

## Being with Each Other is Essential to Long Life

**H**aving friends is critical to lifelong satisfaction, happiness and well-being. "We are not meant to be lonely as a species," said Paul Dolan, a professor of behavioral sciences at the London School of Economics. "If you were to think of the most significant interventions to improve life expectancy, after quitting smoking, it's: Don't be lonely."

A New York Times opinion article dated September 6, 2023, reported, "loneliness is as deadly as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and more lethal than consuming six alcoholic drinks a day, according to the surgeon general of the United States, Dr. Vivek Murthy. Loneliness is more dangerous for health than obesity, he says."



*"Being social, getting out of the house on a regular basis, gives seniors a sense of purpose, a greater sense of life satisfaction and a greater sense of optimism"* --Dr. Jim Mittelberger, CEI CMO

"In one review of nearly 150 studies, social connections increase the odds of survival over roughly the next seven years by about 50 percent," states the NYT article. "Social isolation is the rare malady whose cure is fully known and costs relatively little, yet is still so difficult to achieve."

For seniors, when a beloved friend, companion or spouse passes, loneliness becomes very real and can be devastating to one's outlook or will to live. Coupled with sorrow, it can be hard to go out, even to the grocery store.

This was the life of Rose Usher, a PACE Berkeley participant who lost her best friend and spouse several years ago. She recalls, "I didn't do anything. I didn't go anywhere. I would go days without talking to anyone. My life was shut down and empty after my husband died."

### Places to Go Make a Difference

Having a place to go is a great start to lift oneself out of deep loneliness and depression. For Rose, the healing

started with a piece of mail that inspired her to reach out to Center for Elders' Independence. "I saw it and set it aside. Several weeks later, something told me to look at it again, so I did. I read it and thought, 'this is what I need right now.' Two years later, I'm much happier and I have friends to do arts and crafts with just about every time I go to the PACE center," Rose said with a big smile.

### PACE Makes Connections Easier

People like Rose blossom when they are surrounded by positive people, like the staff and other participants at CEI. We see and hear stories similar to Rose's often—having a place to go and be with others changes their lives for the better. It's all part of the overall design of PACE—social connections are built in—activities and socialization are right there, steps away from the clinic or the rehab gym.

Dr. Jim Mittelberger, Chief Medical Officer at CEI, highly encourages people to be with others as often as possible. "The studies show us over and over that being social, getting out of the house on a regular basis, gives seniors a sense of purpose, a greater sense of life satisfaction and a greater sense of optimism. We see this in action all the time at our centers. It's very rewarding to watch."

It's being connected to the human fabric, whether sharing a laugh or a heartbreaking life experience, that truly is a cure.

# CEI Foundation Appoints Two New Trustees

The CEI Foundation is the philanthropic outreach and community engagement arm of Center for Elders' Independence. At an annual retreat, the Foundation welcomed two new members to its Board of Trustees.



**Jim Vawter** has collaborated with CEI for many years, as a liaison for HUB International. He is an Executive VP at HUB, responsible for all operations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Jim has 30 years of experience as a specialist in risk management, property and casualty insurance and employee benefits for businesses of all sizes. He holds a BA in Economics and a BS in Mathematics and Computer Science from UC Davis. Married to his high school sweetheart, they have four wonderful children and have made Danville their home. Jim and his family enjoy hiking, skiing, and barbecuing, as well as working with children and young adults through sports and fellowship.

**Amber Childress** is the Chief of Staff for Oakland City Councilmember Janani Ramachandran, Representing District 4. She is responsible for managing staff and team operations, shaping public policy and providing constituent services, addressing community member concerns and advocating for their interests. She has a strong background in fundraising and nonprofit management. For the last 15 years, she has expanded her passion for advocacy to include seniors, because of her own experience as a caregiver to her great grandmother and maternal grandparents. The Oakland native's family includes her amazing son and their dog, affectionately known as Max the Big Dawg. A cross-country and track runner in high school, she tries to keep that going with the occasional half marathon when time permits. As a big sports fan, her most recent goal is to visit all 30 MLB baseball fields in the country over the next 5 years.



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## How to Support Seniors

Join us in financially supporting and helping expand programs for seniors.



**Visit the website:** [ceifoundation.elders.org](http://ceifoundation.elders.org) to support a specific cause.



**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. We can facilitate complex donations such as stocks, IRA or Roth distributions, wills or real property.

*We thank you for your support.*

## Subscribe to the Digital Newsletter!

Send a quick email to:  
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510-433-1150 ext 8860  
to receive short newsletters  
several times a year.



# CEI and FEMA Host Preparedness Forum

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Center for Elders' Independence hosted "Golden Ready: A Preparedness Forum for Older Adults" September 12, 2023 at The California Endowment in downtown Oakland.

