

SONOMA SENIORS TODAY

Unveiling the Hidden Gem

PACE — A Little Known Program Revolutionizing Elderly Care

By Bridget Pearce, RN, MSN, Healthcare Consultant

This article aims to illuminate a hidden gem accessible through Medicare and Medicaid — the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). The name encapsulates the program, designed to address the diverse needs of confident older adults and their families. It offers a solution for those seeking to age within the comfort of their home rather than an institution.

The increasing number of older Americans has brought heightened attention to the challenges associated with aging. Extensive research has focused on various facets impacting seniors' quality of life, especially preventing and managing chronic illnesses and promoting overall health. Navigating through the complexity of the process requires overcoming multiple roadblocks along the way. As individuals age, the risk of chronic diseases such as dementia, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, and cancer significantly rises, posing substantial threats to health and well-being. Access and affordability of medical care, food, housing, and social support are key determinants that strongly influence one's dignity and quality of life. The recent global pandemic emphasized the collective preference among seniors to age in place, underscoring the importance of staying in familiar communities rather than opting for institutional settings.

The Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) is a unique and comprehensive healthcare program designed to meet the diverse needs of individuals over 55 with complex needs. With an estimated 1-2% of the population in this age group eligible for PACE, it is an innovative solution for those who meet specific criteria and seek integrated medical, health, and social services. While not an eligibility criterion, according to the National Pace Association, approximately 90 percent of participants are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid.

What is PACE?

PACE is a Medicare program that is available in states choosing to participate. Currently, PACE is available in only thirty-two states. Based on a three-way agreement with CMS and the state Medicaid agency, the PACE organization agrees to provide all acute and long-term care services the participant needs in exchange for taking the entire financial risk; CMS and state Medicaid agencies pay a monthly capitated rate for each participant, and the organization has flexibility in how they use the funds. The

participant agrees to receive all their care from the PACE organization and is only responsible for payment of premiums. There is never a co-pay, deductible, or coverage gap in PACE so that you can access the care, services, and medications needed. Policies on grievances, appeals, and service requests protect participant rights. Quality of care is closely monitored by all parties using various methods.

To qualify for PACE, individuals must:

- Be 55 years of age or older
- Meet the state's criteria for nursing facility-level care (considers both medical and functional needs)
- Reside in a ZIP code served by a PACE organization
- Be able to live safely in their home or another setting with the support services provided by PACE

PACE organizations have enrollment specialists to work with prospective participants to see if PACE is a good fit for their needs and if they meet the requirements. Insurance and financial status evaluation is usually included to assess eligibility for state Medicaid coverage or other options. Unlike Medicare Advantage Programs, there is no limitation on application timing.

How PACE Works

An eleven-member interdisciplinary team (IDT) is responsible for developing a plan of care that reflects the services and goals of treatment tailored to each participant. Preventative screenings, including vaccinations, are included. The team, trained in caring for older adults, consists of clinical and non-clinical members who communicate regularly regarding participant needs or observations. The primary care provider, nurse, homecare coordinator, social worker, dietitian, physical therapist, and occupational therapist conduct initial and regular assessments. The team is responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan, making sure services are provided as described. Regular team meetings discuss participant status, schedules, and any service requests received. The team agrees to any changes to the care plan. Participant requests are evaluated and acted upon as expeditiously as their condition warrants. Unlike other plans, only IDT approval is required, and there is never a charge to the participant.

The PACE Center serves as the program's hub, typically equipped with a clinic, rehab gym, personal care facilities, spaces for group



Photo by Kampus Production, Pexels

activities, communal dining, family conference areas, and offices for staff. Beyond the center, PACE provides care in various community settings, including homes, specialist offices, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, and skilled nursing facilities if necessary.

What PACE Offers

PACE Organizations deliver comprehensive medical, health, and social services, seamlessly integrating acute and long-term care. The emphasis on preventive care and quality of life underscores the equal significance of medical and social support services. A care plan is developed and updated to ensure participants receive care tailored to their needs across all settings, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Services include but are not limited to primary care, behavioral health, specialty care such as dentistry, audiology, vision, speech, nursing care, home health care including supplies, personal care, chore services, rehabilitative therapies, durable medical equipment, medications, social services, nutritional counseling and meals, recreational therapy, and transportation. It also includes diagnostic studies, emergency room visits, outpatient surgery, acute care, rehab facilities, or other facilities when needed. The IDT will oversee all care, wherever provided, assuring quality and coordination. The PACE organization is also responsible for payment to all contracted service providers.

PACE stands as a beacon of comprehensive care for older adults, addressing the unique needs of individuals over 55 through an integrated and person-centered approach. By offering a wide range of services and operating in various community settings, PACE strives to enhance its participants' overall health and well-being, fostering independence and dignity in their golden years.

For more information, visit these National PACE Association online links:
www.npaonline.org/find-a-pace-program
www.npaonline.org/eligibility-requirements

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Caregiver Corner: Modifying the Environment Can Help People Living with Dementia

By Jamie Escoubas, Director of Social and Fiduciary Services, Council on Aging

Living with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia can dramatically affect how someone interprets and navigates their environment. What may be surprising is that these challenges are often experienced in the home. People, places, and things they have recognized for years can become unfamiliar, causing disorientation, anxiety, and agitation. If you are caring for someone facing these challenges, consider adjusting the home to create a safe, calming, and predictable environment.

