



SENIOR UPDATE
AREA AGENCY ON AGING
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING
1955 FOOTHILL BLVD., SUITE 300
OAKLAND, CA 94605-1907

January/February/March 2017

Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

Happy New Year

Bernie Nillo, Commissioner

Inside this issue:

Happy New Year	1
Commissioners Visit Life ElderCare	2
Commissioners Visit Life ElderCare	3
Food Resources for Older Adults	4
Trust but Verify	5
With the New Year Comes New Changes	5
We are Here to Help You Realize Your Dream	6
Spotlight on Commissioner Ashok Desai	7
Senior Information	8

The New Year is the time of unfolding horizons and to be able to rejoice in the simple pleasures that life has to offer and put a brave front for all the challenges that may come your way. New Year's Day is a national holiday celebrated on January 1st, the first day of the New Year. Many people celebrate New Year's in the company of loved ones, involving traditions meant to bring luck and success in the upcoming year. Many cultures celebrate this happy day in their own unique way. Typically the customs and traditions of New Year's involve celebrating with champagne and a variety of different foods. New Year's marks a date of newly found happiness and a clean slate. For many celebrating New Year's, it is their opportunity to learn from the prior year and make positive changes in their life.

Here are some New Year's Day Resolutions and Traditions:

Making resolutions or goals to improve one's life. Common resolutions concern diet, exercise, bad habits, and other issues concerning personal wellness.

A common view is to use the first day of the year as a clean slate to improve one's life.

Famous parades include London's New Year's Day Parade and the Rose Parade in Pasadena, California.

For me, it's watching the College Football games such as the Rose Bowl, BBQ'ing with family and friends, eating "Black-eyed peas" - a tradition common to the southern states of the USA that the eating of black-eyed peas on New Year's Day will attract both general good luck and financial good fortune in particular to the one doing the dining.

In England: The English custom for welcoming the New Year is full of hospitality and warmth. They believe that the first guest for the year would bring fortune for them.

On behalf of the Area Agency of Aging of Alameda County, we wish you health, abundance of happiness and hope, prosperity and Zen like serenity.



Commissioners Visit Life Elder Care

Paul Hauser, Commissioner

November 10th the Commission visited the Life ElderCare organization in Fremont, California. Commissioners Bernie Nillo, Paul Hauser, Ashok Desai, Sarah Kim-Lee and AAA staff member Jose Villaflor met with Life ElderCare Executive Director Patricia Osage to watch Meals on Wheels volunteers load up nutritious meals for delivery to some 200 local needy older adults. Just as important, those volunteers were going to make certain those housebound older adults were doing ok. This remarkable non-profit organization delivered 102,439 meals in 2015, staving off hunger and loneliness for many Tri-City older adults.

Life ElderCare is about serving frail older adults along with people with disabilities who live alone in the Tri-City area and need help to survive. In addition to their Meals on Wheels program, Life ElderCare has such useful programs as VIP Rides, where trained volunteers

bring the frail people to and from their medical appointments or shopping. They assist a person getting into or out of a car, finding the office, and filling out paperwork. Life ElderCare matches compassionate volunteers with elders including a culturally sensitive LGBTQ Older Adults program. They sponsor a Fall Prevention



program that teaches how exercise, a safe home environment, and understanding the effects of your medications contributes to a decreased risk of injury through falls. Life ElderCare assists their older adults needing basic home safety modifications, such as grab bars or better lighting.

To provide these Tri-City services, Life ElderCare has over 510 community volunteers who spent 31,681 hours last year delivering meals with a smile, driving to appointments and visiting lonely and shut in seniors. For more information regarding this organizations services call (510) 574-2091 or go

online to

www.LifeElderCare.org

For those of us making this visit it was a morning well spent.



Commissioners Visit Life Elder Care

Paul Hauser, Commissioner



Life ElderCare volunteers preparing for the daily meal delivery (upper left and lower left photo).

Commissioner Ashok Desai assisting with meal delivery preparations (upper right photo).



Food Resources for Older Adults in Alameda County

Mary Louise Zernicke, Area Agency on Aging Senior Nutritionist

As we begin the New Year, it is a good time to make resolutions about improving health. How to improve health? Eat well!

But food insecurity can get in the way of eating well. Estimates are that about 80,000 older adults in Alameda County are food insecure. The number of older adults having issues accessing healthy food is growing. What are food resources for lower income over-sixty adults in our county?

