

SENIOR PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER



CITY OF LAS CRUCES
Fall 2026 Edition (Oct–Dec)

Editor: Emily Kebabjian



Announcements

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• **HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!**



All facilities will be closed the following days:

- October 12 for Indigenous People’s Day.
- November 11 for Veteran’s Day.
- November 26 & 27 for Thanksgiving.
- December 24 & 25 for Christmas.
- January 1 for New Year’s Day.



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**Scan to Learn More
at Our Website**

50+ Senior Dances



Friday December 4 • 2 PM - 4 PM

Munson Senior Center, 975 S Mesquite St

Open to anyone 50+ • \$3 per person

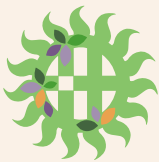
Senior Programs’ beloved Thursday dances are getting a fresh new rhythm and will now be held quarterly as special seasonal celebrations! Mark your calendars for our winter dance on Friday, December 4. Admission is \$3 per person, and we can’t wait to celebrate, dance, and make wonderful memories with you.



@LCSeniorPrograms



Zumba Gold



**ZUMBA
gold®**

@LCSeniorPrograms

**Tuesday and Thursday •
October - December •
9 AM - 10 AM**

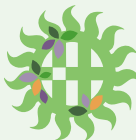
Munson Senior Center, 975 S
Mesquite St

Join us at the Munson Senior Center for a fun, low-impact fitness class designed specifically for active older adults, combining easy-to-follow dance moves with upbeat music to improve balance, flexibility, coordination, and cardiovascular health. This free class welcomes all fitness levels and offers a great way to stay active while enjoying a supportive and social atmosphere.

Billiards Tournament

**Tuesday and Thursday
October 30 • November 20 • December 18
9 AM - 10 AM**

Join Senior Programs on the last Friday of every month for a fun and friendly billiards tournament! Challenge fellow players, enjoy a little friendly competition, and show off your best shots in a tournament limited to just 16 participants that begins promptly at 9:00am. The entry fee is just \$3, so grab your cue and don’t miss the fun!



Autumn Word Scramble

OCNAR	_____
MUPNKIP	_____
ROTCBOE	_____
NREEBOVM	_____
CTSNHSTEU	_____
OLAHENWEL	_____
SEALVE	_____
REHAIDY	_____
VIHGNKATSNGI	_____
LTESE	_____
OECWBB	_____
DGUOR	_____
UTILQ	_____
WERTEAS	_____
AVHTRES	_____
EDCRI	_____
LTOFBLAO	_____
ACWORCRES	_____



Access The Lunch Menu Conviniently In Your Phone



Menu subject to change without notice.

The suggested donation for seniors 60 years of age and older and their spouse is \$2.50 each. The charge for persons under 60 years of age is \$7.50 per person.

Questions: Call (575) 528-3012 or email us at seniornutritioninfo@las-cruces.org

Lunch Hours: 11:00am to 12:30pm

****Foods prepared may contain:** Milk, Eggs, Wheat, Soybean, Peanut/Tree Nuts & Fish/Shellfish

KEEP US IN THE KNOW!

- Life changes—so do phone numbers,
- email addresses, and mailing addresses.
- Help us stay connected with you!



PLEASE REMEMBER:

If your contact information has changed, please contact the front desk to update your information in our system.

SENIOR PROGRAMS

575 528 3000



THANK YOU
for helping us serve you better!

Accurate information helps us communicate important updates and provide the best service possible.

STOP BY THE FRONT DESK TODAY!

New Mexico Grown

Senior programs use New Mexico Grown foods when possible. Due to weekly changes in availability, it is difficult to predict what we will be able to order and serve in our menus. The program purchases locally grown, raised, and harvested foods from approved farmers, ranchers, and food hubs across New Mexico. The asterisk on the item denotes a component that could be made with New Mexico Grown products based on availability. Ask your kitchen staff for more details.



**NEW MEXICO
GROWN**

Social Connections: A Key to Brain Health?

[Kathleen Doheny/Senior Planet](#)

Want to keep your brain sharp? There’s a new addition to the list.

Everyone knows the to-do list to keep our brains [healthy](#) and working well: Eat right. Sleep enough. Keep exercising. Maintain a healthy weight. Control your blood pressure.

A growing body of research suggests a new addition to the list: get out and about, enjoy your friends and social connections, and do so regularly. This, experts say, will keep your brain from shrinking, preserve your memory and stall cognitive decline.

