

Statement of Issue

People are continuing to live longer which means that the surrounding communities are going to have to make changes to accommodate the elders. There are plenty of communities that are well equipped for older adults and many that are not. There is research that is provided to show what a community needs to be considered age friendly. The benefits of having an age friendly community is that it allows older generations to still be independent, but also provides services for those who might need extra help. The purpose of this study was to examine the age friendliness of our own community, specifically Encinitas, California. This presentation will talk about the strengths and weaknesses of Encinitas, and what could be improved to make it more age-appropriate.

Criteria For Age-Friendliness Of A Community

- Safe, accessible, and affordable housing
- Pleasant and clean environments
- Outdoor spaces providing opportunities for physical, psychosocial, and cultural activities
- Affordable and reliable transportation options
- Social environment inclusion in community-related decisions
- Community support
- Health and Wellness services

HOUSING

There are a lot of house options available in Encinitas California. One of the most popular is La Costa Glenn. La Costa Glenn is considered to be Continuing Life retirement community. The community focuses on helping those who need it. Some of the things this community helps elders adults with is financial protection, access to long-term care, endless senior living activities and the chance to live happier and healthier for longer.

OUTDOOR SPACE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There are a number of outdoor spaces and built environments that are accessible to elder adults.

- Botanic Garden
- Meditation Garden
- Farmers Markets
- Concert in the park at Moonlight Beach
- Cottonwood Creek Park

TRANSPORTATION

There are a lot of different transportation services provided to elder adults throughout the community. For example, one program called Out & About transportation. This program is organized through the community center. Citizens of the community can volunteer to drive elderly adults to doctors appointments, grocery store, pharmacy, senior center and many other locations in Encinitas. The community center does their best to fit all elder adults in need with a volunteer driver, but some are still on the waitlist to receive a driver who is willing to help them.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

While the Health & Human Services Agency provides many programs that provide elder adults with a social environment, one stuck out the most. A program called Storied Lives works to match seniors with students to share stories about their lives. This allows for elder and younger generations to connect simply by sharing their own experiences through life.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mira Costa Community College, with two campuses available, to offer elder adults with community support. The college offers a program called LIFE, which stands for Learning Is For Everyone. LIFE offers discussion groups, guest speakers, and keeps elder adults engaged. The college also offers noncredit classes that older adults can take such as photography, painting, and chair making mobility.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

The best place in Encinitas that provides health and wellness services is the local YMCA. They have a number of fitness classes specifically targeted towards elder adults with arthritis and disabilities, such as low impact swimming. The county's Aging & Independent Services also hosts free Tai Chi classes, called Moving for Better Balance, for elder adults. These classes are targeted to help prevent muscle weakness and balance issues in older adults.

There are also a number of grocery stores in the area that will deliver to elder adults homes so that they don't have to worry about finding a way to the grocery store. There are always options for elder adults to get fresh groceries whenever needed.

CONCLUSIONS

After looking at all the possible aspects that go into making a community what it is, Encinitas California seems better built than originally thought of going into this project. There are so many more resources and programs available to elder adults in the community, even if they aren't as well known. Outdoor space and built environments is one category that took me by surprise considering California is such a high packed area. The transportation category also took my by surprise considering I don't know anyone who offers to drive elder citizens around for doctors appointments or to the grocery store. When looking at this community as a whole, it looks to be a very solid place for elder citizens to live.

REFERENCES

1. Age Friendly Communities Initiative: Public Health Approach to Promoting Successful Aging
2. Health & Human Services Agency- County of San Diego *Health & Human Services Agency*, www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/.
3. La Costa Glenn- <https://lacostaglen.com/>
4. Encinitas Community & Senior Center- <https://encinitasca.gov/Residents/Senior-Citizens/Community-Senior-Center>