Here are some simple modifications and changes you can make to your living space to better support your loved one.

- Reduce visual distractions:** By minimizing unnecessary clutter and simplifying décor, you can create a soothing space to increase focus and attention. For example, consider removing decorative vases, perfumes, and lotions from the bathroom sink and only display the toothbrush and toothpaste. Your loved one will be more likely to recognize the task of brushing their teeth when they enter the bathroom.
- Use visual cues and signs:** The ability to find one's way in the world, known as wayfinding, is impaired in persons with Alzheimer's. Posting arrows and signs throughout the house enables your loved one to locate rooms and objects independently. For example, adding labels and/or words to dresser drawers can help your loved one locate his clothing successfully. Arrows at eye level can direct them to the bathroom or kitchen as needed. Limit choices: Much like clutter, people with dementia can feel overwhelmed by too many choices. Consider purging or rotating clothing in the closet for the season so that it doesn't require someone to choose between a wool sweater and a t-shirt on a hot summer day.
- Use color and lighting to create contrast:** Different types of dementia can impact visual perception in various ways based on how the disease changes the brain's structure. Consider using contrasting colors to draw attention to objects. For example, the lack of ability to differentiate between colors can make eating difficult. Evidence suggests that using a bright (e.g., red) plate, utensils, and cups might help your loved one recognize the food and encourage them to eat. You can also help by turning lights on gradually to allow



- pupils to adjust, using adequate lighting to minimize shadows, and adding motion-activated lighting to help navigate dark rooms at night.
- Remove tripping hazards:** Because visual impairments and attention can be a challenge for someone with dementia, accessing your home for fall risks is essential. Consider removing objects, such as area rugs and low coffee tables, that are not in one's visual field. For example, rugs that buckle, are extra thick, or slip and move easily can cause someone to trip or stumble. While the rugs may look aesthetically pleasing, it may not be worth the risk.
- Use music:** There is strong evidence that the effect of music can improve the behaviors or reactions of people with dementia. For example, ambient music has been shown to reduce agitation and wandering, while stimulating, upbeat music can promote wakefulness and activity. Play different kinds of music depending on the situation and time of day to elicit the response you are hoping for.
- Adjust temperature:** Watch for cues indicating your loved one is too hot or cold, and adjust accordingly. Your loved one may not tell you how they feel but might give you clues by resisting a task or pacing.

Although it is not a cure, offering a positive, dementia-friendly environment can change Alzheimer's outcomes. By applying some or all of the strategies mentioned above, you can better support the health, independence, and safety of your loved one to help them live well and successfully at home for as long as possible.

For further information about caregiver support and services for your loved one, please get in touch with Council on Aging at 707-525-0143 ext. 103.

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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.

Make SST part of your plan to age successfully!

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Legacy



To leave a bequest is to make a permanent statement of your values. It is by this act of charity that the world will remember what you cared about and what you stood for.

If providing for seniors matters to you, consider a gift to Council on Aging in your estate plans.

CEO Corner with Marrianne McBride



Many people are concerned about leaving a legacy: evidence that their life mattered and that they made a difference in the world and in the lives of those they love. A legacy reflects who you are as a person and what your life is about. Take time to reflect on the events in your life: the things

you have accomplished, the people you have loved, and the memories that you cherish. Creating a legacy that reflects your life is a valuable gift to your family and friends and can help ease your sorrow about leaving them behind. How do you want to be remembered by your family? It is of high value for Americans to help the next generation, not only by helping provide for their children’s material needs but also by instilling deeply held values. Such values are not just taught by hearing what their parents say but by witnessing how they live their lives. For 75%

of us, philanthropy is a pervasive value. Charitable giving is something we do during our lifetime. It is, however, possible to leave a legacy by planning beyond our lifetime. A gift to charity in your estate plans is a living, lasting statement of your values. In many cases, planned gifts can reduce taxes and sometimes even provide an income for you. If a charitable gift in your estate plans is of interest, talk to the organizations whose values are consistent with yours. Begin a conversation about the possibilities. You may be able to make a difference in ways that you never dreamed possible.

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PUZZLES & GAMES

Puzzle solutions are on page 10

WORD SCRAMBLE
"WORLD MUSEUMS"

1. RLEOUV _ _ _ _ _
2. SILCOOPRA _ _ _ _ _
3. ETAT _ _ _ _
4. DAPRO _ _ _ _ _
5. ETTYG _ _ _ _ _
6. ALMAB _ _ _ _ _
7. ONGGVAH _ _ _ _ _
8. MAMO _ _ _ _
9. DYSRA'O _ _ _ _ _
10. MTE _ _ _
11. NGAINNJ _ _ _ _ _
12. ZIFFUI _ _ _ _ _

SUDOKU - Medium

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

SUDOKU - Hard

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

WORD SEARCH
"LABEL CLAIMS"

- CALORIE CHOLESTEROL
- GLUTEN FASTING
- VITAMINS WEIGHT LOSS
- ELECTROLYTES FIBER
- METABOLISM PROTEIN
- DIETING GRAINS

"EARTH DAY"

