals, seniors are provided with supplemental food, social contact, monitoring of well-being by trained CSET staff, and more.

To learn more about the Meals on Wheels program and CSET Senior Services, call 1-800-321-2462 or visit www.cset.org/senior-services.

Chronic Illnesses...

(continued from page 16)

According to the CDC, 25% of adults over 65 have no natural teeth. Oral health care, checkups and cleanings need to be a priority. It's not just about preserving your teeth and making it easier to eat, it is also how we perceive ourselves and self-care.

As you age, your mouth tends to become dryer and cavities are more difficult to prevent. Abscesses and infections are more common which can lead to life threatening issues. Proper oral care should be a senior healthcare priority.

Living the best and health-

iest life we can is very important. We are most likely to have issues with one or more chronic diseases as we age, but being proactive and focused on our physical and mental wellbeing is important to live a happy and fulfilled life.

Kimberly Jensen has been working with Quail Park as a Senior Resource Advocate for over ten years and has helped hundreds of families find solutions to their senior problems. If you have a question, you can send it to her at KimberlyJ@QPCypress.com or call (559) 737-7443.

Visalia Medical Clinic (VMC), a group of 62 physicians and other health care providers, became part of Adventist Health Physicians Network on May 1.

"In partnering with Adventist Health, along with their four hospitals and more than 60 medical offices in the Valley, it expands our patients' access to comprehensive care in Hanford, Tulare and other locations, in addition to Visalia," said Angela Pap, M.D., VMC board chair and president. "Adventist Health is also a multi-state health system, which improves our ability to grow our services as needed in the future."

The transition includes three facilities in Visalia: the Visalia Medical Clinic and Sleep Lab on West Hillsdale Avenue, the Aesthetic Center on Avenida de los Robles and the Physical Rehabilitation Center on North Akers Street.

VMC providers will continue to contract with the same major health plans, so there will be no disruption in care for current patients, said Dr. Pap. Adventist Health is also expanding hospital contracts with health



Pictured left to right are: Dr. Ralph Kingsford, Visalia Medical Clinic executive director; Dr. Angela Pap, Visalia Medical Clinic board chair and president; and Dr. Raul Ayala, Adventist Health chief ambulatory medical officer.

plans to ensure patients have access to hospital, surgical and outpatient services in the Valley.

"We're thrilled that Visalia Medical Clinic is joining our network of physicians," said Gurvinder Kaur, M.D., chief medical officer for Adventist Health hospitals in Hanford, Reedley, Selma and Tulare. "These physicians and providers are known for their excellent, compassionate care, and we're honored to serve with them."

In addition to expanding access to care for Visalia patients, the partnership with Adventist Health will open options for patients in other communities to see the Visalia providers, said Raul Ayala, M.D., ambulatory medical officer for Adventist Health. "Patients benefit when they have more options and access."

Adventist Health also operates hospitals in Bakersfield, Delano and 14 other California cities, in addition to Oregon and Hawaii.

For more information, call (559) 738-7500

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The Pioneer at Mooney Grove Park in about 1960



The salvaged sign that once stood in front of The Pioneer statue (Photo courtesy Tulare County Museum)

The Pioneer Is Gone – Something Should Be Done!

In 1915, the famous American artist Solon Borglum revealed to the world a statue he called “The Pioneer.” It stood at the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco at the entrance to the Court of Flowers. It depicted a “triumphant American” man on horseback with a buffalo skin, carrying a rifle and an axe. It represented a rugged pioneer advancing forward on his way to winning the West.

Nearby at the exhibition stood James Earle Fraser’s “The End of the Trail”, a statue that many considered a companion piece to The Pioneer. The Fraser statue showed a weary Native American warrior on an equally tired horse, and to Fraser it represented his sadness that native people were being “pushed” into the Pacific Ocean.

After the Pan-Pacific Exposition was over, many of the statues on display were offered free of charge to groups willing to pay the cost of crating and shipping. The Tulare County Forestry Board, which was the agency responsible for the administration of county parks, applied to receive The Pioneer statue. Thomas Jacob led the effort to acquire it for the county saying, “That is the one piece of statuary we want...”

On April 7, 1916, the statue was awarded to Tulare County.

