



FREE!

Successful Aging

SPRING/SUMMER 2022

Vol. 12, No. 1

8,000 copies circulated to seniors, businesses and community residents in greater Santa Barbara



CommUnify Celebrates 55 Years of Serving Our Community

Local Nonprofit's "Seniors Safe at Home" Program Benefits Residents Countywide



Since 1967, CommUnify (formerly CAC - Community Action Commission) has worked to improve the lives of those most vulnerable throughout Santa Barbara County. For 8,000 – 10,000 residents each year, this represents the difference between living in uncertainty and living in stability. For 55 years and counting, CommUnify has worked to connect the neediest residents in the community to vital services and life-changing resources, thereby providing a social safety net to those most at risk. CommUnify provides this assistance and creates opportunities for families and individuals to be more self-sufficient through 17 programs in four program areas:

COMMUNITY SERVICES: Bringing together resources and tools to address individualized needs

CommUnify's Family Self-Sufficiency program provides participants with intensive case management and wrap around services to overcome barriers in education, housing, employment, and job training. The Economic Empowerment program teaches tools and strategies which put participants on the path to financial stability and independence.

The Utility and Rental Payment Assistance programs and Weatherization services help to prevent homelessness and keep residents safe and comfortable in their homes. The free and confidential 2-1-1 helpline, operated by CommUnify, connects residents to referrals and resources in the areas of support groups, crisis hotlines, drug treatment, legal assistance, disaster information, shelter, transitional housing, and more.

“ Santa Barbara is not paradise for everyone. 1 in 5 residents live at or near the poverty measurement earning \$35,600 per year for a family of four. That is close to 90,000 people. ”

SENIOR SERVICES: Aging safely, gracefully, and with dignity...at home

Over 950,000 older adults are hospitalized every year because of injury due to a fall. CommUnify's Seniors Safe at Home program offers minor home repairs, installs slip and fall prevention devices, and replaces smoke alarms, furnaces, CO2 detectors, for little or no cost to those who are income eligible. Focused on enabling seniors to enjoy continued quality of life and maintain their independence, CommUnify ensures the well-being of the County's seniors.

Continued on page 7



Senior Services



Community Services



Family & Youth Services

A publication of the
Center for Successful Aging
Santa Barbara, California
(805) 898-8080

In this issue:

Message from ED Allison Marcillac	2
Want To Join Us?.....	2
Personalities: Gil Garcia.....	3
Join Us for a Fun Mix & Mingle!.....	5
Seniors + High School Students = Great Pen Pals	5
Helpful Tips to Relieve Travel Anxiety.....	6
Have Seniors Been Drinking More During Pandemic?	6
You Are (Still) What You Eat	7
CommUnity Celebrates 55 Years, continued	7

Partnerships at CSA



By Allison Marcillac,
Executive Director,
CSA

From teens to long time affiliations, CSA has had the pleasure to work with some amazing organizations. A new club was formed at Santa Barbara High School, the SBHS Center for Successful Aging Club, that has written over 500 cards of well wishes and encouragement that were distributed to local Santa Barbara Seniors. Next on the horizon for this high school club is to host their first annual bake sale with all proceeds benefitting one of the CSA programs of their choice.

But we can't forget about the partnerships that CSA has forged for many years, Alzheimer's group therapy is up and running again and CSA is about to add another support group for caregivers. It is because of these partnerships that CSA has been a stable force in this community for over 30 years and we can't wait to join up with other local organizations and collaborate to benefit all of our local senior community.



Want to Join Us?

By Gary Linker, Ph.D., Clinical Director, CSA

The Center for Successful Aging has many useful programs for seniors and their families. Is there something here for you?

Would you like someone to talk with about issues or concerns in your life?

The Center has, for over 25 years, offered low cost senior peer counseling. Seniors and/or their family caregivers can meet with a trained counselor and hold regular meetings to find new directions, solve problems and/or resolve old wounds. These confidential meetings can take place in your home or at our office. If you receive Medicare and Medi-Cal, these sessions are free.

I feel lonely and isolated. Can you do anything for me?

Of course we can. We have a program called **CareLine** where a trained volunteer can call you every day or just the days you want them to check in on you, see how things are going and prepare you for the day. This is a free service offered by the Center's volunteers. We are here for you 365 days a year, so feel free to call our office at (805) 898-8080. Anyone 50 years or older living in the Tricounty area qualifies to participate in this program.

Do you offer any groups where I could meet some new people?

Yes, we have counseling and support groups for seniors and/or their family caregivers. The support group for caregivers meets on Zoom every 2 weeks and the one for seniors also meets twice a month. That group meets in person. We also offer groups for caregivers of people with Parkinson's disease. All group meetings are free.