ACROSS

- 1 That girl
- 4 Loot
- 8 American Indian tribe member
- 14 Summer skin color
- 15 Sugar plant
- 16 Loathes
- 17 Electric spark
- 18 Molecule
- 19 Evening party
- 20 Coated with flour
- 22 Possessive pronoun
- 23 Plant life
- 24 Representatives
- 27 Rubbish
- 31 Plateau
- 33 Scorching
- 35 Central processing unit
- 36 Mixture of gasses that surrounds earth
- 38 Director (abbr.)
- 39 Rebuff
- 40 5th Greek letter
- 44 Rock growths
- 46 Atmosphere
- 47 Night bird
- 49 Paddle
- 50 Note of debt
- 51 Federal Bureau of Investigation
- 52 Nix
- 55 Ache
- 58 Northeast by east
- 61 One of Columbus' ships
- 63 What a cow chews
- 65 Servants
- 67 Category
- 70 Socialism's Marx
- 71 Crest
- 72 Capital of New York
- 73 Not out of
- 74 East northeast
- 75 Most have leaves, roots, stems, flowers
- 76 Feverish
- 77 Lair

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13
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67	68	69						70				71		
72								73				74		
75								76					77	

By Jimmy and Evelyn Johnson - www.qets.com

DOWN

- 1 Man
- 2 New York City Upper Manhattan neighborhood
- 3 End of performance cheer
- 4 Pock
- 5 Clear liquid with no taste or color
- 6 Positive electrode
- 7 Rock
- 8 El __ (Texas city)
- 9 Around
- 10 Whizz
- 11 Neither's partner
- 12 Bard's before
- 13 Compass point
- 21 Unspoken
- 25 Doctoral degree
- 26 Top layer of the earth's surface
- 28 Inflammatory disease
- 29 Made thread
- 30 Middles

- 32 Cause of sickness
- 34 Three
- 37 House top
- 39 Got smaller
- 40 Give off
- 41 Winnie the __
- 42 Tangy
- 43 Northwest by north
- 45 Metal container for food or products
- 48 Palter
- 53 Tried to lose weight
- 54 Any person
- 56 Body of water covering three quarters of earth
- 57 Charred
- 59 Mont __
- 60 Fifth largest planet in solar system
- 62 Quaking tree
- 64 24 hour periods
- 66 Satiare
- 67 Retail clothing store
- 68 Building addition
- 69 Basketball association
- 70 Central Intelligence

WORD SEARCH - "LABEL CLAIMS"

N	E	E	C	U	M	D	P	Q	X	G	F	J	C	B	J
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Sonoma County Senior Resources

Welcome to the newly enhanced Senior Resource Section of Sonoma Seniors Today. Each issue will showcase expanded content for specific services related to healthy aging. Content will include local resources, ads, articles, best practices, tips and valuable information when choosing a service provider. Be sure to CLIP AND SAVE these valuable resources for your future reference.

CLIP AND SAVE



AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

FREE help to prepare and file your 2023 income tax returns. Text or call for an appointment.

City	Location	Dates & Hours	Start / End Date	Text / Phone #
Santa Rosa	Franklin Park Clubhouse 2095 Franklin Avenue	Monday – Thursday and Select Fridays 9:30 am – 2:30 pm	Feb 1 / Apr 15	707-582-0251
Santa Rosa	Rincon Valley Regional Library 6959 Montecito Boulevard	Friday (Closed 3/1) 12:30 – 5 pm Mar 10:30 am – 2:00 pm in April	Feb 2 / Apr 12	707-582-5208
Santa Rosa	Oakmont Berger Center 6633 Oakmont Drive	Monday & Wednesday 9 am – 3 pm (Closed 4/1)	Feb 5 / Apr 15	707-582-0565
Healdsburg	Healdsburg Regional Library 139 Piper Street	Thursday 10 am – 3 pm	Feb 1 / Apr 11	707-836-3198
Petaluma	Petaluma Community Center 320 N. McDowell Boulevard	Monday 9 am – 2 pm	Feb 5 / Apr 15	707-408-3190
Petaluma	Petaluma Regional Library 100 Fairgrounds Drive	Wednesday 10 am – 2 pm	Feb 28 / Mar 20	707-408-3190
Rohnert Park	Rohnert Park Senior Center 6800 Hunter Drive	Friday 9:30 am – 2 pm (Closed 3/1, 4/5)	Feb 2 / Apr 12	707-582-1983
Sebastopol	Sebastopol Center for the Arts Veterans Bldg. 282 High Street	Tuesday 9 am – 2 pm	Feb 6 / Apr 9	707-582-3945
Sonoma	Sonoma Valley Regional Library 755 W. Napa Street	Friday 10 am – 2 pm	Feb 9 / Apr 12	707-996-5217
Windsor	Windsor Senior Recreation Center 9231 Foxwood Drive	Monday 12 – 4 pm (Closed 3/11)	Feb 5 / Apr 15	707-687-9883

You do not need to be a senior or a member of AARP to use the service. We can handle most tax returns, however, some complex tax situations may be out of scope. Call the AARP district office at 707-327-2401 if you have specific questions regarding your situation.

CLIP AND SAVE





AT HOME
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of Marin
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At Home Caregivers has served Sonoma County for more than 17 years with licensed and vaccinated employee caregivers.

Services provided include:

- Personal Care
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Call today for a free assessment: 707-575-HOME (4663) • AtHomeCaregivers.com



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Look for: Council on Aging

Value of One • Power of Many !



THANK YOU
TO THE HUNDREDS WHO
VOLUNTEER THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR

council on aging

GRANDPA SEZ...

