

2019 Elder Justice Summit – Staying Engaged as We Age
Oldemeyer Center, Seaside
June 21, 2019

On June 21, 2019, over 120 professionals and community members convened for the 3rd annual Elder Justice Summit, sponsored by the Monterey County Area Agency on Aging. The rising prevalence of isolation and loneliness among the elder population, and its impact on elder abuse, resulted in the theme for the day as “Staying Engaged as We Age.” We were fortunate to have the event at a local community hub, Seaside’s Oldemeyer Center, and attendees were welcomed by the Mayor of Seaside, Ian Oglesby. This event also had the largest number of individuals from the offices of elected officials, Assemblymember Mark Stone, Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Senator Bill Monning, and Assemblymember Robert Rivas. Supervisor Parker attended the afternoon sessions herself!

Throughout the day, attendees were invited to visit as many of the 18 agencies involved in the resource fair that occurred within the main hall at the Oldemeyer Center.

The morning portion of the event included additional welcome remarks by DSS Acting Director, Henry Espinosa, and Summit Planning Committee Chair/Aging and Adult Services Program Manager, Allison Yant. Dr. Patrick Arbore, Director of the Institute on Aging’s Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention and Grief Related Services, provided a keynote called “Loneliness and Isolation in Serving Adult Populations.” He shared recent data on trends related to isolation and the overall health risks for those experiencing loneliness. Research indicates that an individual experiencing loneliness has the same impact on health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. In addition, loneliness and isolation can make an individual increasingly vulnerable to abuse. One solution? Connectedness. Dr. Arbore ensured that all in the audience connected with each other and ended his talk by asking all attendees to walk around the room, make eye contact and say “hello.”

Dr. Arbore also facilitated a panel discussion later in the morning on “Engaging Resources.” Panel members included Angela Bernier, SPCA Volunteer Coordinator, Tish Sammon, Executive Director for Community Builders for Monterey, Maribel Trejo, Alliance on Aging Transportation Coordinator and Tracy Powell, Vice President of Community Services at Covia. Each individual shared some of the ways their programs are reaching out into the community in order to interrupt isolation. These successful agencies identified how volunteerism, transportation and telephonic senior programs are all ways to reach all ages of the community to increase social networks.

Attendees were provided a specially prepared lunch by Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula. Food was provided through a donation from the Neighborhood Housing Fund for Monterey. During the lunch hour, Tracy Powell from Covia returned to the podium to discuss recent efforts to develop a Shared Housing program in Monterey County.

The afternoon consisted of a series of four breakout sessions – Cultivating Community Enthusiasm, Generation “Network”, Making Your Voice Heard and Isolation Task Force. Each breakout had 90 minutes to discuss the topic and develop action steps. The Making Your Voice Heard breakout had a panel that included Supervisor Jane Parker, Carina Chavez, Deputy District Director for Congressman Jimmy Panetta, and Erica Parker, Aide to Assemblymember Mark Stone. The goal of the breakouts was to start the conversation. The hope is these breakouts will continue working after the Summit concludes. Based on the report out from each breakout that afternoon, the groups do intend to meet again and to start developing concrete action steps. If anyone is interested in hearing more about these breakout sessions, contact Allison Yant at yanta@co.monterey.ca.us.

Upon conclusion of the day, attendees were asked to complete commitment cards, identifying their topics of interest and whether they wish to stay involved. Supervisor Jane Parker concluded the day by inspiring the audience to continue its work to address isolation and to continue advocating for elder justice.

An event like this takes collaboration between multiple agencies. Thank you to the following:

The Seaside Oldemeyer Center
Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula
Area Agency on Aging

The Planning Committee:

Aimee Cuda – Central Coast Senior Services
Clara Vargas – Aging and Adult Services
Deacon Warren Hoy – Catholic Diocese of Monterey
Sylvia Ballantyne – Aging and Adult Services
Doris Beckman – Golden Connections
Jessica McKillip – Independent Transportation Network
Kathleen Murray Phillips – Area Agency on Aging
Sylvia Ballantyne – Aging and Adult Services
Margaret Huffman – Area Agency on Aging
Meggie Pina – Alliance on Aging Ombudsman Program
Richard Kuehn – Family inHome Caregiving
Timothy Barrett – Neighborhood Housing Fund for Monterey
Travis Beye – Aging and Adult Services
Sandra Silva – Aging and Adult Services
Allison Yant, Aging and Adult Services



2019 Elder Justice Summit



Seaside Mayor, Ian Oglesby



Keynote Speaker, Dr. Patrick Arbore



4th District Supervisor, Jane Parker