



IN THIS ISSUE: Back to Normal, New Health Clinic in Tulare, Chinatown Pretty, Alaskan dog sled team, Netflix presents "I Care a Lot"

# The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume VIII, Number 2 • May/June 2021



## No Local Events to Mark Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Tulare County will be commemorating World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, but there will be no in-person events this year due to existing precautions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Kings County District Attorney's Office also has no in-person events planned.

"As an office, we hope to start doing in-person bilingual awareness and educational events soon," said Nicole Burnham, Tulare County District Attorney (TCDA) elder abuse victim advocate.

"Even though we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel and a return to 'normal,' we cannot move on from physical, financial or neglectful abuse that may have happened during the very tense moments of the last year," said Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward. "There is still time to report that abuse, and I encourage seniors, their families, or caregivers to do so."

Technology and media have been powerful tools in reaching people, and the TCDA is planning another multi-media campaign to educate seniors about abuse and how to report it.

"If you suspect elder abuse, you can contact law enforcement or call the County Adult Protective Services toll-free, 24-hour-a-day hotline at 1-877-657-3092 to report confidentially," Ward said.

Since 2020, the TCDA has filed more than 70 cases of elder abuse.

For more information about elder abuse, visit the National Center on Elder Abuse website at [www.ncea.acl.gov](http://www.ncea.acl.gov)

In case of an emergency, always call 911.

## Most Local Seniors Now Vaccinated

Following the increase in the supply of COVID-19 vaccines in Tulare and Kings counties, most local residents who are 50 or older have now received at least one vaccine.

It also helps that seniority has been a factor in determining when people can receive their vaccines.

As of April 20, more than 38,500 vaccines were given to Tulare County residents 65 and over. A majority of county residents in this age group have now had at least one shot, according to Carrie Monteiro, Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency public information officer.

She added that almost the same number of residents ages 50-64 have received the vaccine.

The numbers in Kings County also show that most seniors have had at least one shot. Of the 56,241 vaccines administered, almost 25% went to those 65+ and almost 30% were given to those 50-64.

"We're doing what we can to make it easily accessible to anyone and everyone who wants to get the vaccine," said Monteiro. "We're shifting more vaccination opportunities to evenings for individuals who



COVID-19 vaccines being given at COS in Visalia.

work during the day."

The recent extremely rare but very well publicized issues with the Johnson & Johnson vaccines "really didn't hinder our operation too significantly," according to Monteiro.

"For all of the 233,000 doses administered in the county, only about 2% have been Johnson & Johnson" she said. "We were able to easily change to Pfizer."

To make an appointment for a vaccine in Tulare County, call (559) 685-2260 Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

In Kings County, visit [www.kingscovidinfo.com](http://www.kingscovidinfo.com) for vaccination information.

Appointments can be made at <https://myturn.ca.gov>, which also provides information.

The CA COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-422-4255 also offers assistance.

## Vacation after Vaccination?

On April 2, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its travel guidance for fully vaccinated people to reflect the latest evidence and science.

A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the last recommended dose of vaccine.

Fully vaccinated people can travel within the United States and do not need COVID-19 testing or post-travel self-quarantine as long as they continue to take COVID-19 precautions while traveling - wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, socially distancing, and washing hands frequently.

They can travel internationally without getting a COVID-19 test before travel unless required by the destination.

Fully vaccinated people do not need to self-quarantine after returning to the United States, unless required by a state or local jurisdiction.

They must, however, still have a negative COVID-19 test

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## Annual Senior Resource Expo Set for May 22

The Annual Senior Resource Expo will be held at Tulare Community Church, 1820 N. Gem St., Tulare, from 8:30 a.m. to noon on May 22.

Organized by the Senior Care Organization, this year's event will feature a financial planning presentation from Steen & Associates, and the Tulare Police Department will share tips on how to recognize and avoid scams.

Popular among older adults and their caregivers, the Senior Resource Expo will again offer information about an array of services and activities for the senior care community. The event will feature exhibits and presentations, as well as music, food, and volunteer opportunities for seniors and their caregivers.

The Senior Care Organization has a long history of sup-



The Senior Resource Expo brings seniors and caregivers together with a variety of service providers and industry experts.

porting the needs of seniors in the South Valley. The Senior Resource Expo was created to provide seniors with the information and resources they need to stay well and live quality lives.

This event is also a resource for anyone who is caring for a loved one. Representatives from different organizations that help with seniors and their caregivers will be on hand to provide information on housing, healthcare,

in-home services, transportation and more. A raffle ticket, a continental breakfast and a lunch are included with admission..

There are two opportunities for the public to participate in this event. The first option is in-person with limited access to exhibitors - attendees will receive a packet with information from those exhibitors. The second option is to attend virtually

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Scheduled to make presentations at the online forum are (left to right): Amanda Lawrence, project director for the Master Plan for Aging; Edie Yau, Alzheimer’s Association diversity and inclusion director; and Joy Moreno, deputy director of the Fresno County Department of Social Services. At right is moderator Mark Keppler of the Maddy Institute.

# Online Forum to Focus on Building Age-Friendly Valley

“Shaping Our Communities and Future” will be the theme of a virtual forum scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, May 11. The goal of this free online event is for community leaders, professionals, and older adults and their families to discuss building an age-friendly Central Valley. “The virtual event will be structured into two parts,” said Dr. Helen Miltiades, who is coordinating the forum. “The first part will feature key speakers on the (California) Master Plan for Aging and what it means to create age-friendly communities.” Scheduled to speak at the event are: Amanda Lawrence, project director for the Master Plan for Aging; Edie Yau, Alzheimer’s Association diversity and inclusion director; and Joy Moreno, deputy director of the Fresno County Department of Social Services. The event will be moderated by Mark Keppler of the Maddy Institute. “The second part of our event will be a transition to a group community discussion, consisting of our local representatives and leaders of our aging community who will discuss various issues and share personal life stories related to a need for an age-friendly community,” Miltiades said. California’s Master Plan for

Aging will include different priorities in the Central Valley than in other parts of the state, explained Dr. Miltiades. “For example, one issue is that we have more rural communities, so how do you handle transportation?” she said. Although much of the focus of this year’s forum will be on the needs of seniors, Miltiades noted that the Master Plan affects everyone in the state. “The changes you make for older people also impact younger people,” she said. “A safe community is considered an age-friendly community.” Miltiades helped coordinate a similar event two years ago, an in-person event at the Veterans Hall in Clovis that attracted 50 attendees and resulted in a report on the needs of Central Valley seniors being sent to the governor and to the SCAN Foundation. Among the organizations involved in the planning of the event are Agewell Fresno, Home Instead, the Alzheimer’s Association and the Central California Training Academy. To participate in the forum or for more information, visit [www.eventbrite.com/e/aging-together-tickets-147640953065](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/aging-together-tickets-147640953065) (or click on link in this article at [www.TheGoodLifeSV.com](http://www.TheGoodLifeSV.com)) or email Helen Miltiades at [hmilt@agewellfresno.com](mailto:hmilt@agewellfresno.com)

## VETERANS CORNER

### California College Fee Waiver Program

Are you aware of the California College Fee Waiver (CFW) Program, an education benefit available to the spouses and children of U.S. veterans through the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). The Fee Waiver runs through the academic year, beginning with each fall semester. Once eligibility criteria is met, dependents can get their tuition fees waived when attending any California community college, California State University or University of California campus.