I am really committed to staying in my home. Can you help me do that?

Want to guess the answer? Of course we do. For many years we have offered a program called **Real Help**. Our coordinator for that program is Jamie O'Toole and she has vetted a number of people who provide in-home and around the home personal caregiving services. So whether you need someone to help cook, clean, do light repairs or go on errands

for you we have someone who can help. The fee is \$20 per hour with a two hour minimum. You can call the office at (805) 898-8080 or email us at info@csasb.org.

Would you like to become a peer counselor yourself?

CSA will be offering its next peer counseling training class for people wanting to provide one-on-one and group counseling. You need to be psychologically stable, have an open heart and a listening ear. The training will be in mid-summer, meeting weekly for 8 weeks. The fee is \$150. Partial scholarships are available.

To get more information about these services, please call us at (805) 898-8080. Leave us your name and number and Gary Linker, our Clinical Director, will assist you in finding the program(s) that work best for you. And we don't allow finances to get in the way for the services you need!

We are here for you!

Gary Linker, Ph.D. has worked for the past 40+ years as a Marriage, Family Therapist. Contact Dr. Linker at (805) 898-8080 or by e-mail at info@csasb.org



Feeling Isolated?

If you are a senior 55 years of age and older and live alone, you are invited to become a member of the Center's **CareLine Telephone Reassurance Program**.

This free service helps seniors feel connected to others in the community via regular phone calls (you choose the frequency) and provides the opportunity for a senior to get a caring call 365 days a year.

To enroll in this program as a participant or a volunteer caller, phone the Center at (805) 898-8080.



Gil Garcia - A Lifetime of Service to Others



By Heidi Hutton Rigoli

Gil Garcia begins his day at 4 a.m., with exercise and focused meditation. This practice has empowered him for many years. It is the essence from which this 83-year-old man gets the energy and heart to serve his community. “Do the best you can right now and the future will be bright,” are words that come from deep inside of him. It also echoes the stories Gil’s father told.

Gil’s father was a migrant worker who came to Goleta in 1927. Gil was born at what was then Santa Barbara General Hospital. He was one of eight children. “I was picking lemons at seven years old,” Gil explained. The whole family had to all chip in, he explained. “There is value in a family working together,” he said. “My father’s stories taught us about honesty, integrity, and having a strong work ethic,” Gil said. “These things win over self-interest.”

“I’m not sure where this saying comes from, but I remember hearing there are two most important days of your life,” Gil recalls. “The day you are born and the day you discover why.”

In his early years, Gil said he had a kind of culture shock when he moved out on his own. He served in the Air Force right after high school. When he came home, he was uncertain about his purpose. A friend came along at the right time, Gil recalls, and helped to steer him onto a good path. “I’ve always felt someone was there to guide me,” Gil asserts.

His creativity and ability to see “the big picture” moved Gil towards a draftsman’s career. He worked as an apprentice, and recalls one of his bosses telling him to “shut up, draw, and learn from your mistakes!” Gil did just that, then, after studying hard for the architect exam, he took it and passed.

“I was always hungry for knowledge,” he said. Gil formed a partnership with John Blankenship in 1975. In 1977, Gil started Garcia Architects, Inc. Many local single-family, multi-family residence projects, and commercial buildings have the thumbprint of Gil’s design.

“I think successful aging is to have a purpose in life, and being of service to others.”

Both Marti and Gil have a long resume of accomplishments and honors. Gil served on the Santa Barbara City Council, and both have been active in the Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee for many years. Currently serving on the Board of Governors of Southern California Sister Cities International (SOCAL), Gil has been active statewide and internationally in the Sister Cities organization.

The Sister Cities Committee was formed between Santa Barbara and Puerto Vallarta in the 1970s. It is a part of Sister Cities International, which seeks to pair up cities internationally, enabling understanding and friendship between differing cultures. Puerto Vallarta was chosen for this cultural exchange in 1972, because of its similar features to Santa Barbara. The committee’s focus is on people-to-people programs. With the help of the Santa Barbara Rotary Club, the committee has helped to build the Santa Barbara Physical Rehabilitation Clinic of Puerto Vallarta, to improve the lives of disabled children and low-income adults there. During the pandemic, the committee raised \$30,000 to support the Volcanes Food Bank, supplying food to more than 500 families in the poorest areas of Puerto Vallarta.

As a board member of Rotary Club Santa Barbara North, he has served as president and currently works to create a cooperative alliance that supports social and economic impact projects in Mexico and Africa.

