One of the most difficult experiences in life is accepting that your loved one can no longer be safely cared for at home. You are confronted with a tough choice—which facility would be the best match? Details on nursing homes have been available to consumers online for many years, but until the launch of the County of San Diego’s Choose Well program (www.choosewellsandiego.org) recently, information was not easily accessible to the public on the safety of local residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFEs) such as assisted living facilities and board and care homes.

Chris Murphy, 71, knows firsthand about the heartache and challenge of placing a loved one into out-of-home care. Although she cared for her mother for as long as possible, eventually declining health from stage 4 ovarian cancer made placement necessary. Chris struggled to locate a facility that would best meet her mother’s needs, especially as cognitive decline took hold. How could she know which facility would provide appropriate care? Fortunately, Chris had the flexibility to shift to freelance contract work so that she could be very involved in her mother’s care and serve as her advocate. But, she wondered about all of the other families who might not be able to be as hands-on for their loved ones.

After her mother’s passing, Chris was energized to honor her mother’s memory by making a difference in the lives of other older adults. She had enjoyed successful careers teaching special needs children and working as a contract negotiator for aerospace and technology firms. Despite being in her early sixties and already having a Master’s degree in Acquisition Management, in 2006 Chris went back to school to earn a second Master’s degree in Gerontology. Although some older adults worry that it might be “too late” to pursue a career change, Chris did so with confidence: “It is about reinventing yourself; not staying stagnant…not letting a number hold you back from your career choice.”

While in class one day, Chris and a fellow student, Chrisy Selder, were exploring the very issue that Chris has stumbled upon in her own journey as a caregiver—the lack of accountability and transparency for RCFE providers. She and Chrisy were adamant, “Somebody’s got to do something about this!” And in that very moment, they asked each other, “If not us, then who?”

Chris and Chrisy made a commitment to tackle the (Continued on next page)
problem. In 2009, with the support of their families, they founded the non-profit organization Consumer Advocates for RCFE Reform (CARR). Their early work involved making public records on RCFE inspections more accessible to the public by posting compliance data online. It wasn’t long before their work attracted attention from an investigative journalist at the University of Southern California’s (USC) Center for Health Journalism. Soon thereafter, the Union-Tribune published the “Deadly Neglect” series on abuse and neglect in local RCFEs.

The articles did not escape the notice of County Supervisor Dianne Jacob. A long-time advocate for older adults, Supervisor Jacob was alarmed by the problems revealed in the newspaper’s exposé, and resolved to address them. She, with the support of Supervisor Greg Cox, envisioned creating a voluntary rating system whereby RCFE providers would “opt in” to be rated using an objective scoring system. Consumers could easily access rating scores and safety information on a website, along with a variety of other facility details. The program would help “raise the bar” for all providers. It would reward the facilities who were committed to providing quality care and adhering to best practices with the distinction of being labeled a Choose Well provider.

CARR was selected to design and administer the program under the name “Choose Well.” CARR’s approach relied on focus groups and consensus-building to craft a method for rating and comparing facilities of all sizes based on 11 evaluation criteria. They invited consumers, providers, and other experts to have a seat at the table.

Although the program is in its infancy, 120 of the over 600 RCFE facilities in San Diego County have agreed to be rated and many have already provided full details on the Choose Well website. As consumer demand for transparency and accountability grows, so too will the demand for facilities to be Choose Well providers.

Chris is excited to get the word out to families about the Choose Well program. She notes, “If you can go to Yelp and get a rating on a restaurant why not on an assisted living facility?” And there are a lot of quality providers out there. “Chrisy and I have met some really impressive providers who are interested in being open and transparent,” she explains.

Still, she recognizes that Choose Well is just one piece of the puzzle concerning the long-term care system. “CARR gets phone calls from people who are shocked to discover the fragmented system of care and shocked to discover that their parents need memory care and it is $7,000 or more per month.”

But Choose Well is an important step as it helps give families the information they need to make an informed decision. Creating this ground-breaking program has been a labor of love for both Chris and Chrisy. “I eat, live, and breath in this office,” Chris laughs. “It is worth it to help families in their time of need.”

