

Connection

SERVING SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

SENIORCONCERNS.ORG
FALL 2021



**CA
NONPROFIT**
GOES ABOVE
AND BEYOND

**DELIVERING
MEALS**
AND MORE TO
HOMEBOUND SENIORS

CAREGIVING
DURING COVID-19

READYING
FOR REOPENING

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Life Beyond COVID

This past year has highlighted the challenges faced by so many older adults and their family caregivers. Food insecurity, social isolation, lack of resources, and general fear of the unknown.



In this magazine you will read about how Senior Concerns has been at the forefront of meeting seniors' needs in amazing ways.

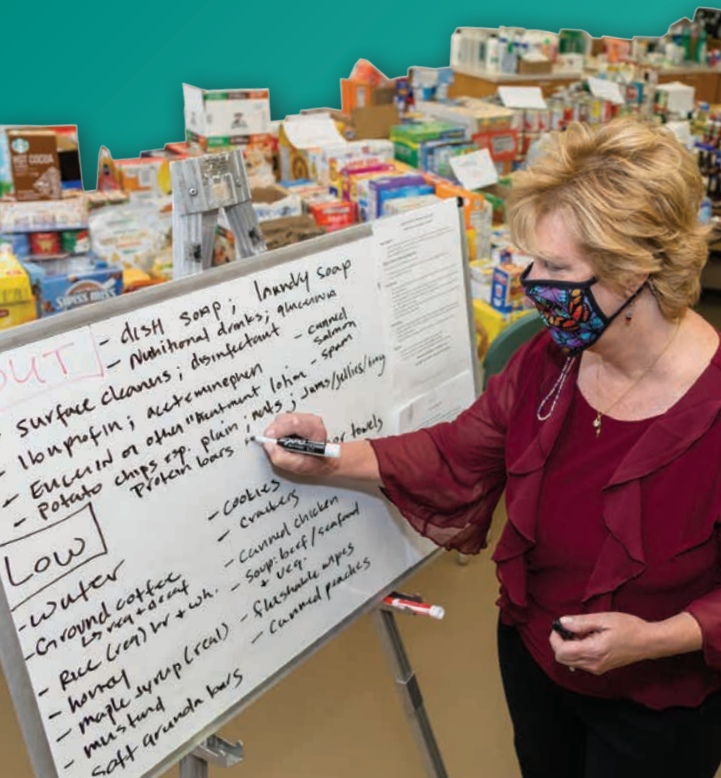
Even now, as things begin to reopen, many of these needs won't go away. There is so much more that needs to be done.

Please consider a donation to Senior Concerns. We can't do our work without your support.

Our community's seniors thank you for your generosity.

Andrea

Andrea Gallagher, CSA
President, Senior Concerns



Delivering Meals and More to Homebound Seniors

by Bridget Harvey-Elliott, MS, RD, Director, Nutrition Services

March 13, 2020 was a day seared in all of our memories; the day CA shut down, the day when all of our lives were put on indefinite hold. Senior Concerns, too, was forever altered by the COVID pandemic stay-at-home recommendation. The need for meals and groceries immediately developed and the 'relatively small' Meals On Wheels program exploded beyond capacity. The need to provide other resources and services became readily evident. While the daily operations of Senior Concerns changed, the mission remained the same: to provide programs and services which support seniors.

As the premier resource for the aging population in this community, Senior Concerns sprang into action. Working with the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging, Goebel Adult Center, and local restaurants, meals were delivered to seniors by the many community members who volunteered their time during the pandemic. The Senior Concerns office became ground zero for meeting pantry needs for those in this and surrounding communities. Donations began pouring in and the pantry operations began and continued through mid-August 2021.

During the past year plus, there were about **288,000 meals delivered and more than 11,000 pantry deliveries.** There were also volunteers who worked with individuals as personal shoppers.

For many of the area seniors, Senior Concerns' delivery volunteers became their contact with the outside world. The volunteers became friends, confidants, and that ray of sunshine needed during the long COVID isolation period. Through the meals and pantry deliveries, nutritional status was maintained and peace of mind for many of the seniors was provided.

Volunteers Nancy Luder, Victoria Price and Phil Mercurio pack hundreds of hot meals a day.



Marty Edwards gets ready to deliver fresh meals to the seniors she has grown to care for. She calls her delivery days her "happy days."



