



Choose Well Member Newsletter

February/March Issue

Choose Well Member CEU Lunch n' Learn
A Look Behind the San Diego Air &
Space Museum
Technology Programming for Older Adults

February/March 2021



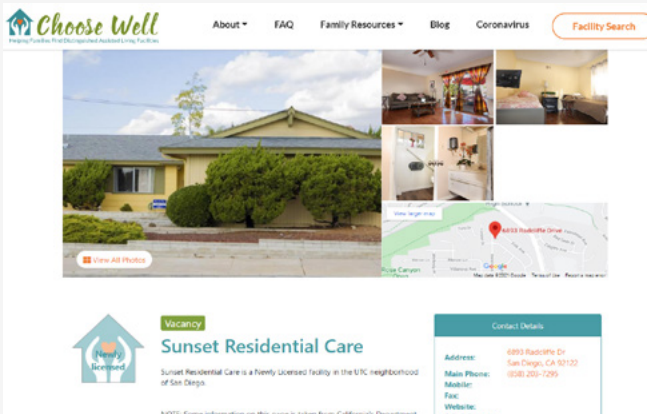
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SNEAK PEEK OF WHAT'S INSIDE!

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Welcome to Our Newest Member Sunset Residential Care



Member Count

By HHSA region, this is how Choose Well membership is distributed countywide:

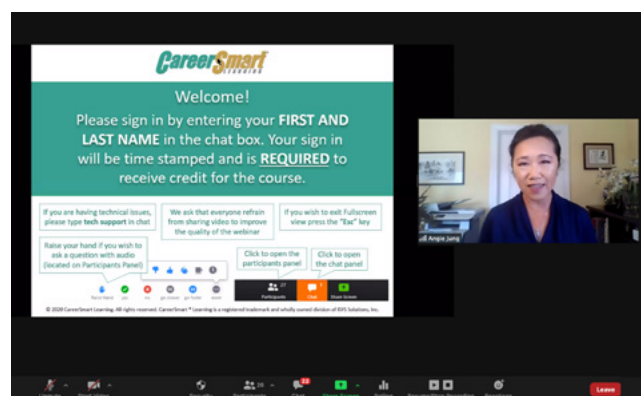
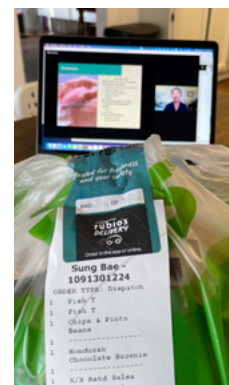
HHSA Region	Total in Region
Central	11
East	32
North Central	46
North Coastal	41
North Inland	53
South	14
County Total	197

Choose Well Member CEU Lunch n' Learn

We had our first Choose Well Member Advisory meeting of 2021 on January 27th via Zoom!

We listened to our Choose Well Members and brought back Angie Jung, who led our successful CEU event last year. Angie led a presentation on animal-assisted activities and fall prevention, where Members were able to receive 2 free CEUs for attending.

The Lunch n' Learn also featured optional training on creating pre-recorded virtual video tours for Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE).



Attendees learned tips and strategies on how to stage their RCFE, how to use proper lighting for photos and videos, as well as basic equipment used for property tours.

Members also took advantage of the networking portion of the meeting to chat with other RCFE administrators and staff. Mary, from St. Paul's Senior Services, asked Members if they had certain protocols for accepting new residents with COVID. Anna, from Amparo Senior Care, responded and shared her facility's standards so other RCFE administrators can get ideas for their own facilities.

And what is a Lunch n' Learn without lunch?! As usual, Choose Well Members were treated to a Rubio's lunch delivered to the homes and businesses of attendees via DoorDash.

A Look Behind the San Diego Air & Space Museum

While nearly all institutions in Balboa Park are closed now, Choose Well was able to get an exclusive interview with a docent, informally known as a museum tour guide, from the San Diego Air & Space Museum, and he has many stories to tell.

