

SONOMA SENIORS TODAY

Storytelling: The Heart of Age-Friendly and Value-Based Care

By Dr. Jeremy Holloway, Founder of Tellegacy

In age-friendly health systems, care revolves around a powerful yet straightforward question: "What matters most to you?" Understanding older adults' individual stories, values and goals guides healthcare decisions that resonate deeply with personal preferences. Storytelling is central to this approach because it transforms healthcare interactions into meaningful conversations that effectively address social determinants of health (SDOH) and align with value-based care.



Dr. Jeremy Holloway

The Transformative Power of Storytelling

In age-friendly healthcare, personal narratives offer essential context that clinical diagnoses alone cannot provide. Instead of solely addressing medical symptoms, storytelling invites older adults to articulate their unique experiences, aspirations and priorities. This approach ensures care plans authentically reflect each person's life and preferences. It reduces fragmented care and avoids unwanted interventions. These stories illuminate what genuinely matters—such as maintaining independence, enjoying social connections or comfortably managing chronic conditions. Regularly revisiting these stories ensures care evolves appropriately as health situations change.

Tellegacy: Storytelling as a Foundation

At Tellegacy, storytelling isn't just encouraged—it forms the foundation of our approach. Rather than emphasizing medical diagnoses, Tellegacy prioritizes personal narratives through guided sessions where older adults share life experiences and insights. This process builds strong emotional connections and meaningful social interactions that profoundly benefit mental, emotional and cognitive health. Participants report enhanced emotional well-being along with reduced loneliness and isolation through storytelling. These sessions also engage memory and cognition to maintain mental agility and promote overall wellness.

Creating a Legacy Book

A standout feature of the Tellegacy experience is the Legacy Book—an elegant, personalized hardcover collection of stories, photos and reflections from each participant's sessions. These books document significant life events, insights and memories, preserving the rich histories of older adults. Legacy Books also include reflections from volunteer story listeners who highlight the

mutual enrichment of these intergenerational connections. Volunteers often share profound insights gained through their interactions, which emphasizes the reciprocal benefits of storytelling. Legacy Books represent respect for each individual's experiences and ensure their stories endure to inspire future generations.

Addressing Social Determinants of Health Through Stories

Storytelling directly addresses essential social determinants of health. It strengthens social bonds, reduces loneliness and builds community belonging. Participants in storytelling programs experience improved management of chronic conditions, better mental health and increased

satisfaction with their healthcare. Tellegacy's narrative-driven approach exemplifies value-based care. It focuses not only on medical outcomes but also on emotional and social well-being to promote holistic health.

Supporting Age-Friendly Community Values

Integrating storytelling naturally aligns with age-friendly initiatives, particularly the 4Ms framework—What Matters, Medication, Mentation and Mobility. Storytelling programs actively support cognitive and emotional health, which are crucial components of holistic well-being, by continually focusing on what genuinely matters to older adults.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

— SONOMA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH —

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Communities recognized as Blue Zones, known for their residents’ longevity, emphasize social and intergenerational connectedness as critical to health. Tellegacy similarly nurtures these values by encouraging intergenerational storytelling as a pathway to healthier, longer lives.

How to Participate

Joining Tellegacy provides significant emotional, cognitive and social benefits for older adults

and offers volunteers enriching experiences. To participate or volunteer, please contact the Council on Aging at 707-525-0143 ext. 121 or email lgalten@councilonaging.com.

Together, through storytelling, we can deepen connections, promote health and honor the lives and experiences of our older community members.

Council on Aging Receives Grant from a Kaiser Permanente Fund at The East Bay Community Foundation

By Denise Johnson, MS, Senior Nutrition and Health Director

Council on Aging is proud to announce it has received a generous grant to support its Nourishing Connections: Well-Being Through Food and Friendship initiative. This one-year, \$90,000 grant will ensure the continuation of the Tellegacy and Lunch Companion programs—two impactful efforts designed to combat social isolation, depression and ageism among older adults in Sonoma County.

Starting August 1, 2025, this funding will allow Council on Aging to provide nutritious meals, meaningful social engagement, and personalized legacy storytelling to homebound seniors. With county funding for these programs no longer available, the foundation’s support arrives at a crucial moment.



Through these innovative, relationship-based programs, seniors build connections with volunteers over shared meals and conversations.

