

## **Master Plan for Aging Local Playbook Workgroups Meeting summary, April 29 2026**

### **Health Access Advocacy Updates**

Sheree provided updates on oral health access advocacy efforts in Washington DC and Sacramento, including recent meetings with state representatives about proposed changes to dental care benefits for undocumented immigrants, who will lose dental care benefits as of July 1, 2026, and that the organization is advocating to delay these changes. Sheree also mentioned their ongoing \$5 million, 5-year grant with Delta Dental to improve senior oral health access and the "Bite Into Life" PSA campaign aimed at encouraging better home oral health care.

Lisa Macon from the Volunteer Center reported that three Matter of Balance classes have been completed this year, with an additional fall prevention class scheduled for May 27th with the Scotts Valley Fire Department.

### **Senior Wellness Program Updates**

The group discussed several health and wellness programs for seniors. Lisa explained the difference between fall prevention workshops and Matter of Balance, a national 8-week evidence-based program that significantly reduces fall risk. Darshana announced an upcoming falls prevention presentation at the Scotts Valley Senior Center in conjunction with Damians Ladder. Rachel expressed interest in bringing these programs to the London Nelson Center. Mary shared information about Village Santa Cruz County's new STEP (Strategic Training & Essentials Planning) program, which provides a comprehensive 60-page workbook and workshops to help seniors organize essential information in one place.

### **Upcoming Events**

Rachel reported on several recent and upcoming events at London Nelson Center. The main event is Retro Rainbow, a prom for older adults on May 30th, featuring DJ Sparkle and performers. In conjunction with this, a Pride art exhibit will be displayed in the hallway throughout May, with an opening event on May 7th featuring John Laird and local supervisors. Rachel also mentioned a Filoli (sp?) trip on May 18th, the need to find a new facilitator for the senior shares program, increased volunteer opportunities for the senior computer center, and the upcoming Santa Cruz History Fair on May 16th. Rachel also discussed the 10-year anniversary of the Walking Adventure Group (WAG), a free drop-in walking program for seniors in Santa Cruz County that has fostered friendships and social connections through walking and talking.

Chloe announced the upcoming ribbon-cutting celebration for the Capitola Community Center on May 27th at 11:30 AM, which will highlight the center's new universally accessible playground and year-round programming for adults and seniors. The event is open to the whole community, and Chloe will send promotional materials to Zachary for distribution to interested groups.

### **Watsonville Shared Community Space Proposal**

Mary inquired about connecting with the Inclusion & Equity, Not Isolation group regarding a new assisted living facility in Watsonville that plans to offer community space. Zachary suggested that Mary contact him directly to discuss the proposal further, with a focus on gathering details about the space's size and capacity.

### **Program Updates and Funding Challenges**

The meeting covered updates on several initiatives. Sally discussed funding challenges affecting their internship program, which may not continue due to budget constraints. Zachary announced upcoming candidate forums for the District 4 Board of Supervisors race on May 8th and San Benito County on May 15th, though funding for interpreters and space remains uncertain. Philip provided updates on caregiving programs, including partnerships with Scotts Valley Senior Center and Dignity Health, successful outreach at a Catholic Church in Watsonville, and ongoing virtual classes on Alzheimer's and dementia care. The group also discussed the need to find a new location for caregiver training sessions, with Katie offering space at the Watsonville Senior Center.

### **Community Preparedness and Food Initiatives**

Steve announced an upcoming Home Hardening and wildfire preparedness community event hosted by Assemblymember Pellerin, scheduled for tomorrow night (4/30) at The Landing theater. Danielle shared information about a food insecurity symposium at Cabrillo College on May 15th, where Jennifer Merchant will speak at a senior-focused breakout group. The group discussed a capital campaign to build a new food warehouse with better facilities for distributing food and serving free lunches, and Jane raised a question about implementing financial literacy programs for seniors, noting the need for such programs regardless of age.

### **Senior Financial Literacy Program Discussion**

The group discussed implementing a financial literacy program for seniors, with Zachary agreeing to speak with Ed about it and Tami offering to share information about a similar program in San Benito County. Lisa highlighted the Volunteer Center's Helping Hands program, which provides minor home repairs and safety improvements including grab bars to prevent falls. The discussion also touched on the need for similar services in San Benito County, where current resources are limited.

### **Age Friendly Community Updates**

Katie provided updates on the City of Watsonville's completed AARP Age Friendly Action Plan with 33 action items, and announced their annual Senior Resource Fair moving to the Watsonville Senior Center on May 22nd. Darshana announced plans for a comprehensive survey to assess senior needs across Scotts Valley and surrounding areas, with Kendra offering to help share existing data from the county's Age Well survey. The group scheduled their next meeting for July 29th, and Chloe expressed interest in arranging a presentation to Capitola's council similar to what Zachary's group has been doing with other municipalities.

### **Adjournment**

The group agreed to meet again on July 29<sup>th</sup> at the same time.

## Next steps

- Lisa: Send information about the May 27th fall prevention talk with Scotts Valley Fire Department to Zachary for distribution to the group.
- Darshana: Send information about the upcoming falls prevention presentation at Scotts Valley Senior Center to Zachary for sharing with the group.
- Rachel: Coordinate with Lisa regarding hosting Matter of Balance and emergency preparedness classes at London Nelson Center; reach out to Rachel for scheduling.
- Sheree: Send Zachary an email update about dental care advocacy developments, especially as news emerges after the May Revise, so Zach can alert the group for possible advocacy support.
- Mary: Investigate further details about the new board and care facility in Watsonville (including space capacity and usage plans) and update Zachary, who will consider how the group might support or utilize the space.
- Jane: Contact Rachel regarding interest in facilitating the Senior Shares group at London Nelson Center.
- Philip: Share the list of upcoming caregiver classes and support groups with the group (already in chat, but follow up as needed).
- Tami: Send Zachary information about the DFPI financial literacy program for possible adaptation or sharing in Santa Cruz County.
- Zachary: Talk to Ed about the possibility of offering a financial literacy program for seniors and report back to the group.
- Chloe: Send promotional materials for the Capitola Community Center ribbon-cutting celebration to Zachary for group distribution.
- Darshana: Coordinate with Kendra to obtain and share relevant Scotts Valley data from the county's Age Well survey for the upcoming Senior Center survey.
- Chloe: Contact Zachary to schedule a Seniors Council presentation to Capitola City Council.
- Katie: Share the AARP Age Friendly Action Plan with the group once it is posted online.
- Zachary: Send out a summary of this meeting and collate/forward all information shared in the chat to the group.