

## Celebrating 40 Years of Making Life Better

**T**he year was 1982. The world population was 4.61 billion people with 231.7 million living in the United States. Stamps cost 20 cents each to mail a first class letter and the minimum wage was \$3.35 an hour. There were many firsts that year: the first successful permanent heart transplant, the first CD player, the first airing of *The Weather Channel* and the first printing of *USA Today*. Diet Coke made its debut and the Michael Jackson bestselling album *Thriller* hit the air waves while ET phoned home.

Alameda County also had a first in 1982: Community Adult Day Health Services (CADHS) welcomed seniors to the county's first Adult Day Healthcare Center. The location was in a small unused section of Oakland's Highland General Hospital.

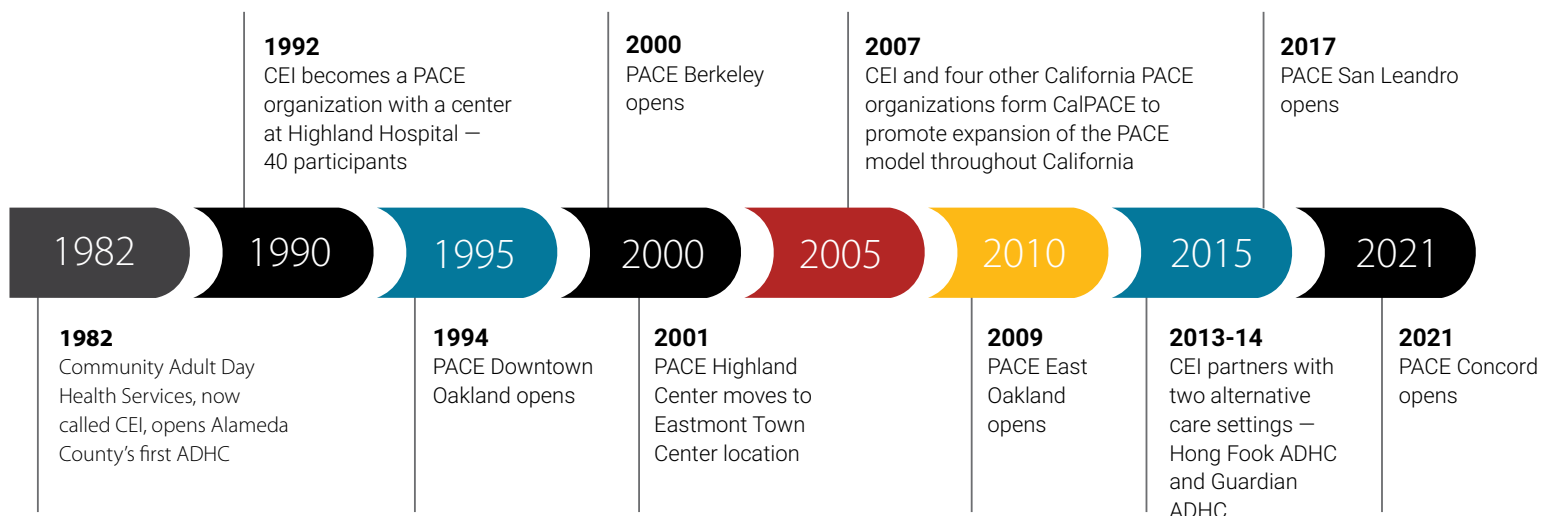
Despite the severe lack of resources, the founders had a fierce determination to help at-risk, isolated East Bay seniors to live independently and with dignity in their homes and communities. Luckily, Highland Hospital only charged \$1 a year for rent and provided lunches for the first year. By 1988, the fledgling ADHC was bursting at the seams.

Eventually CADHS became CEI and now, in 2022, we celebrate our 40th year serving older adults in the San Francisco East Bay. Throughout the decades, CEI made a difference for well over 5,000 seniors plus countless family members, caregivers and staff. We've grown from that small center at Highland to five full-service PACE centers



and one ADHC across two counties. We employ close to 400 people and have a fleet of nearly 50 vans and buses. We run the HCBA waiver program for two counties that keeps nearly 550 people of all ages living at home.

Today, nearly 1,100 seniors receive healthcare and social services, plus recreational activities. Our history is rich with thousands of stories of making lives better. We are extremely proud of our journey thus far and are committed to developing and growing for what comes next.



