SAVE THE DATE!
Call (650) 289-5400 for event details

Incredible World Food Tour: Mother’s Day Virtual Afternoon Tea and Cinco de Mayo celebration!
Wednesday, May 5, 2 to 3pm. Free for members. Pre-registration event, RSVP by 4/28

email: accc@avenidas.org
This event will be offered bilingually in English and Mandarin.

AvenidasNews is published in March, June, Sept. & Dec.
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Printing & Production: Zoom Media, (916) 939-8025

In April of 2020, after seeing all the confusion and fear caused by COVID-19, Avenidas Care Partners Manager Paula Wolfson began a series of educational presentations to help ease people’s concerns. The first Town Hall was kicked off by our dedicated community partner, Dr. Mehrdad Ayati, Director of the Geriatric Center in Los Altos, who was the first to provide us with comprehensive information on the Corona virus. It was very well attended and participants asked us for more.

As the virus began to surge out of control, a secondary threat emerged for elders: that of prolonged isolation. So Avenidas Care Partners invited psychiatrist Dr. Grace Nadolny to discuss the shelter in place mandates and the pandemic of loneliness impacting many older adults and solo agers.

As the numbers of death increased worldwide, many elders in our community began to revisit their end-of-life treatment goals, their Advanced Directives, and their family elder estate plans. So Dr. Ellen Brown, former Director of Pathways, joined us for a Town Hall discussion on navigating difficult family conversations and for clarifying with our loved ones about our quality-of-life values and end of life treatment preferences.

Dr. Marina Martin, the Section Chief of the Division of Stanford Geriatric Medicine, presented on the protocols and procedures for residents living during the pandemic in care communities.

Dr. Anna Lembke, Medical Director of the Stanford Addiction Medicine Program, and nationally known best-selling author and educator on the opioid addiction crisis in our country, discussed in the November Town Hall: “Aging and Alcohol: How Much is Too Much?” She provided strategies for monitoring alcohol use, praised the successful support groups facilitated nationwide by Alcoholics Anonymous, and advised members to seek the advice of their physicians if alcohol consumption is a problem.

In November 2020, JML learned about Avenidas’ mission of supporting senior communities in the Bay Area and was particularly impressed by the actions Avenidas has taken to support seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. JML made the generous offer to donate the masks to our Operation PPE Program to protect the lives of seniors and their caregivers.

Dr. Mehrdad Ayati
Dr. Marina Martin
Dr. Anna Lembke

Thanks to a generous donation secured by Michael Luo, husband of Avenidas controller Jennifer Luo, Avenidas has received 50,000 high quality KN-95 face masks.

The donor, JML Trading LLC, is a trading enterprise headquartered in the Los Angeles Area. Besides their success in business, JML is also committed to public services and charity contributions, donating textile products to local charities in the LA area every year.

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Kind volunteers spent their Christmas Eve receiving the truck delivery of the masks and adding it to Avenidas’ existing inventory of surgical masks, face shields, and other PPE. These supplies are distributed to the most vulnerable seniors in our community, as well as their caregivers both at home and in smaller senior facilities that are in need of resources.

Jennifer, Megan and Michael Luo played Santa’s Elves, meeting the delivery truck and unpacking and storing over 200 boxes of donated masks on Christmas Eve! Megan has volunteered at Avenidas from the fifth grade all the way through her internship with Berkeley and her sister Jaime, not shown, volunteered with Avenidas from middle school through high school.

Avenidas was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from County Supervisor Joe Simitian for the “Exemplary Service” shown during COVID. He sent a letter, the certificate and a medal to honor staff members’ hard work.

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A Day in the Life…

Until March 13, 2020, Jane attended the Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center (ARKC) in Mountain View five days per week. She was picked up at 8:30 am from her home and taken to the center. She had her coffee and read the newspaper, learned of the day’s current events, exercised, ate lunch, listened to live music, and returned home around 3:30 in the afternoon. She greatly enjoyed her time every day. Then the pandemic hit and Jane had to stay home. The staff quickly identified Jane’s needs (as well as for all of her peers). Jane was already underweight, so a plan was put in place for meal assurance and weight monitoring. In addition, the program nurse and the Nurse Navigator monitor Jane, and the other participants, on a weekly basis to watch for any changes in health as well as for the risk of COVID 19 exposure.

Jane lives alone so the team worked on getting her on the daily social call list so she would have contact during the day. Activity staff put together a weekly packet of activities for her to do to help her spend her time. The rehab team set up twice weekly, socially distanced, sessions with Nancy, the rehab aide, so that Jane would keep her functional abilities.