Caring for the Family Caregiver

The last 16 months have been a rollercoaster for family caregivers. Adult children caring for an aging parent suddenly were working from home and trying to keep their parent(s) engaged and safe while looking after their own children. Husbands and wives were caring for their spouse during a lockdown without help. Family caregivers were unable to take necessary time for themselves, as they cared for a loved one 24/7. A recent research study showed anxiety in family caregivers for a person living with dementia increased during the pandemic. At Senior Concerns, we saw this in real life.

Senior Concerns' **Family Caregiver Resource Center became the lifeline to family caregivers both near and far.** Our case manager, Carie Salas, LCSW, fielded phone calls and offered support via care consultations, respite grants for paid in-home care and support groups. Her support groups transitioned from in person meetings to Zoom and doubled in size.

The group became a beacon for caregivers, a weekly refuge to meet and support one another, laugh, cry, and express worries and fears without judgement. We also reinstated our adult children support group for those who are caring for an aging parent. This group now meets twice a month, and the attendees are also meeting in person, outside of the group time, as their community bond grows stronger.

With restrictions being lifted and our Adult Day Program reopening, our family caregivers are beginning to see a light at the end of what was an exceptionally long tunnel. Enrollment is almost at capacity for the day program and families are beginning to hire more in home care to provide respite. Anxiety levels for caregivers have decreased with coping strategies discussed during support groups, care consultations and our Dealing with Dementia Workshops. It is a privilege and an honor to provide support to family caregivers. It is what we do best and will continue to do through the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Family caregivers receive support and camaraderie in a Zoom Caregiver Support Group.



Carie Salas, LCSW, provides a care consultation to help guide and support a family caregiver.

In the year 2016, I was a 90-year-old Marine WWII veteran, finally going into retirement with a vivacious, alive, beautiful wife of 86. Our future seemed so bright, then destruction hit our lives. My wife was stricken with Alzheimer's disease. First, her memory began to fade. I was no longer her husband. Instead, I was a strange man who was threatening her life; at one time having Sheriff's deputies meet me at the door with drawn guns. My psychologist was no real help. Then I discovered Senior Concerns. Their wonderful Carie Salas and her Alzheimer group meetings saved my sanity. They provided Alzheimer information, legal assistance, built needed changes to the house (ramps, etc.) and were a constant harbor of relief. Then, in 2019 I became hospitalized and in a wheelchair in hospice, AND the virus struck. They provided supplies, information, and most of all, sanity in this very confused crazy world. Senior Concerns is in my daily prayers. In many ways they are saving my life. Of all the organizations I know, they rate the highest. I certainly hope they are recognized for excellent work in our community, they deserve it.

—Dr. Irv Croshier



Dr. Irv Croshier and his wife Diane before she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and he became her caregiver.



SAFETY FIRST

Safety is First Priority at Our Hodencamp Facility

OUR GOAL was to make our offices and Adult Day Center as safe a space as possible for our staff, participants, volunteers, and visitors.

One of the ways we can control against COVID is through proper ventilation of indoor spaces. Ventilation mitigation strategies and a state-of-the-art HVAC system can help reduce viral particle concentration.

We installed new high performance ION generators which purify the air at the molecular level. They are the only air cleaner on the market that has been clinically proven to kill COVID-19 within one hour in an enclosed space. They are also incredibly effective against allergens, molds, MRSA and Staph.

And since our HVAC system sits on the roof, we took the opportunity to install a new roof to help prevent things like mold or mildew which can cause serious long-term health problems.

And lastly, we replaced our 18-year-old pergola, to provide new shading for outdoor activities. This, along with new patio furniture, should allow us to also have outdoor activities which is the preferred venue to reduce COVID spread.

Thank you to our . . .

— FUNDERS —



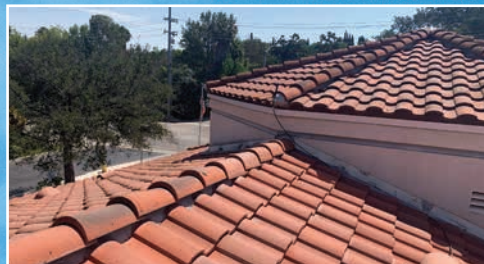
— CONTRACTORS —



— STAFF MEMBER — Adriana Mendez for coordinating the project



New pergola by Evanoff Construction will keep our outdoor space cool and inviting.



