

SONOMA SENIORS TODAY

Moving Forward With PEARLS

By Sari Zimmerman, PEARLS Coach

I had the pleasure of sitting down with my client, MK, to learn more about her life, how she found PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives) to be "really perfect," and what she was looking for.

Born and raised in San Francisco, MK has been very involved in theater from a young age. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Communication Arts, Theater, and English, and later in life went on to graduate school and earned a Master's in counseling. She moved to Sonoma County in 1982 to be closer to her brother, who had cancer, and got a job at a small theater company where she met her husband. She worked as a lighting technician, and her husband was the show's star. They had a theater romance, fell in love, and have been married for 37 years!

The two of them continued to do theater together at a children's conservatory, directed plays for high school students (mostly musicals), and MK had a couple of small businesses. She told me, "Then it kind of took a turn. I got a job at a non-profit. I just felt like I wanted to give back. Theater is all about you; when you're working at non-profits, it's all about the families you're serving." At this time MK was counseling families and also working as a hospital chaplain.

MK loves playing the guitar, writing music, gardening, and reading books. The accomplishment that has been most meaningful to her is "helping others—lifting other people up, and giving them hope is really important. That's part of what PEARLS did too; it lit my fire again, helped me reconnect with my passions, and start focusing on myself rather than always taking care of other people."

Her most joyful experiences have been with her husband and centered around music. She adds, "I love writing music. Anything to do with music has really been a big joy in my life." When MK retired, she had a vision that she and her husband would be travelling, "taking to the road," as she put it, but COVID hit two months later. With the lockdown, her cancer diagnosis, losing their home in the Tubbs Fire, and her husband's illness, she said, "It had been a lot of years of having to deal with one kind of trauma after another." This left her feeling very alone and wanting someone to partner with, but she didn't want counseling. "It wasn't about talking about your problems, it really was about forward movement. To set some goals and be able to check in with an accountability partner."

One of MK's biggest challenges before starting the PEARLS program was feeling overwhelmed by the "big picture." She admits, "I get overwhelmed, and then I get anxious, and then I get depressed. The depression was really about being paralyzed because I didn't know where to start. What

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

SONOMA SENIORS TODAY



A Free Program for
for Sonoma County Seniors 50+*

**JUMP BACK
INTO LIFE
WITH PEARLS**

PEARLS: A PATHWAY TO MENTAL WELLNESS

PEARLS is a free evidence-based program offered by COA designed to help improve quality of life for older adults. The PEARLS program is coaching-based and supports older adults by focusing on problem-solving and increasing activity—physical, social and pleasant. During eight sessions over four to six months, a PEARLS coach supports the participant in applying a problem-solving tool to address challenges and concerns that can contribute to depressive symptoms and feelings of social isolation.

*Eligibility screening is required to assess appropriateness for the program.

COA council on aging



To Learn More, Call Nyah Reynolds at 707-525-0143 x130 or Email nreynolds@councilonaging.com

PEARLS did help me to damp down the overwhelm and focus on one thing at a time. The anxiety went down, and as I began to do the steps, I felt progress, and I was less depressed."

"I really enjoyed Sari, my PEARLS Coach. She's a compassionate listener, non-judgmental, and neutral. She didn't guide the conversation, and after listening, she walked me through the process and was very clear on how to navigate it. The combination of listening, connecting, having the sense of being heard, and then taking the steps, actually putting something into motion. A lot of the time, you have one or the other but not both at the same time. I think PEARLS does an excellent job of combining both."

When I asked MK about the behavioral activation piece of PEARLS, she explained how much it helped her rest, deal with her anxiety, and increase social activities. She said, "Little things like lying in my hammock listening to an audiobook were restful, pleasurable, and they helped my mood and helped me to learn how to rest from the anxiety." As far as social isolations, MK explained that she had really limited her social activity due to the pandemic, her illness, and her husband's illness. She says, "The goals I accomplished were less important than the social, restful, and pleasurable activities. They really helped me to keep moving!"

Marsha's Journey: Experiencing Happiness Again with PEARLS

By Sari Zimmerman, PEARLS Coach

Marsha Cameron was born and raised in Pontiac, Michigan. She was a teacher for over 30 years and split that time between regular and special education classes. Her hobbies are gardening, crocheting, and singing. The accomplishments Marsha is most proud of are her son, whom she raised alone, travelling around Europe while she was teaching there for 5 years, and working towards legalizing medical marijuana.

In 1996, Marsha and two other women created the Sonoma Alliance for Medical Marijuana (SAMM). She commented, "Once it became legal, they didn't know how to enforce it. Let's just say it's been an interesting journey. As a project, that's the most meaningful one I've ever done."

Like many clients, Marsha has expressed that before enrolling in the PEARLS program, she would try to change too much at once and then become overwhelmed. Marsha was interested in PEARLS because, as she put it, "I was in a sort of

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semi-depressed, anxious place; I think as a result of the pandemic. I lost connections with so many people." PEARLS helped her to break issues into small enough pieces that she could change them in a short amount of time. She also appreciated having a trained coach to talk to regularly.

