



OUR STORIES
CAREGIVER RELIEF: A TENT BENEFIT

It was just my mom and me growing up. Being a single parent in the 1950s and 1960s was unusual and particularly tough for a woman. Mom worked very hard, sometimes at multiple jobs, to make ends meet and to provide for our needs. She will be 90 this year, and I don't think anyone is more surprised than she is! As you can imagine, she is fiercely independent and tenacious. Those traits have served her well over the years but advancing age has presented a whole new set of challenges.

When my husband and I sold our business in the Florida Keys, we decided to retire and—after almost three decades there—move to Taos. My mother, a long time Florida resident, was in an assisted living facility in Hollywood, FL. While she had grown to dislike the sprawling megalopolis of South Florida, she was able to live fairly independently due to the breadth of local services available to the elderly. When we decided to move, she expressed a strong desire to leave as well. Having spent a great deal of time in the West, raising me, she was excited at the prospects of Taos and New Mexico. Thus, I promised her I would move her once we got settled in our new hometown. To my dismay, I found that local services for the elderly were much more limited in northern New Mexico. There was no

available assisted living, and the local home healthcare company had just ceased providing non-Medicare home visits. I worried that I would be unable to keep my promise to her: ensuring that she could continue to live independently and also have the support necessary to let her do so.

Sherry Popham



We were fortunate to find an apartment in the independent living facilities of Taos Retirement Village (TRV). This arrangement addressed some but not all of her needs for daily living. I would no longer have to travel three hours to visit her, which meant I could do more to assist her. However, I was highly concerned about whether she would have what she needed when my husband and I were traveling or otherwise unavailable. One of my biggest concerns is her need for transportation.

She likes to do her shopping and has the usual plethora of doctor appointments, but she can

no longer drive; public transportation is not a viable option as it often means long waits for pickup and delivery—which she cannot tolerate. My goal was to have a “toolbox” of options accessible to her and for me as her caregiver. That toolbox seemed lacking in many respects, but when a neighbor told me about TENT, I immediately signed Mom up.

Not long after getting her on board with TENT, we had to return to the Keys to wrap up some business matters. No matter where I am, if possible, I speak to her every day. In our morning conversation, she mentioned she had finally succeeded in scheduling a needed doctor

appointment but not on one of the days TRV provides transportation. I suggested she call TENT and, sure enough, they provided very personalized and timely service, allowing her to keep her important date. You can imagine my relief and gratitude that, even in my absence, this option was available to her.

More recently, my husband had a total knee replacement, placing more and often conflicting demands on my time as a caregiver. In this situation and those that may arrive in the future, knowing that the incredible group of TENT Volunteers are standing by gives me significant respite and great peace of mind.

--- Sherry Popham

FROM THE BOARD:



Please see the headline article on www.taoselders.org regarding COVID-19. I encourage you to become a Phone Buddy, joining a new TENT program providing daily contact with our Members.

Call 575 224-6335 to join. We have temporarily suspended taking in new Members because our Volunteers recently have not been able to keep up with 100% of service requests and also due to the coronavirus. Interested

prospective Members should still call the office; our Member intake crew will put you on a waiting list and when the smoke clears, we will be in touch.

We are working on our grocery and medicine delivery processes, and you will hear more about that soon as we work out the kinks. Meanwhile, reach out by phone, snail mail, or email; stay connected—we will get through this together.

– Jim Schultz, Board President

MORE ABOUT COVID-19

If you think you might have COVID-19, don't go to your doctor or the hospital. Instead, call the coronavirus hotline: 1-855-600-3453. They will advise what you should do.

At this point, social isolation is the most responsible action for our community. Please read the clear *Washington Post* article below to learn graphically how important social distancing is to combat the impact of the coronavirus and how this information is vital to Taos. It worked for Hong Kong and it can

work for Taos.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/>

We have said this to our Members: Until further notice, TENT will only transport Members in an emergency situation that has been specifically approved by Kate Harris (575-741-6230).

Effective immediately, Membership fees are waived for the next two months.

We have said this to our Volunteers: If you are well, have not traveled out of state, and are following all appropriate precautions, and if you choose to participate, here are the things we will make every effort to continue:

- Delivering supplies and medicine
- Phone check-in
- Caregiver relief
- Critical home maintenance

The COVID-19 virus only has cell receptors for lungs—it only affects your lungs. The only way for the virus to infect you is through your nose, mouth, or eyes (via your hands) or from an infected person via a cough or sneeze that reaches your nose or mouth.

SO: WASH YOUR HANDS A LOT & DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE.