# Annual PACE Party Kicks It All Off



On May 5th, CEI kicked off a series of events marking 40 years of serving seniors with our biggest PACE Party yet. Many thanks to all who made our 40th Anniversary Celebration PACE Party a tremendous success by attending this event. Between the

Community Celebration on the Jack London Square plaza and the VIP Reception at Scotts' Seafood Restaurant, close to 400 people joined us for the festivities.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and a representative of the City of Berkeley each issued public proclamations recognizing CEI's people and the great work we do. Vice Mayor of Oakland Rebecca Kaplan sent a proclamation on behalf of the City Council. The PACE Party was a great opportunity for us to get the word out about what we do and what we achieve as a leading senior healthcare provider in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. If you were not able to join us for the evening,

you can see a bit of it at the link below and hear some nice comments. [https://youtu.be/35\\_k1caW7hU](https://youtu.be/35_k1caW7hU)

Highlights of the evening included dancing on the plaza to the Cosmo Alleycats as they played swing and jazz music; a live auction offering fine dining, a two-week Lake Tahoe vacation, 40 bottles of wine, and a pair of VIP concert tickets to Pink Floyd-Roger Waters; a lifetime achievement award to the late Wilma Chan and a caregiver award to Michael Mancini; and a gorgeous ruby-diamond necklace giveaway.

This event helped us reunite with the community and raised over \$120,000 for our digital literacy efforts, a nursing education scholarship fund, and the Helping Hands Emergency Assistance Fund.

Additional 40th anniversary celebrations are planned this summer and fall with participants and staff.

We graciously thank each and every one of our donors and party-goers for making this PACE Party a grand success. Your donations and support go a long way in the life of a senior. ■







## CEO Message

This is a very special year. We are celebrating 40 years of serving seniors in the East Bay! It is such a pleasure to honor the legacy of this organization that is so deeply committed to the community in which it is rooted.

Thank you to The CEI Foundation trustees, all the donors, elected leaders, staff and community supporters who kicked off the celebration at our wonderful PACE Party on May 5th. See page 2 for all the photos and a recap. We are continuing the celebration with posting 40 stories from

participants, caregivers, donors and staff on our social media. You can view all the stories on CEI's YouTube channel. This summer will bring participant and staff celebrations.

Honoring the past is meaningful. Looking to the future is exciting. I look forward to building on the foundation of CEI's great work. We have been through a pandemic and shown great flexibility and resilience, which will serve us well as we continue to increase access to our community's elders and make the care and services we offer even stronger.

We hope to continue some of the flexibility we offered during the pandemic into the future. There is a new piece of federal legislation that you can help support. Senate Bill 3626, introduced by Sen. Casey (D-PA) and Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC), would give PACE greater flexibilities in providing care at home in addition to the PACE Centers. Our centers will always be the core of our model of care; but in-home services and technology can supplement great care. This legislation would also allow for rolling enrollment so seniors wanting to join the program as they are coming out of the hospital in the middle of the month would not have to wait to the first of the following month to get services.

More and more people across the country are recognizing the power of the PACE model of robustly combined medical and social services. It works!

Thank you for being part of our community and making the lives of so many people better each and every day.

### A New PACE Podcast with CEO Maria Zamora



Dr. Ankur Patel, host of the *Keep Up With PACE* podcast, interviewed Center for Elders' Independence President and CEO Maria Zamora. This podcast goes in-depth about the various PACE programs throughout the country and how they impact senior lives.

In this episode, Maria talks about the power of the PACE model of care and shares a heartwarming story about a participant and her young, caregiving daughter. She explains how PACE impacts individual participants, but can also be impactful to whole families and communities.

To hear how Maria got started in her healthcare career and the power of PACE at CEI, listen to the *Keep Up With PACE* podcast with Maria Zamora and host, Dr. Ankur Patel on iTunes or wherever you listen to podcasts or on our website blog. This podcast originally aired on January 18, 2022.

## New Government Relations Director on Board



We are very pleased to announce that Uche (oo-CHAY) Uwahemu joined CEI earlier this year, bringing his extensive hands-on experience in coalition building, public and community engagement, and government affairs. Prior to CEI, he served as Senior Policy Advisor and Senior District Field Representative for California's 15th Assembly District, which covers much of CEI's East Bay service area. He also founded a business and consulting firm that for nine years delivered support and services to nonprofit organizations and small businesses (primarily healthcare). His skills in building key partnerships with local, regional, state, and federal government agencies help CEI forge meaningful connections with elected officials and legislative staff who make policies that affect healthcare and social services for seniors.