New roofing installed by the great team at Statewide Roofing.



New air conditioning units installed by Conejo Valley Heating and Air include new high performance ion generators to purify the air.



New HVAC system sits atop of Senior Concerns' roof.

ReOPENING DAY

Coming Soon

Senior Concerns Adult Day Program

We are using the closure time to reimagine and redesign the program to ensure it is the most fun, the most therapeutic and will bring out the best in each participant!



**Adult Day Program
Team Lead
Hannah Hoffman, MSW**

805.497.0189

Call us to learn more
about the schedule options
and pricing.



Our new Adult Day Program includes two groups:

The Discovery Group

Geared for people with mild cognitive impairment and includes a focus on therapeutic brain healthy activities including trivia, TED talks, and reminiscence activities.

The Harmony Group

Geared for people with a more moderate cognitive impairment who enjoy word games, discussion groups and sensory activities with assistance.

Both groups run Monday – Friday from 10am – 2pm and include a delicious lunch provided by Country Harvest restaurant. Physical activities, exercise, music, and entertainment are a core part of both groups.

Meet Hannah (picture above), our Adult Day Program Team Leader. Hannah has her Master's in Social Work and says that her favorite part of working in the program is "getting to know your loved one and your whole family. I see this as a family program because we work together to make sure your loved one has the best experience both here and at home."

It has been my prayer all along for my husband to be able to return to Senior Concerns and once more benefit from the loving care and beneficial interactions the Adult Day Program provides.

I have told you before and with all my heart I truly mean this, Senior Concerns has been/is such a blessing for my husband and for me. You all have constantly been a phone call or email away for me to ask for guidance. And your guidance has been given in such encouraging and helpful ways.

—spousal caregiver

Free



Senior Concerns

Chateau Plaisance, 3-acre estate atop a private knoll in Lake Sherwood.

Rainn Wilson's (The Office) and his wife Holiday Reinhorn's home is an idyllic Spanish style hacienda crafted to be their own magical Green Acres.



Rising from the ashes of the Woolsey Fire, this home features a rebuilt outdoor oasis.



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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021 • 6:00-7:15PM



▲ Villa del Lago overlooks beautiful Lake Sherwood. This 24,000 sq. ft. self-sustainable Modern Old World Villa features unsurpassed quality and craftsmanship.

This unique event will feature:

- Filmed tours of beautiful homes, narrated by the owners who will showcase special features of their property.
- You'll tour amazing great rooms, jaw dropping garage space (22 cars!), and beautiful gardens!
- Design trend videos presented by our sponsors. See the latest in interior and exterior design for your home!
- An Idea Gallery where you can browse the latest trends in design and link directly to vendors in our community who can help you bring your dreams to life!

OPTIONAL MEAL PACKAGES

Order some meals and host a WATCH PARTY with your friends.



REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR FREE EVENT

www.seniorconcerns.org/events/virtual-home-tour/

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Meet Our Senior Concerns Board Chairs

Board Chair Veronica (Ronnie) Amici

New to Senior Concerns...well not anymore. Answering an Acorn ad in search of a Finance Board Chair, Veronica (Ronnie) Amici thought she might like to give back to her community after a 35+ year career in finance. Filling Debbie Herwaldt's shoes (retired CFO of Los Robles Hospital and Medical Center) as Senior Concerns' Finance Chair was not going to be easy, but Ronnie was up for the challenge.

That was February 2020, and in March the pandemic hit. While there was plenty to do on the finance front, Ronnie felt she could do more. She served as meal coordinator for the Great Plates Program that Senior Concerns helped to administer. This meant packing meals and organizing drivers' routes three days a week. Ronnie was matched with a senior couple to do their grocery shop during the pandemic and delivered food from Senior Concerns' food pantry for another homebound senior.

To onboard the more than 400 new volunteers that offered to help at the height of the pandemic, Ronnie assisted Senior Concerns' staff in setting up newly purchased volunteer management software.

It has been 18 months and Ronnie hasn't had the opportunity to meet her fellow board members in person, which will happen soon, but Ronnie certainly knows the staff, and many



Jane "Tink" Henderson and Chair of the Board of Senior Concerns Ronnie Amici meeting Senior Concerns' Fundraising Committee to plan upcoming events

of the volunteers - she has been working side by side with them every day.