To learn more about the Choose Well program, visit www.choosewellsandiego.org. To contact Choose Well program staff, call (619) 795-2165 or email: choosewellsandiego@gmail.com.

**DIABETES WORKSHOPS**

The **Healthier Living with Diabetes** program is a free, six-week, hands-on workshop that is fun and informative. Participants meet once per week for 2 hours. The classes assist participants in making lasting changes to manage their diabetes, eat well, exercise, prevent complications, and live a healthier life.

**Sept. 21-Oct. 26 (Thursdays), 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** at the Rancho Bernardo Library, 17110 Bernardo Center Dr., San Diego 92128.

To register, contact the library: (858) 538-8163. Visit www.HealthierLivingSD.org for more information.

**“GRAMPING” EVENT FOR KINSHIP FAMILIES**

What do you get when you combine grandparents raising grandchildren and a fun night of camping? **Gramping!** Grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship families are invited to attend a free overnight event **September 16-17** at Dos Picos County Park, 17953 Dos Picos Park Rd., Ramona 92065.

Enjoy camping complete with a scavenger hunt, star gazing, nature games, a buffet-style supper, twilight hike, and s’mores around the campfire. For details or to sign up, contact the Lakeside Community Center at (619) 443-9176 or the Spring Valley Community Center at (619) 479-1832.

**LIVE STRONGER LONGER EVENT**

The **Live Stronger Longer** event will be held on **Tuesday, September 26 from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.** at the Bonita Library, 4375 Bonita Rd., Bonita 91902. Workshops will cover aging well, improving cognitive health, managing emotional aspects of caregiving, fraud prevention, and advanced health care directives. The event includes arthritis screenings, mood screenings, a resource fair, light breakfast, and lunch. To RSVP, call (800) 827-4277 or visit www.sharp.com/classes.
BUYING A DISCOUNT BUS/TROLLEY FARE

and look under "Accessibility," or call District has a Transit Buddy program to teach older adults mobility issues will be held Thursdays, beginning Nov. 10. Nov. 9. A separate Travel San Diego Light for people with ego class will run on Wednesdays, beginning the next day, Tuesday, Nov. 8, at the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, to get around, but "when you're retired, you're not in as Europeans have healthier portation is laid out so well, with universal signage, that you used that number many times, " she says. Paula also learned that when she wants to go to the San College downtown San Diego, then the bus to the zoo. Die with the Orange trolley to City UCSD and walked there, then took another bus to Old stopped and had lunch, then took a bus to the campus of North County Transit regular bus and rail routes. To get a single reduced one-way fare, the rider must show the $43 fee covers the cost of a 2-month MTS Senior An orientation for Travel San Diego will be held at 10 a.m. As Judi reminds people on her email signature, "Life isn't "And I learned that there's a phone number (5-1-1) you can help plan major events in which RSVP participates, such as RB Alive and Spirit of the Fourth (4th of July Parade). She was also a primary member of the planning group for Rancho Bernardo RSVP 25th Anniversary Celebration on June 21 of this year.

Shelby is extremely detail-oriented, organized, and a team player. She is a hard worker and has strong leadership and management skills. Shelby is even-keeled in her approach to problem solving; she listens well to others, is positive in her outlook on life, and is a valued member of the group. She is very personable and has a calming influence in the office. She cheerfully accepts new challenges and sees things through to the completion of the task.

Shelby’s favorite part of volunteering is helping the community, and contributing to the San Diego Police Department’s efforts in keeping San Diego safe. She upholds and strengthens the mission of the Rancho Bernardo Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol. Congratulations, Shelby, and thank you for all you do in giving back to your community!
**East County Intergenerational Games**

Intergenerational (IG) Games events offer adults and youth the opportunity to connect while having fun participating in noncompetitive fitness and wellness activities such as “soccer kick,” horseshoes, and nutritional games.

The next IG Games will be held on **Thursday, October 12 from 9:30 a.m. - Noon** at the La Mesa Arts Academy, 4200 Parks Ave., La Mesa 91941. Adults 50+ are needed to pair with youth ages 7-12 years. To learn more or register, call **(619) 667-1332**.