Uche says, "I'm thrilled to join CEI and make a real impact on the lives of seniors at the local, state and federal government levels. Helping change policy has far-reaching impacts for current seniors and those who will be here in years to come. Two key areas of focus are housing and access to quality affordable senior healthcare. It's essential that we address senior needs now."

Uche is the current vice chair of the Richmond Workforce Development Board and also serves on the board of New Way Homes, a social impact housing development.

# Being Social Helps Us Stay Healthy

Studies have shown over and over again that social isolation is detrimental to physical, mental and emotional health. One study stands out: chronic loneliness is as bad for one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. In other evidence-based, peer reviewed articles, findings reveal the dramatic effects of chronic loneliness.

- **Depression sets in**
- **Immune system weakens**
- **Blood pressure goes up**
- **Anxiety takes over**
- **Risk of Alzheimer's disease increases**
- **Premature death happens**

Seniors are at especially high risk of social isolation. This is something that we take very seriously at Center for Elders' Independence by encouraging and offering numerous social interactions and opportunities to see friends.

The day center is at the heart of being social. Seniors from all over the globe mix and mingle. They are encouraged to be creative: write, paint, color, or draw. Highly competitive bingo or Jenga are always a popular choice of games. Word searches, crossword puzzles and Sudoku help keep the mind engaged. Others get creative with yarn by knitting or crocheting hats, socks or blankets. Creating beaded jewelry is popular along with Diamond Dots painting.

People who speak the same language often group together to create belonging and community. They share many of the same cultures and life experiences. They enjoy many of the same foods. Holiday festivities are more fun as the seniors share stories and celebrate together.

Participants blossom and flourish as they become engaged and social once again. Kyong Regalia is a Psychiatric Social Worker at the PACE San Leandro Center. She witnessed this first hand with one of the participants there.

At 62 years old, Mrs. K was home and spent most of her time in a wheelchair due to fear of having panic attacks and mobility issues. She was severely malnourished and underweight with complex psychiatric diagnoses and was



taking multiple psych medications. She received medical and psychiatric attention by teleconferences only every few months before coming to CEI. She has no family except for her 24-year-old son who quit high school to take care of her. The son could not work, go to school, or take any vacations as she was dreadfully afraid of being alone.

The transition to CEI was difficult for Mrs. K due to her separation anxiety. She thought CEI was going to keep her son away from her. She clung to her social worker and would not venture out. Trust was gradually established with consistent care from all team members. After three months, she began to gradually bloom as she got used to her routine, attended the center daily, and slowly made friends. About a year later, her son went on an extended vacation knowing that his mother would be okay. He now works and has returned to college.

Today, Mrs. K's mental health is stable and she no longer needs her wheelchair -- she walks without any support. She eats regular meals and is no longer underweight. She has a best friend whom she calls every morning and always sits next to in the day center.

This is a testament to the power being out among people, being social and active among peers and friends. It's a vital component of humanity and one that leads to a healthy life and longevity.



# Being Happy at CEI

## Participant Profile

*"Coming here changed my life. I exercise. I smile. I love the people here. They really take care of me like a baby."*

Zouheir and Nabiha Hadla are two very happy people when they are at their PACE San Leandro Center. Their smiles are contagious and bright. "Everybody smiles. There are smiles everywhere!" exclaimed Mr. Hadla. Mrs. Hadla agrees, "When I come here, I am happy."

Married for 56 years, they actually come to the center at different times. Mrs. Hadla explains, "When I am here, I don't have to think about what to feed my husband. I can simply relax and not think. Coming here separately gives us both an opportunity to enjoy the day differently."

Plus she doesn't have to worry about cleaning. Her back pain prevents her from doing basic or heavy cleaning. "Everything is clean at the center. Everything."

They both love going to the senior gym to exercise. Mr. Hadla tends their large garden of fruit trees, vegetables and herbs. Keeping his strength is important to achieving the fruits of his beloved labor. "I have a half acre of land with lots of old fruit trees—orange, nectarine, persimmon, blood orange, peach, plum and a fig tree—all need tending to, especially during the harvest season." So when he comes to the center, he heads straight to the gym.

"I love going to the gym and exercising. It's what I do here," said Mr. Hadla. But that's not all he does at the center. There are other people at the center who speak Arabic and they help each other out. "My friends here are more like sisters. I help explain, even though sometimes the words are different. I am from Lebanon and the others are from other parts of the Middle East. We work around the dialects."