The event presented preparedness education and resources for older adults and caregivers who attended in person or joined through Zoom. Topics included: natural disaster preparedness, active shooter preparedness, healthcare preparedness during disasters and cybersecurity awareness.

CEI President and CEO Maria Zamora said "CEI is proud to partner with FEMA for this pre-eminent disaster preparedness event for older adults.

As we are passionately dedicated to supporting the health, dignity, and quality of life for older adults, we recognize the critical role that a sense of physical safety plays in supporting overall well-being."



Left to right: FEMA Region IX Director of External Affairs David Pasey, Oakland Emergency Planning Coordinator Brianna Horton, FEMA Deputy Administrator Tammi Litrell, CEI Director of Government Affairs Uche Uwahemu, FEMA Public Relations Officer Brandi Richard Thompson, and CEI VP of IS and Cloud Services Justin Lola

## Where There is a Will, There is a Way

Have you considered including the CEI Foundation in your estate planning? A will (or bequest) is an easy planning tool to ensure Center for Elders' Independence continues to serve seniors with complex medical conditions through your generosity. Three easy options include:

- State a specific amount you wish to bequeath.
- Choose a percentage of your estate to donate.
- Designate part or all of the remainder of your estate after other obligations are met.

For more estate planning ideas, visit the CEI Foundation website at:

<https://ceifoundationlegacy.org>

## Show Your Caregiver Pride!

To receive a Caregiver Pride lapel pin, scan the QR code below and complete the form. A pin will be promptly mailed to you.



# CEI Foundation Makes Awards to Support Participants

Your donations to the CEI Foundation truly make a difference at Center for Elders' Independence. They make the lives of the many seniors we serve better. At the most recent PACE Party, held in early May this year, over \$230,000 was raised and those funds are being put to valuable use.



The CEI Foundation awarded \$75,000 to the **WebLinks iPad Class Program** to ensure every senior graduating from the 8-hour course receives an iPad and internet access at home where needed. Over 350 PACE participants have graduated from the WebLinks Program since its inception in July 2020. Originally, funding came from a California Public Utilities Commission grant, which covers the instruction portion of the program. Instruction is provided by the nonprofit organization, Community Tech Network based in San Francisco. Your gifts connect participants to the internet so they can connect with distant family, have more social engagement, access to news and entertainment.



Additionally, the CEI Foundation awarded the **Helping Hands Emergency Assistance Fund** \$40,000 to ensure seniors requiring financial support in urgent or emergency situations receive our help. Previously the fund helped seniors who needed deep cleaning of their housing to make the place habitable, replaced doors for stronger security, and provided a

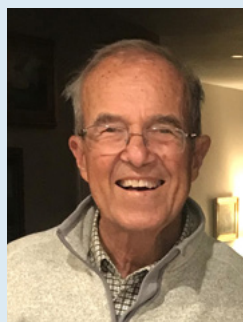
rental deposit for a participant who needed to move quickly to a safer home. These basic needs are not covered through healthcare dollars and your gifts help us stabilize people's lives so they can continue to thrive at CEI.



Another \$40,000 was awarded to the **Language Bridge Fund**. These monies support CEI with language interpretation. English is not the primary language of 50% of CEI participants. Having interpretation devices that give access to audio and video interpreters readily available is essential to give all CEI participants quality healthcare and services.

Thank you for your dedication to supporting the health, dignity and quality of life of CEI participants. Your donations help keep seniors vibrant, healthy and independent.

## J&J Honors CEI Foundation



Recently, a \$5,000 donation was received by the CEI Foundation for the WebLinks Program. This came through a grant from the Johnson & Johnson Western Region Retiree Association, an organization interested in supporting programs benefitting seniors. Carl Fricke,

a resident of Alameda and member of the Association, researched CEI and reached out to Tom Hyland, CEI Foundation Executive Director. Mr. Fricke then became a champion of our program to secure the significant contribution.

The funds will be used support the WebLinks Program, including securing iPads for graduating seniors.



# Winners Everywhere!

Congratulations to our Fundraiser Texas Hold 'Em winner **Willetta Strong**. This Rodeo resident was one of the nearly 150 guests who showed their best poker face at CEI Foundation's very first Tri Valley Texas Hold 'Em Tournament on August 26, which benefited CEI's Regional Expansion in the Tri Valley area. The event helped raise funds to furnish and equip the new CEI Tri Valley campus which is currently under construction and slated to open in early 2024. It will serve hundreds of seniors with complex medical and social needs in the Livermore, Dublin, Pleasanton region.



