

AGING & independence

March 2015

At Odds with the Pitfalls of Gambling

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DIRECTOR, AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

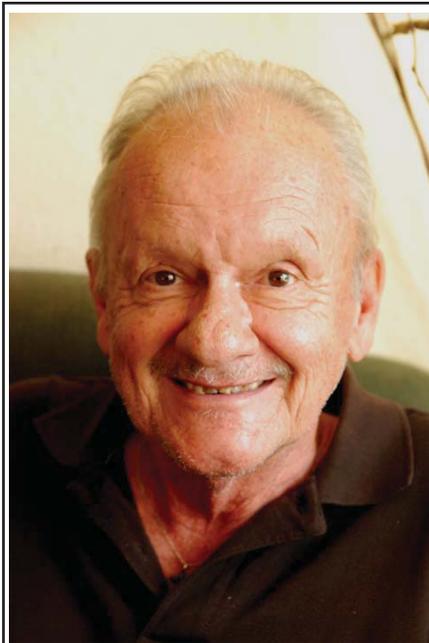
The first time Bob Lewis sat down in front of a Keno machine, all five of the numbers he picked came in. He had turned \$1 into \$500. That memory makes him smile. Then he talks about the time he won \$5,000 at a local casino on the same type of slot machine. His smile fades as he shares how he thought he could turn those winnings into \$50,000, but instead lost it all.

“It felt really bad to walk out of there with nothing,” he says.

Bob, 69, lives on Social Security and a small pension from General Dynamics. At one point, he thought he could supplement his income by gambling. But that hasn't been in the cards for him. Instead, he had two months where he couldn't pay his rent, relying on the kindness of friends to give him a loan.

To Bob, gambling is more than the chance to make money. Gambling gives him excitement that he hasn't found anywhere else, he says. The flip side of that thrill is how bad he feels when he loses, which comes much more often than the wins.

“I understand the extraordinary odds,” he admits. “It just sucks you in. Knowledge is not going to stop an addict. You're not using your mind; you're running on emotion. In fact, it's nice not having to use my mind. I'm in my own world. A great escape.”



BOB LEWIS

He says that the best part of winning is being able to play longer. He has even gambled 24 hours straight.

Bob has experienced VIP treatment at the casinos. After winning streaks, he has been offered a limo to pick him up, free steak dinners, even cash in his account to tap into as he plays Keno.

“They have a way of making you feel like a big shot,” he says.

At one point not too long ago, Bob realized that he was on the brink of big trouble, however. He took \$600 out of the ATM at a casino and lost it.

“I want to have fun with gambling, but I can't afford to lose.”

Bob learned about a free treatment program for “problem gamblers” through the Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC) and funded by the California Office of Problem Gambling. He is now receiving that help.

“Some of the seniors who come to our program are already broke,” says Sunnyo Pak, Program Director for Addiction Treatment and Recovery. “They've lost their life savings, their 401Ks, and some even their homes. Now instead of enjoying retirement, they're struggling to get basic needs met.”

The treatment program involves nine hours a week of

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



COUNTY OF

SAN DIEGO

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

VITAL AGING SPEAKER ANNOUNCED

Paul Nussbaum, an international expert in brain health, will be a speaker at the Vital Aging conference scheduled for Wednesday, June 17. This year's theme is "Boosting Your Brainpower" in support of the Alzheimer's

Project, and will focus on improving your brain health through nutrition, exercise, social interaction, mental stimulation and more.

Dr. Nussbaum, a neuropsychologist at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, is the founder of the Brain Health Center, Inc., and author of "Save Your Brain."



DR. PAUL NUSSBAUM

AIS coordinates the Vital Aging conference every other year to spotlight elements of health

and wellbeing for older adults. The free conference will be held at two locations: McMillin Center in Liberty Station, 2875 Dewey, San Diego 92106; and at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido 92025. Reservation information will be provided in this bulletin next month. ♣



JIMBO'S...NATURALLY! CUSTOMERS DONATED MORE THAN **\$7,000** IN **DECEMBER** FOR OUR **MORE ON THE MENU (MOM)** PROGRAM, WHICH PROVIDES FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO AT-RISK HOMEBOUND SENIORS. SHOWN ARE (FROM LEFT) THAI SUKRACHAN, MOM COORDINATOR; ELLEN SCHMEDING, AIS DIRECTOR; JIM "JIMBO" SOMECK, FOUNDER OF JIMBO'S...NATURALLY!; AND KELLY HARTFORD, JIMBO'S DIRECTOR OF MARKETING. MOM IS CURRENTLY SERVING 250 HOME-DELIVERED MEAL CLIENTS WHO ARE UNABLE TO SECURE FRESH PRODUCE FOR THEMSELVES. MORE CLIENTS WILL BE SERVED AS DONATIONS BUILD. FOR MORE ON MOM, VISIT WWW.GIVETOMOM.ORG.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

educational and process-group meetings, including one-on-one counseling with a licensed clinician, and care management. Treatment goes for 30 days, but additional treatment is available, if needed, Sunnyo says.