The activities team worked with Jane and her family to get her access to a tablet. When that wasn’t able to happen, ARKC donated a tablet to her for use. Jane is now able to access morning and afternoon Zoom sessions with her peers and staff. She talks to staff regularly and has had socially distanced visits with staff and peers. Her Nurse Navigator is working on getting her scheduled for her COVID vaccines. ARKC can’t wait to welcome back Jane and her friends to the center!

We need your help!

We are hoping to reopen our centers in some capacity at some point in 2021. While we don’t know when that will be or what that will look like, we want to make sure our planning addresses your concerns and preferences. Please start thinking about what’s important to you going forward. What are you most looking forward to doing at Avenidas? Will you return to the center for in-person activities? Do you prefer our online format? Would you be interested in attending outdoor classes? What are your safety concerns?

Stay tuned for an online survey in our weekly e-newsletter this spring!

Town Hall Speakers

In December, Dr. Mehrdad Ayati and Dr. Logan Schneider, staff neurologist and the Assistant Director of the Stanford VA Testing Center, participated in a panel discussion on “Cognitive Health, Impairment and Testing Protocols.” Both advised participants on the importance of early baseline testing for detecting cognitive changes and proactive planning.

Due to their popularity, the Town Halls are continuing in 2021. In January, Dr. Marina Martin discussed vaccine protocols, and in February, family mediator Nicole Lance presented strategies on how to reach “workable agreements.” And in March we come full circle: Dr. Ayati will join us for a special Town Hall on Thursday, March 18th, for a review of this year’s health challenges for older adults, their caregivers and lessons learned. We welcome you to join us. For details, visit www.avenidas.org.

Lights, Camera, Action: Top Tips on Using Zoom to Best Dramatic Effect

by Enid Davis

With so many of us using Zoom these days, we turned to Enid Davis, director of The Avenidas Wise Owl Players, to share with us what she’s learned about using Zoom for dramatic or everyday purposes. Enid says:

I moved my drama program from Avenidas in Palo Alto online to Zoom in May 2020. We were all new to the platform. One study class and three performances later, I can tell you this: using Zoom makes a great metaphor for life—it’s not perfect but you can accomplish a lot if you can adapt and persevere. I learned:

• Everyone needs technical training on using Zoom. Most people, but not all, can learn to Zoom.
• People should try to set up their area with sufficient home lighting, both natural and artificial, to make a good screen appearance.
• folks need a fairly powerful computer with a graphic card in order to be heard, seen, and use a virtual background.
• Audio is tricky. Adjust your audio settings on both the computer and the Zoom application if the sound is too low, tinny, or intermittent. Additional equipment, such as a webcam or an external microphone, might be needed.
• Zoom wants one person to talk at a time. If you add music, you will need to adjust settings and perhaps will need different equipment on some of the computers.
• Zoom wants one person to talk at a time. If you add music, you will need to adjust settings and perhaps will need different equipment on some of the computers.

The most difficult aspect of using Zoom for meetings or theatre online is the variability of the Internet connections. Nonetheless, if you want to have successful Zoom gatherings, meetings and theatrical performances, you should just do it…and do it to whatever level you desire. As the Wise Owl Players say, “Break a wing!”
“I Can’t Imagine Life Without Avenidas Village!”

By Alice Scheff Kozar, MD.

I think of myself as a gypsy, or a cat with nine lives now living my fifth life. Anyone who knows me will view this as a simple, childlike expression of my joyous gratitude for today and most of my 75+ years. So many of them went great – but when they didn’t, Avenidas Village became my lifeline.

My true love Jack and I leapt into retirement ten years ago, still dreaming of nature’s simple outdoor adventures. That is, until new health issues thwarted our plans, augmenting my husband’s familiarity with energy-sapping medications and arresting his physical prowess. Within a year, an occult dementia began to surface like a dolphin coming up for air then diving deep to avoid being detected. Now, years later, I’m the “girl” on his Covid-pandemic Facetime Screen who sings with him every afternoon… not recognized!

Alice fondly recalls the good times she and her husband shared in the past.

What were we to do as we faced all these changes with no family nearby for support?

Like an intrepid warrior, I sought resources while adapting my brain to function as “Geriatric Dementia Caregiver” and not the creative “Academic MD” of yesteryear. That’s when I noticed an ad for Avenidas Village in the local newspaper! Amazingly, at 4:45 pm, a welcoming voice answered the phone, and viola, I had an appointment with the Avenidas Village Director!