The \$150 charge was paid and on May 2nd, several crates of statue pieces arrived by flat-car at the Visalia Southern Pacific Depot. They were delivered to the recently acquired Mooney Park. Damaged segments were repaired and all were assembled, and in November 1916, the work was finished. The completed statue was mounted on a pedestal and went on display at the park entrance.

For over six decades, The Pioneer was the pride of Tulare County as it welcomed visitors to the beautiful park. During that time, the plaster of paris statue was exposed to rain, fog, heat, frost and even abuse from visitors. County workers painted, varnished, sealed and repaired it as best they could, trying to hold it together, a very difficult job considering the statue was originally made to be temporary.

On Sunday, May 25, 1980, a 6.2 magnitude earthquake hit Mammoth Lakes, California, northeast of Tulare County. The county felt the 6.2 magnitude jolt and suffered only minor damage, but the tremor proved to be disastrous for the 64-year-old statue.

No one witnessed the collapse, but by Tuesday morning, May 27th, the statue was found in a pile of rubble, destroyed beyond repair.



Some of the rubble after the statue collapsed in 1980

Dusting Off History
with Terry Ommen



The small hill near the entrance where The Pioneer statue stood



The pedestal as it appears today

So for the last 43 years, only the statue pedestal is on display perched on a picturesque little knoll just inside the park entrance. But the years have not been kind to it and it is falling into serious disrepair. The concrete is cracking, and the ground squirrels continue to undermine it structurally.

We lost The Pioneer and we are slowly but steadily losing its pedestal. How long should we be forced to watch the indignity of it falling apart? How long should Mooney Grove be with-

out a welcoming entrance feature?

The site is special and calls out for attention. Thomas Jacob had a vision 107 years ago. Where are the visionaries today? We have a wonderful opportunity to add to the park’s beauty, so let’s take advantage of it!

Note: In 1919, The End of the Trail statue also was acquired by Tulare County and, for over six decades, Mooney Grove Park was home to both of these historic pieces.

FDA Approves Drug to Treat Agitation Associated with Dementia

On May 11, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the supplemental approval of Rexulti (brexpiprazole) oral tablets for the treatment of agitation associated with dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease. This is the first FDA-approved treatment option for this indication.

“Agitation is one of the most common and challenging aspects of care among patients with dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease. ‘Agitation’ can include symptoms ranging from pacing or restlessness to verbal and physical aggression,” said Tiffany Farchione, M.D., director of the Division of Psychiatry in the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. “These symptoms are leading causes of assisted living or nursing home placement and have been associated with accelerated disease progression.”

Dementia is a serious and debilitating neurological condition characterized by progressive decline in one or more cognitive domains in the brain. Dementia can seriously impair an individual’s ability to function independently. Many people living with dementia require permanent at-home or residential care.

Alzheimer’s disease is the

most common cause of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder affecting more than 6.5 million Americans.

Patients with dementia often have behavioral and psychological disturbances. Agitation is among the most persistent, complex, stressful and costly aspects of care among patients with behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

The effectiveness of Rexulti for the treatment of agitation associated with dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease was determined through two 12-week, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, fixed-dose studies.

In these studies, patients were required to have a probable diagnosis of Alzheimer’s dementia; have a score between 5 to 22 on the Mini-Mental State Examination, a test that detects whether a person is experiencing cognitive impairment; and exhibit the type, frequency and severity of agitation behaviors that require medication. Trial participants ranged between 51 to 90 years of age.

In the first study, patients received 1 or 2 milligrams (mg) of Rexulti; in the second study patients received 2 or 3 mg of Rexulti. In both studies, pa-

tients who received 2 mg or 3 mg of Rexulti showed statistically significant and clinically meaningful improvements in the frequency of certain agitative behaviors compared to patients in the placebo group at week 12.

The recommended starting dosage for the treatment of agitation associated with dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease is 0.5 mg taken once daily on days 1 to 7. Patients should increase the dosage on days 8 through 14 to 1 mg once daily, and on day 15 to 2 mg once daily. The recommended target dose is 2 mg once daily. The dosage can be increased to the maximum recommended daily dosage of 3 mg once daily after at least 14 days, based on clinical response and tolerability.

The most common side effects among patients with agitation associated with demen-

tia due to Alzheimer’s disease include headache, dizziness, urinary tract infection, nasopharyngitis and sleep disturbances (both somnolence and insomnia).


Rexulti will retain the boxed warning for medications in this class that elderly patients with dementia-related psychosis treated with antipsychotic drugs are at an increased risk of death.