Marsha has told many friends about the PEARLS program. She says, "People have asked why I am happy now, and I think maybe that's one of the reasons!" She told me at almost every session how much the PEARLS program has improved her life, and as a coach, I have to say how impressed I was with her dedication and commitment to working the Problem Solving Tool.

Marsha concludes, "I just think it's great that it's here, because seniors, especially low-income seniors, really need this kind of help, and it's unavailable through your doctor. It addresses things I am finding out are part of the golden years and not discussed. So, it helps you be prepared for where we are and where we're going—even though I don't think any of us know where we are going!"

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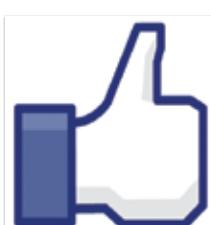
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Introducing PEARLS Intern, Salina Gonzalez

My name is Salina Gonzalez, and I am honored to join Council on Aging (COA) as a PEARLS Intern while completing my Master of Social Work at CSU Northridge. I will be working alongside the PEARLS team to support older adults in Sonoma County, with a focus on delivering PEARLS coaching to caregivers.

PEARLS—the Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives—provides coaching sessions designed to reduce depression and isolation by helping participants set meaningful goals around social, physical, and enjoyable activities.

My journey with COA began as a volunteer while completing my Bachelor's degree in Human Development, with a concentration in Gerontology and a minor in Ethnic Studies: Human Sexuality in Communities of Color, at CSU East Bay. Since then, I have had the privilege of managing COA's Adult Day Program, where care partners receive respite while their loved ones with memory loss enjoy a safe, engaging, and social environment.

I am excited to continue learning through PEARLS, deepen my work with older adults, and further explore the diverse and inspiring community of Sonoma County. I look forward to connecting with many of you soon.

If you are a caregiver or know someone who may benefit from PEARLS, please contact Salina at sgonzalez@councilonaging.com

or
(707) 525-0143 ext. 103.

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Sonoma Seniors Today

A bi-monthly publication by



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Value of One - Power of Many !

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO VOLUNTEER THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!



Mission Statement

To enhance the quality of life for our aging community by providing services that promote wellbeing and maintain independence.

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PUZZLES & GAMES

Puzzle solutions are on page 8

WORD SCRAMBLE "It's Winter!"

1. IECLIC	— - - - -
2. NMETTIS	— - - - - -
3. TYSORF	— - - - -
4. SLGIHE	— - - - -
5. RBAZIZDL	— - - - - -
6. WETESRA	— - - - -
7. BTIRANEEH	— - - - - -
8. EANHCPAGM	— - - - - -
9. PALRO	— - - - -
10. CYZO	— - - -
11. FDIRT	— - - - -
12. ILUEFSRR	— - - - - -

SUDOKU - Medium

		1	2					
5			6			8	3	
7		4			6		9	
8				1		6		
4	9	8						
				3		9	2	
		6	5	2				
2	1		8	9	4	5	6	
5			1			3	7	

SUDOKU - Hard

3	4		6					
1	8		3			6		
		4			7			
2					9	5		
	7		5					
	6	7	1		8	3		
		9	3					
5		6			1			
	7				4			

WORD SEARCH "New Beginnings"

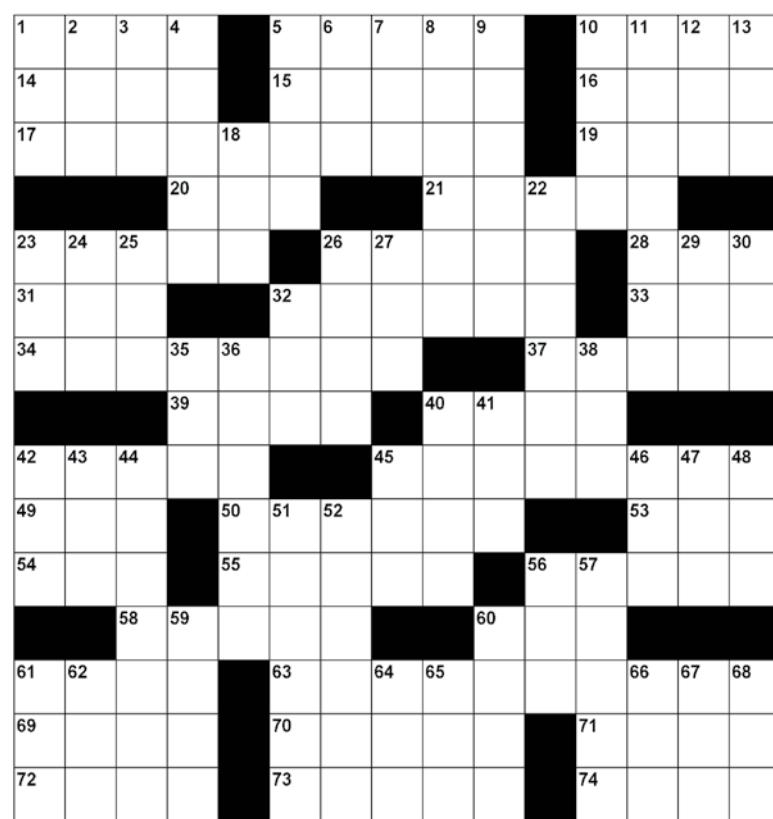
DECLUTTER	ORGANIZE
POSSIBILITY	GROWTH
DREAMS	MOMENTUM
FOCUS	RENEW
CLEANSE	BALANCE
WELLNESS	RESOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