Over the past few years, Avenidas Village has become my guiding light into senior life and a profound resource for vetted services that I never knew might be in my future. Plus, they offered non-threatening workshops/lectures on such issues as Preparing Your Estate; Key Legal Items; POLST and Advanced Directive; How to contact quality Adult Care Services, and so much more! The Avenidas Village Leadership team were wonderful, so supportive and optimistic that there would be a way to solve the myriad problems along the obstacle laden path ahead.

Even during COVID, Avenidas Village has kept us connected, more strongly than ever! They switched as many offerings as they could to Zoom, and taught us how to use it! This allowed us Avenidas Village members the chance to safely see each other’s faces while enjoying social conversations, political discussions, videos, art, lunch-bunch, holiday music and more!

Avenidas Village assured us that our days do not have to be lived in isolation! There is such joy in greeting one another and sharing, perhaps as much or more than in real life (no–I miss hugs!). I feel exhilarated after these Avenidas Village Zoom-sharing sessions, but I am impatient for the post-vaccine period when I can enjoy my Zoom friends in person!

I dream of fun outdoor activities that Avenidas Village will create with music, games and yummies! Throughout this time, we’ve continued taking weekly walks, and some-day soon we will once again be maskless and see each others’ smiles!

Beyond all the practical support and meaningful social activities, Avenidas Village has become my community. I am now home but not alone, even though my son suffered a surprise stroke and death at 45 and my husband is in assisted living… but I don’t feel isolated. Electing to live in one’s home with a caring, sharing community network is the best of all worlds…freedom with as much support as needed! I truly can’t imagine life without Avenidas Village!

Why Expanding Home Care Scope of Services is IMPORTANT!

By 2030, California’s senior population (65 and older) will double to 9 million as baby boomers reach retirement age. There is a critical need to expand the workforce available to care for older adults. California will need an additional 600,000 home health and home care aides (HCA) by 2024.

Professional HCAs are limited to supporting non-medical activities of daily living. For example, family or friends of an older adult with no medical training or experience can set up their loved one’s medication but a professional HCA cannot. Should the older adult lack local family or friends to support this need, they must depend on home health nursing staff with ZERO guarantee that Medicare would cover the visit. If the State of California would offer licensed home care organizations the ability to access a secondary licensing requiring a higher level of HCA training and registered nurse oversight, home care could support this and other non-covered needs and bridge the Medicare reimbursement gap.

The State of California Department of Social Services Home Care Services Bureau should examine the successful State of Oregon home care legislation. Oregon offers home care organizations the four-tiered licensing structure below:

- **Limited:** An agency that provides personal care services that may include medication reminding but does not provide medication assistance, medication administration, or nursing services.
- **Basic:** An agency that provides personal care services that may include medication reminding and medication assistance but does not provide medication administration or nursing services.
- **Intermediate:** An agency that provides personal care services that may include medication reminding and medication assistance but does not provide medication administration or nursing services.
- **Comprehensive:** An agency that provides personal care services that may include medication reminding, medication assistance, medication administration and nursing services.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 more aging adults are wanting to remain at home. In fact, AARP annually polls their members and consistently identifies over 85% of them want to remain in their homes.

What do you need to do? In 2021 new legislation is being drafted. We need to ban together and vocalize a long overdue change in legislation to enable licensed home care organizations to move beyond their current scope of practice. In doing so, California would not only enhance the safety of our aging population but meet the demands of our future health workforce needs.
Join us in honoring
Fran Codispoti
Betsy Gifford
Gay and Bill Krause
Eliane and Armand Neukermans
Alma and Jim Phillips
Steve Player
on Sunday, May 16th, 2021
at a virtual Zoom Celebration
3-4:30pm
Call 408-507-2830 for more information and for reservations

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Avenidas Online Shop
Open Year-Round!
Looking for a special gift? Nothing beats a handmade item!
Our online shop is open year-round with new spring items soon available. Most items are one-of-a-kind. All are made and donated by Club Aveneedles. Items are currently available for curbside pick-up only. Shipping may be available in the near future. Visit our website at www.avenidas.org and click on “shop.”

“One thing that is important to me at age 67 is to continue learning...
Senior Planet helps me feel part of a community of learners freely sharing ideas without judgement.”

- Senior Planet @Avenidas participant

www.seniorplanet.org/avenidas