Ken Cruickshank

So, who is eligible and what are the criteria? The state offers Plans A through D, but we will focus on Plans: A and B. **Plan A:** You must be the spouse, registered domestic partner (RDP), child, or unmarried surviving spouse of a wartime veteran who is totally disabled due to a service-related illness or injury or who has died from a service-connected cause, or any dependent of a former POW or veteran who was declared MIA. Under Plan A, there is no income limit, but the child of a veteran must be between 14 and 27 years of age (up to age 30 if the child is also a veteran). There is no age limit for a spouse or RDP. This benefit is not available to students who are also eligible for Chapter 35 VA benefits, unless the Chapter 35 benefit is waived. Additionally, surviving spouses or RDPs must not have remarried. The veteran’s date of death or date of 100% disability rating has to have occurred before the child’s 21st birthday. **Plan B:** You must be the child of a veteran who has a permanent service-related disability or who had a service-related disability at the time of death, or who died from service-related causes. Under Plan B, there is no age limit, but the child’s income plus the value of parental support must not exceed the federal poverty level of \$13,465 (this figure may be adjusted annually). The academic year benefit is based on the previous year’s annual income. This benefit can be used in conjunction with Chapter 35 benefits – wartime service is not a requirement – and the benefit is only available to the children of a veteran. To document the child’s income, you may use either a copy of the current year’s income tax return (either the 1040 or the 540) or a letter of non-filing provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The IRS usually starts issuing these letters after June 15 of each year. Be advised that without all the requirements, we cannot process the request. Applications are available here in the office or you can download it from [www.tchhsa.org/vso](http://www.tchhsa.org/vso) and follow the California Fee Waiver link. Once completed, just return the application to us, along with proof of income (if enrolling under Plan B) and proof of your relationship to the veteran (such as a copy of your birth, marriage or domestic partnership certificate). Once the CVSO receives all the required information, a benefit letter will be mailed to you and to the appropriate school within two weeks.

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@tularehhsa.org](mailto:KCruicks@tularehhsa.org).

# The Good Life

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# Life Starts Getting Back to Normal for South Valley Seniors

With COVID-19 vaccines now readily available in Tulare and Kings counties, and most seniors in the two counties having been vaccinated, life is slowly getting back to normal in the South Valley.

COVID-19 is still causing many events for local seniors to be cancelled or postponed, but things are starting to change.

## Senior Resource Expo

After the cancellation of last year's event, the 2021 Senior Resource Expo will be held at Tulare Community Church, 1820 N. Gem St., Tulare, from 8:30 a.m. to noon on May 22. (See article on page 1.)

## Visalia Rawhide Baseball

The Visalia Rawhide, the reigning California League



Mary Ann Hensley, Betty Yates, David Noel and Nadine Reindl celebrate their vaccinations at Sierra Hills in Porterville.

champions, will play a full baseball schedule in 2021. For more information, including the complete season schedule and COVID-19 regulations at the ballpark, visit [www.milb.com/visalia](http://www.milb.com/visalia)

## Visalia Players

And while we are sharing good news (even if it's not about things exclusive to seniors), the Visalia Players have announced the first show in their 2021 season, a cabaret featuring a wide range of song and dance, including numbers from "Wicked," "Chicago," "Shrek" and "Mean Girls." For reservations or more information, visit [www.visaliaplayers.org](http://www.visaliaplayers.org)

## Visalia Senior Games

More than 500 athletes 50 and older competed in 13 events at the 2019 Visalia Senior Games. An even bigger turnout was expected for the following games, which were originally scheduled for two weekends in March 2020, but postponed.

Unfortunately, there is no good news to report at this time about the status of the 2021 Senior Games. Possible dates need to be approved and "we haven't made any proposals yet," said Laurissa Roggenkamp, recreation director for the Visalia Department of Parks and Recreation.

## Senior Day in the Park

This annual event at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia for seniors,



The residents at Quail Park at Shannon Ranch in Visalia have a lot to catch up on now that things are getting back to normal.

their families and caregivers, will probably be cancelled for 2021, according to Albert Cendejas, assistant director at CSET.

"There are safety and health concerns, not just for seniors but also for staff," he explained.

However, Cendejas didn't completely rule out the possibility that the event, which combines entertainment, food and informational booths, could be held late this year, "if we have an opportunity where the numbers (of COVID-19 cases and vaccines) look good and the stars align."

## Visalia Senior Center

The Visalia Senior Center's drive-thru lunch is expected to continue. Lunches are available for pick-up/to-go Monday-Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meals are \$4.50 for Visalia seniors (55+) and must be re-

served by 12:30 p.m. the previous business day.

Menus are online at [www.liveandplayvisalia.com](http://www.liveandplayvisalia.com) and on the Visalia Parks and Recreation Facebook page. To reserve a lunch or for more information, call (559) 713-4481.

## Tulare Senior Center

"Even though the county has entered a new tier, the Tulare City Council is being cautious with our reopening," said Karie Rodriguez, City of Tulare senior administrative assistant. "We are hoping to begin youth recreation mid-June and hopefully senior recreation will follow shortly thereafter, however, no date has been set."

Seniors with reservations can still drive up to pick up a meal for a \$3 donation, Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m. to noon.

(continued on next page)



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# Back to Normal...

(continued from page 3)

The center is still delivering lunches to the homes of seniors who used bus or dial-a-ride transportation, and frozen meals to Meals on Wheels clients.

For program updates, call (559) 685-2330.

### Alzheimer's Association

The local Alzheimer's Association chapter continues to offer educational programs and support for caregivers online.

For a complete schedule, visit [www.alz.org/socal](http://www.alz.org/socal) and scroll down to Events. The Educational Programs link leads to online events and activities.

### Flu Season

Another bit of good news is that the recent flu season was "very, very minimal," according to Carrie Monteiro, Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency public information officer. "We saw very limited flu cases, mainly because of the precautions in place for

COVID-19."

### The Lifestyle Center

The Lifestyle Center, a medically-based fitness and rehabilitation facility and a division of Kaweah Delta Health Care District, reopened on March 17.

Hours have been temporarily modified during this time to: 4:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Friday; and 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

### ImagineU Museum

"We are preparing to open on May 1," announced Katy Young, ImagineU Museum's executive director. "We will also have a ribbon-cutting on May 14."

