

MATTERS



LACERS Well Newsletter | Volume 3, Issue 1

Living Life to its Fullest!



There are times in our lives when we go through transitions, which can challenge our enjoyment of life, sense of identity, or purpose. One of the greatest transitions is retirement. I have talked to various retired Members, family, and friends, who have expressed that when they retired, although they liked having their time back, were somewhat at a loss with what to do with all of it. Some figure it out, whereas others can have a more difficult time of it. And what about as people face other transitions after retirement, such as not being as mobile as they once were? Or, outliving their significant other and close friends? How do you think that can affect people?

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The Benefits of Lifelong Learning

Retirement is a time to relax and focus on what you enjoy doing most – you’ve earned it! But did you know that it’s also a great opportunity for you to learn something new? Learning in retirement, whether it be new skills, new hobbies, or even a new language, comes with many benefits and is a way to keep your mind active.

One of the biggest challenges that retirees may face is figuring out how to spend their free time. Learning a new skill or about a topic of interest can help you occupy your time with an activity that will keep you engaged. And the best part? At the end of the day, your newly-acquired skill or knowledge is something you can share with your friends, community, or even at the next trivia game night.

Feeling mentally sluggish? As a retiree, you might not get the same mental stimulation you once did while you were working. A fun way to help keep yourself mentally sharp is by playing

brain games such as crossword puzzles, which can help improve your memory. Even reading a challenging book can help slow cognitizant aging.

Feeling socially disconnected or isolated? Without the structure of the workplace, it can be hard for some retirees to get regular social contact with others.

But, by taking that pottery class you always wanted to or by learning French at the community college, it can help you make new connections and introduce you to potential new friends with common interests.

So before you write yourself off for being “too old” to learn something new, keep in mind that the benefits will far outweigh the initial frustrations of thinking that your age will limit you. You can always start small and in the end it can have a big impact on helping you have a healthy and more fulfilling retirement.



Expert Input, Beneficial Opportunities Await

To ensure that we were on the right track in developing our 2019 campaign, we looked to the experts. For decades, renowned research groups such as the Milken Institute: Center for the Future of Aging, the Alzheimer's Disease Center at Rush University Medical Center, the Gallup Wellbeing Finder®, and the Blue Zones® have studied longevity around the world, and more importantly, methods to maintaining vitality in our later years.

Astonishingly, their findings were similar: people who stay socially connected to friends and family, move frequently throughout the day, give back to their community

through volunteerism, and maintain sound finances seem to live longer, more satisfying lives and suffer less from common medical ailments, such as diabetes, heart disease, dementia and certain cancers.

Additional research also indicates that purposeful living improves the lives of older adults. In short, being more engaged in life and your surroundings makes for a happier and healthier retirement.

We used this research to sculpt this year's wellness campaign, which will offer you a thought-provoking Cultivating Purpose self-assessment tool, multiple LACERS Well signature events and workshops

on topics such as finding purpose, financial wellness, and volunteerism, and an online program called "Feel Like A Million" to encourage you to take steps toward feeling your best.

Members can also look forward to new and fun Champion-led activities and the continuation of earning prizes with the Passport to Health program.

The road to a more fulfilling life is not always an obvious or easy one, but our campaign will provide some road signs to help you reach your desired destination. We hope that you'll take this journey with us and your fellow retirees to cultivate and share the best life has to offer.

Can You Buy Your Well-being?

A team of Harvard researchers has found that financial well-being is more than just the accumulation of dollars and cents. It is what one does with their wealth that makes the difference.

So, how does purchasing experiences, such as an exceptional dinner or vacation, increase our well-being? It works like this: when we use our money to buy pleasant

experiences, we get the benefit of looking forward to the event, the actual experience, and in some cases, years of fond memories.

"Those who use their wealth to gift to others, as well as those who buy experiences, enjoy lasting happiness compared to those who simply seek retail therapy for their own pleasure."

Whereas material items lose their novelty, we can continue to relive our experiences indefinitely.

So the next time you have the urge to spend, rather than heading to the local mall for a personal item, consider gifting a friend or family member. Or, better yet, take them along with you to that new restaurant you've been eyeing. It will payoff for the long haul.





Become a LACERS Well Champion

Thriving by Socializing

Ever wonder what effect social connections have on our stress levels? How about on our memory? Scientists are finding that the amount of time we spend socializing has a profound effect on both, and the more time spent socializing the better. Results of a recent study show that our likelihood of enjoying a stress-free day are increased by 10% or more when we socialize for at least six hours a day. Another study of 15,000 people over age 50 found that, among those who were socially active, memories declined at less than half the rate compared to those who were the least social.