Look for Ronnie in the coming months, she will be out in the community introducing herself and seeing what others have to say about the organization.

Past Chair Patricia Jones

We thank Patricia for her leadership during one of the most challenging times in Senior Concerns' history

Nine years ago, when David Catlin, past Board Chair of Senior Concerns, suggested to Patricia Jones that she join the Senior Concerns' board, Patricia was acutely aware of the challenges facing seniors from her work as co-owner of Home Helpers In-Home Caregivers.

And she knew how she could help. As the first President and CEO of the Alliance for the Arts, and responsible for the funding of the Operations and Programming Endowments, Patricia brought incredible experience and expertise in fundraising. Under Patricia's leadership the Alliance was lauded as most successful public-private partnership in US by the National Endowment for the Arts.



Fast forward to today, Patricia has served on the Senior Concerns' board for nine years, and as Board Chair for four. She also serves on the Executive and Fundraising Committees.

The past 18 months has been one of the most challenging times for Senior Concerns. While needs skyrocketed, funding streams like fees from the Adult Day Program and in person fundraisers ceased.

To manage costs, the organization furloughed half their staff and repurposed the remaining employees to new and expanded programs, servicing seniors sheltering in place.

"Patricia is our guide star," says Andrea Gallagher, President of Senior Concerns. She has led the way through unprecedented times and we are stronger because of it. We cannot thank her enough for her leadership."

To learn more about serving on Senior Concerns' Board, contact agallagher@seniorconcerns.org

Our Volunteers Make it



POSSIBLE!

Volunteers have always been the heart of Senior Concerns, and this past year they flooded our community with more support than we could have imagined.

In March 2020, as older adult volunteers sheltered in place, we put out the call for more volunteers, and since then, **we had over 400 new volunteers join us!**

These volunteers were vital to delivering over 288,000 fresh meals to homebound seniors over the past eighteen months.

They made it possible to pack and deliver over 11,000 bags of pantry and household goods to low-income seniors. And these volunteers were paired to do shopping, run errands, and make friendly calls with seniors, so that no one felt alone during this difficult time.

Pivoting from her pre-COVID duties as Activities Director of our Adult Day Program, Kayla Fowler (pictured above) began to answer phones that were ringing off the hook as the pandemic surged. She also began double duty as our volunteer manager, making sure volunteers were matched to the right task and could assist with all the varied needs of our senior community.

The biggest THANK YOU goes to our VOLUNTEERS who stepped up and overwhelmed our staff with their kindness and willingness to help. You inspired us to work harder knowing how much of your personal time, energy, and heart you were willing to give. We thank you for being such a special part of the Senior Concerns family.

Learn more about volunteering with Senior Concerns at www.seniorconcerns.org/volunteer/

SENIORCONCERNS.ORG



Nancy Luder receives the Community Commitment Award from the Mayor of Thousand Oaks for her service at Senior Concerns.



Kayla Fowler pivoted when needed to become our Volunteer Manager.



Margaret Bohosian, from Comfort Keepers, ready for her 100th meal delivery. Cards and cupcakes compliments of Senior Concerns.



Pastor Phil, Matt R. and Phil K. from Atmosphere Church delivering groceries to stock our emergency food pantry.

Jen B. came in weekly to organize and stock Senior Concerns' emergency food pantry.

LET'S HEAR WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE SAYING:

I served Meals On Wheels through Senior Concerns and the program was life changing for the recipients, and me! The relationships I developed mean so much to me. —Lisa K.

There is a saying 'for only what you give away enriches us from day to day.' What you get back from volunteering is so much more than you give. It's very heartwarming. —Nancy L.

My Wednesdays volunteering are my happy days. It fills me up and it carries me through all week. We are making a difference at Senior Concerns. —Marty B.



A History of Enhancing *Quality of Life* for Seniors and Their Families

Always innovating, Senior Concerns strives to meet the needs of seniors and family caregivers in our community. We will continue to develop new programs and services as needs arise. If you see a gap in service, let us know.

