

Our PACE Centers are Fully Open

Socializing is key to physical and mental well-being

Social isolation "is the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day" according to The New Yorker. The magazine article also stated that isolation "can prompt cardiovascular disease and stroke, obesity, or premature death...and is associated with a forty percent increase in the risk of dementia."

CEI's CEO, Maria Zamora says that, "PACE's holistic model puts our social centers and clinics at the epicenter of helping to get seniors out of their homes, into our on-site senior gyms, and around other people on a more regular basis. Our team finds that this really improves their mental and physical well-being. As we continue to deal with the pandemic, we are mindful of the difference PACE and socialization makes to our growing number of participants."

CEI's PACE centers never closed

For some CEI participants, it has been more than a year since they visited their friends and extended family at our PACE social centers. Our average daily attendance rate



CEI Road Supervisor, Myesha Reynolds (L), participant, Mercedes Rivas (C), and CEI Geriatric Aide, Michele Espino (R) in front of the new PACE Concord social center.



Ms. Patricia Hsiung Scharer, affectionately called "Purple Pat," is served the soup of the day by Charmelle Franklin at PACE San Leandro.

"As we continue to deal with the pandemic, we are mindful of the difference PACE and socialization makes to our growing number of participants."

during the first year of the pandemic ranged from 5 to 8 participants per day at each PACE center. These were seniors whose care plans noted health, rehabilitation or safety needs that would necessitate them attending the center.

For participants who still don't feel comfortable visiting our centers, we still call them over the phone. PACE San Leandro Lead Social Worker, Pai Duch, LCSW, said, "CEI's regular phone check-ins have become more important because in some instances, we are a lifeline for participants – we are their friends. Participants receive emotional support and process their feelings with social workers they feel comfortable with, who are on their care teams."

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Bridging the Digital Gap for Seniors



Sabrina Tam of Computer Tech Network helps a student in the Mandarin speaking session of an iPad training class at PACE Downtown Oakland.

We are very proud to have completed six rounds of iPad training classes since June 2020, graduating a grand total of 88 amazing seniors. The weekly classes are taught by Community Tech Network trainers in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Korean classes will start in the fall of 2021.

Teaching in other languages

"It's important to continually expand the curriculum into different languages. Our participants speak many languages. Learning how to use an iPad or access the Internet can be intimidating. However, teaching the class in their preferred language makes the course far more accessible. Students understand the concepts more readily when explained in their preferred language," says Andrew Hayes, Activities Manager for Center for Elders' Independence.

Deep Gratitude

During the graduation ceremonies, seniors expressed their deep gratitude and what they loved most about what they learned:

"We are very grateful to you all for helping us make this progress."

"I can watch videos of singing and dancing. These are my favorites. I know how to search for these and find them. I can also write in Chinese and use translation apps."

"I can talk to people. Like when my friend went to New York, I talked to her a couple of times a day. And be in contact with my family."

"It's really expanded my whole horizon here. I had no computer experience at all. It's really opened up a whole new vista for me."

Andrew explains, "We see them connect with family members, with brothers and sisters from all over the world. They are extremely proud to have the ability and the confidence to take these steps to reach out and maintain communication. That's been real inspiring." Having regular Internet access eases the intense social isolation and



Ms. Zondra Chambers is one of the 88 proud iPad training graduates.

"It's really expanded my whole horizon here. I had no computer experience at all. It's really opened up a whole new vista for me."



Mr. Shilin Xie is proud to learn how to use his iPad.

loneliness many seniors have felt over the past 18 months.

By teaching seniors how to connect to the Internet and use various apps such as Zoom and YouTube, we are bridging the digital divide. In Alameda County alone, over

95,000 people do not have regular access to the Internet. We learned in early 2020 that many CEI participants did not have a smart device, did not know how to use one, and did not have access to the web. These classes are designed to address that head on.

Classes are held weekly for eight weeks. They are mostly taught via Zoom; however, as many of our seniors are fully vaccinated (90%), we started teaching in person at the PACE Downtown Oakland Center in mid-July 2021.

Funding, Partnership, and PACE

Funding for these classes comes from donors with the majority of funds from a grant by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The partnership between CEI and the CPUC is an important one.