NO ONE IS PERFECT...
WHY DO YOU
THINK PENCILS HAVE
ERASERS?



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Email: beezwaxcomic@yahoo.com



Look What's Coming...

Council on Aging has taken a significant step forward to enhance your experience and ensure you are well-informed about volunteering opportunities. Through strategic investments in cutting-edge software, we are proud to introduce a revolutionary Volunteer Portal dedicated to keeping the community updated in record time.

This innovative platform will soon allow you and your friends to navigate a myriad of

volunteer openings effortlessly. Gone are the days of tedious paperwork, as the new portal streamlines the process with user-friendly interfaces, enabling you to complete initial volunteer documentation online. Soon, you will be able to fully explore the Volunteer Portal, discovering the plethora of opportunities to make a positive impact in our community. The portal serves as a hub where you can seamlessly connect with various needs that resonate with you. Whether it's lending a helping hand at our dining sites, driving meals to homebound seniors, or having lunch with a lonely, isolated older adult, these are just a few of the positions we need assistance with.

Moreover, our commitment to fostering community extends beyond the initial engagement. Volunteers will also enjoy swift and

encouraging feedback, creating a dynamic and supportive environment. We believe that recognition is vital in sustaining the spirit of volunteerism, and our new system ensures that your efforts are acknowledged promptly.

We are excited to welcome new, friendly faces to support our local seniors and other community initiatives. With the Volunteer Portal, we strive to make the journey of giving back as seamless and rewarding as possible. Prepare to embark on a fulfilling volunteering experience where your time and dedication can make a difference. Stay tuned for the unveiling of the portal, and let's build a stronger, more connected community together.

Interested in volunteering? Call Leigh Galton at 707-525-0143 x121 or email her at lgalton@councilonaging.com.

Daylight Savings Time Begins March 10th.

Remember to set your clocks ahead!

Are you a caregiver in need of a break?

DAY RESPITE PROGRAM

Program Activities Include:

- Gentle Group Exercise
- Nutritious Lunch and Snacks
- Creative Art & Music Sessions
- Stimulating Brain Games
- Performances by Musicians & Artists

VETERANS

Ask us about VA benefits!

PROGRAM LOCATIONS THROUGHTOUT SONOMA COUNTY

MONDAY THRU FRIDAY

Call Salina Gonzalez

707-525-0143 x103

sgonzalez@councilonaging.com

30 Kawana Springs Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 • Council on Aging is a 501 (c)(3) Organization

For decades, Council on Aging has had the privilege to offer Day Respite Programs which give seniors living with dementia a safe and engaging group space to spend their day, while providing caregivers with much-needed respite time.

Serving Seniors Since 1966

The Orange Apron

Our Heroes Don't Wear Capes.

And they don't supply hammers, ladder, lightbulbs or power tools.

Our Tools are People Tools.

We build relationships with Sonoma County seniors to battle food insecurity and isolation—one senior at a time.

If you have what it takes to wear The Orange Apron, Council on Aging has a **Volunteer** opportunity for you.

Meals on Wheels • Community Dining • Drive-Up/Pick-Up

Heroes are Invited to Call 707.525.0143 x121

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Day Respite Program Welcomes Volunteers!

The Council on Aging Day Respite Program offers a variety of activites that enrich the lives of older adults with cognitive decline. As a volunteer, you'll play a vital role in helping our participants stay engaged and active in a fun and lively setting.

Details:

- 1-5 Days per week available
- 4-hour shifts
- Assisting with group activities and general supervision of participants

Locations:

- Sonoma
- Sebastopol
- Santa Rosa

Interested in making a difference?

Call Leigh Galton

Volunteer Coordinator

707-525-0143 x121

lgalton@councilonaging.com

For the Love of the Games

Coby Lafayette, Games Coordinator

Here at Council on Aging (COA), we’re gearing up—literally and figuratively—for our annual Sonoma Wine Country Games (the Games).

The first step early in the new year always involves reaching out and checking in with our sports commissioners. Calls are made, texts and emails are sent, and meetings are scheduled.

It’s not like they are sitting around waiting for our calls. They may be retired, but they are all—to the last one of them—exceedingly busy people. So, catching them near their phones or in their homes can feel like hitting the jackpot. And, honestly, that is precisely how we feel about every one of them: like we have hit the sports commissioner jackpot.

Sports commissioners are individuals who are players and advocates for the sports tournament they help us pull together. They are the experts, the people the players turn to and look up to. They are connected not just to the local sporting community but to other players and clubs throughout the state—and sometimes, beyond.

Our sports commissioners are the unsung heroes of the Sonoma Wine Country Games (sometimes on purpose). Without their commitment and connections, we could not produce the caliber of tournament that athletes have come to expect from Council on Aging. So, we’ve decided it is time to introduce you all to the secret weapons behind the success of our Games.

In this and the next edition of SST, we’ll be shining the spotlight on our commissioners to acknowledge and thank them publicly. That, and we want to get the upcoming Games on everyone’s mind. Enjoy the read!

Bocce

For his birthday, Al Ferrando wanted to play bocce. Having just purchased a bag of bocce balls from the thrift shop he managed, he thought it was a sign to finally take up the sport he’d been curious about since childhood. With his family in tow, he arrived at the Santa Rosa bocce courts in Julliard Park with a lot of enthusiasm and no idea how to play.