Want some ideas to get social? Check out our articles on [Social Engagement](#).

Brain Health and Social Activity

Last year, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, issued an [advisory](#), raising alarms about the impact of loneliness and isolation and highlighting the healing effects of social contact and community. Poor or inadequate connecting leads to a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults, Murthy points out, and increased the risk of premature death by more than 60%.

Poor or inadequate connecting leads to a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults.

Social isolation is common, with a 2023 University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging finding that 1 in 3 older adults, ages 50 to 80, reported [infrequent](#) social contact, defined as once a week or less with people outside their household, and 9% having that degree of contact once a month or less.

Recent Research Findings on Brain Health and Social Contact

- The frequency of social contact is associated with brain volume, with lower frequency of social contact associated with smaller volumes in parts of the brain associated with memory, vision and other important functions. That was the bottom line of Japanese researchers who evaluated nearly 9,000 adults, age 65 and above, who got brain MRI scans, a health exam, and reported how often they had contact with relatives and friends outside their household. The less contact, the less brain volume.
- In a review of 13 aging studies, social connections (such as being in a relationship, a weekly community group or weekly family or friend interaction) were linked with lower risks of mild cognitive impairment, the early stage of memory and other brain problems. Having regular family or friend interactions, monthly or weekly, and having a confidante were linked with a lower risk of dementia; social engagement and having a confidante were linked with a lower risk of death during the study period.
- Social isolation is one of the 12 modifiable risk factors for dementia, according to a 2020 Lancet report. (This year, 2 more risk factors were added,



high cholesterol and vision loss, with experts stating nearly half of dementia cases could be delayed or prevented by addressing these 14 risk factors.)

How it works

Social engagement and social interaction engage multiple neurological circuits, says [Dr. Tamar D. Gefen](#), associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University, Chicago, and co-director of the [Northwestern University Super Aging Research Program](#). In her opinion, we need to do more to encourage social contacts among older adults. She pointed to the UK, which has a [Minister of Loneliness](#).

“When we are social, we are learning and listening and engaging,” says [Dr. Marc Milstein](#), a Los Angeles brain health researcher who wrote *The Age-Proof Brain*. And that causes new brain cell connections as well as exercises the brain, he says.

How much Social Activity for Brain Health?

The “right” amount of social connection is personal, Gefen says, using her neighbor and her family babysitter as examples. Her neighbor is happy to say hello and go about the day; her babysitter, 73, relishes the chance to care for her young children and also be with others when she’s not on duty.

Reaching out to make new social connections can be anxiety-provoking for those not used to it, Gefen says. Forget the advice about “Do one thing a day that scares you,” she says. Instead, try something new to be more social, but not anything that negatively affects your mood. At her Northwestern clinic, social workers meet with people and suggest social activities based on interests, values and cultures.

Engaging in research studies that align with your health goals or conditions might lead to connections with like-minded people, Gefen adds. Volunteering for political campaigns or charities can boost social connections, too.

“Find activities that give you a sense of purpose,” Milstein says. “Purpose is important for brain health. You don’t have to have a ton of friends. It’s about just a couple meaningful relationships. It’s the quality of the relationships, not the quantity.”

Conexiones Sociales: ¿La Clave para la Salud Cerebral?

[Kathleen Doheny/Senior Planet](#)

¿Quieres mantener tu cerebro ágil? Hay una nueva adición a la lista.

Todos conocemos la lista de cosas por hacer para mantener nuestro cerebro sano y funcionando correctamente: Comer bien. Dormir lo suficiente. Hacer ejercicio. Mantener un peso saludable. Controlar la presión arterial.

Cada vez más investigaciones sugieren una nueva adición a la lista: salir, disfrutar de tus amigos y conexiones sociales, y hacerlo con regularidad. Según los expertos, esto evitará que tu cerebro se encoja, preservará tu memoria y frenará el deterioro cognitivo.

¿Quieres algunas ideas para socializar? Consulta nuestros artículos sobre Participación Social.

Salud cerebral y actividad social

El año pasado, el director general de servicios de salud de EE. UU., el Dr. Vivek Murthy, emitió una alerta que alertó sobre el impacto de la soledad y el aislamiento, y destacó los efectos curativos del contacto social y la comunidad. Murthy señala que una conexión deficiente o inadecuada aumenta un 50 % el riesgo de desarrollar demencia en adultos mayores, e incrementó el riesgo de muerte prematura en más del 60 %.