On the Housing Authority for ten years, Gil worked for more affordable housing. Then, he was on the Santa Barbara City



Gil and Marti Garcia

Council for ten years (1992-2002). One of his first actions on the Council was to create a “Celebration of Ethnic Diversity” task force. He also focused on the city’s General Plan. Gil believes that alternative modes of transportation are important for social interaction and for the aliveness of the city. He was instrumental in changing the plan to include transportation alternatives that gave people a choice to not only use automobiles. This includes walking and bike paths.

In 1996, both Gil and Marti received the Santa Barbara Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1997, his entire family was honored as “Pioneer Family of the Year” by the Goleta Historic Society. Two of Gil’s four children have become architects. Another is in social work, and the fourth is retired from Navy ship repair and electronics.

Marti Garcia has been Gil’s partner and wife for forty years. She will tell you that Gil is the creative one, while she does the other part of their work, including finances and other office-type duties. “We’re pretty good friends,” she smiles.

Gil and Marti continue to be active in civic matters, both locally and nationally. They believe in the idea to “Think Globally, Prosper Locally,” and have lived their lives sharing the fruits of their life values with others. “We have fun too!” Gil said. For instance, zip lining in Costa Rica!

Heidi Hutton Rigoli is a freelance writer. Having recently retired from psychiatric nursing, her interests now are writing, people, psychology and spirituality. She lives in Santa Barbara with her husband, Francis. She is currently enrolled in writing classes at Santa Barbara City College.



CommUnify

Celebrating **55** years!

CommUnify (formerly the Community Action Commission) was formed in 1964 to address the causes and conditions of poverty within Santa Barbara County. CommUnify's Community Services department provides innovative sustainable solutions for income eligible seniors and families to improve and maintain their health, resilience, safety, and financial security with programs and services including:

Seniors Safe at Home grab bars, ADA ramps, slip and fall prevention

Weatherization smoke/CO2 alarms, door/window replacement, furnaces/water heaters

Utility Payment Assistance up to \$1000 for help paying bills

2-1-1 Helpline free call line for information and referrals



Contractor License #621241

NOW ENROLLING!

CommUnify's programs enable income eligible seniors to live safely and independently in their own homes. We are currently accepting applications! For more info and to see if you qualify, call **805-617-2897** or visit us at:

www.CommUnifySB.org



Join us for a Fun Mix & Mingle!

Benefiting the Center for Successful Aging

Sunday, May 22, 2022 – 2:00 - 5:00 pm
M.Special Brewing Company in Goleta
\$40/Ticket

Learn More and Buy a Ticket Today!

CSA May Event purchase tickets here 

Or email us at: info@csasb.org



GRACIOUSLY SPONSORED BY:



Seniors + High School Students = Great Pen Pals!

By Jill Bender, CSA Board Member

In today's technology-enabled world, the idea of exchanging good ole fashioned letters in the mail seems to be part of a bygone era. Though during the height of the pandemic, a compassionate San Marcos High School student saw letters as the perfect opportunity for her generation to connect with those most isolated - seniors in our community. Summer shares a bit about her pen pal program.

Why did you start the pen pal program?

During the earlier days of the COVID pandemic we were all feeling very isolated, especially seniors who were more vulnerable and on an even stricter lockdown. I had read about a pen pal program in another state that was bringing in mail, packages, and most importantly joy and connection into seniors' lives and thought it was a great idea. So I decided to start it here as well with two senior communities, Garden Court and Gardens on Hope.

How did seniors and students learn about your program?

I recruited senior participants by making posters and flyers that were hung up and passed around by the activities director since I couldn't enter the facilities. For high school students I recruited through the Santa Barbara Chapter of the National Charity League, and more recently friends in the SMHS AAPLE Academy.

How is the program going?

Now running for over two years, the program is going beyond its initial intent of helping seniors through a very isolating period, as it's fostering relationships amongst two generations that probably wouldn't have had a chance to connect. Participants share that they are gaining new perspectives and developing friendships. So far, 14 seniors and 40+ high school students have participated, and many are excited to meet in person. I'm hoping now that it's becoming more safe to do so, I can organize soon!

Heard you have been busy with a few other senior-focused activities, do share!

Through working with the seniors and community directors, I continue to identify opportunities to help! For example, I have coordinated 'tech support' for seniors once a month, where teenagers from the Boys Team Charity help with questions about smartphones and computers. During the pandemic I delivered homemade baked goods and cards from members of the Santa Barbara National Charity League. I also regularly bring in donations such as masks, holiday decor, and other items to benefit the overall well-being of these seniors.

