

Survey Workshops Report Communications and Outreach Subcommittee

1. Executive Summary

Los Gatos Senior Services

April 2022

3 Things...

We asked community members what they need help with:

1. **COMMUNICATION.** Print, email, and flyers with important phone #'s, including referrals for everything from tax help to handymen, help with meals and game schedules; all in a 'one-stop-shop' of information.
2. **TRANSPORTATION.** Sometimes last minute & always reliable; for short trips to stores or church & long trips for day-excursions.
3. **TECHNOLOGY.** How-to's for cell phones, iPads, Kindle, social media etc.

...and then we asked them what activities they like to do:

1. **SOCIALIZING:** seeing friends, meeting people, camaraderie; group meals, volunteering, playing games
2. **EXERCISE:** in groups with health focus, for all levels of abilities
3. **SHOPPING/DINING:** discounts & special hours at local business

"Volunteering is better than working...and has other effects too, such as building friendships and keeping busy in mind and body..."

"Everyone enjoys...everyone needs...a sense of belonging. Between Live Oak, the Rec Center and others, we're getting there!"

For more information, go to www.losgatosca.gov

Los Gatos Senior Services

April 2022

We listened...

1. COMMUNICATION. "The Print" is a publication put out by the LGS Recreation Center for adults 55+. It has recently expanded in both physical distribution and email distribution. It is becoming a hub of information! The Outlook, a newspaper for seniors, is mailed to homes in LG, Saratoga & Monte Sereno & is also a 'hub' of info.

2. TRANSPORTATION. There are options available! RYDE is one program for a safe and reliable journey to appointments etc. The Rec Center has scheduled excursions via shuttle-bus for the future. There's a network of volunteers available for last-minute rides as needed.

3. TECHNOLOGY. Students from LGHS are planning on holding classes for seniors through Live Oak, over the summer. The Rec Center has classes too!

- Local Service Clubs offer numerous outlets for volunteering and will make their information accessible to The Print
- The LGS Recreation Center has recently expanded their activities for the 55+ program, with everything from bridge lessons, chess, mahjong, and more...lots more!! Details in The Print
- Live Oak Senior Nutrition has also expanded, with not only hot, nutritional meals, but exercise classes
- The LG Chamber of Commerce is working with local businesses to establish some senior discounts!

For more information, go to www.losgatosca.gov

2. Workshops purpose

The Communications and Outreach subcommittee established the survey workshops effort to reach out to local older adult communities in Los Gatos. The purpose was to increase awareness in the community of the Committee's official survey in order to boost response and at the same time to gain additional insight into specific local interests and concerns of our older adult residents. We believed that the responses to an open discussion of what people liked and what they felt was missing in a focus-group setting

would help add ideas and insights to the higher level knowledge gained from our official survey findings. We recognize that holding the workshops with existing groups necessarily means that we are only sampling a particular demographic of an active and engaged older population. However these participants are also more likely to be early adopters and engage in new programs as one seeks to build new senior services.

Subcommittee members Nancy Pearson and Catherine Somers conducted the workshops. Using a theme of re-imaging senior services the participants were asked to think about what things would enrich their lives and those of their friends, family and neighbors. They were asked to talk about the top three things that they would like to see the Town offer seniors and the three things that the Town needs to do better. Responses were noted and are summarized below. The workshops typically lasted 30 minutes.

Workshops were conducted between January and April with the following groups:

- Lions Club
- Kiwanis Club
- Los Gatos/Saratoga Service Providers
- Democracy Tent
- History Club
- Live Oak Nutrition
- El Sombroso Oaks (walking the community)
- Rotary noon
- 55 Plus Adult Rec.
- Terraces
- Rotary morning
- LG Interfaith Council

3. Findings and takeaways from the Workshops

When the Senior Services Committee was initially formed and sub-committees defined, our general ambition was to spread the word about the official survey and ‘energize’ the town with regard to the future of Senior Services. This was mostly accomplished through print, social media and word of mouth.

Since the beginning of this year, the Outreach sub-committee focused on gathering information from various senior-oriented groups throughout our community. The specific goal was to find out what is lacking and what can be added or improved upon, as related to senior services in Los Gatos. The word was again spread through media (both print & social), as well as through extensive workshops with local community service groups and seniors. The results, while not mind-boggling, do help in pinpointing some specific needs throughout the community. They have been put into two categories: broad general needs and specific detailed needs/desires. This report summarizes the broad, general needs.