We thank the Kaiser Permanente fund at The East Bay Community Foundation for recognizing the importance of community-based solutions that nurture both nutritional and emotional well-being. Together, we are helping older adults age with dignity, purpose and connection. If you or someone you know could benefit from either of these programs, please contact Leigh Galten at 707-525-0143 ext. 121 or send an email to: lgalten@councilonaging.com.

Rotary Club of Windsor Donates \$25,000 to Support Meals on Wheels for Sonoma County Seniors

By Denise Johnson, MS, Senior Nutrition and Health Director

The Council on Aging is honored to recognize and thank the Rotary Club of Windsor, California, for their generous \$25,000 contribution to our Meals on Wheels program. This vital gift will directly support the delivery of nutritious meals, wellness checks and meaningful social connections to homebound older adults across Sonoma County.

Meals on Wheels is more than a food program—it’s a lifeline for seniors who are isolated, vulnerable and often living alone. With the Rotary Club of Windsor’s support, we can continue providing meals that meet one-third of a senior’s daily nutritional needs, while also offering critical safety checks and moments of companionship through our dedicated volunteers.

This contribution comes at a time of increasing need, as more seniors face barriers to accessing healthy meals due to limited mobility, income or health challenges. The Rotary Club of Windsor’s commitment to service and community betterment



will make an immediate and lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

On behalf of the entire Council on Aging team, our volunteers and especially the seniors who rely on Meals on Wheels each day—we extend our deepest gratitude to the Rotary Club of Windsor. Your generosity ensures that older adults in our community remain nourished, safe and connected.

Thank you for being a champion for Sonoma County’s seniors.

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Mission Statement

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

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PUZZLES & GAMES

Puzzle solutions are on page 8

WORD SCRAMBLE

"California Wines"

1. AENTRBCE	- - - - -
2. TLMREO	- - - - -
3. NOPTI GIIGOR	- - - - -
4. SHRYA	- - - - -
5. IADLENZFN	- - - - -
6. LEMCBA	- - - - -
7. ARDNCOANHY	- - - - -
8. NIUOGASVN	- - - - -
9. LIRGIESN	- - - - -
10. EARPMNIOLT	- - - - -
11. RGENACEH	- - - - -
12. ÉRSO	- - - -

SUDOKU - Medium

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

SUDOKU - Hard

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

WORD SEARCH

"Autumn Treats"

CHILI	POTROAST
CASSOULET	SQUASH
MEATLOAF	CINNAMON
CORNBREAD	RAGOUT
STUFFING	APPLE CIDER
CARAMEL	CHESTNUTS

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

"Patriots Day"

ACROSS

- 1 Gem
- 6 United States of America
- 9 Gourmet cook
- 13 Upon (2 wds.)
- 14 Luau dish
- 15 Eddy
- 16 Devil
- 17 Sticky black substance
- 18 Common girl's name
- 19 Skim
- 20 Sports car brand
- 22 Electroencephalograph (abbr.)
- 23 And so forth
- 24 Cocktail drink
- 25 Norm
- 27 Dodge
- 29 Tasteless
- 33 Period between sunrise and sunset
- 34 Often poetically
- 35 Malaria
- 36 Large grassy area
- 39 Rested
- 40 Repent
- 41 Opposed
- 42 Drunk
- 43 Roberto's yes
- 44 Inadequately
- 46 Keeps
- 49 Leaves
- 50 Thief's hideout
- 51 To be in debt
- 53 Digital audio tape
- 56 Musical term
- 58 One of two things that are identical
- 59 Basic beliefs
- 61 Card game
- 62 Snuck
- 63 Point where two or more parts come together
- 64 Villain
- 65 Tanker
- 66 Niche
- 67 Ram's mate
- 68 Authoritarian

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13						14				15			
16						17				18			
19					20				21		22		
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41				42				43					
44				45				46			47	48	
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53	54	55		56			57				58		
59			60			61			62				
63						64			65				
66						67				68			