**Legacy Corps Volunteers Sought**

Legacy Corps volunteers are needed to support caregivers in veteran and military families. Volunteers provide respite for caregivers and companionship to elderly or disabled family members. Volunteers become members of the national AmeriCorps Program, and receive a monthly stipend. At the successful completion of the 450-hour, 12-month commitment, members earn a $1,527 educational award, which may be gifted to children or grandchildren. An information session will be held on **Thursday, September 7 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.** For details, visit [www.LCsandiego.org](http://www.LCsandiego.org) or call **(858) 505-6305**.

**Fall Prevention for Seniors, Caregivers**

Join the Caregiver Coalition of San Diego County and the Fall Prevention Task Force for a free special event: **Fall Prevention and Safety for You and Your Loved One.** The conference will be held on **Thursday, September 14 from 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.** at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Dr., La Mesa. Hear from a physical therapist what can be done to prevent falls. Learn how to talk to a loved one about accepting help, home safety tips, and how to use equipment properly. This conference also includes a community resource fair, refreshments, and a light lunch. Free respite care is available to those who need someone to look after their loved one during the conference. Registration required. Call **(800) 827-4277** or register online at [www.sharp.com/classes](http://www.sharp.com/classes).

**Caregiver Workshops**

A variety of caregiver classes are being held this month: **Wednesday, September 20 from 12-1:30 p.m.-Memory Loss 101** will be held at Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego 92107. A comprehensive overview for anyone who wants to know more about memory loss, Alzheimer’s disease, and other types of dementia. Learn about the risk factors, signs and symptoms, how to get a diagnosis, and what to expect if you do. To RSVP, visit [www.alzsd.org/services/education/](http://www.alzsd.org/services/education/) or call **(858) 492-4400**.

**Saturday, September 16 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.- Caregiving at Home: Physical Aspects of Caregiving** will be held at the Sharp Grossmont Brier Patch Campus, 9000 Wakarusa St., Classroom 13/14, La Mesa 91942. Family caregivers can learn and practice the basics of caring for a loved one at home including transfers, personal care, proper body mechanics, and more. Learn how to physically care for your loved one and how to protect yourself from injury.

**Saturday, September 23 from 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.- Legal and Long Term Care Benefits Planning: When the Diagnosis is Dementia** will be held at La Vida Real, 11588 Via Rancho San Diego, El Cajon 92019. Join experts from the San Diego Elder Law Center and Alzheimer’s San Diego for a free workshop to learn the essentials of legal and financial planning, understand what key documents you should have, and discover options that are available to help pay for long-term care. To RSVP, visit [www.alzsd.org/services/education/](http://www.alzsd.org/services/education/) or call **(858) 492-4400**.

**Join a Community Action Network**

Four regional Community Action Networks focus on issues affecting older adults and persons with disabilities. They welcome the participation of professionals and those from the public.

The San Diego Community Action Network (SanDiCAN) meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon on the last Tuesday of each month at the War Memorial Building, 3325 Zoo Dr., San Diego. Contact Brian Rollins: **(858) 505-6305**.

The East County Action Network (ECAN) meets from 1 to 3 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the El Cajon Library, 201 E. Douglas Ave., El Cajon. Contact Hazel Quinones: **(619) 401-3994**.

Typically, the South County Action Network (SoCAN) meets from 1 to 3 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Bonita-Sunnyside Branch Library, 4375 Bonita Rd., Bonita. However, **SoCAN will not be meeting in September of 2017**; meetings will resume in October. Contact Anabel Kuykendall: **(619) 476-6223**.

The North County Action Network (NorCAN) meets from 1 to 3 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Foundation for Senior Well-Being, Panorama Building, 131 Richmar Ave., San Marcos. For details, contact: Matt Parcasio: **(858) 505-6435**.
Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr., La Jolla 92037 (UTC area). Come to this workshop to find out what the social media craze is all about! Covers Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. Price: $12. RSVP to (858) 362-1141.