Before the pandemic, the museum launched its grandparent membership program. For more information, visit [www.imagineumuseum.org](http://www.imagineumuseum.org).

### Sierra Hills

Sierra Hills, a Holiday Senior Living Community in Porterville announced that, "We are over 80% vaccinated as a community."



Seniors are Wii bowling again! It was residents vs. staff at Quail Park at Shannon Ranch in Visalia. Residents won. Pictured (l-r) are: Barbara Artis, Bill Ward, Rita Ward and Frank Walker.

"This, along with the change to the color tier system in Tulare County, has allowed Sierra Hills to move closer to pre-COVID activities," reported Robin Martin, community sales leader. "Family and friends are welcome to come visit without an appointment, our dining room has been expanded to seat 80

people with our normal dining services, and full activities resume to include live entertainment."

### Epilogue

With other senior communities enjoying similar progress, maybe life really is getting back to normal in the South Valley.

## Senior Resource Expo...

(continued from page 1)

via YouTube or Facebook live-stream. (You must be registered to receive the link.)

This year's event incorporates several changes in response to the pandemic. The facility allows for social distancing. There will be hand sanitation stations, and masks will be available. This year's lunch will

not be a buffet, but instead a packaged lunch will be handed to attendees.

Early registrants will be entered to win prizes at the event and receive updates about the event. To register, or for general information or exhibitor inquiries, call (559) 667-9601 or email [seniorcaretkc@gmail.com](mailto:seniorcaretkc@gmail.com).

(See ad on page 6.)

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The Open Arms House (at left) is designed to provide a home-like atmosphere, including in the Living Room (pictured above).

# Open Arms House 'at a Pivotal Point Right Now'

By Larry Kast

You could sense the concern in Sabrina Jimenez’ voice as she spoke.

“Most people aren’t familiar with hospice and all that it has to offer,” she said. “Most people don’t talk about end-of-life care until they need it, or they are put in a position to make a medical decision for a loved one.”

But the executive director of the Open Arms House in Visalia aims to change that, especially now that the six-bed home tucked away in a Central Visalia neighborhood has reopened its doors after a temporary closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Open Arms House, lo-

cated on the corner of County Center and Iris Avenue, is unique to the community and the only non-profit facility of its kind between Southern and Northern California.

Licensed as a Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE), the Open Arms House is part of a national movement to help improve the end-of-life experience for individuals and their families in their communities and throughout the United States.

These types of homes are designed for and focused on end-of-life care, staffed by trained caregivers and supported by local volunteers. Currently, there are only two similar facilities in California, in Santa

Barbara and Torrance.

While its rates are among the lowest in the area, and it is known to provide care on a sliding fee scale, the Open Arms House receives no Medicare, Medi-Cal or private insurance reimbursement. It relies heavily on residents and their families to pay to the best of their ability, as well as donations and support from the community

That hasn’t stopped Jimenez and her staff from being at the forefront in their approach to care. But when the COVID-19 pandemic started, the tough decision was made to take precautionary measures and temporarily close its doors, an especially tough decision since at the time they were almost at

capacity. “It was a very difficult decision for us,” she said.

“We had to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents, family members, and staff,” she said, noting that the myriad of county, state and federal healthcare oversight agencies would give ever-changing direction in what was, and was not, allowed to happen during the pandemic.

When the facility reopened on October 6, all required measures and guidelines were in place to protect anyone who entered the home. Today, the facility that features six private rooms, each uniquely decorated in different themes, is currently allowing two family mem-

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## Fun for Seniors at Home

### Homebound Senior Social Network

**Good news for homebound seniors!** Reconnect with old friends and make new friends while participating in an assortment of fun activities that will help relieve feelings of isolation and depression. From the comfort of your home, participate in activities by telephone. There is no fee to enroll. Participants must be 60 or older and reside in Tulare County.

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# Kaweah Delta Opens Tulare Clinic, Expands Visalia Emergency Department

On April 5, Kaweah Delta held a grand opening for its new Tulare Health Clinic, which will provide access to care in one of the most clinically underserved counties in California.

The new 10,800-square-foot clinic is located at 1000 N. Mooney Blvd. in Tulare, the former IRS building on the corner of Prosperity Avenue and Mooney Boulevard. It has 20 exam rooms, a lab onsite for patients, and three behavioral health rooms for therapy, psychiatry and eventually, child psychiatry.

"We're very excited about our holistic care model of integrating behavioral health with the medical care of our patients," said Ryan Gates, vice president of population health for Kaweah Delta. "We imbed community care coordinators within all of our locations to work as team with the patient and the care providers to not just address the medical needs of our patients, but their social, mental and behavioral health needs as well. We will be expanding access to psychiatry, including child psychiatry, and specialty care later this summer."

"Often times patients who are underserved do not have resources for medical care and many times go without," said Dr. Rogelio Fernandez, the clinic's medical director, noting



Kaweah Delta had a busy April with the opening of its new Tulare Health Clinic (above left) and the completed expansion of its Emergency Department in Visalia (above right).



that 80% of his patients in the area have been Spanish speakers, with the vast majority being farm workers or lower income patients. "The fact that we've opened this clinic is going to provide a place for people to receive the care that they so deserve."

Primary and walk-in care is available to patients from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday at the Tulare Health Clinic. For appointments, visit [www.kaweahdelta.org/tulare](http://www.kaweahdelta.org/tulare) or call (559) 624-6358.

### Visalia Emergency Department Expansion

On April 13, Kaweah Delta Medical Center unveiled its newly expanded Emergency Department to help better serve patients and meet the needs of the more than 90,000 patients seeking care every

year in one of the busiest emergency departments in the state.


"This expansion has been critically needed for a number of years and long-awaited by us and the community," said Gary Herbst, Kaweah Delta CEO. "Emergency care is first and foremost what the community expects from us, but we know it has been frustrating for them, and for us, because of overcrowding. With the opening of this new 'Zone 5' area of our emergency department, we will now have an additional 24 exam rooms in which to care for our emergency department patients."

This is the final phase of expansion of the only trauma center between Bakersfield and Fresno. In two years, the Kaweah Delta emergency department has more than dou-

bled in size, growing from 32 to 73 beds, which includes:

- 48 beds for general emergency care (with four beds designated for pediatric patients and four beds for dialysis patients);
- Nine beds for behavioral health;
- Eight beds for critical care; and
- An eight-bed area where the team can care for patients with minor illnesses and injuries.

Additionally, this final phase increases the waiting area from seating 65 people to more than 100. The waiting area now features flat-screen TVs to help improve communication with patients and visitors by providing them with a unique code to receive real-time updates on the course of their care.




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Toni M. Onkka LCSW is a Clinical Social Worker Specialist with over 25 years of experience. She has a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and a Master of Social Work. She is licensed to practice by the state board in California (LCS 20402).