Al congratulates The Godfathers for their third-place finish

“Now, you would have thought that I’d looked up on Google how to play this game,” he said with a laugh, “but we just went over and were kind of fumbling around.”

The family’s lack of knowledge of the sport caught the eye of a couple of more seasoned players who were on-site practicing for a tournament. One of them took the time to explain the game to Al and his family. Ten years later, the Ferrando Family’s Fun Night is still going strong.

That birthday began an increasing level of involvement for Al, with the sport that took him from bocce player to bocce capo (team

captain) to club board member to Games Commissioner. It’s an evolution that he’s described by answering the question: “Al, will you?” with an “uh, OK.”

A non-athlete, he found that the sport required very little physical prowess. In fact, the thing he loves most about the sport is that regardless of how proficient you become, it’s a game of luck. But, according to Al, it’s much more than that. “It’s a game that you walk away from and win, lose or draw; you have fun,” he stated, “you walk away with a lighter step because it was engaging. You are engaging with the game and with the people around you because you’re on a team, and everyone is pulling for each other. “This is a game that will get you lightened up,” he promised.

Lawn Bowling

She wasn’t always an athlete or even someone you’d call “outdoorsy,” but Linda Pickell recognized a good time when she saw it. And, like her co-commissioner, Pam Dempsey, she showed up for the club’s Demo Day, and it’s been all fun and games and friendship since.

“Most of my friends,” Pam said, “I’ve met through lawn bowling.”

It’s a sentiment echoed by Linda and her husband, Steve, who is the third member of the commissioner trio that produces the Lawn Bowling tournament for the Games. Like Pam, Steve and Linda came to the club as new residents of Oakmont, looking to make friends. For them, the Lawn Bowling Club has



Lawn Bowling Commissioners, left to right: Pam Dempsey, Steve & Linda Pickell

become more than a place to play; it’s also a hub of the Oakmont community.

“We have people who’ve joined the club,” Steve mentioned, “but never bowl; people who’ve joined for the socializing.” The friendship and hospitality, of course, spill onto the grassy rinks (where you actually bowl). This creates an environment conducive to learning the finer points of bowling. Because, let’s face it, trying something new can be intimidating.

“You don’t have to be an athlete. It’s an easy sport to do,” Pam stated, “The hardest thing for people is to bend over.” Linda agreed, “It’s not like tennis or pickleball, where you’re running and moving all the time.” And, unlike a round of golf, which can take 5 hours, “lawn bowling only takes 2 hours,” Steve added.

The exception to that time frame is the Games, where players bowl more than recreationally over a two-day tournament. Besides the opportunity to bowl a lot, one of the biggest draws of our Lawn Bowling Tournament is the venue. Oakmont’s Lawn Bowling Club opens its usually private club to the greater community to host the Games.

As the hosts, the club’s teams get to play against teams from outside their community. It’s a benefit to hosting the Games that Steve, a lifelong athlete, particularly relishes. It made last year’s first-place win all the sweeter for

him. “Winning last year was pretty cool,” he said, “I never expected that.” Competition aside, the club members enjoy hosting the tournament. “Our whole club comes together for volunteering,” Pam mentioned, “it is a really good community thing for our club.” The fun of the Games, according to Steve, is also in the opportunity it creates to encourage people to try out the sport. “We are very patient with new people. Come and watch and see what you think,” he offered.

Table Tennis

John’s history with the sport of table tennis goes back to recess on the courtyards of his school in Hong Kong. It was a time when



Table Tennis Commissioner John Wong

fierce competition was unheard of. The norm was friendly play, an experience that had a significant impact on him.

To date, John has never competed in a table tennis tournament. In fact, he finds the idea of competition “too stressful.” This begs the question: how did he end up becoming the sports commissioner for our Table Tennis Tournament?

The way John tells it, he volunteered to help with a local tournament and found the logistics wanting. As a man who values efficiency, he felt sure he could streamline the process of tracking players through the tournament. “Next year,” he said, “I can volunteer to manage all the sign-ups and play cards, so you don’t have to do it at the last minute.”

As you might imagine, the tournament coordinators jumped at the offer. They were so thrilled with what John did with the logistics that they suggested he become the sports commissioner for the Games Table Tennis Tournament. And that is how John ended up in our world (and vice versa). And, because John feels that there is always room for improvement, he’s currently lobbying us for a beer & taco truck. And cheerleaders. And an electronic scoreboard. I forgot to mention that he has a wicked sense of humor!

The best thing about the Games, he told me, is meeting the people year after year, to see “they haven’t died yet.” Dark humor aside, John believes all the press about table tennis. It is an excellent way for seniors to stay fit, mentally and physically. Whether you compete or not, table tennis is good for you!

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April Fools' Day Tradition

By Jennifer Kulpa, Council on Aging Administrative and Operations Specialist

The "First of April, some do say. Is set apart for all Fool's Day. But why do people call it so? Nor I nor they do know." As stated in the Poor Robin's Almanac in 1760, people have been trying to determine how April 1st became what it is today for centuries. Is the origin of April Fools' Day based on the introduction to new calendars? Historically, in many countries, yes. It was a shared idea that Fool's Day was a celebration of renewal, marking the year's or season's end. In many parts of the world, it is the end of winter and the arrival of spring. Out with the old, in with the new.