A big thank you to Summer for starting this great pen pal program and contributing to the mental health of seniors in our community! For those interested in participating, you can email Summer at: ability_sitar0s@icloud.com



Summer, a high-school sophomore, starts a great pen-pal program!

“My pen pal and I share a lot of interests and now email each other regularly. We hope to meet up soon!”

~ Natasha, pen-pal participant and SMHS student



Helpful Tips to Relieve Travel Anxiety

From *Travel Tips for Seniors* from FitFly

1. Prepare distractions for the flight

If you're nervous about flying, then before boarding your flight, practice breathing exercises and mindful physical activities as these are powerful ways to reduce anxiety. It can also be useful to utilize healthy distractions, especially things that help you get into the flow, whether it be games, music or creative activities.

2. Confront your surroundings

A great starting point for tackling your nerves is to confront your surroundings, reducing plane noises can be beneficial for some people and moving your body allows you to release any built-up tension. Positive, realistic thoughts can also help, perhaps think of the hundreds of safe flights that take off and land every minute and believe in the fact that you can handle your nerves with techniques and support.

3. Talk to the flight attendants

Communicating with those around you may also relieve some anxiety. Sharing your feelings with those you are sitting near, or staff can feel a little scary, but it ensures you have support on hand and you are not worrying about what others may think.

4. Make a realistic plan

Holidays are costly and we naturally set high expectations as we want to make the most of our time away. You won't be able to control every aspect of your holiday and acknowledging that things are uncertain sometimes will allow you to manage the stresses of traveling. Have realistic expectations, get organized and manage your safety to keep stress levels down. We all know the feeling of the stress we experience preparing to go on holiday. It is often a disruption to our routine and knowing this can help us to feel less stressed about the unknown.



5. Visualize yourself on holiday

If thinking about your holiday makes you anxious seek calming techniques, and visualize yourself enjoying your vacation. Make every effort to prepare to keep yourself safe when traveling.

Finally, be kind to yourself, have some compassion for yourself, it's been a very challenging two years and the reward of traveling is something to look forward and cherish.

Have Seniors Been Drinking More During Pandemic?



Stories are being reported throughout the country on the statistics of senior drinking rising during the pandemic, especially reports on number of women abusing alcohol since the start of the pandemic.

You've probably heard red wine has certain health benefits for the elderly when consumed in moderation. While that holds true in many ways, there are also special considerations older adults should be aware of when drinking alcohol.

Pros

Red wine is rich in antioxidants called polyphenols, which promote heart health by increasing the levels of good cholesterol in the blood, lowering blood pressure, and reducing the risk of blood clots. Resveratrol, a compound found in red wine, is linked to a reduced risk of inflammation and blood clots.

Drinking wine in moderation can help preserve your loved one's quality of life. A 2015 study in the American Journal of Epidemiology focused on heavy and moderate drinkers, as well as those who do not drink. The research revealed healthy seniors who consume 1 to 2 alcoholic beverages each day reduce their odds of developing physical disabilities or dying in the next 5 years by 23 percent.

Cons

Research shows seniors retain less water in their bodies, which makes it more difficult to dilute alcohol when consumed. This leads to a higher blood alcohol content than younger adults of similar build who consume the same quantity of alcohol. As a result, aging adults are more susceptible to alcohol's effects like slurred speech and lack of coordination, which can increase the risk for injury.

Seniors are more likely to have serious medical conditions and be prescribed multiple medications. Not only can consuming alcohol exacerbate diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, liver problems, depression, anxiety, and memory problems, it can also interact negatively with many types of prescription drugs. Because of this, many experts do not recommend seniors begin drinking red wine simply for the health benefits.

Moderation is often the key to reaping the benefits of alcohol, just as it is with the other beverages and foods your loved one consumes. At Home Care Assistance, we believe balance is integral to living a long and healthy life.

The Third Alternative for ever, non-alcoholic wines or lots of water.

You Are (Still) What You Eat

By Gary Linker, Ph.D., Clinical Director, CSA

We know that our diet plays a major role in our health and our overall well being. But did you know that being intentional with what you eat can actually reduce the possibility of having Alzheimer's disease?

Recently, the World Health Organization concluded that many cases of cognitive decline could be delayed or even prevented by adopting a healthier lifestyle. Diet plays a major role in that. We now have clear evidence that certain diets hinder well being. For instance, what is now termed the "Western diet" of convenient processed foods rich in animal products is harmful and can contribute to the development of dementia. Some have said a Mediterranean diet (MD) or a DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) which advocate less consumption of carbohydrates and sodium are better for you.