Una conexión deficiente o inadecuada aumenta un 50 % el riesgo de desarrollar demencia en adultos mayores.

El aislamiento social es común. Una Encuesta Nacional sobre Envejecimiento Saludable de la Universidad de Michigan de 2023 reveló que 1 de cada 3 adultos mayores, de entre 50 y 80 años, reportó tener contacto social poco frecuente, definido como una vez a la semana o menos con personas fuera de su hogar, y el 9 % tenía ese grado de contacto una vez al mes o menos.

Hallazgos recientes de investigaciones sobre la salud cerebral y el contacto social

- La frecuencia del contacto social se asocia con el volumen cerebral. Una menor frecuencia de contacto social se asocia con un menor volumen cerebral en las partes del cerebro asociadas con la memoria, la visión y otras funciones importantes. Esta fue la conclusión de investigadores japoneses que evaluaron a casi 9000 adultos mayores de 65 años, quienes se sometieron a resonancias magnéticas cerebrales, un examen de salud e informaron la frecuencia con la que tenían contacto con familiares y amigos fuera de su hogar. A menor contacto, menor volumen cerebral.
- En una revisión de 13 estudios sobre el envejecimiento, las conexiones sociales (como estar en una relación, asistir a un grupo comunitario semanal o interactuar semanalmente con familiares o amigos) se relacionaron con un menor riesgo de deterioro cognitivo leve, deterioro cognitivo en etapa temprana y otros problemas cerebrales. Interacciones regulares con familiares o amigos, mensuales o semanales, y tener un confidente se relacionaron con un menor riesgo

de demencia; la interacción social y tener un confidente se relacionaron con un menor riesgo de muerte durante el período del estudio.

- El aislamiento social es uno de los 12 factores de riesgo modificables para la demencia, según un informe de The Lancet de 2020. (Este año, se añadieron dos factores de riesgo más: el colesterol alto y la pérdida de visión. Los expertos afirman que casi la mitad de los casos de demencia podrían retrasarse o prevenirse abordando estos 14 factores de riesgo).

Cómo funciona

La participación social y la interacción social involucran múltiples circuitos neurológicos, afirma la Dra. Tamar D. Gefen, profesora asociada de psiquiatría y ciencias del comportamiento en la Facultad de Medicina Feinberg de la Universidad Northwestern de Chicago y codirectora del Programa de Investigación sobre el Superenvejecimiento de la Universidad Northwestern. En su opinión, debemos hacer más para fomentar las relaciones sociales entre los adultos mayores. Señaló el caso del Reino Unido, que cuenta con un Ministro de la Soledad.

“Cuando sociabilizamos, aprendemos, escuchamos y nos involucramos”, afirma el Dr. Marc Milstein, investigador de salud cerebral de Los Ángeles, autor de The Age-Proof Brain. Y eso genera nuevas conexiones neuronales, además de ejercitar el cerebro, añade.

¿Cuánta actividad social es necesaria para la salud cerebral?

La cantidad “adecuada” de conexión social es personal, dice Gefen, poniendo como ejemplos a su vecina y a la niñera de su familia. Su vecina está encantada de saludarla y seguir con su día; su niñera, de 73 años, disfruta de la oportunidad de cuidar a sus hijos pequeños y también de estar con otras personas cuando no está de servicio.

Intentar establecer nuevas conexiones sociales puede generar ansiedad para quienes no están acostumbrados, dice Gefen. Olvídate del consejo de “Haz una cosa al día que te dé miedo”, dice. En cambio, prueba algo nuevo para ser más sociable, pero no algo que afecte negativamente tu estado de ánimo. En su clínica Northwestern, los trabajadores sociales se reúnen con las personas y sugieren actividades sociales basadas en intereses, valores y culturas.

Participar en estudios de investigación que se alineen con tus objetivos o afecciones de salud podría generar conexiones con personas afines, añade Gefen. El voluntariado en campañas políticas o organizaciones benéficas también puede impulsar las conexiones sociales.

“Encuentra actividades que te den un sentido de propósito”, dice Milstein. “El propósito es importante para la salud cerebral. No tienes que tener un montón de amigos. Se trata simplemente de un par de relaciones significativas. Es la calidad de las relaciones, no la cantidad”.