By Jimmy and Evelyn Johnson - www.qets.com

DOWN

- 1 Police
- 2 Acts out
- 3 Begin to cause harm
- 4 Colored horse
- 5 Licensed practical nurse
- 6 "The Jungle" author Sinclair
- 7 Glide
- 8 Any machine that can fly through the air
- 9 Communication Workers of America (abr.)
- 10 Retain
- 11 Canal
- 12 Rectangular piece of cloth with colors and designs
- 15 Refine ore
- 20 Sympathize with
- 21 Pain
- 24 Graduate (abbr.)
- 26 Excites
- 28 Loafing
- 30 Self
- 31 Star
- 32 Visit
- 34 Cereal
- 36 Foreign Agricultural Service
- 37 Business title ending
- 38 Estimated time of arrival
- 39 Asian rice topping (2 wds)
- 40 Actor Alda
- 42 Luge
- 43 Fake butter
- 45 Make hot
- 47 Showerer's need
- 48 Lifts
- 50 Light emitting __
- 52 Entrance
- 53 __ vu
- 54 A spinning toy (2 wds.)
- 55 Not that
- 57 Chew
- 58 Triad
- 60 Less than two
- 62 Black-backed gull

WORD SEARCH "Autumn Treats"

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

Generations in Motion: Walking Together for Sonoma County Seniors

By Rachel Ochoa Jones, Development Director

On Saturday, May 17, 2025, Spring Lake Regional Park came alive with music, laughter and heartfelt connection as Council on Aging hosted its inaugural **Generations in Motion Walk & Picnic**. Designed to celebrate health, inclusion and intergenerational joy, the event brought together families, friends and neighbors for a morning of community spirit and purpose—all in support of Sonoma County seniors. This joyful gathering blended fundraising, visibility and mission-driven engagement, laying the groundwork for what’s sure to become an annual tradition.

A Morning of Fun and Purpose

Festivities kicked off with a vibrant **Community Resource Fair**, where families explored local services, met partner organizations, and enjoyed hands-on fun. Yard games, an arts & crafts station, and a Polaroid photo booth with silly props helped create lasting memories. Children especially loved the bubble station, giggling as they chased shimmering orbs across the field.

One touching highlight was a local family walking hand-in-hand—three generations strong. Grandparents, parents, and children laughed together at the bubble station, then strolled the lakeside trail before settling under the oaks for a shared picnic. It was a living portrait of connection, joy, and what this event is all about.

At 11:30 AM, the community gathered for the walk, choosing between two scenic routes: a paved 0.7-mile loop and a 2.3-mile path around the lake. Along the way, cheerful volunteers, water stations,



and bubble machines energized participants. Adding a touch of magic, a family of geese with goslings joined walkers on the trail—delighting kids and adults alike.

A Picnic Beneath the Oaks

After the walk, everyone gathered under the shade of majestic oak trees for a relaxing picnic. Lunch was crafted with care by **Meals on Wheels Kitchen Director Bill Govan**, and sweet treats from local eatery **Drip** rounded out the meal. It was a time to unwind, connect, and enjoy the company of neighbors.

Heartfelt Thanks

This event wouldn’t have been possible without the incredible support from across our community. Thank you to every walker, volunteer, staff member, donor, and sponsor for making this inaugural event such a success.

A special thank you goes to **Kona Ice**, who added a refreshing and delicious treat to the day; to our amazing community resource tabling partners,

who generously shared valuable services and support; and to **Sonoma County Regional Parks** for donating the beautiful event space. We are also deeply grateful to **Nubia Padilla**, Accessibility & Equity Manager, whose thoughtful collaboration helped ensure the event was accessible and inclusive for all ages and abilities.

Your energy and commitment brought our mission to life and made a real impact.

Looking Ahead

Together, we raised **\$17,680** to support seniors in Sonoma County. But more than that, we created a space of connection, joy, and belonging—something our community deeply values.

Keep an eye out for next year’s *Save the Date!*

We can’t wait to walk with you again, and we hope you’ll bring even more family and friends along for the journey.



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INGREDIENTS:

Makes 2 Servings

1/2 Cup of each of the following (Cut into 1" Pieces)

- Yellow Bell Pepper
- Red Bell Pepper
- Red Onions
- Mushrooms
- Zucchini
- Yellow Squash
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Lemon (Sliced/Seeded) (Plus juice for finishing)
- 1 TBS Olive or Avocado Oil (Plus extra for finishing)
- Kosher Salt & Freshly Ground Black Pepper to Taste

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 425°. In a bowl, toss vegetables and oil together to coat. Toss in seasonings.

Put the vegetables loosely on a parchment or foil lined baking sheet and roast or 15-20 minutes.

Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary and finish with oil and lemon juice.

Divide onto two plates (add protein now if desired) and top with something that pleases you.

Note: Other vegetables can be used as well, just be mindful of the cooking times. Add a protein and/or grated cheese if desired.