"Without the support from the CPUC, we wouldn't have gotten this program off the ground," says Justin Lola, VP of Information Technology at CEI. "That's the big value of PACE – providing needed services. With the grant from the CPUC, we can now boost our services to include these important classes to address the isolation and loneliness many seniors face. We are seeing firsthand the difference it makes."

CEI has an aggressive goal to teach an additional 400 seniors over the next two years. ■



Mo Ahmed from CEI's IT department helps train Ms. Kattie Hodge on how to use an iPad.



After taking the iPad Training class, Ms. Xi Sheng Li uses an iPad to surf the Internet.

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Staying Motivated on the Road to Recovery

Participant Profile

Ms. Lynne Johnson has a big heart and enjoyed a career in homecare before enrolling at CEI. She was always the caregiver in the family, caring for her grandma, her mom, and her significant other. So when she had a stroke during the COVID pandemic, she lost two of the things most important to her – her independence and the ability to take care of her loved ones.

A stroke changed her life

Ms. Johnson had the stroke about a year ago and she only remembers two details. She knows where she was when it happened – in the comfort of her own home. And she recalls the words she said before memory of having the stroke faded away: “I don’t feel right.”

She woke up in the hospital with the right side of her body not functioning properly and her hand twisted at an odd angle. When she tried to speak, it was hard to form words and she knew not only was her speech affected, but so were her cognitive abilities.

After starting therapy at the CEI PACE Center, she is glad she can speak better and says that sometimes it’s hard remembering what she is trying to say, but she is happy to communicate like she wants to.



Ms. Johnson says she has Activity Aide O'Nesha Hogroe (both pictured) on speed dial because she's so sweet and helpful.

Rehabilitation helps her overcome obstacles every day

“I want to do better. I don’t like depending on everyone to do everything,” Ms. Johnson says with all the determination in the world etched in her facial expression – you can tell she’s a fighter.

“CEI, just like before, helped me with everything. What I appreciated the most is that they kept me motivated and busy.”

Manuel Aguero, a Rehab Aide at our PACE Downtown Oakland location says, “Ms. Johnson is optimistic about recovering and overcomes more every day. Every time she comes to the center, she gets up from her wheelchair and walks to Rehab, leaning on the walker. Her favorite exercise is the parallel bars. She likes me to do the exercises with her and so together we have fun.”

In the gym and at home, Ms. Johnson says she does hand and leg exercises she learned in therapy. “But I am ready to do more. I like challenges. I tried the bike before, but I got too cramped up, so I did other exercises instead. I’m ready to go back to the bike again.”

CEI keeps her motivated and busy

Ms. Johnson says, “During the pandemic I felt alone, especially after my significant other passed on July 16 last year and my mom passed in May of this year. I had been going through a lot. One thing after another. But CEI, just like before, helped me with everything. What I appreciated the most is that they kept me motivated and busy.”



Ms. Johnson loves to make art at the PACE center.

"Every time she comes to the center, she gets up from her wheelchair and walks to Rehab, leaning on the walker. Her favorite exercise is the parallel bars. She likes me to do the exercises with her and so together we have fun."

The iPad training and new iPad help her stay connected with friends

Once she was able, she started CEI's Weblinks iPad training program in January. One of her former jobs was working at an antique shop where she says she got some computer experience listing items online to sell: "I knew a little before the class about going online and I love shopping, researching, and learning." But she says the class did more for her spirit, helping her connect with friends and staff at CEI again during the hard times in her life.

Being at the center helps with her memory

Right before the pandemic hit, Ms. Johnson had a lot of friends at the social center but once she had a stroke, she says her memory is not as good. "What really helped was when I could come back into the center and get out of the house. When I came back, people looked familiar but I couldn't remember them. I was so happy that they remembered me."

O'Nesha Hogroe, the Activity Aide at PACE Downtown Oakland met Ms. Johnson last year and says that they "clicked right away" because of her sweet personality and beautiful smile. She also says, "Ms. Johnson's recovery after her stroke has been emotionally trying for her, but she has not allowed that to defeat her."