"Happy New Year"

ACROSS

- Untied
- Errs
- Press with lips as a sign of love
- Portal
- Sporty car brand
- Colored part of eye
- Promise to change something in the future
- For fear that
- Sun's name
- Propel with oars
- Spread
- Applesauce brand
- Ripen
- Note of debt
- Citizen of Libya
- North northwest
- Small pieces of colored paper
- Render able
- Injured
- Toady
- Corset
- Tenor sings high
- Party favor
- Tapered spike of frozen water
- Present
- Extension (abbr.)
- Knobby
- Many times
- Villain
- Rio de Janeiro
- Harsh criticism
- Police cars (2 wds.)
- Factor of ten
- Architect Frank ___ Wright
- Gets older
- Attorney (abbr.)
- Sugar-free brand
- Run



By Jimmy and Evelyn Johnson - www.qets.com

DOWN

- Former president of U.S.
- Caviar
- Goddess
- Jagged
- Ancient European region
- Fall month
- French "yes"
- Cold in manner or attitude
- Holy places
- Terminate
- Scotland neighbor
- Sister for short
- Supersonic transport
- Down
- "___ and World Report"
- Attack
- Also
- Bolt
- Small amount
- Kimono sash
- African antelope
- Ram's mate
- Long-term memory
- Be airborne
- Alleviating
- North northeast
- Season
- Brew
- Her
- Excise
- Allure
- Farm credit administration (abbr.)
- Explosive
- Foot extension
- Possess
- Two
- Utopian ideas
- Cooking fat
- Having focus
- Yes
- Traveled by car
- Those who make the food laws (abbr.)
- Permit
- Kid
- Seed bread
- Past
- Representative
- Compass point

WORD SEARCH "New Beginnings"

R	O	O	P	O	S	S	I	B	I	L	I	T	Y	D	E
P	V	D	Q	F	W	E	G	O	B	M	T	R	N	E	Z
A	J	N	K	D	C	X	K	M	U	F	F	E	J	C	H
O	M	Y	D	N	R	T	D	W	Z	B	X	S	I	L	J
N	Z	O	A	D	D	E	O	J	A	O	S	O	R	U	D
F	J	L	M	T	L	T	A	D	F	S	A	L	H	T	Z
R	A	M	F	E	W	F	U	M	E	N	F	U	L	T	T
B	E	J	D	K	N	T	M	N	S	B	D	T	C	E	N
O	Q	N	L	G	P	T	L	Z	U	C	C	I	M	R	F
T	S	R	E	O	W	L	U	F	K	S	K	O	P	A	O
V	U	F	O	W	E	V	I	M	V	A	E	N	H	S	C
H	X	E	Y	W	Y	Z	X	U	X	X	I	S	V	C	U
Q	G	V	H	L	I	C	H	E	P	L	U	Y	Y	J	S
O	R	G	A	N	I	Z	E	G	R	O	W	T	H	Z	A
Z	R	N	F	K	V	T	P	W	M	L	V	A	G	J	E
K	S	F	Y	F	V	C	L	E	A	N	S	E	B	A	W

Help Seniors Keep Their Beloved Companions, Donate to *Kibbles of Kindness*

Friends fur-ever

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

MEALS
on WHEELS
LOVES PETS

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- **1 in 3 seniors** have sacrificed their own care—medical visits, bills, utilities, even their home-delivered meals—to provide for their pets.
- **97%** say their pet helps them feel less lonely.
- **4 out of 5** say Meals on Wheels support makes it possible to keep their cherished companion.

You can make a life-changing difference.

A gift to *Kibbles of Kindness* provides dog and cat food to homebound older adults who depend on Meals on Wheels—ensuring they never have to choose between caring for themselves and caring for the pet they love. Your kindness keeps seniors and their beloved companions together. Because sometimes, love really does come with four paws.

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2. Donate online at: www.councilonaging.com/donate—select *Kibbles of Kindness*
3. Call us at: 707-525-0143 ext.146
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social . financial . health . nutrition

Why Consign?

- Earn money from items you no longer need. Profits can go to you or COA, as you designate!
- You can support Sonoma County seniors.
- Reduce waste by giving your items a second life.

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1. Bring your gently used curated items to Treasure House.
2. Specify that proceeds from your consignment be directed to the Council on Aging.
3. Feel good knowing your contribution helps provide vital services like meals, dementia care, and more!

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Council on Aging Thanks Moody's for Their Generous Donation of Senior Comfort Kits

Council on Aging extends a heartfelt thank you to Moody's for its generous donation of Senior Comfort Kits for our homebound older adults.