You may be saying to yourself, "Six hours seems like a lot!" But keep in mind this goal includes any socializing you do. Whether at home sharing coffee with a loved one, being out on the town with friends, or befriending someone new during your weekly trip to the grocery store. In fact, even chatting on the telephone or keeping up with LACERS Well on Facebook counts towards your six hours!

If you aren't socializing six hours a day, let's provide an incentive to get you started. Please make a list of the activities you will use to reach six hours of socializing a day and email lacerswell@lacers.org to receive a LACERS Well passport and automatically receive entry into an opportunity prize drawing. Here's a hint from LACERS Well: get started by taking a long walk with a friend so you can both socialize and motivate each other to be healthy.

LACERS Well Extravaganzas

This year, the LACERS Well program will focus on "**Living Life to Its Fullest.**" Join us to learn about 2019 offerings and how you can participate. Additionally, enjoy light refreshments, opportunity prize drawings, and insights on how to lead the most fulfilling retirement possible at one of three events in March.

- **Wednesday, March 6**, Pomona Sheraton Hotel
- **Thursday, March 14**, The Centre at Sycamore Plaza in Lakewood
- **Thursday, March 28**, The California Endowment in Los Angeles

WE WANT YOU!

Do you have an interest, hobby or activity that you would like to share with others? If so, volunteering to be a Champion provides you an opportunity to have fun with other retirees and receive more program rewards and incentives. LACERS Well Champions meet regionally twice a year to connect and plan wellness activities for all LACERS Retired Members. As an ambassador, you recognize the importance of staying active, mentally alert, and socially engaged. To apply or to find out more, log on to www.lacers.org/lacerswell and click "Become a LACERS Well Champion," or call our LACERS Well program manager Tara Miller, at **(213) 978-6843**.

Some Champion-led events near you:

Every Friday of the Month 8:30 a.m.

- Playa Del Rey Beach Walk with Champion Frankie Gallagher

Every Thursday of the Month 11 a.m.

- Kaiser Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Medical Facility Walk and Fitness with Champion Avis Ridley-Thomas

1st Friday of the Month 8 a.m.

- El Cariso Park Walk with Champion Irene Galvan

For a complete list of events, visit the [LACERS Well website](http://www.lacers.org/lacerswell).





Living Life to its Fullest!

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How will that affect you? If people let challenges get the best of them, they can isolate and become depressed. And if that happens, what is the likelihood that they are going to take the best care of themselves?

We want to make sure our Members have the tools and resources to help them navigate through difficult transitions by finding or renewing their purpose, re-discovering their passions, and making a difference.

We believe that by keeping our Members more engaged in life, they will be more apt to take care of things that matter, such as their health. But, more importantly, they are going to have much more fulfilling retirement years.

Even if you are doing well right now, are you making the most of your time? Do you feel there is more you can do? Is there more you'd like to do? No matter your current situation, if you would like to live with more purpose or bring even more satisfaction to your life, our 2019 campaign of Living Life to Its Fullest is for you.

Find Your Cause and Volunteer



Most people plan on volunteering in some way during their retirement, but it can be difficult getting started. You can search for current opportunities listed on www.VolunteerMatch.org, one of the web's most robust resources to connect potential volunteers with great causes. There are countless opportunities that range from basic office work to helping build houses for families in need. So, no matter

your activity level, there's an option that will suit your skills.

The first step is to simply look for the causes you care about and identify where your help would do the most good. For example, if you're an animal lover, you can volunteer at an animal shelter or an animal rescue and help animals find their forever homes; if you want to help with the fight against hunger, you can volunteer at a local shelter's kitchen,

Meals on Wheels, or even become an advocate for hunger relief in your community; and if you're interested in helping those affected by natural disasters, many relief associations exist that accept both monetary donations and time donations to help get supplies to those in need.

Whatever calls you to volunteer, no act is too small to make a difference.

Visit www.lacers.org/lacerswell
for all the latest updates
and information.

CARRIER HIGHLIGHTS



SCAN INDEPENDENCE AT HOME

Independence at Home (IAH), a SCAN community service, provides no-cost programs, support and resource referrals for older adults and caregivers. These programs provide support to older (55+) adults who currently lack the personal resources to maintain their health and well-being in the community. Care management is provided by experienced social workers, nurses and therapists who direct the provision of necessary services for qualified seniors.

From resource navigation to in-home services and caregiver support, one call connects you with expert guidance. Whether you are calling on behalf of yourself, someone in your care, or are making a referral, Independence at Home is the right call to make. Contact SCAN by telephone at **(866) 563-7380**. For SCAN enrollees only.

To see what SCAN Health Plan has to offer, visit scanhealthplan.org today.