Senior Recreation Programs

Eastside Community Center: Activities

Henry Benavidez Community Center

Frank O'Brien Community Center

Sage Café: Activities

Munson Center: Extra Activities

ACTIVITY	DAY	TIME	PRICE	LOCATION
Crocheting (this is not a class)	Tue & Thu	8:15am - 12:00pm	Free	Eastside Center, Classroom; items donated locally.
Wood Carving (this is not a class)	Wed & Fri	8:15am - 12:00pm	Free	Eastside Center, Classroom. Join anytime!
Guitar Jamming (this is not a class)	Tue & Thu	12:30pm - 1:30pm	Free	Eastside Center
Billiards – Daily	Mon – Fri	8:00am - 2:00pm	Free	Eastside Center
Guitar Basics Intermediate	Mon	11:00am - 12:00pm	Free	Eastside Center, Pre-registration required, bring your own guitar.
Bingo – Weekly	Wed	1:00pm - 2:00pm	Free	Benavidez Community Center, Dining Room
Game Day	Tue & Thu	10:00am - 1:00pm	Free	Benavidez Community Center, Dining Room
Painting Class	Mon & Wed	12:30pm - 2:30pm	\$6 per 6-week session	Benavidez Community Center, Pre-registration required. Stop by the Munson Center to register and pick up class supply list.
Dancercise	Tue & Wed	9:00am - 10:00am	Free	Frank O'Brien Papen Center, Auditorium
Beginner Line Dancing	Thu	11:00am - 12:00pm	Free	Frank O'Brien Papen Center, Auditorium
Intermediate Line Dancing	Wed	11:00am - 12:00pm	Free	Frank O'Brien Papen Center, Auditorium
Enhanced Fitness	Tue & Thu Fri	9:15am - 10:15am	Free	Sage Café, Dining Room. Join anytime for group exercises that focus on the cardiovascular, strength training, balance, and flexibility.
Jam Session	Wed	11:00am - 2:00pm	Free	Sage Café, Classroom. Come in with your instrument and join anytime!
Train Dominoes	Tue & Thu	10:00am - 12:30pm	Free	Sage Café, Classroom
Line Dancing	Mon	1:00pm - 2:00pm	Free	Sage Café, Dining Room
Dancercise	Wed	1:15pm - 2:00pm	Free	Sage Café, Dining Room
Sage Café Book Club: The Fine Whiners	Mon	2:00pm - 4:00pm	Free	Sage Café, Call Branigan Library @ (575) 528-4000 for more info
Card Making Class A	Mon	9:30am - 12:00pm	\$4 per 5-week course	Sage Café, Classroom. Pre-registration at the Munson Center required.
Card Making Class B	Fri	11:30am - 2:00pm	\$4 per 5-week course	Sage Café, Classroom. Pre-registration at the Munson Center required.
Trivia Tuesday	Tue	12:30pm - 1:30pm	Free	Sage Café, Classroom
Cribbage	Thu	12:30pm - 2:00pm	Free	Sage Café, Classroom
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren – Monthly	2nd Tue	9:15am - 10:15am	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 3
Alzheimer's Support Group for Men – Monthly	2nd & 4th Thu	2:00pm - 3:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Studio 2; items donated locally
Quilting (this is not a class)	Tue & Thu	8:30am - 11:30am	Free	Munson Center, Studio 2; items donated locally