SEPTEMBER 7, THURSDAY
9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
San Diego Oasis is hosting a Fall Fitness Palooza at both of their locations: La Mesa (5500 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa 91942) and Escondido (Park Avenue Community Center, 210 Park Ave., Escondido 92025). Sample a variety of fitness offerings in 20-minute sessions: T’ai Chi, yoga, line dancing, ballet, gentle exercise, and more! No RSVP required. For details, contact Jolyn: (858) 353-0439 or jolyn@sandiegooasis.org.

SEPTEMBER 7, THURSDAY
12:45 p.m.
Come view a session of the PBS special reflect: Successful Aging Defined and hear from the director and “star” Fred Davis about how this series has impacted their lives. Be inspired by older adults who stay positive and find meaning as they age. This viewing and discussion will be held at the College Avenue Center, 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120. For details, call (858) 637-3273 or email elissal@jfssd.org.

SEPTEMBER 14, THURSDAY
1:30-3 p.m.
An Introduction to Social Media class will be held at the Lawrence

SEPTEMBER 15, FRIDAY
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
A free event, the Living Well Health Expo, will be held at the First United Methodist Church Mission Valley, 2111 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego 92108. Educational speakers, health/wellness vendors, continental breakfast, and giveaways/prizes. Bring two cans of food to earn additional raffle prizes. To RSVP, call (619) 957-9196 or email info@assertivehomecare.com.

SEPTEMBER 15, FRIDAY
6-8 p.m.
Celebrate Mexican Independence Day with the House of Mexico at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park, 2125 Pan American Road East, San Diego 92101. Enjoy Mariachi music, Mexican folk dancing, singers, and more. For details, call (619) 994-3556.

SEPTEMBER 16, SATURDAY
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
The 2017 Recovery Happens Celebration and Picnic in the Park will be held at Liberty Station NTC Park, 2455 Cushing Rd., San Diego 92106. Bring your picnic and blanket and celebrate the journey of recovery from substance abuse, your own or a loved one’s. There will be a recovery countdown, music, success stories, a resource fair, and fun family activities. For details, call: (619) 563-2721.

SEPTEMBER 22, FRIDAY
9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Ready, Steady, Balance: Preventing Falls in 2017 will be held at Fair Winds Ivey Ranch, 4490 Mesa Dr., Oceanside 92056. Free seminars, demonstrations, resources, and healthy snacks and refreshments. For more information, call (760) 439-8090.

SEPTEMBER 28, THURSDAY
6-8 p.m.
A Planning for Your Pets seminar will be held at the Encinitas Community Center, 1140 Oakcrest Park Dr., Encinitas 92024. Learn about pet trusts and planning for the care of your pet after you are gone. Also offered on Saturday, September 30 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the San Diego Humane Society, 5500 Gaines St., San Diego 92110. RSVP by September 20 to (619) 243-3446.

SEPTEMBER 30, SATURDAY
12-4 p.m.
The 5th Annual Wheelchair Dancers Fundraiser and Showcase will be held at the Balboa Park Club, 2150 Pan American Rd. West, San Diego 92101. Door prizes, vendors, silent auctions, music, and more. For details, contact Beverely at Bevweurding@san.rr.com or (858) 573-1571.

ADVISORY COUNCIL
The AIS Advisory Council will meet at noon Monday, September 11 at AIS, 5560 Overland Ave., Third Floor, San Diego 92123. These meetings are open to the public.
WHEN YOU DON’T KNOW WHERE TO TURN, TURN TO US.

Whether the need is for assessment, service referrals, or follow-up, with just one phone call, you or a loved one can receive help for:

- Seniors
- Disabled adults
- Abused adults
- Those requiring home-based care to prevent institutionalization

As a public agency, we provide comprehensive information and impartial assistance free of charge to county residents. Since 1974, people have been turning to us at Aging & Independence Services. You can too.

Call toll-free 800-510-2020

Aging & Independence Services
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Calendar information is welcome and must be submitted before the 10th of the month preceding the issue date. Submit to: Editor, P.O. Box 23217
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