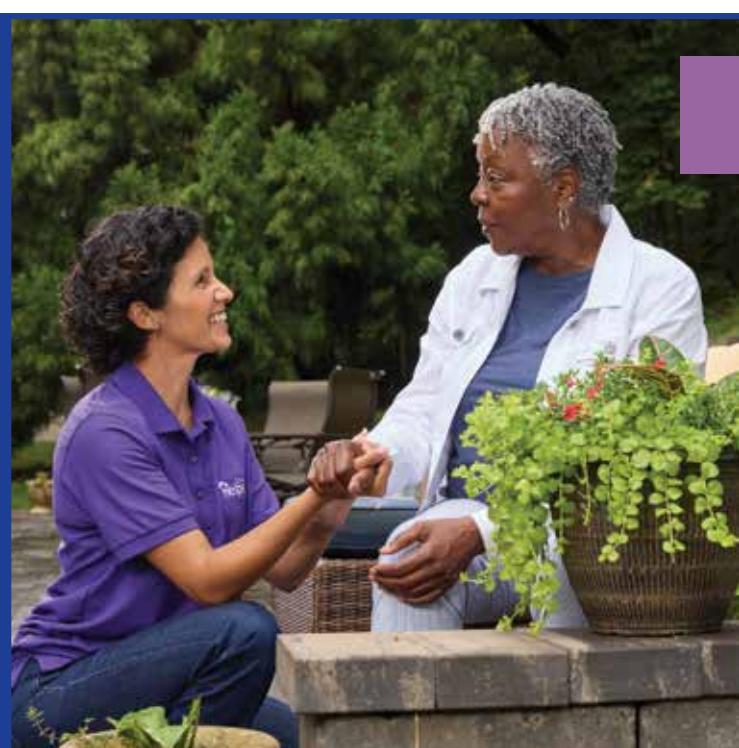
These beautifully assembled kits—filled with thoughtful items such as lotion, Chapstick, herbal tea, honey sticks, tissues, non-slip socks, a mug, cards, an adult coloring book, colored pencils and a pencil sharpener—brought warmth, comfort, and joy to many seniors across Sonoma County.



Thanks to the kindness and community spirit of Moody's, we delivered 72 Senior Comfort Kits to older adults who may otherwise feel isolated or overlooked.

We truly appreciate this partnership and Moody's commitment to supporting the well-being of our seniors. Together, we're helping make Sonoma County a more connected and caring community.

Thank you!
MOODY'S



Tellegacy & Lunch Companion Programs

Two programs that offer support, so no older adult faces life alone.

The Lunch Companion Program pairs you with a caring volunteer who visits your home and brings a meal along with meaningful conversation.

The Tellegacy Program pairs you with a volunteer for eight guided sessions where you'll share your life story, memories, and experiences. Your stories and photos will be gathered and beautifully compiled into a personalized Legacy Book for you to keep and share with loved ones.

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"The Surgeon General has announced loneliness as a new public health epidemic. Research shows that loneliness and social isolation can result in long-term negative health outcomes. These programs assist seniors in staying connected."

SENIOR CARE

ONLY BETTER

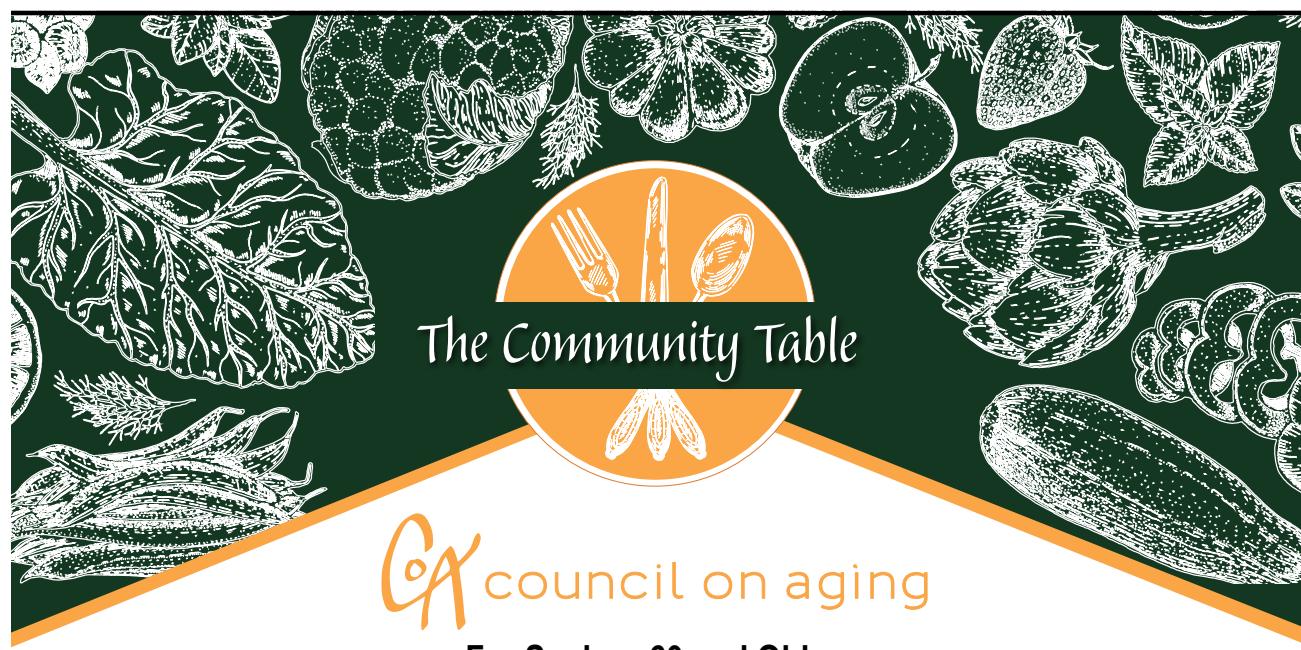
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For Seniors 60 and Older