More recently, the MIND (Mediterranean-Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) diet has been adopted as the best approach. It takes elements from the MD and the DASH diets and recommends "good" foods like whole grains, green leafy vegetables, fish, poultry, beans, nuts and olive oil while minimizing the "bad" foods such as red meats, butter, cheese, fast foods and sweets. One study found that the following the MIND diet led to more successful cognitive aging and better protection from Alzheimers than the DASH or MD diets.

OK, now that we know what to eat, how about vitamins and supplements? While your doctor may recommend certain vitamins and minerals that you are deficient in, a recent article by the American Medical Association cautioned us that many dietary supplements that claim to prevent or treat cognitive decline do not end up with credible evidence to these assertions.

While diet is just one element in designing a positive lifestyle and good health, it is worth giving serious consideration to what we put in our mouths. It is pretty clear that being aware of what are "good" foods can enhance our health and well being. Choose a healthy life!



OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Center for Successful Aging is to promote the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of seniors and their families.

Successful Aging

is a quarterly publication of the Center for Successful Aging, located at 228 East Anapamu Street, Suite 208 Santa Barbara, CA 93101 (805) 898-8080 info@csasb.org Real Help Phone: (805) 965-1531 Fed Tax ID #80-0422344

Successful Aging Information, Advertising Allison Marcillac info@csasb.org (805) 898-8080

Design / Production Coordinator Susan Rees

Circulation: 8,000 Advertising rates and current and past issues of *Successful Aging* are posted online at www.csasb.org

CommUnify Celebrates 55 Years

Continued from page 1

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES:

Creating pathways to build future success

A child's future is predicted by the stability of their family life. CommUnify offers youth a chance to build resilience and engages their parents or guardians in this effort, creating a better future for the entire family. CommUnify's programs provide families and youth with individualized support to address the impacts of generational poverty, trauma, lack of education, or limited resources. These programs are designed to build resilience and include mentoring and tutoring for high school students and at-risk youth, increasing access to higher education opportunities health education, and case management for families struggling with behavioral and emotional wellness.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES: A helping hand can change the trajectory of a kid's life

Early quality education is the key to ensuring that children succeed in academics and in life. CommUnify offers 24 Head Start, Early Head Start, and California State Preschool locations

for children 0 to 5 years of age to income eligible families. The Children's Services programs focus on each child's academic, emotional, and physical growth. Students are nurtured by caring, skilled teachers in a safe and accepting environment regardless of disability or circumstance.

Whether providing services to a struggling senior, a pregnant teenager, young children, or a family trying to make ends meet, CommUnify has been dedicated to serving Santa Barbara County residents for more than five decades. And CommUnify is committed to continuing to help the community to empower sustainable independence for the next five decades.

Please visit www.CommUnifySB.org or call 805-964-8857 to learn more about all the services CommUnify provides or make a contribution at <https://www.communifysb.org/support-us>.

2021-2022 CSA Board of Directors

LaShon Kelley, *President*

Roberta Kroot, *Vice President*

Sharon Kennedy, *Secretary*

Jill Bender

Lynda Fairly

Gayle Golden

Mark Levine, *Founding Member*

Advisory Board

David Graff

Billie Maunz

Deborah Naish

Ernesto Peredes

Angela Siemens

Pat Snyder

Alma Vaja

Allison Marcillac, *Executive Director*

Gary Linker, Ph.D., *Clinical Director*

ASK NANCY



How do you know it's the right time to downsize?

IF you are spending most of your time in just one or two rooms of a large house;

IF housecleaning and repairs have become overwhelming;

IF your utility bills are painfully high;

IF your home's landscaping is overgrown because you can no longer maintain it;

IF the stairs in your home have become public enemy #1.

My specialty is working with seniors and their families during home-downsizing and estate liquidation efforts, providing hands-on, start-to-finish real estate services, including:

- + Organization & Paring Down of Possessions
- + Assessment of Property & Contents
- + Estate Sales/Tag Sales
- + Home Sale Preparedness & Boosting Curb Appeal
- + Relocation Support/Transition Assistance

If you have been thinking of selling, **now** is a great time. Call us to get started.



Nancy Newquist-Nolan

Senior Homes Sales Specialist
Coldwell Banker Top Sales Pro
805 570-1015 | CalRE 01459696
nancynolanrealtor@gmail.com
nancynewquistnolan.com

Freddy San Juan

Licensed Real Estate Salesperson
Buyer or Seller Representative
805 450-7344 | CalRE 02130389
freddy.sanjuan@cbrealty.com
nancynewquistnolan.com



Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees. ©2022 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logos are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker® System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Realogy Brokerage Group LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.