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The Sonoma County AARP Tax-Aide program is again offering its in-person summer/fall tax clinics. The clinic can help file tax returns for 2024 or 2023, file amended tax returns and can help taxpayers who need assistance interpreting letters they received from the IRS or California Tax Franchise Board. These clinics are offered on selective Tuesdays and Fridays through mid-October at the Franklin Park Clubhouse, 2095 Franklin Avenue, Santa Rosa. Appointments are available from 9:30 a.m. through 12:15 p.m. Call or text 707-582-0251 for an appointment. A volunteer will call or text back to you with available dates and times. Those with a tax question should text or call the main district number 707-327-2401 and leave a message.

This is a free service for low and moderate-income seniors, but is open to anyone regardless of age or income. It is sponsored by the AARP Foundation and is staffed by trained, certified tax volunteers. You do not need to be a member of AARP to use the services.

NUTRITION NEWS

Nutrition and Chronic Diseases



As we age, our bodies undergo changes that can make us more susceptible to chronic diseases. For elderly individuals, managing these conditions can be particularly challenging, but good nutrition plays a powerful role in maintaining health and improving quality of life. Eating well isn't just about feeling good; it's a vital tool in the fight against chronic illness.

Even if you're not as active as you once were, your body still needs a variety of nutrients to function optimally. Different diseases typically benefit from increased consumption of specific food groups. Four of the most common chronic diseases we are seeing today are Heart Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, Osteoporosis, and Obesity.

Conditions related to the heart often benefit from a diet low in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Focus on prioritizing intake of whole grains, lean proteins, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Using herbs, spices, or acidic juices (lemon, lime, apple cider vinegar, etc.) are great ways to flavor food without using salt.

Blood sugar management has become a popular topic in recent years. Dysregulated blood sugars have been linked to causing a variety of chronic conditions like kidney disease, nerve damage, poor wound healing, and impaired eyesight. Increasing your dietary intake of high fiber foods like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, and lentils are a great way to help regulate blood sugar. Limit added sugars which are commonly found in sugary drinks and ultra-processed foods. Try to eat balanced meals and snacks at regular intervals throughout the day to prevent severe blood sugar dips.

Bone health is extremely important the older you get. The best way to support bone health is to ensure you are consuming enough Calcium and Vitamin D sources. Dairy products, dark leafy greens, and foods fortified with Vitamin D are great sources of these nutrients. Additionally, prioritizing daily sunlight exposure is another great way to meet your Vitamin D needs.

Maintaining a healthy weight is important, not just for overall wellness, but for chronic disease management. Some of the best ways to do this is to prioritize nutrient dense foods (foods high in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, protein, etc.), be aware of serving sizes, and prioritize daily movement whether that is going for a walk, gardening, doing a few chair exercises, or other low impact exercises.

For further information or to answer questions, contact your primary care physician.

Written by: Vanessa Hasslinger, MS, RDN

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

1	P	E	A	R	L		6	U	S	A		9	C	H	E	12	F		
13	O	N	T	O	P		14	P	O	I		15	S	W	I	R	L		
16	S	A	T	A	N		17	T	A	R		18	M	A	R	I	A		
19	S	C	A	N		20	P	O	R	C		21	H	E		22	E	E	G
23	E	T	C		24	G	I	N		25	R	U	L	E					
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1. AENTRBCE	C A B E R N E T
2. TLMREO	M E R L O T
3. NOPTI GIIGOR	P I N O T G R I G I O
4. SHRYA	S Y R A H
5. IADLENZFN	Z I N F A N D E L
6. LEMCBA	M A L B E C
7. ARDNCOANHY	C H A R D O N N A Y
8. NIUOGASVN	S A U V I G N O N
9. LIRGIESN	R I E S L I N G
10. EARPMNIOLT	T E M P R A N I L L O
11. RGENACEH	G R E N A C H E
12. ÉRSO	R O S É

SUDOKU - Medium

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

SUDOKU - Hard

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



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How to take care of your blood pressure to prevent memory loss

By Dr. Parimala Selvan

As we age, many of us worry about maintaining our mental sharpness and memory. While we often focus on brain games and mental exercises, there's a crucial connection that deserves our attention: the relationship between blood pressure and cognitive health. Recent research reveals that active management of your blood pressure could be one of the most effective ways to protect your memory as you age.