Congregate Dining Sites

There are dining sites serving delicious and nutritious lunches for rich and poor older adults in your neighborhood. There are ethnic food programs in Alameda County that prepare and serve Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Afghani food. All programs request a donation, but if someone is low income they can either pay for

part of the meal or not at all. The food gets excellent reviews by the attendees. Where else can you get a salmon meal for a \$4 donation request? Contact Information and Assistance number, 800-510-2020, to get a list of meal sites.

Meals on Wheels

A daily meal is delivered throughout Alameda County to over 2,200 eligible home-bound older adults, providing healthy food and a cheerful visit.

As with the dining site meals, a donation is requested but is never used to determine eligibility. Some programs have a waiting list and can serve only higher risk clients. To find out if you or your loved one is eligible, contact the I&A number above, 800-510-2020, and they will steer you to your local program.

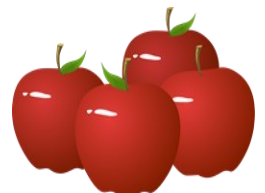
Mercy Brown Bag

Mercy Brown Bag provides a grocery bag twice

a month to lower income older adults at over 45 sites throughout Alameda County. The bags have seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables as well as meal staples. There is no cost for the bags, but older adults are asked to participate in the distribution if they can. Over 5,000 seniors are served each month, and over 50,000 grocery bags are distributed annually. Call Mercy Brown Bag, at 510-534-8540 X369, to enroll.

Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) Pantry Sites/ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Our county food bank has pantry sites throughout the county, and can provide assistance with enrollment in the food stamp (SNAP) program. While SSI recipients are ineligible for SNAP, many older adults are pleasantly surprised to find that they qualify. Call at 510-635-3663.



Trust *but* Verify

Deidra Perry, Adult Protective Services

Scams targeting older adults have become so prevalent that they're now considered "the crime of the 21st century." Strangers may call, send an email or knock at your door. Be aware that caregivers, family and friends may also attempt to take advantage of older adults. A few of the most prevalent scams include:

1. Identity Theft Strangers ask you to provide account information, SSN,

date of birth. Persons known to you may take this information while visiting or providing care.

2. Grandparent Scam

Phone call or email pretending to be a grandchild and asking for money because they are in jail, in the hospital or stranded somewhere.

3. Homeowner/Reverse Mortgage Scams

Offers of money or property in exchange for the title to your property.

4. Sweepstakes & Lottery

"You have won...", but you must send money to claim your prize.

Always **trust** your instincts. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't real. Remember, you are not alone and there are people who can help you **verify** the offers and requests. Call the police, your bank and/or Adult Protective Services at 1-866-5615.

With the New Year Comes New Changes

Sarah Kim-Lee, Commissioner

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will see a slight increase in 2017.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$127,200 from \$118,500. Of the estimated 173 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2017, about 12 million will pay more because of the

increase in the taxable maximum.

Thresholds for benefits will change slightly next year including the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA), SSI Federal Payment Standard, and SSI Student Exclusion.

Information about Medicare changes for 2017 are available at www.Medicare.gov. For some beneficiaries, their Social Security increase may be partially or completely offset by increases in Medicare premiums.

The Social Security Act provides for how the Cost of Living Adjustment is calculated. To read

more, please visit

www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

Learn more about the resulting changes at our factsheet on the subject:

www.socialsecurity.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2017.pdf.



We Are Here to Help You Realize Your Dream

Sarah Kim-Lee, Commissioner

January 16 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — a national holiday and a day of remembrance. Martin Luther King Jr. dedicated his life to creating and fostering equal rights for African Americans, and he died during his efforts to make his dream a reality. Many people commemorate this holiday by serving their community and giving to others who may be less fortunate. In many ways, this is what Social Security does every day, all year long.

A great way to be of service to others is to help someone you know who may need assistance applying for Social Security, Medicare, or *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug costs.

This is easy to do at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Some people who need these benefits may not be comfortable with computers or may not even know applying online is an option. But now, it's easier than ever to apply for such benefits from the convenience of a home computer at www.socialsecurity.gov. For example, it's easy to apply for retirement benefits at www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline. It can take as little as 15 minutes from start



to finish. Once the application is electronically submitted, in most cases, there is nothing more to do.