Broad needs are basic, yet extremely important:

1. **Communication:** with complaints about having no communication during the pandemic, to simply not knowing where to go or who to reach out to, it became very apparent that this was one of the biggest gaps. In addition, requests of ‘one-stop-shop’ hubs of information were many. Needs ranged from how to find transportation,

how to get a meal delivered, how to find a reliable handyman etc., to how to find out what is going on in town and how to participate in group activities. Particular interest was noted for the mountain communities - many folks asked if they would be included in communications.

2. **Transportation:** older seniors who don't drive anymore had many questions and concerns about transportation. These concerns were related to timing (eg. Last minute appointments) to coverage (eg. Does Ryde serve the mountain communities?) to cost for the desire to just get a short ride. One woman at the Terraces can't get a ride to her church in Saratoga, as it was either outside of the range that their vehicles served or perhaps she didn't know who to reach out to (which goes back to communication)

3. **Technology:** whenever we asked about email/internet ability, the response varied generally based on age. Younger seniors were fine with being on email lists, while older seniors preferred print and regular mail. Many said that they would like to be taught how to use their mobile phones properly, as well as social media (FaceBook) and devices for reading, such as Kindles. They would love for the younger generations to help them.

4. **Socialization:** people generally want a place to go, perhaps to share a meal, play a game, listen to music...socialize. Many also expressed a desire to volunteer.

Our committee started working closely with the LGS Recreation Department and their 55+ Program Manager. It became very apparent throughout the process that under their newer leadership, programs were being expanded, added, and promoted, almost in sync with our findings.

At the same time, we noticed that there were various responses/attitudes regarding the LGS Adult Rec Center: those who never have been and had a poor perception (if any) vs. those who regularly go there for classes and more, who absolutely love it. Since our committee had also been planning a reception to present our findings (and the other important findings and results of Survey and the SSC) we thought that it would make the most sense to have it at the LGS Adult Rec Center - ARC. We feel strongly that people need to understand what is offered there, and once they do they'll start attending and participating...thus making the demand even higher...and thus allowing our senior population to thrive. We want to build momentum and keep seniors engaged. Social events seem to be the biggest draw - no shock there!

Please note that we know that there are numerous outlets that are available, such as The Outlook newspaper for seniors and Live Oak Senior Nutrition Center. They are not meant to be left out of this report, but this report is meant to highlight the responses from our workshops.

The last prong in this initial outreach was to present these findings and offer solutions at the reception at "The ARC Bar" on Wednesday, April 20, from 5pm-7pm. We wanted to transform the Rec Center and make it a special evening for everyone to remember. We feel that we certainly achieved that and would like to continue events to keep up the interest. Some ideas for the future include: bringing Live Oak into the mix, with perhaps a daytime BBQ and some games; bringing service clubs into the mix, to volunteer and promote; have open houses for more formal presentations of services offered; roving

socials at various locales/restaurants around town, etc. Note that while the reception was very well attended, we all felt that there were still a lot of people to be reached. We felt that we just scratched the surface. The ARC Bar concept: To Be Continued!

4. Ideas expressed by workshop attendees

Lions Club

1. Meal programs for shut-ins are imperative
2. Bus/transportation as a group to events would be great. Sporting events, theatre, etc.
3. Put information on-line/email, 2-3x per week, upcoming events and senior issues
4. Volunteers/get-togethers for cause: e.g., wife used to cook for the Saratoga Senior Center
5. Promenades were great - young seemed to come out early with kids; older adults later
6. Holiday drive-through was great
7. Need exercise programs/health needs to be maintained. Exercise groups and health focus classes would be nice. Example: Morgan Hill has 24hr fitness at their rec center
8. Ditto #7 and ditto #2 (also mentioned nice community center in Almaden)
9. Socialization important; important to be active
10. Dance!
11. Age is just a number - many don't think of themselves as 'senior citizens'!
12. Counseling/classes needed for some: how to's on taxes, computers, etc.
13. Someone suggested checking out the Villages, where they currently live.