- Adult Day Care/Caregiver Respite
- Home Delivered Meals
- In-Home Geriatric Assessments
- Senior Advocacy Services – providing answers and guidance
- Community Education and Information via Online Seminars, Workshops, and Newspaper Columns
- Support Groups (both in-person and Zoom)
- Caregiver Support Center offering one-on-one care consultations
- Assisted Living Consultation
- Free Legal & Financial Assistance

**You can learn more at
seniorconcerns.org
or call us at
805.497.0189**

I have never known an organization that responds so **quickly**, and, without exception, has the most **caring and friendly** team of people I have ever known. This organization is a treasure, and their team deserves to be recognized for their unfailing support of the seniors they serve. —Karen H.

I first became aware of Senior Concerns several years ago. The staff and volunteers assisted to identify the services and support options available; every interaction throughout was both **helpful and compassionate**. —Angela C.

I have recently become a caregiver to my 98-year-old mother and did not have a clue who to reach out to for guidance and information. Senior Concerns **helped me** through every step and answered all my questions. I don't know what I would have done without their help and ongoing support. —Kathy H.

We were locked in because of Covid and we are unable to get out to get food. Here comes Senior Concerns with their Meals On Wheels. I cannot begin to tell you how that has **changed my life** because not only was I dealing with a husband who had broken his patella, but he was then diagnosed with Alzheimer's. They are sympathetic, they understand our problems and go out of their way with their kindness to help us. —Sharon C.

TO OUR SENIOR ADVOCATE:
I'm very **grateful** to you for listening to me. I can feel your heart through the phone. —Sally M.

Our Senior Concerns' staff thanks you for trusting us to support you and your family.

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**Senior
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Serving Seniors & Their Family Caregivers

Stay In Touch with Senior Concerns

VENTURA COUNTY
STAR

**Martha
Shapiro**



Martha Shapiro's column appears every Wednesday in the Ventura County Star.



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THOUSAND OAKS
Acorn

**Other
Side of 50**

Andrea Gallagher

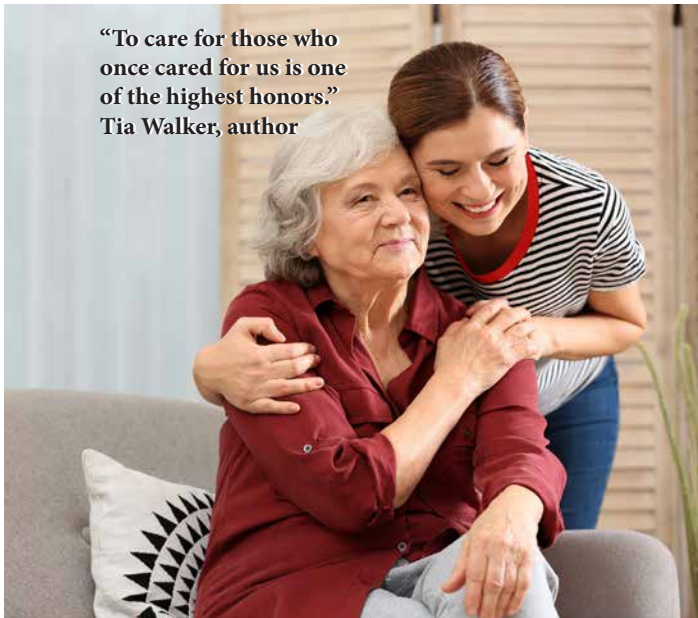


Andrea Gallagher's column appears every other week in the Thousand Oaks Acorn.

*Our thanks to Home Helpers In-Home Caregivers
for underwriting the cost of this magazine*

"To care for those who
once cared for us is one
of the highest honors."

Tia Walker, author



(805) 777-8111

In-Home Caregivers

homehelpershomecare.com/thousandoaks

Senior Concerns

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Give Back, and Leave a Lasting Legacy

Ever wonder how you can continue to do for others even when you are gone? We all want to be remembered, to feel that we've contributed something to the world. If you have a love for seniors or a dedication to the huge sacrifices family caregivers often provide, a planned gift to Senior Concerns can share your blessings with those that matter for generations to come.

Giving to Senior Concerns can be done either directly or through a gift model that can provide tax benefits and even income. To learn more, contact Janet Young at jyoung@seniorconcerns.org or 805-497-0189.

Senior Concerns is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Tax ID # 95-2992927