COVID-19 RESOURCES:

Taos News online: <https://www.taosnews.com>

FUNDRAISING REPORT

In order to pay our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator, Kate Harris, and our expenses such as insurance, website support, supplies, etc., we have to do fundraising. All monies raised offset membership fees for those members unable to pay the dues. TENT is open to all in our community who live within 15 miles of Taos Plaza and need the services we provide.

We have been fortunate to get grants from the Taos Community Foundation, the Milagro Rotary Club, First Presbyterian Church of Taos, the Unitarian Congregation of Taos, the Taos Lions Club, LANL Foundation, the McCune Charitable Foundation, and the Quail Roost Foundation. We are keeping up with their requirements and we welcome information about other foundations that might be interested in helping TENT.

New Mexico Department of Health:
<https://cv.nmhealth.org>

COVID-19 explained:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIL5m5XznNY>

Detailed description of stages (mild, moderate, severe):

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/03/13/814691018/coronavirus-symptoms-defining-mild-moderate-and-severe>

DONATE:

Taos Community Foundation has established the COVID-19 Response Fund that will deploy funds as specific areas of community need are identified.

And consider donating to St. James Food Pantry:

<https://www.stjamestaos.com/giving.html>

They are committed to giving free food to anyone in need.
— Jim Schultz

Catherine Guynes hosted two fundraising presentations, which brought us some founding donors who provided us with a reserve account of \$25,000, should we need it.

We are currently sending out letters to past donors, asking for their continued annual support, and we are developing a list of potential new donors. If you get one of those letters, we hope you'll respond positively. And if you don't receive a letter, please consider donating:

- with a check mailed to P.O. Box 3561, Taos, N.M. 87571
- through PayPal on our web site www.TaosElders.org
- with a donation to the TENT Endowment at the Taos Community Foundation

Suggested categories are:

- \$50 Friend
- \$150 Sustainer – an annual commitment of support
- \$300 TENT peg
- \$500 TENT pole
- Other

You can also donate to TENT from your IRA as part of your required minimum distribution (RMD).

All donations are fully tax-deductible as TENT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

For more information, please contact me at (575)758-3376 or bette@taosnet.com. And if you know of an organization or group that might be open to a short presentation about TENT, please let me know. I'll be happy to meet with them. Thank you!

— Bette Myerson, Fundraising Chair

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR UPDATE

Well. What a difference a few months has made in all of our lives! By now everyone should be aware of TENT's reduced services, a decision not taken lightly. We are making every effort to keep both Members and Volunteers safe and are instituting a Phone Buddy check-in service to 1) make sure everyone is OK; 2) determine if there are any needs; and 3) provide some contact and reassurance. Some are feeling the effects of isolation and we will do all we can to alleviate this particular stress.

I encourage everyone to visit our website for updates and good advice. I see many positive and powerful changes—look at that blue sky! How quiet without all the traffic; hear the birds

singing us into spring! People are organizing neighborhoods and finding out what is needed, indeed, doing what TENT has been doing all along. Added to this is a renewed interest in volunteering. I will be conducting trainings via Zoom.

We will get through this challenging time together. Please take care of yourselves—rest, eat, play, sing, laugh . . . write that book or play, pull out the drawing materials, or compose an opera. Stay curious! As always, THANK YOU! to all the Volunteers for continuing to serve, and to the Members for understanding the difficult choices we need to make. Please call me with any questions or concerns: (575) 741-6230.

-- Kate Harris, Volunteer Coordinator

SENIOR DIGNITY FUND LAW SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

On February 25, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed House Bill 225 that set up the Kiki Saavedra Senior Dignity Fund to help address services like transportation, food insecurity, physical and behavioral health, case management, and caregiving. Kiki Saavedra, a longtime state representative from Albuquerque, passed away in January 2019. The law goes into effect on May 20 and helps New Mexico boost services to seniors because

the state “is expected to have the fourth largest senior population in the U.S. by 2030.”

Although the governor proposed \$25 million for the fund, the legislature cut it to \$7.3 million. For the fund's first year, the Aging and Long-Term Services Department can only request a maximum of \$3 million. “It is well past time that New Mexico steps up for its seniors, supporting their independence and providing for their needs,” stated Lujan Grisham. Source: the New Mexico Political Report of February 27, 2020

<https://nmpoliticalreport.com/> — Lois West

A CLOSYS ADVENTURE

Volunteering with TENT has become an important part of our lives in Taos. My husband David and I have been living here full time for the past year, after David retired from his architecture practice in Denver. Previously, we've been part-time Taos residents for 20 years, having built a home in 2000 in Taos Canyon.