"It's a horrible illness and it hits anybody," she says. "It doesn't matter your social, economic, educational or ethnic background."

She says problem gambling is particularly tough on older adults with fixed incomes: "Those seniors can no longer recoup money they've lost; their assets are limited. Young people can still work, but for retirees, it's hard."

Fortunately, Sunnyo says they have seen positive results from the treatment: "Recovery is real and attainable. The majority of people who stick to the program succeed."

Bob says he has made significant changes, but wants to continue with the psychotherapy. He still gambles, but feels less out of control with it. He plays Keno once a month, only takes \$40 and he leaves his debit card at home. He had himself banned at one casino, so if he gambles there, all his winnings will be confiscated at the end of the night and put into a fund used to mitigate gambling-related problems.

One of his biggest goals is to pursue other activities, such as golf, that give him enjoyment.

"You have such high adrenalin (with gambling)," he says. "And loneliness and boredom are great motivators (to head to a casino). I want to find healthier ways to handle that."

For more information about the UPAC Problem Gambling Services, call (619) 521-5720, ext. 313, or email: gambling@upacsd.com. ♣

SIGNS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Thinking about gambling frequently.
- Difficulty stopping and irritability when attempting to stop gambling.
- Needing to gamble more money to achieve the same excitement.
- Gambling to escape personal problems or uncomfortable feelings.
- Placing relationships in jeopardy because of gambling.
- Gambling more to make up for past losses.
- Lying to conceal how much money or time is spent gambling.
- Relying on others for "bail outs" when faced with financial difficulties.

HONORING



RSVP: LEAD WITH EXPERIENCE

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Angie Galvan, nominated by Marcie Stansberry and Bonnie Dupree with Serving Seniors (La Mesa site), is the RSVP Volunteer of the Month. Angie has been a volunteer at that site for 20 years. She continues to be a wonderful asset to the center's senior lunch program. Angie is an excellent food server, helps make sure the proper amounts of



food are given on every tray and that the serving guide is followed every day. She takes pride in all areas of the kitchen, making sure all the counters, sinks, stove, refrigerator, and cupboards are cleaned and sanitized. She inspects every serving utensil before it is used for the meals.

Her volunteer activities don't stop there. She volunteers with the food pantry at her church, helping those in need. Angie even supplies seniors in the La Mesa program with pastries and other dessert items for their morning snack.

"Angie is a blessing to us and our senior program," says Marcie Stansberry. "We are fortunate to have her on our team!" Congratulations, Angie! Your dedication to volunteering is making a difference in East County.

SPOTLIGHT: SENIOR GLEANERS

There are residents in San Diego County who are in need of food. Throughout the county, Senior Gleaners gather food to help those individuals and families in need. The gleaners pick and harvest from gardens, orchards and backyards. They also gather from grocery stores. The gleaner teams then redistribute the food to nonprofit groups who deliver the food directly to those in need. It is not unusual for the gleaners to give in excess of 12,000 pounds of food a month to nonprofit groups.

This service to the community is accomplished with only 52 volunteers, ranging in age from their 60's to 85-plus. They would love to have more volunteers to help them. In addition to providing a wonderful benefit to those in need, the gleaners help themselves stay healthy. While volunteering, they are active and socially engaged.

There are two gleaner groups: one focused in North County and one in San Diego. If volunteering for Senior Gleaners is of interest to you, call RSVP at (858) 505-6399.

MANY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are currently more than 80 active RSVP volunteer sites throughout San Diego County.

These sites provide a wide range of choices for volunteers in both the type of organization (law enforcement, hospital, museums, cultural, etc.) and the type of work with hundreds of different volunteer jobs available.

The RSVP office can help you find the organization and job that might interest you. Call (858) 505-6399.

WELCOME NEW ASSISTANT MANAGER

RSVP is excited to welcome Armida Martinez as our new Assistant Program Manager, replacing MyLinh Tran who was promoted to another position in the County after eight years with AIS. We thank MyLinh for her hard work for RSVP!