SANTA ROSA

Finley Community Center
2060 W. College Ave.
MON 12:45 – 1:15 PM

SANTA ROSA

Salvation Army
Senior Activity Center
115 Pierce Street
FRI 12:00 – 1:00 PM

SONOMA

Vintage House
264 First Street East
MON 12:00 – 1:00 PM

SONOMA

Oakridge Senior Apartments
18800 Beatrice Drive
TUES 12:00 – 1:00 PM

HEALDSBURG

Fitch Mountain Senior Apartments
710 S. Fitch Mountain Road
THUR 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Pre-Registration Required

RESERVATIONS AND CANCELLATIONS MUST BE
MADE ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE.

For More Information, Call
707-525-0143 x128

Meals Funded in Part by County of Sonoma. Contributions are voluntary and confidential.

Eligible participants will not be denied service for an inability to contribute.

A suggested \$4 per meal contribution can be deposited in the collection box.

Eligible individuals who do not complete a registration form must pay \$7 for meal costs. REV. 11/20/2025.

ROHNERT PARK

Rohnert Park Senior Center
6800 Hunter Drive, Suite A
MON – FRI 12:00 – 1:00 PM

SEBASTOPOL

Burbank Heights & Orchard
7777 Bodega Avenue
WED 12:00 – 1:00 PM

WINDSOR

Bell Manor Senior Apartments
8780 Bell Road
WED 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Congregate Table Dining

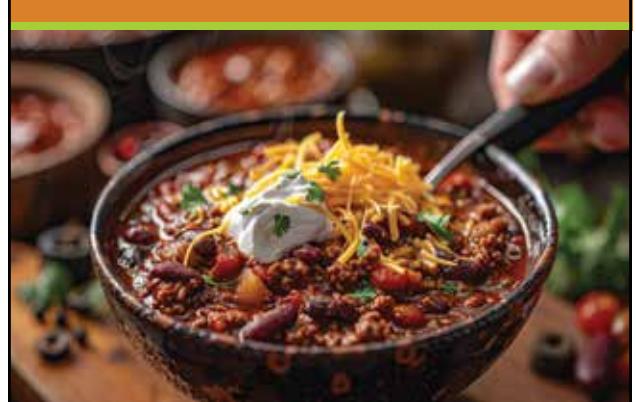
For nearly ten years, Jocelyn Duran has had the privilege of working at Council on Aging, and since January 2024, she's overseen the Community Table dining program. Through this work, she's witnessed firsthand how vital this program is for our local seniors.

Through its eight dining sites across Sonoma County, Community Table provides nutritious meals to older adults. But it's much more than just a meal — it's a safe place for seniors to gather, share stories, and build friendships. For many, it's their main opportunity to connect with others and feel a sense of belonging in the community.

Every day, she's reminded of the difference this program makes. Seeing seniors laugh together over lunch or check in on one another truly highlights the importance of what we do. The Community Table nourishes both body and spirit — and that's something worth celebrating.

Winter Warmer Easy Chili

(4 Servings)



INGREDIENTS:

1 Tbs. Olive Oil (or cooking oil of your choice)
1 Medium Red Onion, ¼ Diced
2 Large Cloves of Garlic, Smashed
2-3 Cups Leftover Cooked Meat (Ground, Shredded, Diced, Pulled)
1-15 oz. Can of Diced Tomatoes
1-15 oz. Can of Tomato Sauce or Purée
2-15 oz. Canned Beans of your Choice, Rinsed and Drained
3 Tbs. Chili Powder
1 tsp. Cumin, Ground
½ tsp. Smoked Paprika
Pinch of Cayenne Pepper
2-3 Cups Leftover Vegetables, Cut in Small Pieces
1-2 Cups Stock, Broth, or Beer, or More to Desired Thickness
2-3 Cups Leftover Vegetables, Cut into Small Pieces
Kosher Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper

METHOD:

- In a saucepan sauté the onions and then garlic using the olive oil. (You can use a skillet if you will be simmering in a slow cooker.) If you want to add some diced fresh meat or vegetables, now is the time.
- If you are going to simmer in a slow cooker, add it now.
- Add the meat and stir until hot.
- Add the liquid when it is hot.
- Add the beans when it is hot.
- Add the seasoning.
- Simmer until everything is tender, stirring occasionally.
- Add the leftover vegetables & cook until heated through.
- Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary.

The variations are endless—add in different seasonings, use some fresh peppers, play with different toppings.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's isn't always easy.

Cuidar a alguien con Alzheimer no siempre es fácil.