On Saturday, David and I combine two scheduled appointments with dear TENT friends, Jewel Biancamano and Bobbi Shapiro, for some necessary errands. Bobbi has very recently decided to move to an assisted living facility in San Diego to be closer to relatives there. We feel saddened by this news, yet happy for her to be closer to those who can help her the most. She needs us to deliver packages to UPS for her big move to California.

First, we pick Jewel up from her condo off of Cruz Alta. She needs to grocery shop for the week at Albertsons. Next, we retrieve Bobbi from Loma Parada Apartments off Cañon. We load the back of our big old Lexus SUV with many carefully wrapped boxes Bobbi has readied for the journey to her new location. The two women have not met before but realize after a few minutes that they are both originally from Greenwich Village in New York. In fact, they had lived within a few blocks of each other. The women seem to get on well, discovering similarities in their pasts, as well as during their 30 years in Taos.

I mention that we must stop first at Walgreens, as we need to replenish our supply of Closys, a mouthwash my periodontist has recommended for its bacteria killing capabilities. David and I faithfully use it daily. Jewel pipes in that she must also find a strong, antibacterial mouthwash for a recent tooth loss, and agrees

to the stop. Bobbi announces that she, too, could benefit from a periodontist-recommended rinse like this product.



L to R: Meredee, Jewel, and Bobbi

We all get out of the car and make our way through the aisles at Walgreens. Something about this outing strikes me as funny—these two fun-loving women and David and me, all on our way to buy some miracle product named “Closys.” I think all four of us simultaneously realize the humor and the irony of it: We are enjoying a “closest” relationship because of our united need for a product named “Closys”! We laugh about this discovery, chortling and giggling as we glide down the aisles, making our way to the checkout counter. I don't know about them, but I feel a warmth spreading through me as I look at these two funny friends and my dear husband. Joyfulness. This is a precious moment in time for me and I am grateful. Thanks to TENT for providing this “closeness.”

And, goodbye (sob) to Bobbi, a sweet, loving, much beloved and appreciated soul in both Taos and in our TENT community. Now that she found her cell phone and I just had mine repaired, we will never lose contact, no matter how far away she moves! Love, love, love!

--- Meredee Vaughn

STAYING IN TOUCH DURING AN EPIDEMIC

How can we keep in communication with friends and family without touching them or being too close? Few of us use smoke signals or talking drums any longer. There are ways of keeping in touch with our friends and family during this period that work fine.

TELEPHONE - The word means “far sound.” This has the advantage that every phone can talk to every other phone. And everyone knows how to use it. I have more than 800 names in my contact list (though some of them are mighty stale).

EMAIL - Every Internet user has an opportunity to use electronic mail. Of course, it is not very personal, and it is hard to convey emotion, but you can attach pictures.

ADD VIDEO - There is [FaceTime](#), which is only available to Apple users, both on iPhones and computers. It is very easy to use. Android phones can use [Google Duo](#) which is also highly recommended and widely used.

CONFERENCE CALLS - Suppose you want to have a conversation with several people at once. Both common cell phone platforms let you make a conference call with up to five or six talkers (depending on your carrier). Instructions for iPhone are [here](#) or [here](#). Instructions for Android phones are [here](#) or [here](#).

SKYPE - If you (or your respondent) are not on Apple, Skype is available on all platforms,

but requires you to download an application (“app”) and set up a user ID and password. For [computer to computer](#) use, it is free; for [computer to phone](#), you pay \$3/month. A Skype user cannot call someone using a different software program.

Other options are [WhatsApp](#), and [Facebook Messenger](#). For these, all parties on the call must be using the same app.

VIDEO CONFERENCING - For small, shorter online meetings, there are several free services that work very well. They can be used for one-way broadcasting (a teacher or speaker to an audience) or for conferencing where many people can participate in discussion. These generally require a camera or computer screen as the video source and a microphone for audio, but all allow telephone connection for audio-only. Here are a few examples:

[Zoom](#) - conference with video and audio, easy to use and a very popular service; for more info, click [here](#). Tutorial [here](#).

[Google hangouts](#) - a free conference service; start with a [gmail account](#), then a gmail [email address](#).

[GoToMeeting](#) - a more advanced program, which starts at \$12/month for the host.

You can also play some games with your friends online: [Bridge](#), [Scrabble](#), [Monopoly](#), and probably others. So, don’t sit at home, missing your friends. Use some of the modern tools to keep you in communication.