## SAVE THE DATE!

The next PACE Party will be on  
**Thursday, May 2, 2024**  
and held on the USS Hornet in Alameda



# Connecting the Dots with Spiritual Care



CEI Chaplains Mi Chun and Jason Hotchkiss

CEI has recently expanded its Spiritual Care Department by hiring Jason Hotchkiss, a hospice chaplain with many years of experience. Together with Chaplain Mi Chun and several volunteers, they make up CEI's interfaith spiritual care team, providing a listening ear and compassionate presence for participants as they go through life challenges.

In the process of aging, many go through transitions, and the chaplains help facilitate these shifts through rituals, memorial services, spirituality groups, and one-on-one consultations. Spiritual care is integrated into healthcare, as it has an impact on overall mental wellness. Chaplain Mi Chun says the bulk of the work is "being available in those delicate moments of need."

**Recent research\* has spawned growing interest and awareness in the relationship between spirituality and aging. Results show that spiritual well-being based intervention may boost older adults' resilience-based recovery.**

- Increased sense of well-being and resilience
- Positive effects on dementia patients
- Help in grieving the loss of a loved one
- Improved family relationships
- Reduced depression
- Support for those in palliative care and preparation for the end of life



The Spirituality Group provides a safe space for participants to share, listen and support each other. For this session, the group listened to the lyrics of "Turn! Turn! Turn!" by the Byrds and shared their reflections.



Led by retired UMC minister and volunteer Diana Bohn (standing, in red), the Spirituality Group at East Oakland is one of several groups at CEI that meet weekly and offers spiritual and community guidance to participants in need.

*"Our participants have led profound outer and inner lives – wars, exile, cultural revolutions on the one hand, unspeakable heartbreak, and discoveries of inner fortitude on the other. It's a complete privilege to bear witness to these stories."* – Mi Chun, CEI Chaplain

Mi adds, "Spirituality provides a framework for making meaning out of our lives. What is love? What is suffering? What is mortality? These questions help us connect the dots between who we are deep down and the external life we aspire to live. So, spirituality encourages us to ask these questions while also naming what we already know: there's always hope, and some measure of healing is always available."

Of all the age groups, the elderly population is the one with the greatest religious affiliations and spiritual practice. Studies\*\* attach the role of spirituality to the aging process and management of chronic disease. Spiritual care becomes a resource used for participants, creating positive impact on quality of life and well-being.

"Loss is a part of daily life as we age. We lose parts of ourselves—our loved ones, physical health, memory, and self-understanding," Mi continues "But when faced with honest attention, loss can teach us how to go deeper and connect to our true essence. It is fascinating to work with older adults with all the layers of human experience they carry in their minds and bodies."

\*Spiritual well-being promotion for older adults: Implication for healthcare policy makers' decision making on Cost Savings. By Nader Adhikani and Claire Su-Yeong Park, National Library of Medicine. 2019

\*\*Spirituality and quality of life in older adults: A path analysis model by Sara Lima, BMC Geriatrics. 2020

# The Road to Recovery Leads to a Happy Homecoming

In celebration of Filipino American History Month this October, we would like to share the PACE Participant story of Crescenciana Young.

This fall will be a happy homecoming for this Bulacan native, who was finally given the green light to travel by her PACE Healthcare Team! After over a decade of being away, Crescenciana was dreaming of traveling back to the Philippines, but the trip was filled with obstacles. Over a year ago, Crescenciana suffered a seizure at home, putting her in a coma. Her brain surgery was successful but it left her with months ahead in rehabilitation. Crescenciana underwent intensive rounds of speech therapy and physical therapy in order to walk again.

The PACE care team determined what mattered most to Ms. Young and helped her get ready for travel. Crescenciana worked hard and can now get around with a walker. She will be traveling with her daughter and daughter-in-law to her hometown and plans to visit her childhood home. She shares a Filipino saying: "Ang hindi lumington sa pinanggalingan ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan." In English, those who don't look back to where they came from, will not reach their destination.

Thanks to PACE, Crescenciana is looking forward to making some happy new memories with her American family, in the land of her birth.



## PICKING UP SPIRITS

After receiving a serious diagnosis, PACE San Leandro participant Rana Khan needed a bit of a "pick-me-up". Massage therapist Mary Barry, CMT, stepped in. She provided Ms. Khan with a Michael Kors designer handbag and a beautiful scarf both donated by Mary's close friend and CEI supporter Virginia Madden. Ms. Madden is a prominent member of the East Bay community and a generous philanthropist.





You're Invited to the  
**2023 Senior Health  
Policy Forum**

**Friday, December 1, 2023  
8:30AM to 3:30PM  
\$149**

To Learn More & Register:



**elders.org**



Join CEI as we co-sponsor this forum drawing together senior advocates, care providers, and policy makers to create a unified voice to make a real difference for Bay Area seniors. This year's theme is **Impacting the Future of Aging. JOIN US!**