Although most countries celebrate April Fools' Day on April 1st, how we celebrate varies. In France, sticking a paper fish on someone's back and exclaiming, "Poisson d'Avril!" which means "April Fish," has been a practice since 1508, found in a poem by Eloy d'Amerval. The French may be having laughs with new pranks today, but the phrase remains, and the fish symbol is a tradition. So, if you plan on being in France on April 1st, be sure to say "Poisson d'Avril!"

"Hilaria" is the ancient Roman festival and has been compared to April Fools' Day. Pranksters would impersonate one another and dress in disguise. Mexico celebrates a day known as "Dia de los Inocentes," or "Day of the Innocents," on December 28th. This Fools' Day, pranks are played, but also beware of lending money because no one expects to be repaid on this Day! In Scotland, it's known as "Gowkie Day" or "Hunt the Gowk Day. This term implies someone is cuckoo, crazy, or a fool for believing the joke. The Scottish may have the most fun, celebrating April 1st through April 2nd! A good 48 hours of foolery.

It is too bad that false news is no longer reserved for April 1st. For hundreds of years, it was common to see untruthful headlines in newspapers or, more recently, hear something outrageous and untrue on the radio. A famous good-humored prank from 1957 was when a BBC program showed Swiss farmers harvesting spaghetti from a tree! The BBC received calls from viewers asking where they could get a spaghetti tree. April Fools! The next day, the BBC confirmed it was a hoax. With social media, artificial intelligence, and the internet spoofing we must decipher what is valid every day and not be fooled! Staying connected with friends and family is one of the best ways to "fact check" and combat this trickery.

Throughout history, the fun humans have playing tricks on each other remains the same. Laughing is the best medicine for a happy, healthy, long life. A good exercise for the brain can be crafting a new prank! Keep this in mind and possibly avoid being the one "made the fool" on April 1st, 2024! So, here's to continuing this tradition of pranking and tricking because it can be good for us—young or old. It's an intergenerational tradition.

What Goodness Looks Like

By Coby LaFayette, Wine Country Games Coordinator

There's something about Rita. Something that immediately draws you in and puts you at ease. Maybe it's the twinkle in her blue eyes. It could be her smile, which is bigger than she is tall. Regardless, she emanates goodness and happiness, and it is contagious. These are all great qualities to have when you work with seniors, with people who can be isolated and lonely, withdrawn and depressed. She relishes opportunities to be of service. Her entire life is an homage to service. "In some ways," Rita said, "I feel like I was trained for that from a very early age."

Rita began her life of service in support of an emotionally fragile mother. Throughout high school, she was there for her mother and her family. In her spare time, Rita added volunteering as a Candy Striper to an already packed schedule. "I learned empathy," she shared, "I learned about feeling compassionate and understanding people's emotional issues."

These experiences proved fortuitous when, years later, Rita began her life's work of advocating for her developmentally delayed daughter. She's been doing that for over 40 years now. Through her advocacy for her daughter, Rita's circle broadened to include Council on Aging (COA).

Rita was drawn to COA's Peer Support Program, as it was similar to a volunteer position she held at Marin Villages in Novato. Peer Support volunteers are trained and supervised by a mental health clinician to provide emotional and social support to seniors struggling with mental health issues. It's a position Rita is highly passionate about. "I think people are so worthwhile. They deserve to have support, to be empowered, and to know that despite our age, we still have rights. We have the right to be comfortable and safe," she continued, "and if we, as peer support volunteers, can provide a little bit of that, that's the most wonderful thing I can think of."

In addition to the clients, Rita's fondness for the COA Peer Support Program includes her

fellow volunteers. The camaraderie that comes from bonding over shared experience—the suggestions and advice of the "team" are critical to client service. But the team also functions as a touchstone for the volunteers themselves. "I think the peer meetings are the most important aspect of the program," she explained. "Certainly, serving the clients is number one," she added quickly, "but the fact that we come together every week is essential. We could not do this without that."

COA's Peer Support Program is a 12-week program. One of the things the Peer Support volunteers struggle with is client attachment. For Rita, coming from a program in Marin that ends only when the client dies or stops participating, it was a very tough adjustment. "I considered leaving the program," she stated. "It's hard; you do form attachments, but I understand that so many others out there have need. You keep on helping. You do the best you can."

Recently, Rita took on a new volunteer position at COA. That new position is of course, service, but with a twist. Working in our Community Dining Program, Rita serves a healthy and nutritious lunch to seniors at one of our congregate sites.

"I love, love, love it!" she shared and quickly set a personal goal of learning everyone's name. "The people there, I love calling them by their name. I want everyone to have a good time. I want everything to be cheerful and joyful. That's what it's all about. And it makes me feel cheerful and joyful to be with them."

Rita's superpower is service. It feeds her, and it indeed feeds everyone lucky enough to be around her. "Volunteering itself gives us something to live for," she said. "I couldn't wait to quit working so I could volunteer."

Rita Wengler

PEARLS Testimonial — Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives

On a rainy afternoon, AG sat down at her dining table to take a moment to reflect on her life accomplishments, hurdles, and the many things she is looking forward to in the future.

AG was the oldest of four children in Ohio, and feels like her active and imaginative childhood unknowingly led her to live through similar experiences that her beloved book characters also lived through. AG’s love of books and writing later led her to major in English literature. Hopeful that she would start a career in editing, AG decided to make a long trek and moved to San Francisco. Job seeking did not go as expected, and she found herself heavily influenced by the counterculture of the late 60s.