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Chinatown Pretty uses colorful photographs and personal stories to document senior citizens' street style in six Chinatowns. (All photos on this page are by Andria Lo and featured in Chinatown Pretty.)

# Chinatown Pretty Showcases Fashionable Asian Seniors

By Steve Pastis

*Chinatown Pretty*, published by Chronicle Books, is more than the name of a new book featuring portraits and personal stories of trendsetting seniors in six Chinatowns across North America.

"Chinatown Pretty" is also what people call the distinctive fashion of *pòh pòhs* (grandmothers) and *gùng gungs* (grandfathers). The style is a blend of modern and vintage, handmade and store-bought clothing.

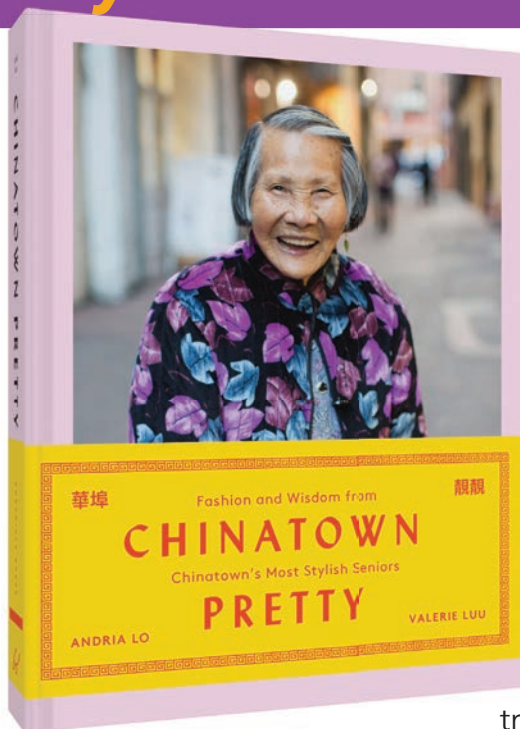
According to the book's photographer Andria Lo and its writer Valerie Luu, the Chinatown Pretty style "combines urban utilitarianism with unexpected sartorial choices that reveal resilience, personal histories, and cultural values."

The book's website, [www.chinatownpretty.com](http://www.chinatownpretty.com), also provides a description of the style, "It's about layers of hand-knit sweaters and puffy coats in the summer, as well as bold floral patterns and baseball caps – sometimes all in one outfit. It combines urban utilitarianism with unexpected sartorial selections that makes the heart go a-flutter."

Andria and Valerie, who met when Valerie had a "pop-up" Vietnamese restaurant and Andria visited to do some freelance food photography, have



"The Bearded Butcher" takes a moment to smile for the book.



been photographing and interviewing some of the most visually intriguing seniors in Chinatowns across North America for several years.

The subjects of the photos also took the time to share the insights and philosophy that helped many of them overcome the challenges of immigration, and the circumstances that inspired them to move to a new continent.

Many of those who live and work in North America's Chinatowns are not Chinese, but instead from Thailand, Vietnam and other countries in Asia. Many are part of families that spent time in South America or Mexico before settling in the U.S. or Canada. There are also a lot of Chinese-Americans who emigrated from Vietnam.

Valerie is a second-generation Vietnamese-American, and Andria is a second generation Chinese-American (via Boston) on her mother's side. Her father immigrated from Hong Kong.

Their book, *Chinatown Pretty*, which has been featured at [Vogue.com](http://Vogue.com) and in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well as in special features on television news shows, is also a self-help book with examples of how to grow old with grace and humor and of course, style.

"The project started in 2014 in San Francisco's Chinatown," Valerie told *The Good Life*. "Andria and I would notice people wearing Nike's and the two-

piece suits they got from Hong Kong.

In addition to San Francisco, the book's photos include those taken in Chinatowns in Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Vancouver.

Valerie and Andria made many of the connections outside of their native Bay Area through Chinese non-profit organizations such as the Chinatown Community Development Center in San Francisco.

"They're focused on the neighborhood so it's not absorbed by the financial district and so it keeps the charm we all know and love," said Andria. "There are similar non-profits in other communities that we would contact and get connections. We would also hit the streets and have magical moments."

What Andria describes as "magical moments" happened during the three hours a day they spent talking to people in the six Chinatowns. Most of the moments, however, weren't especially magical. Valerie reported that she and Andria had "a 90% rejection rate" when they stopped people to talk to them about the book.

"Asian culture tends to be private," she explained.

"The 10% that stopped to chat with us would ask us what drew us to them," said Valerie.

Most of the pictures in *Chinatown Pretty* are what Valerie called "street photos," but some of them were more carefully planned.

"Sometimes we coordinated 'senior photo days' where people would wear their outfits and talk more in depth," she said.

One gentleman was happy to show off his fashionable ensemble, taking special pride in the custom hand-sewn pockets.

"He then lifted up his pant-leg to show us his socks," said Andria.

"There was a gentleman in New York we approached as he sat on a bench," said Valerie. "He took special pride in the



half-inch hem on his sleeves. He said he was a tailor."

He was glad that Andria and Valerie took the time to talk to someone of their grandparents' generation. He then shared a bit of cultural wisdom about getting older, "One day, the sun will set on you."

Andria and Valerie have not decided on their next project, but both are interested in doing things for their community, such as assisting seniors in getting their COVID-19 vaccines.

"I think people are looking for ways to give love to Chinatown," she said.



This woman is Anna Lee, who is proud of more than just her Chinatown Pretty style. Her step-granddaughter Valerie is the writer of Chinatown Pretty.



# 'I Care a Lot' - A Crime Thriller about Financial Elder Abuse

"I Care a Lot," a movie currently showing on Netflix, features a new type of villain, one who bilks seniors. She is very successful at this until she and her partner pick on the wrong target – an elderly woman with connections to a volatile gangster.

"'I Care a Lot' is about a woman named Marla Grayson (played by Academy Award nominee Rosamund Pike) who is a professional guardian," said the film's producer Teddy Schwarzman. "She is supposed to take care of the elderly, but instead she and her partner Fran (Eiza González) are running a scam to essentially lock them up, take over their finances and bleed them dry.

"Marla and Fran are constantly on the lookout for the perfect mark, and believe they find her in a woman named Jennifer Peterson (two-time Academy Award winner Dianne Wiest)," he continued. "They execute their scam seemingly to perfection, only to realize that things aren't as they seem – for Jennifer Peterson is not that sweet old lady. She's hiding something: a deep, dark past and a son named Roman (Golden Globe winner Peter Dinklage) who has some more than shady connections."