The FDA granted this application Fast Track designation. Fast Track is a process designed to facilitate the development and expedite the review of drugs to treat serious conditions and fill an unmet medical need. The purpose is to get important new drugs to the patient earlier.

The supplemental approval of Rexulti was granted to Otsuka Pharmaceutical Company Ltd., and Lundbeck Inc.

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Tulare County Supervisors Present Commendation to Maria Grijalva

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors presented Maria Grijalva with a Resolution of Commendation for receiving the Patient Engagement Award from the National Kidney Foundation. Many of her friends, family and close kidney patient friends attended the presentation. “I have worked almost all of my transplant years helping and educating people about kidney disease and being proactive about their kidney health,” said Grijalva, who also celebrated 36 years of successful living following her kidney transplant from her brother, John Arriola.

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The senior fitness area at Ralston Tower Park in Modesto. (Photo by by Jason Ortega, parks project coordinator for the City of Modesto)

The Idea of a 'Senior Playground' in the South Valley Attracts Interest

The May/June issue of *The Good Life* included an article about senior playgrounds that suggested readers consider whether it would be a good idea to have one in the South Valley.

We followed up the article by contacting various local officials to ask for their opinions – supportive or not. We received the following responses:

"I think it is a great idea. Location is the key," wrote Tulare County Supervisor Larry Micari. "I am forwarding this to our general services manager who oversees our county parks to see if there is anything they can implement."

"We can definitely look into this," responded Tulare County Supervisor Pete Vander Poel. "I am very supportive of any effort that benefits our seniors through these types of efforts."

"This looks like a great idea to create an outdoor space for seniors in our communities with some targeted activities," wrote Dennis Townsend, Chairman of

the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. "I think this could be a good fit for county or city parks. Something to pursue in my opinion."

"It is definitely an interesting idea and something worth taking a closer look at," wrote Visalia Vice Mayor Brett Taylor.

"I think senior playgrounds are a great idea," responded Hanford Parks and Community Services Director Brad Albert. "We are currently involved in community engagement for the expansion of Hidden Valley Park, and I will include the senior playground as an amenity people can vote for. We have two more in-person events and an ongoing online survey."

"...this is very interesting, and we will explore developing this amenity in the City of Visalia Park System," wrote Visalia Recreation Manager Laurissa Roggenkamp. "It's an item that we will seek community input on."

Please send your comments to: editor@kastcompany.com.

Alzheimer's Walk...

(continued from page 1)

The colors of the Promise Garden flowers represent people's connection to Alzheimer's – their personal reasons to end the disease.

Purple is for those who have lost someone to dementia, yellow is for people caring for someone with dementia, orange is for those who advocate for the cause, and blue is for people who have dementia.

Registration for the Walk to End Alzheimer's (for those who don't register online) begins at 8 a.m. A 15-minute ceremony is scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m.

Although the 2021 walk at Mooney Grove Park, the first since 2019, exceeded expectations in both participation and money raised, last year's walk did not meet its goal of raising \$45,000. Only \$25,000 was raised.

This year's goal is \$24,000 and more than \$5,000 has already been raised, mainly through fundraisers, according to McCarthy.

The Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research.

To sign up as a team captain or team member, or to register to walk as an individual, visit alz.org/walk. People still concerned about COVID can still



Pictured (l-r) are: Heather McCarthy, walk manager; Markus Haggglund, Visalia Rawhide assistant general manager; and Sherrie Wallace, former walk manager and current volunteer.

participate by walking around their own neighborhoods.

"They can walk wherever they feel comfortable," said McCarthy.

There are also volunteer opportunities, including setting up and taking down booths for walk day, working in the booths, helping with registration, and educating the community about the disease and the walk at events and club meetings.

The committee is also looking for "people to help us make phone calls to get people to register and to reach out to those who helped us in the past," said McCarthy.

For more information, visit alz.org/walk or call (320) 444-3439.

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Do your part to protect yourself, your family & your community.

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Fix these common mosquito water sources or dump them weekly for a bite-free summer.



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Fill empty **plant trays** with soil/sand or perlite



Place window screens over **yard drains**



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- Verbal assaults, derogatory names or insults
- Threats, intimidation, coercion, isolation

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ELDER ABUSE:

Withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, depression, tense relationship with caregiver

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