After getting married, camping out in nature, and traveling the country in a van for a year, AG paused her travels to start a family and had two daughters. With the help of a friend, AG turned a small playgroup into a school for young children. Following her divorce, she decided it was best to close the school and refocus her energy on new beginnings. The back-to-land movement led her to settle on a large coastal ranch where she engulfed herself in nature, raised her daughters, tended to gardens for self-sufficiency, and organized a new nature-based school on the ranch. AG spent over 30 years on the ranch, living on a mountain where she spent time caring for goats and making cheese, just like she would read in Heidi as a child.

After accomplishing so much, a sense of existential dread began falling over her. About a year ago, she spiraled down into significant depression and anxiety. AG stated, “I was feeling like it was time for me to die,” one of the many symptoms of depression. With a moral boost from her daughters during this time of darkness, AG was able to receive the medical treatment she needed to reduce her depression and anxiety symptoms. Her daughter researched additional services that would benefit AG and learned about the PEARLS program by calling Council on Aging.

PEARLS offers no-cost, short-term coaching sessions to adults 60 and up who experience symptoms of depression or social isolation. This evidence-based, participant-led program is designed to reduce depression symptoms through problem-solving skills and by increasing physical, social, and pleasurable activities.

When asked to describe PEARLS, AG shares that “a coach comes to your home, which is special, sits very casually at your table with you, and assures you that she will come back every week, every two weeks, then once a month. So, there’s security in knowing the regularity that sessions will happen. In a friendly, nonjudgmental manner, my coach guided me through the worksheet that helps you discover your goals, your solutions to the goals, and what kind of action you can take.”

AG enjoyed the structured format of PEARLS, stating that it was a way to define her needs and problems clearly. “I was impressed that my coach was not giving me her answers to my problems but provided a format for understanding and working on my problems.”

By the time AG reached her last session with PEARLS, she had gained a better sense of control over some challenges. “I was able to take this overwhelming feeling of unsolvable matters and see a way to solve them,” she shares. “Instead of dwelling on this lack of joy in my life, we were able to find solutions to this lack of joy.” Today, AG continues her path to mental wellness, sharing that she has more to look forward to now than she did last year. If you or someone you know struggle with thoughts of suicide, know that there is support. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support 24/7 for people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of depression, encourage them to seek help and talk to a healthcare provider to learn about treatment options.

For more information about the PEARLS Program, contact Gloria Ramirez, PEARLS Case Navigator, at (707) 525-0143 ext. 139 or gramirez@councilonaging.com.

Crossword

1	S	H	E		4	S	W	A	7	G		8	P	9	A	10	W	11	N	12	E	13	E
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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

WORD SCRAMBLE - Museums

1. RLEOUV	L O U V R E
2. SILCOOPRA	A C R O P O L I S
3. ETAT	T A T E
4. DAPRO	P R A D O
5. ETTYG	G E T T Y
6. ALMAB	M A L B A
7. ONGGVAH	V A N G O G H
8. MAMO	M O M A
9. DYSRA'O	D ' O R S A Y
10. MTE	M E T
11. NGAINNJ	N A N J I N G
12. ZIFFUI	U F F I Z I

SUDOKU - Medium

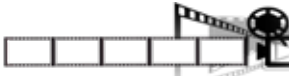
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7	4	6	9	2	5	3	1	8
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4	9	2	5	1	3	6	8	7
3	6	8	2	7	9	1	4	5
9	2	3	6	5	4	8	7	1
5	1	7	3	8	2	4	6	9
6	8	4	1	9	7	5	2	3

SUDOKU - Hard

6	1	5	7	9	4	3	8	2
8	3	2	1	5	6	7	9	4
7	4	9	8	3	2	1	6	5
1	8	6	5	4	3	2	7	9
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4	5	8	3	6	1	9	2	7
9	7	3	2	8	5	6	4	1
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Movies To Celebrate

by Barbara Spear



RUGGLES OF RED GAP (1935)



This is a comedy gem from a director who was a master of the genre, Leo McCarey. He worked with such funny men as Laurel and Hardy, The Marx Brothers, and W.C. Fields. The surprise in RUGGLES OF RED GAP is that the lead is played by Charles Laughton, one of the greatest dramatic actors of all time. Just two years earlier, Laughton had been awarded a Best Actor Oscar for his performance in the title role of THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII. In RUGGLES, Laughton will astound you with his marvelously funny and touching portrayal of an English valet who is won from a British Earl in a poker game and is brought to the American Wild West by his new “owners.” Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles, and Zasu Pitts give Laughton terrific support. Forsyth Hardy in Cinema Quarterly says, “Charles Laughton has said that he enjoyed playing the part of Ruggles more than any other on stage or screen, and his performance definitely has that fine, rich, sustained quality which results when an artist has delighted in expression.” And Pauline Kael in the “New Yorker” raves, “... it works like magic. The cast could hardly be better.” RUGGLES OF RED GAP has a perfect score of 100% on the Rotten Tomatoes website and can be streamed from Amazon Prime for \$3.99.

Barbara Spear organizes and moderates Lifelong Friends of Film, which meets on the last Friday of the month at the Rialto Cinemas Sebastopol to watch a contemporary movie and discuss it in the theater after the screening. For more information or to be added to the monthly email notification list, contact her at shadowvoyager7@gmail.com.