"It started when I saw news stories about real-life predatory guardians who game the system and exploit their wards – and I was horrified," explained J Blakeson, who wrote and directed the film. "Imagine opening your door one day and there is a person standing there holding a piece of paper that gives them total



Rosamund Pike plays a new kind of villian in "I Care a Lot." (Photo by Seacia Pavao. Courtesy of Netflix.)

legal power over you. That idea terrified me and seemed very relevant right now. It plugged into themes that I am interested in exploring – themes about the power of authority, about people vs. profit, control vs. freedom, humanity vs. bureaucracy. It reminded me of Kafka's *The Trial*. I knew I had to explore it."

Blakeson also wanted to make a film about ambition, about the moral compromises people are willing to make to gain success and wealth.

"So I started playing with the idea of a story about an ambitious, tenacious guardian who is focused on success and money," he said. "She is focused on her own wants and desires. An entrepreneur who is following in the footsteps of the most successful people in our world right now, gaming the system and bending the rules, but technically staying within the law to get what she wants.

"And I wanted to explore this idea within a framework of a crime thriller because Marla sort of feels like a gangster to me," he continued. "She abuses the vulnerable for power and profit, but she is a legal gangster. So I wanted to counterpoint this idea by having Marla run into the path of a real gangster, who is on the other side of the law – someone just as ruthless and ambitious and amoral, someone who is exactly the wrong person to upset – and then see how far each of them would go to win."

Blakeson hopes the film will help bring more attention to the importance of caring for older generations.

"As a society, I think we tend to ignore and undervalue older people," he said. "Somehow we can't connect the dots from older people now to our own future being older – or maybe we don't want to. We see 'the

elderly' as a problem to fix, or to move out of sight, forgetting they are all unique individuals who are still very much experiencing their own lives.

"As Marla says in the movie, 'Don't underestimate old people,' because all those people in care homes have all lived very different, often very interesting lives. But we forget that. And in a way the character of Jennifer is meant to speak to that – she seems like a stereotypical 'nice old lady' when we meet her, but we soon discover that she is just as surprising and morally complicated as Marla.

"I hope the film will bring to light the fact that we should all be more prepared for getting older," he added. "The elderly are prime targets for scams and exploitation. And we should all be vigilant and proactive in setting up protections – not just for the older people in our lives, but for ourselves too.

"Hopefully 'I Care a Lot' is a film that will get people talking afterwards – about the movie itself, but also about the questions it raises. I hope the audience will take away the feeling that exploiting people for money is a bad thing to do. I know that sounds like an obvious point to make, but it seems to me that people are being exploited for money everywhere right now in so many different ways – predatory guardians being just one example – and we do nothing about it. If it is not happening to us directly, we find it easy to ignore. But we shouldn't ignore it. And hopefully the film makes it a little harder to ignore."

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# Bipartisan Legislation Introduced to Improve Dementia Care

Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.); and Reps. Brian Higgins (D-N.Y.), Darin LaHood (R-Ill.), Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.), and Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.) have introduced the Comprehensive Care for Alzheimer's Act, which seeks to address shortcomings in the way dementia care is delivered.

Providing care for an individual living with dementia involves many unique and often challenging elements. Individuals and caregivers have to deal with primary care doctors and specialists, as well as with medication management.

"Individuals living with dementia and their caregivers must navigate a complicated healthcare maze on their own," said Robert Egge, Alzheimer's Association chief public policy officer and AIM executive director. "This bill is the next step on the path to high-quality dementia care."

Dementia care management is a model of care that enables individuals with Alzheimer's and their caregivers to more seamlessly navigate the healthcare and social support systems and to obtain more timely access to care. This may include care coordination and navigation, management of chronic conditions, and caregiver education and support.



Comprehensive dementia care has been shown to reduce costs while providing better quality care. However these programs will not develop on their own because healthcare practitioners would need to provide unreimbursed services without capturing these offsetting savings. To encourage and facilitate the development of dementia care management programs under Medicare, a change in the payment structure is necessary.

The Comprehensive Care for Alzheimer's Act would ask the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to test a payment structure for dementia care management designed to reach as many Medicare beneficiaries as possible, especially

individuals from diverse communities and rural and medically underserved areas. The model has the potential to greatly improve dementia care delivery for millions of Americans, while reducing costs.

The Comprehensive Care for Alzheimer's Act model would provide person-centered services, including the development of a dementia care plan, care coordination and navigation, and caregiver education and support. In addition, the model would ensure patients have access to an interdisciplinary team of providers with expertise in dementia care management, and reimburse providers through an incentive payment.

"We've seen previously-funded demonstration projects by CMMI successfully reduce healthcare utilization and costs but providers and payers need support to enable this better method of care," said Egge. "We are grateful to the cosponsors for prioritizing this innovative legislation. It has tremendous potential to improve our dementia care system."

"The needs of someone with Alzheimer's disease and their family members who are caring for them are unique and especially challenging," said Sen. Stabenow "This bill takes a comprehensive approach in

addressing these special health care needs. It creates a model for innovative planning, high standards of care and support for caregivers while reducing costs through better coordination."

"As the number of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia continues to increase, it is vital we look for ways to better care for them," said Sen. Capito. "By enhancing the coordination of this care, we can lessen the burden for patients and their caregivers while reducing health care costs by preventing unnecessary physician visits or duplicate tests. Having been a caregiver for my parents living with Alzheimer's disease, I know how needed this model is."

"Alzheimer's is a devastating disease both for the afflicted and those who love them. This legislation recognizes the unique challenges and needs of families struggling with Alzheimer's disease and takes a novel approach to improve treatment coordination, care quality and patient outcomes," said Rep. Higgins.

"Alzheimer's impacts millions of families in America and in Illinois' 18th District," said Rep. LaHood. "It is important that we continue to work to provide high quality care to individuals impacted by this disease."

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# Report Shows Financial Impact of Diminished Capacity

Three financial services and technology experts – all with extensive professional and personal experience devising strategies to protect families and improve financial decision-making – have released a whitepaper that provides a framework for more effective client engagement, risk mitigation and protection around diminished capacity.

The whitepaper, *Cognitive Overload: The Coming Surge in Diminished Capacity Cases and What Wealth Management Firms Can Do to Protect Their Clients and Themselves*, summarizes the current demographic realities, the nature of the risks to financial services firms, the regulatory environment, and the opportunities for firms seeking to better protect their clients – and themselves.

Older adults control the vast majority of wealth in the U.S., with an estimated 83% of all assets owned by individuals over the age of 50, according to the AARP 2016 report *The Longevity Economy*.

As the U.S. population ages over the next decade, the concentration of wealth in the hands of older adults is likely to accelerate.

The aging of the U.S. population presents both challenges and opportunities for the finan-



cial services industry. Trillions of dollars will be transferred to heirs over the next 20 years, presenting significant opportunities for asset accumulation and consolidation. On the other hand, the health-related hazards that inevitably accompany an aging client base present substantial challenges.