– Terry Thompson & Jim Ludden

MEMBER CHECK-IN

We now have the ability to support daily check-in of our Members. We have lined up 20 Volunteers to call our 45 Member households and assigned them to be “Village Buddies.” Our software (Helpful Village - HV) has a way to record the results of the check-ins.

Check-in Process for Members.

If you are a Member, you can check yourself in. Here’s how:

1. Log in to TaosElders.HelpfulVillage.com. (If you don’t have login instructions, call us at 575/224-6335 and ask.)

2. Click on the icon in the extreme upper right of the page.
3. Select “My Profile.”
4. If you are on our list of Members to check, you will see a red button **NEW CHECKIN**.
5. Clicking this takes you to a simple form to fill.
6. When finished with the form, click **SAVE**.

Members can also be callers to check in on their friends. And Members can get the Members Directory. On Helpful Village, Members menu,

select Members Directory. You will see the names and phone numbers of our Members.

Members can submit their own Service Requests online:

1. On the Members menu (at the top), select New Service Request.
2. Select Type of Service from the list.
3. Briefly describe the purpose. If it’s for technical support, include the type of equipment (iPhone, PC, Mac, etc.).
4. Tell us when you want this.
5. Click **ASK FOR HELP**.

— Jim Ludden

TECH NOTES: Service Evaluations

After each TENT service, our computer sends an evaluation form to both Volunteer and Member, asking them to rate the quality of service. But we use this feedback only to improve our service. It does not matter if the service is “rated” 1, 2, or 3. What is important is the information that we receive from you.

One example: “When I called to confirm with Mary, she said her brother would take her today.” So, we change the status of that request to “Cancelled” because both Member and Volunteer understood, before the Volunteer left home, that it was not needed.

Another example: “The procedure took much longer than we expected. We did not get home until 6:00 PM, so the total time was seven hours.” Thus, we change the duration of the request to match.

It is especially important for you to let us know when an appointment is cancelled. The computer marks the requests as “Completed” or “Unfilled.” If you let us know of a cancellation, we can mark the request as “Cancelled.” Being specific in this way helps TENT provide better assistance to our Members.

— Jim Ludden

RESOURCES

The Older Adults Technology Services, Inc. (OATS) has an organization called Senior Planet, whose purpose is to teach seniors how to use technology “to change the way we age.” Physical locations are in New York, Maryland, Colorado, Texas and California (“more coming soon”) and those of us in other places can participate online. Go to:

<https://seniorplanet.org/about/our-purpose/>

to become acquainted with this resource.

Another website, [GreatCall.com](https://www.greatcall.com), calls itself “the leader in connected health for active aging,” and has guidelines for buying cell phones, support for caregivers, fall prevention, avoiding social isolation, and many other topics: <https://www.greatcall.com/about-us>

— Linda Thompson

SPOTTING FAKE NEWS

Computer literacy classes and workshops can be very helpful for senior citizens in spotting fake news. U.S. officials say that Russia is interfering again in U.S. elections the way it did in the 2016 election. Seniors are particularly likely to mistake false news as the truth. “Researchers at Princeton and New York universities found that Facebook users 65 and over posted seven times as many articles from fake news websites, compared with adults under 29.”

Andrew Guess, an assistant professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton, coauthored a study for *Science Advances* involving senior citizens and fake news. He says, “People who are not digital natives didn’t grow up online, having a sort of natural relationship to using computers and the Internet. They are simply more susceptible to the kinds of online content that happened to be weaponized in that particular election. If it turns out that this is the big part of the explanation, digital literacy is something that can be taught, and it’s a skill that can be developed.”

Senior citizens in a workshop on spotting fake news sponsored by “Senior Planet” used reputable fact-checking sites like [Snopes](#) and [FactCheck.org](#) and within a few minutes identified fake news. One way of checking out a source is opening a new Internet tab and doing a deeper search. Ask “Who wrote the information?”; “What is the source?”; and “Does the author have an agenda?” Also, FAIR ([fair.org](#)), a national progressive media watchdog group, challenges corporate media and offers well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship.

During this election season and at all other times, in order to know the truth, be sure to double-check information and identify fake news.

Source: National Public Radio, February 26, 2020

<https://www.npr.org/2020/02/26/809224742/wi-th-an-election-on-the-horizon-older-adults-get-help-spotting-fake-news>

— Lois West

TENT

(Taos Elders and Neighbors Together)

Memberships Receiving Services

Individual

\$350/year or \$32/mo.

Household

\$450/year or \$40/mo.

3 Month Trial

\$150 or \$50/mo.

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