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"Happy New Year"**PUZZLE SOLUTIONS****"New Beginnings"****SCRAMBLE "It's Winter!"**

1. IECLIC	ICICLE
2. NMETTIS	MITTENS
3. TYSORF	FROSTY
4. SLGIHE	SLEIGH
5. RBAZIZDL	BLIZZARD
6. WETESRA	SWEATER
7. BTIRANEEH	HIBERNATE
8. EANHCPAGM	CHAMPAGNE
9. PALRO	POLAR
10. CYZO	COZY
11. FDIRT	DRIFT
12. ILUEFSRR	FLURRIES

SUDOKU - Medium

6	3	9	1	2	8	7	4	5
5	2	4	9	6	7	1	8	3
7	8	1	4	3	5	6	2	9
8	7	3	2	9	1	5	6	4
4	9	2	8	5	6	3	7	1
1	6	5	7	4	3	8	9	2
3	4	6	5	7	2	9	1	8
2	1	7	3	8	9	4	5	6
9	5	8	6	1	4	2	3	7

SUDOKU - Hard

3	7	4	1	2	6	8	5	9
1	8	9	5	3	7	2	4	6
6	2	5	4	8	9	7	3	1
2	1	8	3	6	4	9	7	5
4	3	7	8	9	5	1	6	2
9	5	6	2	7	1	4	8	3
7	4	1	9	5	3	6	2	8
5	9	2	6	4	8	3	1	7
8	6	3	7	1	2	5	9	4

How Sodium Affects Your Body and How to Limit Your Sodium Intake

By Megan Atha, CSUS Food, Nutrition, and Dietetics Graduate

While sodium offers many benefits, too much can harm your health. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the ideal daily sodium intake for older adults is around 1,500 mg. That is about one teaspoon of salt. This recommendation can vary among older adults, as recent studies have found that reducing sodium intake below 1,500 mg is not necessary for some older adults. You should always consult your healthcare provider to determine your sodium intake. Limiting sodium is crucial for some seniors, especially those with high blood pressure, heart failure, or kidney disease.

One reason too much sodium is bad for you is that it can strain the kidneys, which regulate the amount of sodium in your body. When sodium levels are low, the kidneys hold onto it, and when sodium levels are high, the kidneys release some of the excess sodium into your urine. If the kidneys can't remove enough sodium from the body, it will build up in the blood. Since salt attracts and holds water, this will raise your blood volume, leading to more work for the heart. The heart will have to work harder to pump blood due to the higher blood volume. This can increase pressure on your blood vessels and can cause stiffened blood vessels, which could eventually lead to high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes.

A high-sodium diet can also lead to osteoporosis, as the amount of calcium lost during urination can increase with the amount of salt you eat. This will cause calcium levels in the blood to be replenished by releasing calcium from bone stores and, in turn, will lead to bone thinning (osteoporosis). Given all the adverse effects of too much sodium in your diet, let's see what we can do to help lower your intake.

One thing you can start doing is adding more fresh foods to your diet, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat. Many processed foods at the grocery store are high in sodium. Canned goods (like soups, beans, and fruit) tend to have higher sodium levels than their uncanned counterparts. Some other foods that tend to have high levels of sodium are condiments, bread, processed deli meats, soups, and prepackaged dinners. Since a lot of foods tend to have high levels of sodium, look at the nutrition facts label to see how much sodium is in that food to determine if you should buy it.

When looking at a nutrition facts label, choose foods with less than 200 mg of sodium per serving (or 5% of the daily value or less). Looking for foods low in sodium can be tricky because companies often market their products differently. For example, a can of Progresso reduced-sodium roasted chicken noodle soup has 460 mg per serving, which is 20% of the daily value for sodium (Figure 1). When looking for food products, look for products with "sodium-free" or "salt-free", "very low sodium", or "low sodium". These products will usually have 200 mg or less of sodium per serving.

Nutrition Facts

About 2 servings per containers	1 G21
Amount per serving	
Calories	80
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 15mg	5%
Sodium 460mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 1g	

Figure 1: Detail - Nutrition facts label for Progresso Soup Reduced Sodium Roasted Chicken Noodle Soup

Another way to reduce the amount of sodium you eat is to prepare your own meals at home rather than eating out. When you go out to a restaurant, you don't know how much salt has been added to your food. When you cook at home, you control how much salt is used. One complaint often made about foods with very little or no added sodium is that they are bland. To fix this, you can add spices to the food you're making to add flavor without extra salt. Lowering the amount of salt you eat per day can be tricky at first, but starting slowly can help. You can start by swapping out some of the groceries you buy for lower-sodium options or by going out to eat only once a week. Lowering your sodium intake can be challenging, but over time, eating foods with lower sodium levels will become easier.

Improving Daily Function Through Flexibility

By Anjelica D. Ramirez, RN, Sonoma State University BSN Student

As we get older, our bodies start making noises we don't remember signing up for—pops, cracks, and the occasional "why did that hurt?" Stretching and mobility won't turn anyone into a gymnast, but they can keep us moving smoothly enough to retrieve the TV remote without calling it a workout. That's why staying flexible is important for older adults: a little daily stretching can mean fewer aches, better balance, and a lot more confidence doing everyday things—no superhero cape required.

Over time, muscles naturally tighten and shorten when we don't use them regularly. This stiffness can make simple tasks, like reaching into a cupboard, bending to pick something up, or getting dressed more difficult. For older adults living alone, these challenges can chip away at independence.

Fortunately, stretching is a simple, safe, and effective way to keep your body moving just the way you need it—so you can handle daily tasks with confidence and ease. Physical therapy professionals, including those within the American Physical Therapy Association, commonly recommend regular stretching to help older adults maintain mobility as they age.