Armida brings extensive experience working with seniors. She was a case manager for more than 14 years in various programs within the County. She also has strong customer service experience in jobs she held outside the County.

Armida has a great sense of humor and loves talking with people and problem solving. She will bring much to the program and our volunteers.



JOIN THE INTERGENERATIONAL GAMES

For the past 13 years, active older adults (50+) and third-grade students have joined together for the annual Intergenerational Games (IG) event at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista. This year's event will be held April 9. There will also be an IG Games in San Marcos on April 1, and in Rancho Bernardo April 16.



The Games encourage adults and youth to forge a connection and learn more about each other while having fun engaging in noncompetitive fitness and wellness activities, such as paddle tennis, nutritional bingo, ultimate Frisbee, and more. At the end of the day, everyone “wins” a medal for their participation.

Besides providing one-on-one encouragement to the students, older adults serve as role models and help dispel myths about the capabilities of seniors. The impact these Games are having on the children is reflected in thank-you notes sent last year to their older adult buddies: “This is the best day of my life,” “I wish we could do this more often,” and “Now I know old people are fun.” Adults come away with a few lessons of their own; many remark how impressed they are by their partner’s courteous manners, positive attitude, and thoughtful conversation.

Enrollment is now open for older adult participants at the April 9 IG Games at the Olympic Training Center, 2800 Olympic Parkway, Chula Vista 91915. Contact Pam Plimpton, AIS Intergenerational Coordinator, at **(858) 495-5769** or pam.plimpton@sdcounty.ca.gov.

North County IG Games will be held April 1 at the Walnut Grove Park, 200 E. Olive St., San Marcos 92069. To volunteer, call **(760) 744-5535**.

The Rancho Bernardo IG Games will be held April 16 at the Ed Brown Senior Center at the Rancho Bernardo Community Park, 18448 W. Bernardo Dr., San Diego 92127. To volunteer, call **(858) 487-9324**. ▲

SIGN UP FOR ‘HEALTHIER LIVING’ CLASSES

The County coordinates interactive and goal-oriented workshops called “Healthier Living” for people with chronic health conditions. Caregivers are also welcome to attend. Workshops are held once a week for six weeks:

March 6 to April 10 (Fridays) from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the McClellan Senior Center, 1400 Vale Terrace Dr., Vista 92084.

(Spanish) March 25 to April 29 (Wednesdays) from 1 to 3:30 p.m. at the Public Authority-HHSA, 3890 Murphy Canyon Rd., Suite 250A, San Diego 92123.

To register, contact Kyra Reinhold at kyra.reinhold@sdcounty.ca.gov, or call **(858) 495-5710**. ▲

WAY LIFE COACHES WANTED

Make a difference in the life of a young person through the Workforce Academy for Youth (WAY). Older adults (50+) volunteer to be life coaches to emancipating foster youth who are interning with the County. Training and support is provided and a commitment of three to five hours a week of mentoring is needed. For details, contact Pam Plimpton, Intergenerational Coordinator, at **(858) 495-5769** or email: pam.plimpton@sdcounty.ca.gov. ▲

EVENT SCHEDULED FOR KINSHIP FAMILIES

Grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren have unique challenges, including legal issues, school concerns, financial matters. The County’s East Region is offering a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Symposium from 8:30 to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 28, at the Meridian Baptist Church, 550 S. 3rd St., El Cajon 92019. Lunch and onsite childcare provided. RSVP: call **2-1-1**. ▲

JOIN A COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

Four regional Community Action Networks focus on the issues and needs of older adults and persons with disabilities. They welcome your participation.

The San Diego Community Action Network (SanDiCAN) meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon on the last Tuesday of each month at the War Memorial Building, 3325 Zoo Dr., San Diego. For more information, contact Brian Rollins: **(858) 505-6305**.

The East County Action Network (ECAN) meets from 1 to 3 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Renette Recreation Center, 935 S. Emerald Ave., El Cajon. For more information, call Kathy Holmes-Hardy: **(619) 401-3994**.

The South County Action Network (SoCAN) meets from 1 to 3 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the San Diego County Library, Bonita-Sunnyside Branch, 4375 Bonita Rd., Bonita. Contact Anabel Kuykendall: **(619) 476-6223**.

