

Senior Concerns

Serving Seniors & Their Family Caregivers

August 25, 2020

Six Months of Coronavirus A Message from Senior Concerns

If you have been with us on our journey, you know Senior Concerns has been vigilant in our response to supporting our community's seniors and family caregivers because they are two of the most at risk populations during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Sadly, the virus has shown no sign of going away. We will be in this pandemic era for the long haul, likely a year or more. Our services at Senior Concerns have grown and will continue to, to meet the need.

Home Delivered Meals

With congregate meals sites closed, restaurants closed for inside dining, and concerns about using public transportation, seniors are more reliant on meals coming to them. We have stepped up our home delivered meal program to meet this need, and, at the same time, we are offering restaurant quality meals.



The numbers are astounding, as we have expanded from delivering 800 meals per week to 5,000. Even as I write this, seniors are still calling to be added to the program. Through the generosity of grantors, donors, and sponsors, we have no waiting list, and the only criteria for the program is to be age 60+, be homebound due to COVID-19, and in our geographic territory.

Join Thousand Oak Mayor Adam and me to see an up-close view of this program in action. <https://www.seniorconcerns.org/programs/meals-on-wheels/>

Food and Home Essentials

Our grocery and pharmacy shopping and no-contact delivery continues for those in need.

Our free food pantry is filling the gap for seniors who are financially strapped and without transportation to food banks. Non-perishable food items, water, paper goods, household cleaners and toiletries are part of the over 100 deliveries per week that are made. We are happy to have partnered with Pegasus Transport and Dial A Ride, as well as individual volunteers, to deliver these essential goods.

Caregiver Support

Thousands of family caregivers across the Conejo are caring for a senior loved one with physical or cognitive conditions. These caregivers normally rely on a small army of resources including Adult Day Care programs, family members, neighbors, and others to get through each day. But that has been stripped away due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Caregivers are feeling isolated, stressed, and overwhelmed at a time when they need more support than ever as their loved one deals with a loss of routine, heightened anxiety, and other challenges.



Our Care Manager, Carie, and Senior Advocate, Faviola, fielded over 480 calls in June and 600 calls in July to and from caregivers or seniors needing help. This forced isolation, and all the challenges around it, have been taking a toll. We have been receiving more calls from individuals (both caregivers and seniors) who are very emotional, upset, overwhelmed, and even talking about suicide. We are fortunate to have trained social workers here to gently guide them to the appropriate resources.

COVID-19 Toolkits

By early September we will have distributed over 500 COVID-19 Tool Kits to community seniors.

The Tool Kits include critical health and safety items that are hard to find such as: Thermometers and Alcohol Wipes, Pulse Oximeter with batteries, Hand Sanitizer, Antiseptic Wipes, Disposable Face Masks, Cloth Face Mask, Disposable Nitrile Gloves, File of Life to maintain important medical information, California Department of Aging: Feeling Good & Staying Connected, An Activity Guide, and a COVID Tool Kit Booklet.

As a public service, we provided the COVID-19 Tool Kits free of charge. We

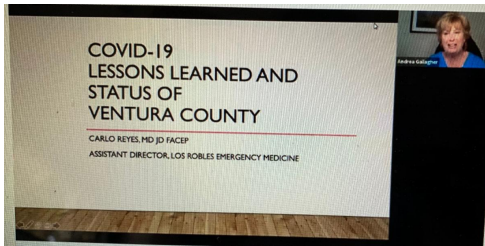
initially produced 250 of these kits and we were "sold out" in one week. So, we quickly produced another 250 kits for a total of 500 kits at a cost of \$30,000. We were fortunate to find sponsors to help us offset the costs to produce the kits.



We will likely do a third round of kits, so if you know of a business or individual who might like to be a sponsor, please let us know.

Community Learning

Sometimes there are silver linings in challenging times. Our in-person education series usually garnered a small audience of interested seniors. The pandemic forced us to move to a Zoom webinar platform which allowed us three big changes. We could invite experts from all over the country to address important topics, more people are joining us since it is from the comfort of their own home, and we can record the session for those who could not attend live.



Much of our programming has centered on COVID-19. Here are some of the recent webinars.

- What Older Adults Need to Know About COVID-19 with Dr. Carlo Reyes, MD, JD, FACEP
- Planning in a Time of COVID-19 with Terri Hilliard Olson, Esq and Teri Helton, RN, MSN, FCN
- Caring During COVID-19: What to Do When Caring for Your Loved One Becomes Too Much, Mark Stelzer, MSW, Kelila Heller, Elder Care Advisor and Ellen Henahan, RN, CHPN

One of our most attended webinars (many having to view the recording afterward as we could only have a live audience of 100), was Will You Pass Your Next Driving Test with Tressa Thompson, Senior DMV Ombudsman. The session was fascinating, with over 50 questions answered by a DMV expert.

You can view all of our recorded webinars and sign up for new ones here <https://www.seniorconcerns.org/seminars/>

We will be offering three new programs in the coming month.

Create Your Own COVID-19 Back Up Plan

Seniors and their family caregivers should be prepared for the next surge in COVID-19 cases, or the double threat of COVID-19 and the seasonal flu. This

tool guides the development of a plan to help ensure your and your loved one's health, safety, and well being during the next surge. This tool will be offered for free on Senior Concerns' website.

Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment Program

Many adult children are not visiting their older adult parents because of the threat of exposing them to the coronavirus. Or, spousal caregivers are watching their loved ones struggle physically or cognitively during this time of isolation. In both cases, Senior Concerns understands that sometimes a professional evaluation in the home of an older adult to assess functioning, abilities, care, and safety needs can be valuable. In our new Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment Program, a master's level social worker will safely come to the home to complete the thorough assessment. A full care plan with recommendations will be provided to the family in writing. The assessment will include all areas of functioning with the focus on increasing and improving quality of life.

A Step Toward Better Brain Health - THINK FIT

Seniors' greatest universal unspoken fear is worrying about their mental decline. Having difficulty finding the right words, recalling things, or misplacing items only exacerbates that fear. These challenges may be signs of normal aging or they could be Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). Social isolation can dramatically increase the risk of both.

Based upon Senior Concerns' extensive experience in working with older adults with memory concerns and recognizing that stay at home orders create a greater risk to seniors' cognition, we developed THINK FIT, a live online evidence- informed program for mind and memory.



Classes are small and individualized to a senior's specific needs and concerns. The program is designed to help seniors

- Increase their memory confidence
- Strengthen them both physically and cognitively
- Learn techniques to reduce stress and work
- Gain a supportive community and
- Learn practical tips to increase recall and memory

THINK FIT is a proactive program to help seniors with a fear of memory loss, or MCI, take steps early to strengthen their memory and ultimately improve their mental and physical health. To learn more go to <https://www.seniorconcerns.org/programs/thinkfit/>

Health, well being, good nutrition, socialization, self-assurance, and independence for seniors and their family caregivers is our aim.

If you would like to join us in our mission, consider volunteering or donating to Senior Concerns.

- You can donate online [here](#)
- Or send a check to Senior Concerns, 401 Hodencamp Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
- Or call us at 805-497-0189

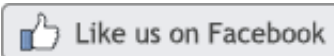
On behalf of those we serve, a very appreciative thank you to those who support our work. You are making a huge difference in our community.

Stay safe and be well,

Andrea Gallagher, CSA, President, Senior Concerns

DONATE *HERE!*

Stay connected for all of the latest updates!



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*Learn more about
Senior Concerns'
programs here.*

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