Dr. Parimala Selvan

The Blood Pressure-Memory Connection

Your brain requires a steady supply of oxygen-rich blood to function optimally. When blood pressure is elevated, it can damage the delicate blood vessels in your brain over time, reducing blood flow and potentially leading to cognitive decline. Think of it like a garden hose with too much pressure—eventually, the increased force can cause damage to the system.

High blood pressure significantly increases the risk of covert brain infarcts—small, "silent" strokes that often go unnoticed but quietly damage brain tissue and impair cognitive function. These silent strokes not only contribute to memory loss and cognitive decline but also substantially increase the likelihood of future major strokes and dementia, making blood pressure control crucial for protecting both brain health and long-term memory.

The recent, groundbreaking SPRINT MIND trial studied over 9,000 older adults with high blood pressure and found compelling evidence for this connection. Participants in the study who achieved the target blood pressure of less than 120 mmHg (rather than the standard target of less than 140 mmHg) showed significantly lower rates of mild cognitive impairment—often considered a precursor to dementia.

What this Means for Your Brain

The study's MRI findings were particularly revealing. Those with more intensive blood pressure control had less increase in white matter lesions—areas of brain damage that can affect memory and thinking. These lesions are like small scars on the brain that accumulate over time when blood pressure isn't well-controlled.

Practical Steps for Better Blood Pressure Control

- **Monitor regularly:** Check your blood pressure at home and keep a log. Many pharmacies also offer free blood pressure checks.
- **Embrace the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension):** Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy while reducing sodium intake.
- **Stay active:** Even 30 minutes of moderate exercise like walking can make a big difference.
- **Manage stress:** Practice relaxation techniques, meditation, or activities you enjoy.
- **Take medications as prescribed:** Work closely with your healthcare provider to find the right combination and dosage.
- **Limit alcohol and quit smoking:** Both can raise blood pressure and affect cognitive function.

Remember, protecting your memory isn't just about crossword puzzles—it's about caring for your whole cardiovascular system. By keeping your blood pressure in check, you're not just protecting your heart, you're safeguarding your mind for years to come.

Reframing Aging

An educational session with Dr. Parimala Selvan

Presented by the Council on Aging and Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa



Join Dr. Parimala Selvan for an engaging session titled "Reframing Aging" where participants will learn proactive approaches to healthy aging and how to navigate healthcare systems with confidence.

Participants will discover what age-friendly healthcare means for them and how to advocate for care that respects their values, preferences, and goals. The session will cover essential heart health strategies and practical, science-backed techniques to maintain cognitive health and reduce dementia risk. And discover the 5 Ms of geriatrics—Mind, Mobility, Medications, Multi-complexity, and Matters Most—a framework that helps both patients and healthcare providers focus on what's truly important for individual well-being.



Parimala Selvan, M.D.
Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa
Board certified in Internal Medicine, Lifestyle Medicine, Geriatrics and Hospice, and Palliative Care



Date: Friday, September 26

Time: 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Location:
In-person and virtually
Council on Aging
30 Kawana Springs Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Light refreshments will be provided

RSVP
Space is limited. Please RSVP for this event:
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• Email Taryn Henry at thenry@councilonaging.com
• Call Taryn at 707-525-0143, ext. 124



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Sonoma Wine Country Games: The 2025 Report

By Leigh Galten, Volunteer and Wine Country Games Manager

The 13th annual Sonoma Wine Country Games, held across the first three weekends in June 2025, once again brought together a vibrant community of athletes. Registration for the Games opened promptly at 12:01 AM on March 1, welcoming the first team, "Kick in Grass," a women's soccer team from Washington State, shortly after midnight. This early registration trend continued, particularly among soccer teams from across the United States, drawn by the allure of Wine Country in June.



Participation and Demographics

By the time the Games commenced, a total of 811 athletes had registered, a figure consistent with participation numbers from recent years. A significant portion of this athlete base was driven by women's soccer, which fielded 26 teams comprising 320 players, with some individuals even participating on multiple teams.

Delving deeper into the statistics, athletes' ages spanned from 50 to 95. Of the 811 participants, 241 identified as men and a notable 570 as women. This increase in female participation was not solely attributed to the growth in women's soccer but also to a significant surge in women playing Pickleball—indeed, the women's doubles pickleball tournament was the first to sell out!