Stretching works by gently lengthening muscles, like slowly pulling an elastic band until it stretches more easily over time. With regular practice, your muscles adapt and become longer and more flexible. This helps increase your range of motion, reduce back and joint pain, improve posture and most importantly, support better balance—which is especially important for older adults, who want to stay steady and independent at home. Staying flexible isn't about touching your toes or becoming an acrobat—it's about moving through your day with comfort, confidence, and independence. Just a little daily effort can reduce aches, improve balance, and help you enjoy an active lifestyle for years to come.

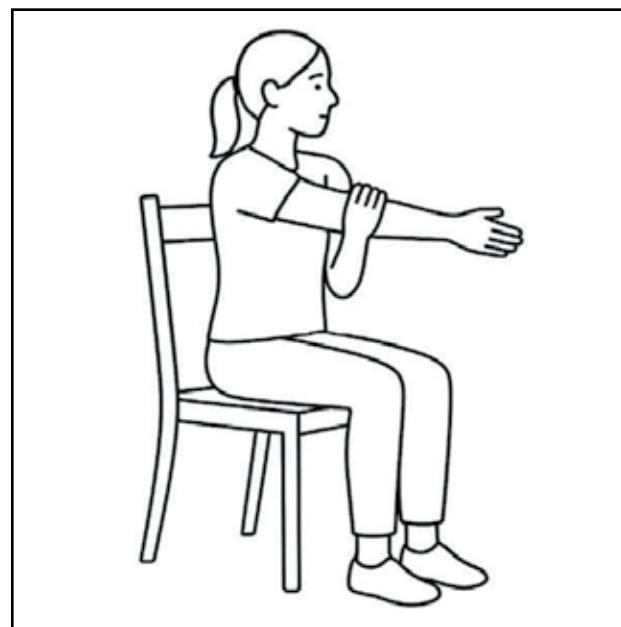
Start with a warm-up! Stretching cold muscles can lead to injury, so begin with gentle movements that warm your body from the inside out. Try rolling your shoulders, lifting your knees, or sweeping your arms up and out for 2-5 minutes. After warming up, you can do static stretches—holding each stretch gently for 10-30 seconds without bouncing. Stretch to the point of slight discomfort, but not pain.

Enjoy a Healthy and Active New Year 2026!



Pexels-Jill Wellington artwork

Simple At-Home Stretches for older adults



Seated Shoulder Stretch

Sit tall with your feet flat on the floor. Bring one arm across your chest. Use your other hand to gently press your arm closer to your chest. Hold for 15-30 seconds, then switch arms. This loosens the shoulders and upper back, making daily tasks like dressing, cooking or lifting a little easier.



Seated Hamstring Stretch

Sit on a chair, extend one leg forward with the heel on the floor, and gently lean forward. This stretch helps with bending, walking, and getting up from a chair.



Seated Flex-and-Round Stretch

While sitting or standing with your feet hip-width apart. Slowly arch your back, lifting your chest and tilting your pelvis forward, then gently round your spine, tucking your chin toward your chest and drawing your belly button in. This keeps the spine flexible and reduces stiffness that builds up from long periods of sitting, and encourages better posture and comfort throughout the day.



Hip Flexor Marching

While standing or holding a chair for support, lift one knee as if marching. This keeps your hips mobile, making stairs, and getting in and out of bed easier.



Ankle Circles

While sitting, gently lift your foot and rotate your ankle in slow circles. Improving ankle mobility helps keep you stable and reduces the chances of slipping or stumbling.

These stretches can be done in 5-10 minutes, and doing them daily, or at least a few times a week, makes a big difference. Before starting any new stretching routine, it's always a good idea to check with your doctor, especially if you have arthritis, Parkinson's, or medical conditions. Your doctor may recommend a physical therapist who can design a stretching plan based on your specific needs.



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GET STARTED

Takes 2 minutes!

Call or Text "Hi" to
76DEMENTIA
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or visit
hottocare.com
or scan:



For More Information Contact
Council on Aging:
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councilonaging.com

How the GUIDE Program Eases the Journey for Dementia Caregivers

By Holly Johnson, HöttoCare

Caring for a loved one with dementia can feel like an overwhelming journey, but you don't have to navigate it alone. The Medicare GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) Model is a groundbreaking program designed specifically to provide wrap-around support for families.

The GUIDE Model acknowledges the immense challenges caregivers face by funding a comprehensive suite of services, which includes crucial access to 24/7 support, personalized care planning, and perhaps most importantly, a \$2,500 yearly allowance to give you a paid break. Medicare invests in this proactive support because decades of research show it helps prevent costly hospitalizations, allowing individuals to remain safely at home longer.

HöttoCare is a certified GUIDE provider, and is bringing this vital program to Northern California. Under the leadership of Dr. Yumi Taylor, their physician-led team offers expert coaching, peer groups, and resource navigation, creating a true partnership in your caregiving journey. Best of all, HöttoCare's services through the GUIDE program are 100% covered by Medicare—there is no cost to you or your family, and no financial inquiries required to qualify. Through a new partnership between HöttoCare and Council on Aging, Sonoma County families can now receive seamless dementia care navigation and day-respite support—available in both English and Spanish—all in one place. Through this collaboration, caregivers gain access not only to expert guidance, but also to safe, reliable breaks that support their well-being while their loved one receive high-quality dementia care.