When Ms. Johnson is at the center, O'Nesha makes sure she is being a great listener and that she is patient with Ms. Johnson. "I think that's something she appreciates the most."

When asked about their relationship, Ms. Johnson smiles brightly and says, "I can go to her and ask her for anything. I have her on speed dial." O'Nesha laughs and says, "I look forward to making many more memories with Ms. Johnson." Ms. Johnson smiles and says, "Me too."

It is these strong relationships that Ms. Johnson has formed at CEI that have made all the difference in helping her overcome the obstacles in her life. ■



Ms. Johnson likes it when Rehab Aide Manuel Aguero does her favorite exercise, the parallel bars, with her.



Ms. Johnson exercising on the stairs under the close watch of Manuel.

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Celebrating National PACE Month

September is National PACE Month and this year we are celebrating the hard work of our employees, who have contributed to keeping participants safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, even during the pandemic, CEI and other PACE programs across the country managed to keep 95% of senior participants living safely at home while the other 5% live in nursing facilities due to their medical conditions. PACE is designed to be flexible and the last 18 months proved how valuable that flexibility is in keeping seniors safe amid great challenges.

CEI delivers medical supplies and medications straight to the home with our homecare staff and pharmacy services. We provide homecare, meals, dentistry, podiatry, massage therapy, and acupuncture. Our doctors specialize in treating seniors in our own clinics. Seniors have access to state-of-the-art gyms for exercise and physical therapy. Each participant and their family has a designated social worker who helps with coordination of services and supports mental health. Plus, PACE centers act as social centers to keep participants active and seeing friends. Because of what we can offer through the PACE model of care, barriers like transportation and physical limitations are removed. With CEI's robust transportation department of 44 vehicles and five centers, our participants have gained more access to their healthcare providers and people who truly care about them.



CEI now serves more than 900 participants in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and we are growing every day. PACE across the country continues to grow as well – 30 states have PACE programs that operate 272 PACE centers, as of July 2021. ■

PACE Centers Open

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We also have continued our robust Zoom schedule and the iPad training courses in order to continue to keep participants connected to their friends while at home through exercise classes, activities, and games.

90% participant vaccination rate

Now that 90% of our participants can safely attend the center since they are fully vaccinated, many are opting to come back to see friends and use the gyms. We have practices in place that are helping us to increase center attendance. Each center has a morning and an afternoon shift participants can attend while maintaining mask wearing and social distancing protocols. ■



Concord Grand Opening a Success

PACE Concord's Grand Opening Celebration was held on Tuesday, April 20th. We opted for a small gathering of invited guests including the Vice Mayor of Concord, Dominic Aliano; the Mayor of Martinez, Rob Schroder; several Concord Chamber of Commerce members; and a few of CEI's board members. We also welcomed over 160 attendees via Zoom for our first online grand opening event. ■



From left to right: CEI Governing Board Chair Flo Raskin; CEO Maria Zamora; Center Director Emily Hoshida; Mayor of Martinez Rob Schroder; Vice Mayor of Concord Dominic Aliano; Councilmember Carlyn Obringer; FEI Trustee Chair Carol Leytem; and Trustee Péllo Walker.



CEO Maria Zamora poses with life-size ceremonial scissors.



CEI Welcomes a New Director of Fund Development

Center for Elders' Independence would like to introduce Tom Hyland as the new Director of Fund Development.

Tom joined CEI because of our "great reputation in the community" and our "holistic approach to healthcare through the PACE model." After being with CEI for a couple of months, he said, "What stands out about Center for Elders' Independence is the enthusiasm of the trustees to advocate for CEI and engage new volunteers. I look forward to helping CEI continue to expand PACE throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties."

Welcome aboard Tom! If you would like to read Tom's bio on the website, visit: <https://cei.elders.org/tom-hyland-bio/>

PACE Party Coming in 2022!

Last year as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CEI decided to move the Annual PACE Party online. We raised a record amount of money and are thankful for our sponsors and donors, who graciously donated \$130,000. These funds have helped to provide seniors with meals, iPads and personal iPad training classes.

The next PACE Party will be in Spring 2022. Stay tuned for updates!





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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.

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