M eet Bob Odelson, a seventy-year-old retiree who has volunteered at the museum for almost four years and is currently the Vice Chairman of Volunteers & Docents. Bob is one of over thirty docent volunteers, mostly over the age of sixty-five, who until the recent mandatory closure of museums, were able to stroll through the exhibits of the San Diego Air & Space Museum and engage curious visitors in conversation. According to Bob, “I think a lot of older people gravitate to [volunteering in] museums because it serves a significant purpose, and it also keeps your mind and body busy. It’s not a lot of walking, but it’s a lot of talking. People who don’t like to talk, don’t stay.”

Guests assume that Bob was a military pilot before he landed his gig at the museum based on his deep knowledge of every aircraft on display. Surprisingly, Bob is a retired Clinical Systems Engineer from Kaiser Permanente, and installed imaging equipment at the hospital until 2017. He has no military nor professional aviation experience. Bob considers himself an “aviation enthusiast.” In fact, the docents who volunteer are a diverse mix of old school military pilots and non-pilots from different professions.

The diverse backgrounds of museum docents help the museum tell history from different perspectives. Bob, for example, was able to utilize communication skills used in his former job to help improve the museum’s ability to reach older adults. Many of the museum’s docents did not

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even know if they had an email address, so trying to coordinate events with them was often challenging. Bob worked with the museum's marketing staff to include all important announcements in newsletters normally mailed to employees, and had it mailed to the docents as well. The reception was fantastic, and Bob says docents tell him they now look forward to getting the newsletter regularly.

Still, snail mail has limitations, especially for a museum looking to adapt to stay relevant to a younger generation. The museum has embraced the use of technology as a matter of practicality to draw more staff and visitors. Most of the older restoration crew that had the talent and skill to reconstruct aircraft parts with vintage tools, such as a metal lathe that turns a solid block of aluminum into a precision component, have passed on. Last year, the museum hired an aeronautical engineering team from San Diego State University to create aircraft parts out of plastic using a 3D printer, and then paint them to look like metal. The museum is also keenly interested in getting a younger audience interested in aviation, and that means installing more hands on, interactive exhibits. The museum has cockpit simulators for kids to experience flying a warbird or docking a space shuttle. The curator is looking to expand the museum's offerings of realistic cockpit simulators that kids can climb in to pull levers and push buttons.

Bob and his fellow docents have also welcomed many celebrities and local leaders, like former City of San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, who was present when all three of the Apollo IX crew visited the museum in 2019 for the 50th Anniversary of the mission. "He was really jazzed about seeing the astronauts, and I've never seen a man so giddy and happy," Bob exclaimed. Former astronauts have also passed through the Air & Space museum's doors as regular guests. One such famous guest, Tom Jones, a former space shuttle astronaut who preferred to keep a low profile, politely declined Bob's docent tour of the space exhibit, simply saying he was "familiar" with how it worked. "For someone who has been in space three times, he was quite down to earth," Bob said.

After the pandemic hit, museums had to find different ways, often using technology, to engage with people who could no longer visit, especially older adults and those living with cognitive conditions who are most at risk of social isolation. Four museums in Balboa Park are hosting monthly, virtual, docent-led tours designed for older adults with memory disorders. Caregivers in assisted living communities can register themselves and their residents to participate in an interactive, live Zoom tour facilitated by docents trained by the UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's and Dementia Research Center.

For communities that offer WiFi to their residents, older adults can stay engaged in virtual events designed for them. Residents can use their own tablet computer, such as an iPad or Android device, to participate. Seeing well known local landmarks, such as museums, even if it is through a digital touch screen, can help older adults feel connected to the San Diego community. The Air & Space Museum recently introduced a robot called BEAM, complete with wheels, a camera, and microphone, that enables visitors to "walk" around the museum exhibits with a docent. The San Diego Museum of Art offers a free "SDMA 360" gallery tour, allowing anyone with a computer or tablet device to use their fingers to "walk" around the museum's two floors, zoom in to see art details, and even read full labels in both English and Spanish. For assisted living communities that can connect their residents with technology, even if it is a borrowed iPad, the museums in Balboa Park offer virtual programming that can keep residents engaged and safe at the same time.