The Games boasted a wide geographic reach, with 16 U.S. states represented, alongside three women's soccer players from Canada. Locally, 321 athletes hailed from Sonoma, Napa, or Marin County. An impressive 67% of the athletes were returning players, underscoring the event's enduring appeal. The largest age demographic participating this year was the 65-69 age group.

Weekend One: May 30 – June 1

The 2025 Games officially kicked off with a serene **Lawn Bowling Tournament** at the picturesque Oakmont Lawn Bowling Club in Santa Rosa. The sight of the green courts, framed by mountains and dotted with crisp white uniforms, proved to be a truly spectacular beginning.



That same opening weekend also hosted the **Bocce and Table Tennis Tournaments**. Bocce, known for attracting some of the "oldest" competitors—who demonstrate remarkable skill—got underway on Saturday, May 31, at the beautiful Juilliard Park. Fourteen teams and over 60 players competed in this two-day event, with all teams playing on Saturday and the top eight advancing to Sunday. "Out of Our Hands" ultimately claimed first place after narrowly making the playoffs and then dominating Sunday's play, followed by "Rolling Stones" in second, and "Dolls & Balls" in third.

A few miles away, at The Zones, the **Table Tennis Tournament** unfolded in a newly renovated space, much to the appreciation of participants who enjoyed the fixed air conditioning during two days of fierce yet friendly competition. A highlight of this event was a Council on Aging's "Meals on Wheels" volunteer driver winning gold in the Men's Singles 80-84 age group.

Weekend Two: June 6 – June 8

The second weekend of the Games began with an impressive turnout for **Women's Pickleball** on Friday morning, marking the largest number of participants ever for this event. Held annually at Sunrise Park in Rohnert Park, the tournament benefited greatly from the partnership with the Rohnert Park Pickleball Club and its dedicated volunteers, who ensured excellent care for both



athletes and the facility. Saturday's play featured the **Mixed Doubles Pickleball Competition**, with thankfully mild weather allowing for extended matches that drew loud cheers from spectators. Sunday concluded the pickleball events with the **Men's Doubles**, which, while having the smallest turnout, still saw 84 men engaging in intense volleys and dinks on their way to the medal stand.

This weekend also hosted the largest-ever **Women's Soccer Tournament** at A Place to Play in west Santa Rosa. Drawing 320 women from Canada and across the U.S., the two-day tournament saw athletes compete in 50, 60, 65, and 70 event/age divisions. A significant "first" this year was the presence of six teams in the 70s age group, including three players in their 80s, sparking discussions on the sidelines about forming an over 75s division in future Games.

Weekend Three: June 14

The final event of this year's Games took place on Saturday, June 14, with the **Throws Meet**. This competition showcased both men and women participating in javelin, discus, shot put, hammer, and weight toss. Athletes had the option to sign up for one to five implements, with those throwing all five entering the Pentathlon. This tight-knit and supportive community always brings a blend of competitive spirit and camaraderie, almost achieving a new women's javelin record this year. The event also served as a valuable opportunity to connect with the broader throwing community and highlight the venue, which is meticulously updated and maintained by sports commissioner Paul Troppey.

A Farewell to a Legacy

It is with heavy hearts that Council on Aging announced that this will be the final year they host the Sonoma Wine Country Games. Due to ongoing uncertainties regarding funding and resources, the Council's primary focus must shift to essential services that directly support the critical needs of its clients in Sonoma County.

The inaugural Sonoma Wine Country Games were held in June 2011, featuring sports like Bocce and Soccer, predating the widespread popularity of Pickleball. This marks an incredible run of 13 Games over 15 years, after accounting for a two-year hiatus. Being involved in 11 of these events and forging numerous friendships has been a truly rewarding experience for the organizers. For the majority of athletes, the sheer joy of "playing" far outweighs the pursuit of medals. When asked about their longevity, athletes in their 80s consistently offer the simple yet profound advice: "Just don't stop doing it." Beyond the physical challenge, these past 11 years have been a testament to the best in sportsmanship, camaraderie, and community. Memories abound: a new bocce player

PEARLS Testimonial: SM

Born in Santa Rosa and raised on a ranch in Sebastopol, SM has one sister and one brother. She has a wide range of talents and skills. Her first job was as a bartender and waitress. She later moved to Hawaii, where she worked as a dancer for ten years. SM is also an expert gardener having worked in the gardening departments at Orchards and Home Depot, where she often



SM

operated a forklift and took on on-call shifts. Her outstanding job dedication and excellent customer service earned her a Customer Service Award. In addition, she worked as a flower arranger at Michael's and held a customer service position at Tuesday Morning Home Goods. SM has many hobbies, including making and painting statues, building planter boxes, creating flower arrangements, and gardening. She also enjoys listening to music, shopping, walking her dog, and riding motorcycles. A fun fact about SM is that she loves to sing and dance—and was even featured on an episode of *Inside Edition*!