The married couple have two children and two grandchildren. "I have a much smaller family than my parents. My mother, who lived until she was 96, gave birth and raised 12 children. She was strong. Very strong!" Mrs. Hadla shared with amazement. "At 77, I am not as strong as her but I am working on it."

"Coming here changed my life. I exercise. I smile. I love the people here. They really take care of me like a baby," said Mr. Hadla. "Whatever I need, they give it to me. It's terrific." ■



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# Three Ways to Make a Big Difference

New and ever-changing needs confront the participants and staff throughout Center for Elders' Independence. In response, the CEI Foundation developed three new funds offering donors different ways to make significant and meaningful change. These funds address diminishing the digital divide and social isolation for seniors, promoting nursing education through scholarships, and extending emergency assistance to participants when dire circumstances overtake them.



## The Mark Abar Memorial Scholarship Fund for Nursing Education

This fund was established to honor Registered Nurse Mark Abar, a long-time employee. Mark was a quiet, empathetic leader who provided nursing mentoring and guidance to his coworkers. He listened to participants' questions about their health and took the time needed to fully answer them. To honor Mark's dedication to nursing, this fund is designed to support nursing education for future nurses or current nurses who wish to deepen their formal education.



## The Language Bridge Fund

Participants speak as many as 25 different languages at Center for Elders' Independence. With that comes the challenge of clearly communicating questions, needs, or asking for help. The Language Bridge Fund addresses this challenge by purchasing hand-held language translation devices to be used within the day centers to facilitate basic conversations between staff and participants. Participants can also use these devices to speak to each other. Bridging the language barrier will enhance services, promoting easier communication and more social connections and friendships.



## Helping Hands Emergency Assistance Fund

There are times when a senior faces the unexpected. In the event of a sudden or emergency situation that might lead someone to leave the PACE program or a situation that the regular PACE program cannot cover, the Helping Hands Emergency Assistance Fund is designed as a last resort to help. Funds can address the emergent situation and be used for things like a rental deposit, relocation expenses, nutritious food or a deep cleaning for a hygienic home environment. Donations make a direct and impactful difference in the life of a senior striving to remain independent in our care.



Whether you are passionate about nursing care, language and connection, or solving a dire need, your financial support can make a world of difference in how we serve seniors in your community and support our staff. ■

To learn more and/or donate, please visit:  
<https://ceifoundation.elders.org>. Thank you.

# 40 Stories Highlighting Our 40 Years

As part of our 40th Anniversary Celebrations, we interviewed the people who made Center for Elders' Independence what it is today. From participants to the co-founder; from caregivers to activity coordinators; from retired staff members to the current CEO, 40 people shared their best memories and stories about their lives with CEI. You can watch these videos on our [YouTube 40 Stores Playlist](#) or on our website [elders.org](#). ■



*Having built a strong, resilient foundation, CEI is well-positioned to meet the needs of at-risk East Bay seniors and take a leadership role in advocacy and policy formation for the growing population of older adults in California.*

— Maria Zamora, President & CEO

## CEI's 40 Year History Book

Our history is rich and deep, filled with stories of how we have grown from that small section of



Highland General Hospital to where we are today. We captured that rich history in a short book covering the past 40 years. If you'd like a copy, please reach out to our Communications department to have one mailed to you by calling 510-433-1150, ext 8860, or email [enoble@cei.elders.org](mailto:enoble@cei.elders.org) with your mailing address.

## Ways to Donate

Join us in financially supporting and helping expand programs for seniors. There are multiple ways to donate to the CEI Foundation.



**Visit the website:** [ceifoundation.elders.org](http://ceifoundation.elders.org) to support a specific cause. Donate once or on a monthly basis. You can also designate your contribution as a tribute gift in memory or in honor of someone close to you.



**Mail the enclosed return envelope** with your check or credit card information.



**Call the CEI Foundation** at 510-318-7162 and speak with us directly about your gift.

You can make a one-time or a recurring donation, acquire stock transfer information, or learn about IRA/Roth distributions, wills or real property.

*We thank you for your support.*

## Mission Statement

The Center for Elders' Independence provides high quality, affordable, integrated health care services to the elderly, which promote autonomy, quality of life, and the ability of individuals to live in their communities.

[elders.org](http://elders.org)



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