Of these health-related risks, none is as vexing, or potentially harmful, as diminished decision-making capacity. About 13% of adults over 65 are living with Alzheimer’s or another type of dementia, and an estimated additional 15-20% suffer from at least mild cognitive impairment.

This suggests that 25% or more of the average wealth management firm’s clients are at risk for poor financial decision-making and/or exploita-

tion. This further implies that 25% or more of a typical firm’s assets under management are at risk – directly as a result of diminished capacity.

The whitepaper includes:

- **The Facts:** the critical data points and trends that characterize the demographic and the medical realities of an aging population;
- **The Risks:** a summary of the six specific diminished capacity-related risks facing advisory firms;
- **The Guiding Principles:** a review of regulatory actions and recommendations to date, including perspectives from the CFPB, FINRA and NASAA; and
- **The Path Forward:** a comprehensive set of specific suggestions for firms seeking to better protect clients, their families, and themselves. This includes recommendations for more effective professional training, better utilization of technology, and more successful collaboration with physical, mental and behavioral health specialists.

The whitepaper will be introduced at the American Society for Aging’s 2021 “On Aging” conference and is supported by the Alliance for Lifetime Income ([www.protectedincome.org](http://www.protectedincome.org)). The whitepaper is available at <https://info.whealth-careplan.com/diminished-capacity-whitepaper>

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TCSO Deputies Jonas Tirado, Hendersen and Hector Negrete return the scooter to the grateful veteran (at left and center). Pictured above is suspect Tina Guerrero.

## TCSO Deputies Track Down Scooter Stolen from Disabled Vet

*(This article is presented as a warning to our readers who ride motorized scooters.)*

On March 17, a 72-year-old disabled Vietnam Veteran parked his motorized scooter at the Veterans Memorial Hall in Orosi and then walked to McDonald's.

According to the Tulare

County Sheriff's Office (TCSO), while he was gone, 35-year-old Tina Guerrero rode by on a bicycle and spotted the veteran's scooter. She left, then came back with a friend and took the scooter. When the veteran returned to the parking lot, his electric scooter was missing.

The scooter is worth about

\$1,200.

TCSO Deputy Jonas Tirado found surveillance video that showed Guerrero taking the scooter. Not long after, Deputy Jason Hendersen tracked down Guerrero and the stolen scooter. She was arrested and booked into the Adult Pre-Trial Facility.

TCSO Deputies Jonas Tirado, Hendersen and Hector Negrete quickly returned the scooter to the very grateful veteran, who uses it as his main mode of transportation.

Guerrero faces charges of grand theft, possession of stolen property and looting during a pandemic.

## Survey Finds Retirees Spent Less on Healthcare in 2020

Although older Americans have been the most at risk of dying from COVID-19, the pandemic has resulted in a rare drop in healthcare spending for this group in 2020, according to a new survey by The Senior Citizens League (TSLC).

The nationwide survey of more than 1098 participants found a very large drop from 2019 to 2020 in the percentage of individuals reporting the highest level of healthcare spending, and a significant increase in the numbers of those with the lower levels of spending.

"This was most likely due to the large number of doctor, medical, dental and other visits that were postponed or cancelled as our nation awaited vaccines," said Mary Johnson, a TSLC Medicare policy analyst.

Johnson, who is 69 and receives Medicare herself, cited her own experience.

In 2019, her total healthcare costs, including premiums for Medicare Part B, a Medigap supplement, prescription drug plan, and dental insurance, as well as out-of-pocket spending, totaled \$9,500 for the year, about \$791 per month. In 2020, however, her total healthcare spending fell a hefty 43%, dropping to \$5,397, or \$449 per month.

"Since starting Medicare, I can think of no other time since when my healthcare spending went down by this much," Johnson said. "This was a temporary drop. Now that I'm vaccinated, I'm already making up post-

poned visits and getting routine care for this year as well.

"What is not so clear is the extent to which other older adults will make up postponed care or experience increased spending for newly diagnosed conditions or worsened health," she added.

The healthcare survey asked participants how much they spent per month on healthcare costs in 2020. Participants were instructed to include premiums for Medicare Part B, Medigap or Medicare Advantage plans, prescription drug coverage, and dental and vision insurance.

The survey also asked participants to include spending on out-of-pocket costs and co-pays for doctor visits, labs, special procedures and diagnostics, prescription drugs, and exams by dentists and optometrists.

In addition, participants were told to include spending for glasses, hearing aid batteries and special protective medical items, such as face masks needed for the pandemic.

With 1.2 million supporters, The Senior Citizens League is one of the nation's largest non-partisan seniors' groups. Its mission is to promote and assist members and supporters, to educate and alert senior citizens about their rights and freedoms as U.S. Citizens, and to protect and defend the benefits senior citizens have earned and paid for.

For more information, visit [www.SeniorsLeague.org](http://www.SeniorsLeague.org)



The home-like atmosphere of the Open Arms House extends into the patient rooms, including this one known as the Farm Room.

## Open Arms House...

*(continued from page 5)*

bers to visit at a time.

"We're at a pivotal point right now," Jimenez said. "Just like so many other businesses and non-profits, the pandemic impacted us tremendously and we are calling upon our community for their continued support and to help spread the word that we are open and here to serve."

"For now, our focus is to continue to educate, support and bring awareness to the community because everyone at some point in their life has been or will be impacted by death," she said. "Knowing that there is a place that can guide you along and provides comfort, peace and dignity in a homelike setting to those in need is a blessing."

For more information on their services or ways to support the Open Arms House, call (559) 713-6542 or visit their website at [www.openarms-house.org](http://www.openarms-house.org)

Please visit our extensive library of past articles at [www.TheGoodLifeSV.com](http://www.TheGoodLifeSV.com)



# Stereotypes Harm Task Performance of Older Adults

When older adults are viewed as cognitively or physically impaired, they perform below their abilities on tasks, according to a recent review article by Sarah Barber, a psychology and gerontology researcher at Georgia State University.

Groups that are stigmatized – whether due to race, socioeconomic status or age – perform more poorly when they are faced with negative stereotypes, Barber said. She found expectations of others can play a powerful role in how well older adults perform on cognitive tasks and motor skills such as driving.

The phenomenon is known as “stereotype threat,” according to Barber. Her review article, published in *The Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, looks at recent studies as well as those dating back to the mid-1990s, all of which show the power of this phenomenon.

“The concept was originally formulated to look at stereotypes around race,” Barber said, but the effect turned out to be much broader. She said it can affect older adults by affecting their memory, physical perfor-



mance, driving abilities and even job satisfaction.

Older adults frequently encounter the challenge of stereotype threat at their physician’s office, where they routinely go for checkups, Barber said, and where they may sometimes be given cognitive tests as well.