Related Resources:

UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, in collaboration with Alzheimer's Association, provides free, Live Zoom docent led interactive tours for participants with memory disorders and their care partners at four exceptional museums in Balboa Park at 2:00pm – 3:00pm on the first Tuesday of every Month. Pre-registration required [here](#).

Upcoming virtual events at the San Diego Air & Space Museum:
www.sandiegoairandspace.org/calendar

San Diego Air & Space Museum BEAM Tour Program.
Tickets can be purchased [here](#).

Virtual Events at San Diego Museum of Art:
www.sdmart.org/virtual-sdma

Technology Programming for Older Adults

Since the pandemic began, many health programs and agencies have developed high-quality virtual programs to combat isolation experienced amongst many older adults. Assisted living communities can readily utilize these technological interventions to enhance the quality of life of their residents with minimal additional staff time and cost. Various institutions, from senior centers to museums, have online classes that can

be accessed at home with a tablet, computer, or smartphone. These programs include two-way video communication, interactive games to stimulate the mind, learning activities, fitness classes, and more. Research has shown that technological interventions can alleviate social isolation by connecting older adults to the outside world, enhancing social support, engaging in activities of interest, and increasing self-confidence.¹



One initiative that aims to engage older adults in activities they enjoy from home using technology is the Oasis Innovation Center (OIC). Started by San Diego Oasis, OIC is an educational program for adults 50+, in partnership with Cox and AT&T. The partnership provides low-income older adults with free tablet computers so they can take classes online through Zoom. Software useful for seniors is pre-installed on the tablet, and participants receive free internet for six months. In addition to technology classes, Oasis also offers free and fee-based classes in dozens of topics, including finance, personal development, language, and arts. For assisted living communities, Oasis offers packages for activity directors to offer free classes as a benefit to their residents. Program participants are encouraged to take at least four classes in a six-month period.

Ten weeks into the program's launch, OIC has distributed about 250 tablets to low-income older adults, and still has more tablets available. Launching a new program quickly is not without challenges. Jolyn Parker, Vice President of External Relations for Oasis, shared some of the challenges and successes of OIC. Because the capability of each participant varies, training is best done one-on-one, as opposed to groups. One initial challenge



was identifying ways to provide this one-on-one support. Oasis reached out to the City of San Diego and developed a partnership. The City repurposed staff from the Parks and Recreation Department, whose duties had shifted during the pandemic, to make phone calls to each participant and train them on how to use Zoom and other essential software. Participants are brought up to speed on internet essentials, like getting an email account if they do not have one, or trying to recover email accounts their children may have set up for them long ago.



Meet Shawn!

Shawn lives at the Rancho Vallecitos Mobile Home Park in San Marcos. *"He received his tablet recently and is LOVING IT. He learned so much from the "Gadgets and Gizmos" class. Such a nice, caring, and thankful person. He is so happy and grateful to everyone involved."*
- San Diego Oasis

Despite the initial hurdles, the program is already showing early signs of success. One senior participant said that OIC has “provided the passport to start my journey across the digital divide.” The positive reception has paved the way for other programs with similar goals, such as a new pilot program in South Bay called “Tech for Seniors,” which provides free iPads to older adults and pairs each participant with a student volunteer to guide them through a six-month structured program, tailored to their interests and capabilities. For residents living in an assisted living community, caregivers are encouraged to participate in the classes with them and provide assistance.



Technology can help older adults feel less isolated, more mentally stimulated, and healthier, particularly during times when they are discouraged from attending social gatherings. However, it is essential that assisted living communities are careful to not use technology to displace other forms of social interaction. When possible, it is recommended that caregivers or staff accompany the residents during virtual opportunities. Virtual classes that encourage older adults to be active participants and engage and respond are especially recommended. Communities interested in implementing an Oasis program for their residents should contact San Diego Oasis at: www.san-diego.oasisnet.org

Sources

1. Journal of Medical Internet Research, 2016. The Effect of Information Communication Technology Interventions on Reducing Social Isolation in the Elderly: A Systematic Review. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4751336



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