The North County Action Network (NorCAN) meets from 1 to 3 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the San Marcos Senior Center, 111 Richmar Ave., San Marcos. For details, call Marty Dare: **(858) 505-6300**. ▲

community

C A L E N D A R

SEND IN YOUR ITEMS

This monthly calendar welcomes your contributions. Just send items by the 10th of each month preceding the issue date to: Denise G. Nelesen, editor, Aging & Independence Services, PO Box 23217, San Diego, CA 92193-3217. Or you can e-mail to: denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov.

MARCH 11, WEDNESDAY

NOON TO 1 P.M.

“Healthy Aging with Fitness,” will be presented by Sharp physician Mark Howard at the Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd, San Diego. RSVP required; call (800) 827-4277.

MARCH 11, WEDNESDAY

11:15 A.M. TO NOON

Free seated exercise classes are offered on Wednesdays at the Challenge Center, 5540 Lake ParkWay, La Mesa. Improves strength and flexibility. For details: (619) 667-8644.

MARCH 12, THURSDAY

3 TO 5 P.M.

Games, such as checkers, chess, Mahjong and Scrabble, will be offered for adults to enjoy on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at the San Carlos Branch Library, 7265 Jackson Dr., San Diego 92119. For more information, call (619) 527-3430.

MARCH 17, TUESDAY

6:30 TO 7:30 P.M.

“Maximizing Your Brain Health” will be presented by Holly Pobst

with the Alzheimer’s Association at the Solana Beach Branch Library, 157 Stevens Ave., Solana Beach 92075. The same topic will be presented from 1 to 2 p.m. on Monday, March 23, at the Rancho San Diego Library, 11555 Via Rancho San Diego, El Cajon. To RSVP or for more information, call (800) 272-3900.

MARCH 18, WEDNESDAY

9 A.M. TO NOON

“Spring into Healthy Living,” a free health fair for older adults, will be held at the Cameron YMCA, 10123 Riverwalk Dr., Santee 92071. Includes free health screenings and medication review, plus information on resources, breakfast and more. Prescription drug disposal available. To RSVP or for more information, call (877) 926-8300.

MARCH 19, THURSDAY

12:30 TO 3:30 P.M.

“San Diego’s Got Talent,” the city’s annual talent show for older adults, will be performed at the Balboa Park Club, 2150 Pan American Road West in Balboa Park. RSVP by calling (619) 236-6905. Cost is \$3 prepaid or \$5 at the door.

MARCH 19, THURSDAY

1:30 TO 3 P.M.

“What to Do with Photos and Videos from Your iPhone” will be offered at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr. in the UTC area. Cost is \$10. Bring your charged iPhone and know your Apple ID and password. RSVP by March 12 to Melanie Rubin: (858) 362-1141.

MARCH 28, SATURDAY

8 A.M.

A one-mile or 5K walk/run to benefit Meals-on-Wheels will be held at RoadRunner Sports, 5553 Copley Dr., San Diego 92111. Cost is \$35. Race begins at 9 a.m. Participants encouraged to wear a wig. For details: www.meals-on-wheels.org.

MARCH 28, SATURDAY

8:30 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Symposium will be held at the Meridian Baptist Church, 550 S. 3rd St., El Cajon 92019. Get help with legal matters, school issues, custody concerns. Lunch and onsite childcare provided. RSVP required; call 2-1-1.

APRIL 8, WEDNESDAY

9 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.

“Finding the Balance in Caregiving” will be held at the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, 120 Stevens Ave., Solana Beach 92075. RSVP by April 6 to (800) 827-4277.

APRIL 10, FRIDAY

1 TO 3 P.M.

“7 Smart Strategies for 50+ Job-seekers” will be held at Grossmont College, Room 55-522. Call (855) 850-2525 to register. For more information, call (619) 644-7247.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AIS Advisory Council will meet at noon Monday, March 9, at AIS, 5560 Overland Ave., Third Floor, San Diego 92123. These meetings are open to the public.

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Whether the need is for assessment, service referrals, or follow-up, with just one phone call, you or a loved one can receive help for:

- Seniors
- Disabled adults
- Abused adults
- Those requiring home-based care to prevent institutionalization

As a public agency, we provide comprehensive information and impartial assistance free of charge to county residents. Since 1974, people have been turning to us at Aging & Independence Services. You can too.

Call toll-free
800-510-2020

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*Aging & Independence*SM is published monthly by Aging & Independence Services, a division of the Health and Human Services Agency, to inform and recognize clients, service providers, volunteers, public officials, supporters of the agency and agency staff.

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