Research shows about 17% of individuals aged 50 and older experience stereotype threat at the doctor’s office, and about 8% worry their physician is negatively evaluating them because of their age. This can lead older people to underperform on the cognitive tests they are

given and can lead to greater distrust of physicians, greater dissatisfaction with healthcare services, poorer self-reported mental and physical health, and even higher rates of hypertension.

Just as important in stereotypes about age, Barber said, is negative self-evaluation, which she reviewed in a 2017 paper.

“People worry that there is truth to the negatives,” she said. “When they forget, they may worry they are on a slippery slope towards dementia and decline.”

That can be detrimental and

actually lead to more forgetting. After conducting her own research on this topic, Barber said, “I was struck by the negative things older adults would say about themselves, and I’d wonder how much better they might be performing if they weren’t so worried.”

These stereotype threat effects can also affect physical performance.

“Older adults are often stereotyped as being slow, weak, feeble and frail,” Barber said.

In lab studies, she said, stereotype threat can also lead to slower walking and weaker grip strength for older adults.

“We need to make people feel confident in their own abilities,” she said, “and feel that they will be respected no matter how they perform.”

Barber said older adults would also benefit from looking at their own attitudes about aging.

“Your own attitude about aging is highly predictive of your aging outcomes,” she said. “Those who have positive attitudes about aging live longer, have better memory function and recover more easily from illnesses.”

# Vaccine Mistrust among Some Caregivers Puts Seniors at Risk

Just 63% of family caregivers who have doubts about COVID-19 vaccine safety say they’ll take the senior under their care to get vaccinated. That’s according to a new survey of U.S. family caregivers conducted by Wakefield Research for SCAN Health Plan, one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit Medicare Advantage plans.

“These findings should ring alarm bells throughout the country,” said Eve Gelb, senior vice president of healthcare services for SCAN. “Family caregivers are the linchpin in our healthcare system. They make crucial decisions every day that affect the health of the people they care for. That’s why it’s so important that they trust the vaccines and get the person under their care vaccinated.”

The survey polled 1,000 U.S. family caregivers who provide care for a family member older than 65, with oversamples for 400 Hispanic and 400 Black respondents. Nationally, there are 53 million family caregivers in the United States, providing care to adults and children with an array of needs.

Among all caregivers surveyed, 71% harbor doubts about the vaccines’ safety and about 1 in 5 caregivers (19%) do not plan to take the person under their care to get vaccinated. Looking at communities that have been disproportionately harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 13% of Hispanic caregivers and 25% of Black caregivers do not plan to take the senior

under their care to get vaccinated.

The survey also asked caregivers whether they’d get the vaccine for themselves. Overall, nearly half of American family caregivers (47%) would either delay or refuse COVID-19 vaccination when offered to them.

“It’s just as important for caregivers to get the vaccine for themselves as it is for them to get it for the people they care for,” said Dr. Romilla Batra, a practicing internist who serves as SCAN’s chief medical officer. “In addition to exposing their loved one to the virus, if they become sick themselves, they may not be able to provide vital day-to-day care for the person they support.”

Among those who would delay or reject the vaccine, safety is a top concern. Nearly three in four caregivers who would delay or reject the vaccine (73%) cite safety concerns as the top reason.

## Building Trust

SCAN commissioned the survey as a means to better understand its members’ attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccines so the health plan can find innovative ways to build trust in them.

Gelb noted a quarter of Black caregivers (25%) and even more Hispanic caregivers (28%) say their insurance provider is one of their most trusted resources for COVID-19 vaccine information.

Gelb also stated that all of the respondents said they have high levels of trust in their physi-



cians and public health officials. SCAN has recently implemented several programs involving both groups to conduct member outreach about the importance of vaccinations.

“We know we have our work cut out for us,” said Gelb. “But the good news is we know exactly what that work is.”

## Additional Findings

- More than two-thirds of Black caregivers (77%) have doubts that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe.
- 59% of Black caregivers would delay or refuse getting the vaccine.
- Higher levels of mistrust in the Black community may result in even lower vaccination rates among Black seniors. A quarter of Black caregivers (25%) do not plan to take the senior in their care to get vaccinated.
- Despite evidence to the contrary, 74% of Hispanic caregivers have doubts that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe.

- About half (49%) would delay or refuse to get the vaccine.
- More than one in 10 Hispanic caregivers (13%) do not plan to take the senior in their care to get vaccinated.

## Vacation?...

(continued from page 1)

result before they board a flight to the United States and get a COVID-19 test three to five days after returning from international travel.

Fully vaccinated people should continue to take COVID-19 precautions while traveling internationally.

This guidance does not change the agency’s existing guidance for people who are not fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated travelers should still get tested 1-3 days before domestic travel and again 3-5 days after travel. They should stay home and self-quarantine for seven days after travel or 10 days if they don’t get tested at the conclusion of travel. The CDC discourages non-essential domestic travel by those who are not fully vaccinated.

Due to the large number of Americans who remain unvaccinated and the current state of the pandemic, the CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people continue to avoid crowds, social distance, wash hands frequently, and wear a mask when visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple other households, and when around unvaccinated people who are at high risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19.





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# United Nations Reports Ageism is a Global Challenge

Every other person in the world is believed to hold ageist attitudes, leading to poorer physical and mental health and reduced quality of life for older persons and costing societies billions of dollars each year, according to a new United Nations report on ageism.

The report released on March 18 by the World Health Organization (WHO) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and United Nations Population Fund, calls for urgent action to combat ageism and better measurement and reporting to expose ageism as "an insidious scourge on society."

The response to control the COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled just how widespread ageism is. Both older and younger people have been stereotyped in public discourse and on social media. In some contexts, age has been used as the sole criterion for access to medical care, lifesaving therapies and for physical isolation.

"As countries seek to recover and rebuild from the pandemic, we cannot let age-based stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination limit opportunities to secure the health, well-being and dignity of people everywhere," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general. "This report outlines the nature and scale of the problem but also offers solutions in the form of evidence-based interventions to end ageism at all stages."

### Findings from the Report

Ageism seeps into many institutions and sectors of society, including those providing health and social care, in the workplace, media and the legal system. Healthcare rationing based solely on age is widespread. A systematic review in 2020 showed that in 85% of 149 studies, age determined who received certain medical procedures or treatments.

Both older and younger adults are often disadvantaged in the workplace and access to specialized training and education decline significantly with age. Ageism against younger people manifests across many areas such as employment, health, housing and politics



where younger people's voices are often denied or dismissed.

"Ageism towards younger and older people is prevalent, unrecognized, unchallenged and has far-reaching consequences for our economies and societies," said Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, assistant secretary-general for policy coordination and inter-agency affairs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "Together, we can prevent this."

Ageism has serious and wide-ranging consequences for people's health and well-being. Among older people, ageism is associated with poorer physical and mental health, increased social isolation and loneliness, greater financial insecurity, decreased quality of life and premature death.