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Minnie McCune's Irish Soda Bread



Ingredients

Servings: 12 Slices (1 Loaf)

- ☐ 4 cups all-purpose flour, plus 1/4 cup more for dusting
- ☐ 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- ☐ 1 tsp sea salt
- ☐ 1 tsp baking soda
- ☐ 6 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, plus 1/2 Tbsp to grease pan
- ☐ 1-3/4 cups cold lowfat buttermilk or kefir
- ☐ 1 large egg, cold

Instructions

Preheat oven at 375° F. Generously grease a 10" cast-iron skillet with 1/2 Tbsp. butter.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, salt, and baking soda. Cut butter into small pieces and use your fingers to work the butter into the flour until crumbs form. Break up any clumps. Make a well in the center.

In a large measuring cup, whisk together the buttermilk and egg, then add this mixture into the flour mixture. Use a wooden spoon and mix just until lightly moistened and dough barely starts to come together.

Transfer to a floured surface and use floured hands to shape the dough just until it forms into a round loaf. It should be shaggy. If it's too sticky to handle, dust lightly with flour. Do not over-mix or bread will be tough.

Transfer to the buttered pan, use a knife to score the top with a large and deep "X". Bake in the center of your preheated oven at 375° F for 50-55 min. When you tap on the bread, it should sound hollow inside. Transfer bread to a wire rack to cool. Enjoy within 2 days of making it and refrigerate leftovers up to a week.





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Poetry Corner

A longtime fan of Martin Luther King, Jr. JR was infuriated the day following the assassination, when opening his New York Times, he read the news. Moved to write by an article he read in Sunset Magazine, JR wrote a poem on MLK Jr., “Spring Thing”. Fellow writer, Terrie Taffinder, came into his office crying. When asked why, she said his secretary had told her of MLK Jr’s death. I handed her the poem and said, “Here, reap some tears.” With JR’s permission, she wrote beautiful music to accompany the poem. By the vagaries of life, the poem became the anthem in the first memorial service for MLK Jr. at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City. He loved how the Choir Director changed the key of the last stanza to a major key, the music having been written in a minor key. The major key change gave the anthem a more positive feeling at the end.

Spring Thing

by Jeremy Raikes

In response to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination

Spring could be a little late this year,
For the heavy blossom’s, hard to bear,
Hate, the hybrid-growth of greed and fear,
Yeah, spring could be a little late this year.

It’s April, but it’s not too late for snow,
To and fro, see how the looters go,
Shadows in the city’s dying glow,
It’s April, but it’s not too late for snow.

Spring is ‘round the corner’ - out of sight,
And discontent’s, deep winter has the right,
To a rifle shot, in the dirty Memphis night,
Yeah, spring is ‘round the corner’ - out of sight!

The spring that should be here, is yet to come,
Hearts that should be filled with love are numb,
Too cold to summon summer, or too dumb.
The spring that should be here, is yet to come.

But come it will - for this we must believe!
But not before our blindness can perceive
That love - alone! - can grant us warm reprieve.
And that it will – for this we must believe!

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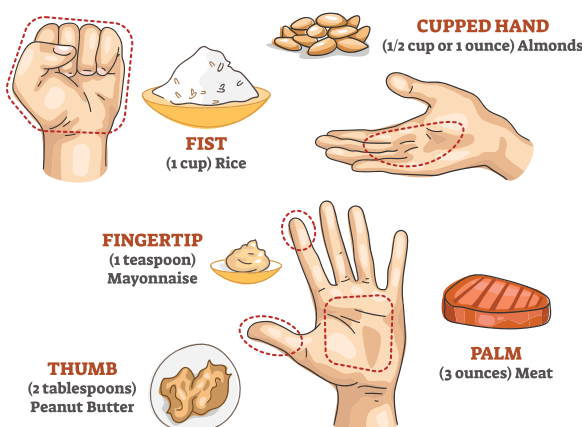
For More Information, Call
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NUTRITION NEWS

What is a Portion?

PORTION SIZE



What is a food portion?

The key to eating healthy is knowing and choosing appropriate amounts of different types of food. The term "portion size" and "serving size" are often thought to mean the same thing, however, they don't.

Serving size is a standard of measure for foods. It means the portion of food used as a reference on the nutritional label of that food or, the recommended portion of food to be eaten.

Portion size is simple; it's the amount of food you eat which may be more or less than a recommended serving size.

Estimated portion sizes:

Using measuring spoons and cups is the best way to make sure your portion is the same as a serving size. However, these tools are not always available, so another way to estimate your portion is by comparing it to something else.

- 1 teaspoon = the tip of the pointer finger or a postage stamp. This portion is often used for oils and fats.
- 1 tablespoon = the size of the thumb. This portion is often used for peanut or nut butters.
- 3 ounces = the palm of the hand or a deck of cards. This portion is often used for fish, chicken, beef or other meats.
- 1/2 cup or 4 ounces = small scooped handful or tennis ball. This portion is used for grains, such as rice, pasta and oatmeal.
- 1 cup = average sized fist or baseball. This portion is often used for raw or cooked vegetables, whole fruit or 100% fruit juice.

Ways to monitor your portions:

Read the Nutritional Fact Label on the food package to identify the appropriate serving size.

Using the right tools for measuring, portion out your food onto a plate and then put the container away.

Eating from a package often leads to consuming more than the recommended serving.

Try using smaller plates and bowls to make portion sizes appear larger.

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Source: National Institute of Health
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, USDA