To get started or reach the care team with questions:

- Visit www.hottocare.com and click "Get Started"
- Text "hi" to 763-363-6842 (76DEMENTIA)
- Call 650-826-3876 and leave a message

Behavioral Health Resource Map for Sonoma County

This online resource map is designed to help you navigate and connect with a variety of behavioral health services and support options available in our community. While not an exhaustive list of all resources, it serves as a helpful starting point to guide you in finding the assistance you need.

The map is organized into eight key categories: Crisis Support, Behavioral Health, Children and Youth Services, Advocacy and Supportive Spaces, Crisis Support, Cultural Aid, Housing and Basic Needs, and Older Adult Services.

Whether you are seeking immediate help or long-term support, this map provides essential tools to begin your journey toward improved well-being. Navigate to this link to learn more about the resources available to you:

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/behavioral-health/resource-map>



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We Can All Make a Meaningful Impact

In the Lives of Older Adults in Sonoma County



Be the voice for the homebound. Lead the way.

Sonoma County's aging population is rising—from 28% to 35% by 2030. Are we ready?

- Suicide among adults 75–84 has surged 52%—the highest of any age group.
- 56% of older adults feel lonely.
- Half of older adults living alone can't afford basic needs.
- In California, 14.6% of older adults have been diagnosed with depression.

PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active & Rewarding Lives) reaches isolated seniors at home, remotely, and in trusted settings—breaking barriers of cost, transportation, and stigma.

Lead the way—fund PEARLS. Your investment improves health, reduces suicide risk, and supports independence for our most vulnerable elders. Be the change that makes a difference.

DENISE JOHNSON | 707-525-0143 x119
Senior Nutrition and Health Director

Our impact since July 2023:

335 clients served

**54% achieved remission
from depression**

**55% improved social
connectedness**

54% reduced loneliness

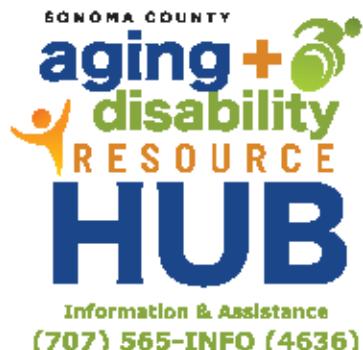


CoA

council on aging
living better, together.

Improve Lives. Reduce Risks. Support Independence. Fund PEARLS.

-CLIP AND SAVE-



Sonoma County Aging & Disability Resources



Programs Available

Types of Assistance Available under the Program

Care Management and Supplies/Equipment	Care Management, Medical Alert Systems, Medical Equipment and Supplies, Memory and Memory Care, Pets and Companion Animals, Blind and Visually Impaired
Counseling, Crisis Prevention and Support Groups	Alcohol and Drug Related Services, Counseling, Crisis Prevention and Hotlines, Medical Condition-Education and Support, Support Groups, Visiting and Reassurance Programs
Education, Training and Employment	Adult Education, Health Education, Job Search and Employment Services, Training for Adults with Disabilities
Financial, Legal and Advocacy	Adult Protective Services, Discount Cards and Vouchers, Financial and Utility Assistance, Insurance Assistance and Complaints, Legal Assistance, Medicare & Other Benefits, Money Management, Tax Counseling
Food and Meals	Congregate Meal and Senior Dining, Farmers Markets, Food Panties and Distribution Sites, Home Delivered Meals
Health Services and Home Care	Health Care Centers and Clinics, Home Care Organizations, Home Care Registries, Home Health Care Agencies, Hospice and Palliative Care, Hospitals, Outpatient Rehabilitation Services
Housing Resources and Placement and Services	Transitional Housing, Housing Information, Housing Repair and Weatherization, Low Income and Subsidized Housing, Mobile Homes, Placement Services, Supportive Housing, Utility and Rent Deposit Assistance, Home Modifications
Emergency Information and Disaster Services	Aging & Disability Resource Hub, Disaster Food, Clothing, and Shelter, Disaster Info and Bulletins, Police and Fire Services, Consumer Information and Complaints, Information and Referral, Libraries
LGBTQIA+ Support Services	Information and Resources, Social and Support Groups, Legal and Advocacy, Medical and Health
Transportation	Public Transportation, Fixed Route Services, Non-Emergency Transportation, Paratransit and Wheelchair Services Transportation Resources
Veterans	Local Benefits and Resources, State Benefits and Resources, Federal VA and National Benefits
Social Activities and Support	Adults Day & Social Programs, Recreation, Senior Centers
Caregiver Resources	Caregiver Counseling and Support, Respite Care for Caregivers, Training for Caregivers
Assistive Technology and Technology Support	Assistive Technology and Technology Support
Advance Care Planning and Donations	Donations: Blood and Organ, Survivor and Burial Benefits

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OR RESOURCES FOR ANY OF THESE SERVICES, CALL (707) 656-INFO (4636) OR VISIT WWW.SOCOADRH.COM

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