An estimated 6.3 million cases of depression globally are estimated to be attributable to ageism. It intersects and exacerbates other forms of bias and disadvantage including those related to sex, race and disability, leading to a negative impact on people's health and well-being.

"The pandemic has put into stark relief the vulnerabilities of older people, especially those most marginalized, who often face overlapping discrimination and barriers - because they are poor, live with disabilities, are women living alone, or belong to minority groups," said Natalia Kanem, executive director, United Nations Population Fund. "Let's make this crisis a turning point in the way we see, treat and respond to older people, so that together we can build the world of health, well-being and dignity for all ages that we all want."

Ageism costs our societies billions of dollars. In the U.S., a 2020 study showed ageism in the form of negative age stereotypes and self-perceptions led to excess annual costs of \$63 billion for the eight most expensive health conditions. This amounts to \$1 in every \$7 spent on these conditions for all Americans over the age of

60 for one year.

Estimates in Australia suggest that if 5% more people age 55 or older were employed, there would be a positive impact of \$48 billion (Australian dollars) on the national economy annually. There are currently limited data and information on the economic costs of ageism and more research is needed to



better understand its economic impact, particularly in low and middle-income countries.

"Ageism harms everyone - old and young," said Michelle Bachelet, United Nations high commissioner for human rights. "But often, it is so widespread and accepted - in our attitudes and in policies, laws and institutions - that we do not even recognize its detrimental effect on our dignity and rights. We need to fight ageism head-on, as a deep-rooted human rights violation."

### Combating Ageism

The report notes that policies and laws that address ageism, educational activities that enhance empathy and dispel misconceptions, and intergenerational activities that reduce prejudice all help decrease ageism.

The report encourages all countries and stakeholders to use evidence-based strategies, improve data collection, and research and work together to build a movement to change how we think, feel and act towards age and aging, and to advance progress on the U.N. Decade of Healthy Aging.

### About the Report

*The Global Report on Ageism* compiles the best evidence on the scale, the impact and the determinants of ageism, effective strategies to tackle the problem and recommendations for action to create a world fit for all ages. The report is directed at policymakers, practitioners, researchers, development agencies and members of the private sector and civil society.

- Ageism arises when age is used to categorize and divide people in ways that lead to harm, disadvantage, and injustice. It can take many forms including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory acts, and institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.

- Prevalence figures based on a survey of 83,034 people in 57 countries found one in every two people held moderately or highly ageist attitudes (i.e. stereotypes and prejudice).

- Ageism leads to excess costs of healthcare three ways: psychological, behavioral and physiological. Psychologically, negative age stereotypes can exacerbate stress; behaviourally, negative self-perceptions of aging predict worse health behavior, such as noncompliance with prescribed medications; physiologically, negative age stereotypes predict detrimental brain changes decades later.

### American Ageism

In the U.S., ageism led to excess costs of \$63 billion for a broad range of health conditions during one year. The excess healthcare spending due to ageism was derived from the number of Americans age 60 years or older in 2013 and the prevalence of interpersonal and self-directed ageism based on percentage of people that agree to the following statements:

- "You are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people,"
- "Forgetfulness is a natural occurrence just from growing old," and
- "The older I get the more useless I feel."





# Alaskan Dog Team Comes to Visalia

The Big Creek Project in the Sierra Nevada east of Fresno is one of the early 20th century marvels. The undertaking required massive engineering, large amounts of capital and many years to build. It is an amazing story in so many ways, but there is one small part that many times gets omitted in its telling.

The often-neglected piece of the story isn't about technology, engineering or water distribution, but rather about Southern California Edison Company's famous dogsled team led by Jeremiah "Jerry" Dwyer, and their weeklong visit to Visalia.

The story of the dog team began in 1920 when the Edison Co. was working on the huge San Joaquin River hydroelectric venture in the area around Huntington Lake. During the long winter months, hundreds of employees were left to work in the Florence Lake area, almost totally cut off from the outside world. The snow could get 20-30 feet deep, especially at Kaiser Pass, and with no mechanized equipment capable of making the trip, there was no easy way of getting supplies, medicine or mail to these isolated workers.

So Edison looked to Alaska for help. There they found Jeremiah "Jerry" Dwyer, a seasoned musher and his seven-dog sled team. He was a quiet man who rarely talked about himself, but always had plenty to say about his dogs.

His favorite, Babe, the powerful lead dog, was three-quarter wolf. Patsy was part Alaskan malamute and gordon setter; Dooley was a cross between malamute and shepherd; and Riley was half wolf and half St. Bernard. The remaining three – Barney, Whiskey and Trim – were part staghound and airedale.

Edison representatives were impressed with the team and were satisfied that "Silent Jerry," as he was called, knew how to handle the dogs. They were also convinced that the dogs and handler could survive the harsh winters in the Sierra high country.

A deal was struck, and Dwyer and his dog team became employees of Southern California Edison. The team became the winter lifeline to the workers, making daily trips from the Huntington Lake post office to the marooned workers at the high

elevation Edison snow camps. Harry Beidleman, secretary of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, heard about Dwyer, his team and the unique assignment. He contacted Edison and asked if they could come to Visalia for an educational exhibition. He knew it was a long shot as they rarely were put on display, but surprisingly, Ballard, Edison's general manager, agreed.

Dwyer and his dog team began their weeklong exhibition on Monday, October 1, 1923, in the building at Church and Center streets. Additional wiring was brought to the building as a precaution in case the weather turned too warm. The dogs could not tolerate heat, so blocks of ice could, if needed, be brought in and additional electric fans could blow cool air on the canines.

Every day from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Jerry and his dogs were on display free to the public. The team was the highlight, but photographs of the Sierra back country and the Edison Big Creek Project were on display as well.


Day after day, adults and schoolchildren were thrilled by the amazing man and his dogs. J. E. Buckman, Tulare County superintendent of schools, sent a letter to all the schools encouraging attendance. As a result, school children from throughout Tulare County made the trip and word spread throughout the valley.

As expected, Dwyer shared very little about himself, but freely talked about his dogs, their pedigree and their habits. He fondly talked about his famous lead dog "Babe" who had died a year earlier. In describing his loss, he said her death hurt him more than he could have imagined, and he added that she died in his arms and did not suffer. Since then, Patsy had taken over as lead dog.

By Wednesday, almost 5,000 people had visited the exhibit and by Sunday, the number had grown to over 12,000. The "silent man of the north" and his dogs were a big hit. After a week, Dwyer and his team left Visalia bound for Huntington Lake to begin another winter season.

By the way, Dwyer buried Babe on Kaiser Pass and I believe the U.S. Forest Service sign paying tribute to that famous dog, can still be seen today.

Dusting Off History  
with Terry Ommen





Jerry Dwyer and his dogsled team near Kaiser Pass east of Fresno. (Photo circa 1921)

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