Kiwanis Club

1. Day trips, games like mahjong, pickle ball, pick up games at specific times
2. Low awareness of 55 Plus, not responsive, need volunteers/staff, like email notices
3. Computer training classes needed for all types of digital devices
4. Need coordinator from Town
5. Need one place where can go to find out thing and get response
6. Would be interested in early bird specials for seniors at restaurants
7. Need central community center and senior programs as part of that

Los Gatos Service Providers

1. Volunteer engagement: form a group to work on this, hold a volunteer workshop
2. Resource Directory: utilize service providers, include maintenance & repair, connect to Rebuilding Together, take advantage of 211 Bay Area, Sourcewise information & referral service, etc.

Democracy Tent

1. Activities would like to see at Rec Center: current events, card games, lectures about travel, history, unprogramed social gatherings with other locals, fitness activities, swim
2. Top three interests: reading, discussion groups on regional topics, bike riding, bridge, financial planning, dancing, opera, continuing studies
3. Town should offer social activities, maybe dancing, music good, have more open-space areas for games, sitting, social gathering, have behavioral and mental health services
4. Early bird dinners for seniors when restaurant workforce returns to full force, encourage businesses that offer discounts or special hours
5. Would love an updated senior center, lots of vibrant seniors need companionship; meet new people with similar interests. Would support tax if told what it would be used for. Need more efficient, hospitable and open facility
6. Interest in a social get-together on a weekly or monthly basis, need notifications
7. Suitable ride programs would help get more folks in attendance for programs
8. Ability to attract funding or donations for senior center, including tax deduction
9. Need ways to include broader community in senior center
10. Every service should have an attraction: fun, music, engagement for different segments of 60+ community

11. Include greater LG area in surveys and services, not just municipal boundaries (i.e., 95033 mountain area considers itself part of LG; 2100 person mailing list of that area)

History Club

1. Class ideas: bridge, sports events, field trips, walks
2. Would like a senior volunteer program—a hub
3. Need an information center where one could call
4. E-mail The Print to all senior emails one can get
5. Community Center is needed, should be intergenerational with senior area
6. Engage boy scouts, garden clubs, high school clubs on projects
7. Need “real” senior center
8. 55 Plus needs more welcoming pricing structure, higher annual and lower per event
9. Transportation is issue, especially for isolated areas like mountains, Uber voucher rides
10. Computer support classes needed more often: twice a week, fixed times, drop in, social media, Facebook, etc.

Live Oak Nutrition Center

1. Volunteer tours of Los Gatos to tell new people what’s here
2. Adult Rec Center is too dark, limited space (like open space like at Methodist Ch. Hall)
3. Like having people come to Live Oak for programs, esp. exercise, health (SJ student nurses come every Thurs.)
4. Like karaoke

Noon Rotary

1. Greater interest in a community center
2. Currently few are going to the Adult Rec Center
3. Some stigma associated with the 55 Plus program
4. Would like to see evening as well as daytime events

Adult Rec Center 55 Plus

1. Day trips and walks are good
2. Physical fitness exercises are important
3. Liked that there used to be a volunteer that always decorated Rec Center to match holidays or seasons
4. Live at the Commons and don’t have our own programs (opposite end of spectrum from the Terraces) so need 55 Plus activities
5. Volunteers bringing meals to the Commons used to knock on doors, bring fliers on things

Terraces

1. Town library used to do weekly visits, enjoyed seeing interesting books and order books
2. Map of Los Gatos for seniors: easy to read, library, museum, things to do for seniors, Happy Dragon thrift shop, chamber offices, few senior-oriented restaurants, ...
3. Transportation: they have weekday 9:30 – 3:30pm service but would like some after hours and weekend options
4. Bus tour of area to orient people as to where things are would be good, especially for residents new to area: downtown, where to park, interesting places for seniors, parks, West Valley College, Saratoga
5. Reception and evening events of less interest, noon events would be better

Independent comments

- Chair yoga, breathing, chair strength with weights. Balance training...bulletin board for caregivers, handymen, cleaners...ARC “yelp”, with no liability...seniors do their own due diligence...”bulletin board only”.

Quotes heard from workshop attendees:

May 13, 2022

“ Volunteering is better than working...and has other effects too, such as building friendships and keeping busy in mind and body...”

Everyone enjoys...everyone needs...a sense of belonging. Between Live Oak, the Rec Center and others, we're getting there!”

“... our pool of friends is continually declining. We have to work at expanding it.”

“The activity is less important than the chance to meet and mingle, but an activity can make that easier.”

“The rec center is great! We don't need a new building - we just need to get the word out!”