SM feels that she has greatly benefited from the PEARLS program. The Problem-Solving Tool helped her break down challenges into smaller, more manageable steps, allowing her to take meaningful action. PEARLS gave her structure, motivation, and a sense of accountability that helped her reach her goals.

Completing the program and receiving her PEARLS certificate brought her tremendous joy. PEARLS also helped bridge a gap when she was unable to access a therapist. She especially enjoyed working with her PEARLS Coach, Kitty, and felt that building a strong rapport with her was vital to her success.

Some of SM's gems of wisdom she would like to share with future generations are: "Don't take anything for granted! Live fully in the moment and be grateful for everything—stay positive."

She concluded the interview by saying, "PEARLS made me feel more grateful for everything!"

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Part 2: Thurs, Oct 30 • 11 AM - 1:00 PM
Topics include steps to take in extended power outages, pet safety in emergencies, and working together as a community to stay safe.

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Wild Bill, aged 101, shares his secrets of longevity

By Linda Owens and Debbie Van Dyke

Wednesday lunch time with Council on Aging Congregate Dining at Burbank Orchards hasn't been the same since Wild Bill came to town. Everyone loves his presence, and there is always a great story to be told. This is his story.



My name is William Adam Owens, named after my grandfather and great grandfather. Some people call me "Wild Bill." I am 101, and will be 102 in November. I was born and raised on a farm in Southern Indiana. I milked one of our family cows twice a day from the time I was seven until I left home at 17. Boy, was I glad to never milk a cow again.

My dad was a coal miner, and my six brothers and I helped out by working on the farm before and after school. My only sister helped raise her seven younger brothers.

I worked for 10 years for the US Coast and Geodetic Survey Party, surveying the country for map-making. I pulled our trailer, which was our home, and my wife Dorothy drove the car with our three kids. After the fourth child was born, we gave up traveling. I loved that life, but it was hard on the kids—disrupting them and moving to a new school so frequently. So, after 10 years, I took a job as an accountant in Southern California. I stayed for 31 years until I retired.

Even though my hearing is almost gone, as is my eyesight, I enjoy sitting and talking with the other elderly attendees at lunch. They are very kind and give me a lot of slack (not really remembering their names or hearing what they say). One of my three daughters brings me and "translates," talking loudly to keep me in line and fill in when I can't remember something! It's nice to have someone serve me food, and I don't have to do the dishes. The volunteer Sabrina sometimes brings treats to us old folks, which I like.

I've been asked about my "secret to a long life" and I've got some suggestions: no smoking, drinking alcohol in moderation, staying active (I played golf for over 60 years and even got five holes in one), cornbread and milk—which I ate every morning growing up on the farm and still eat almost daily, good genes, modern health care and just plain LUCK.

I have so many favorite memories. My wife of 78 years sent me three letters before we were married. I can't remember exactly what she wrote, but I knew it was time to marry her. (She passed away six months ago). I still have those letters somewhere in my stuff.

Another memory I have was a radio station contest asking listeners who wrote *The Call of the Wild*. I was the first caller to tell them Jack London was the author, and I won a small diamond, which I had put on my wife's engagement ring. I've had a good life.

A Sweet Surprise from Girl Scout Troop 10290

By Denise Johnson, MS, Senior Nutrition and Health Director

Council on Aging is deeply grateful to Girl Scout Troop 10290 and Debbie (Troop Leader) for their incredible donation of 33 cases of Girl Scout cookies to support older adults in our nutrition programs. With 32 girls of all ages, this thoughtful and generous troop truly lives by their motto: "We love helping in our community, because we love helping people."

These cookies will be shared with seniors, many of whom are food insecure and face daily challenges in accessing nutritious meals. While it may seem small, a single cookie can bring a moment of joy, a sense of connection, and a much-needed smile to a senior's face.

Thank you, Troop 10290, for your kindness, compassion and community spirit. Your donation is more than just a sweet treat—it's a reminder to our seniors that they are cared for and remembered.



Photo by Ablestock



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