It's even easier to apply for Medicare, for people who do not plan to begin their Social Security retirement payments yet but who do want Medicare coverage. The application takes about 10 minutes and you can find it at

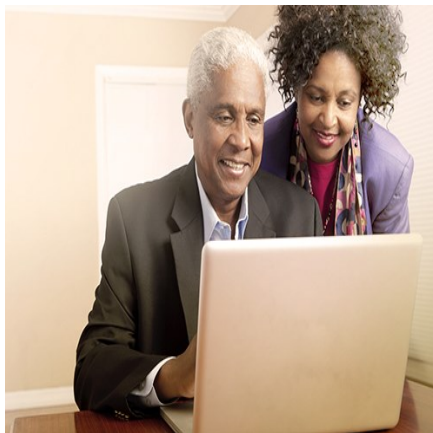
www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

People who already have Medicare coverage, but who need help meeting prescription drug costs, can apply for *Extra Help* online at

www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp.

This holiday, you may want to make a trip to see the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington D.C. or read or listen to a recording of his legendary *I Have a Dream* speech. You can also make your Martin Luther King Day a day of service to someone who can use your help. Lead them to

www.socialsecurity.gov. It may be easy for you, but it may help someone you love realize their own dreams.



Spotlight on Commissioner Ashok Desai

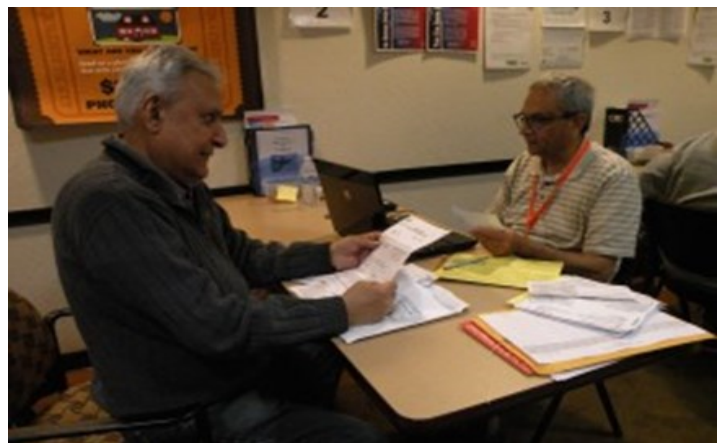
Upon my retirement in 2011 from the tech industry, I decided to dedicate my free time to helping those in need in my community. I was able to engage in various programs to meet my goal of helping the economically disadvantaged and older adults with help and support from City of Fremont Human Services Department. **Here are my current contributions:**

Advocate with the Advisory Commission on Aging in Alameda County to support the independence and protect quality of life of older Californians. Member of the legislative committee advocating for legislation in state assembly impacting older adults in CA. Senior Citizen Commissioner for the City of Fremont– to initiate educational activities and promote an understanding of the needs of the elderly and of the aging process. Member of Tri-City Elder Coalition (TCEC) to advance and promote needs of older adults in Tri City area; including transportation and Meals on Wheels. HICAP (Health Insurance Counselling and Advocacy Program) counselor in Alameda County providing Medicare counseling to older adults.

Volunteered for over 25 years as a team leader at Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara to manage and complete food sort projects with groups from 15 to 50 people from local industries and volunteer organizations. AARP Tax-Aide and VITA volunteer helping seniors and low income taxpayers in preparing and filing their tax returns for past 5 years. ACT for Mental Health, Board member – Non profit providing affordable mental health care services to anyone in need in San Jose, CA.

What motivates me to become involved in volunteer activities is the knowledge that economically-disadvantaged and older adults often lack support and understanding of the complex laws governing health care and taxes. I hope to make a difference in lives of those who need help.

Older Adults have a lifetime of experience that they bring to any organization. It would be nice if their experience can be put to a good use for the betterment of society.





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http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders_and_disabled_adults/aaa.cfm

Senior Update Editorial Board: (Chair), Paul Hauser, (Vice Chair) Bernie Nillo, Donna Ireland, Shelley Zak, Sarah Kim-Lee, Delbert Walker, Jose Villafior

Senior Information

Dates to Remember:

New Year's Day–January 1, 2017

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday–
January 16, 2017

Presidential Inauguration Day–
January 20, 2017

Lincoln's Birthday–February 13,
2017

Valentine's Day– February, 14 2017

President's Day–February 20, 2017

St. Patrick's Day–March 17, 2017

First Day of Spring–March 20, 2017

Upcoming ACA Meetings

ACA Meeting– January 9, 2017

ACA Meeting– March 13, 2017