Senior Recreation Programs

Munson Center:
Classes that require
pre-registration

Munson Center:
Lifelong Learning

Munson Center:
Arts & Craft

Munson Center:
Fitness

Munson Center:
Games

ACTIVITY	DAY	TIME	PRICE	LOCATION
Lapidary Certification Class	Mon	12:00pm - 3:00pm	\$12 per 6-week session	Munson Center, Studio 1. Class limited to 6 students.
Silver Jewelry Beginner Class	Fri	9:00am - 12:00pm	\$12 per 6-week session	Munson Center, Studio 1. Class limited to 5 students. \$50 supply kit required.
Clay Works Class – Beginners (Mon) – Intermediate (Fri)	Mon & Fri	1:00pm - 3:00pm	\$6 per 6-week session	Munson Center, Studio 3 Class limited to 8. Clay available for \$13 per 25 LB bag.
Stained Glass - Beginners & Intermediate	Wed	1:00pm - 4:00pm	\$4 per 4-week session	Munson Center, Studio 1. Each class limited to 6 students. \$5 supply kit required.
Beginners Mosaics	Wed	1:00pm - 4:00pm	\$4 per 5-week course	Munson Center, Studio 4. Class limited to 6 participants. Beginners only.
Painting Class	Mon & Wed	9:00am - 11:00am	\$6 per 6-week session	Munson Center, Studio 2. Stop by the Munson Center to register and pick up class supply list.
Silver Jewelry Intermediate Class	Fri	9:00am - 12:00pm	\$12 per 6-week course	Munson Center, Meeting Room 1.
Beginners Spanish 1	Fri	1:30pm - 3:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Limited to 20 participants
Beginners Spanish 1	Mon	3:00pm - 4:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Limited to 20 participants
Beginners Spanish 2	Wed	2:30pm - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Limited to 20 participants
Spanish Easy Reading	Mon Wed	2:00pm - 3:00pm 4:00pm - 5:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Limited to 20 participants
Intermediate Conversational Spanish	Wed	9:30am - 10:30am	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Limited to 20 participants
Advanced Conversational Spanish	Fri	9:30am - 10:30am	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Limited to 20 participants
Clay Works – Open Studio	Tue & Thu Fri	8:00am - 4:00pm 8:00am - 12:00pm	\$1/session	Munson Center, Studio 3
Lapidary and Silver Jewelry - Open Lab	Tue & Thu	8:00am - 4:00pm	\$3/day at front desk	Munson Center, Studio 1. Certification required to participate in open lab
Stained Glass - Open Studio	Mon Wed Fri	8:00am - 11:30am 8:00am - 12:00pm 1:00pm - 4:00pm	\$1/session	Munson Center, Studio 1.Limited to 10 students
Mosaics – Open Studio	Tue & Thu Wed	1:00pm - 4:00pm 9:00am - 12:00pm	\$1/session	Munson Center, Studio 4. Limited to 8 participants
Painting – Open Studio	Mon & Fri	1:00pm - 4:00pm	\$1/session	Munson Center, Studio 2. Limited to 8 participants
Beading Group	Thu	9:00am - 12:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 3. Join anytime!
Crochet	Wed & Thu	1:30pm - 3:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Studio 2; items donated locally.
Karaoke	Mon	12:45pm - 2:45pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 3. Join anytime!
Desert Writers	Wed	9:00am - 11:00am	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. Join anytime!
Conversational Spanish Group	Tue	9:30am - 10:30am	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2. (& on Zoom)
Horseshoes	Mon – Fri	8:00am - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Horseshoe Area
Billiards – Daily	Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri Tue	8:00am - 5:00pm 8:00pm - 1:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Multipurpose Room
Billiards Tournament – Monthly	Fri	9:00am - 11:00am	\$3/entry	Munson Center, Billiards Room (Limited 16)
Chess	Fri	8:00am - 12:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 3
Game Day	Thu	1:00pm - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2
Pinochle	Fri	11:30am - 4:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 3
Mahjong	Thu	9:00am - 12:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Studio 4
Dungeons & Dragons	Tue & Thu	1:00pm - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 3
Tuesday Game Day	Tue	1:00pm - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 1
Dancercise	Mon	9:00am - 10:00am	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym.
Enhanced Fitness	Mon, Wed, Fri	8:00am - 9:00am	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym.
Zumba Gold	Tue & Thu	9:00am - 10:00am	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym.
Enhanced Fitness 2	Tue & Thu Wed	8:00am - 9:00pm 9:00am - 10:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym.
Chair Qigong	Wed	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Meeting Room 2
Gentle Motion Stretch	Fri	1:00pm - 1:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym
Shibashi Qigong	Fri	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym. Shibashi Qigong can be practiced both seated or standing.
Line Dance Class	Tue	3:00pm - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym
Intermediate Line Dance Class	Thu	3:00pm - 4:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym
Ballroom Dance Class	Tue	4:00pm - 5:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym
Open Gym	Mon - Thu	10:00am - 3:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym
Open Gym	Fri	9:00am - 1:00pm	Free	Munson Center, Munson Gym



Facilities & Resources

Munson Senior Center

975 S. Mesquite St.

[\(575\) 528-3000](tel:(575)528-3000)

Open Monday – Friday

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Eastside Community Center

310 N. Tornillo St.

[\(575\) 528-3012](tel:(575)528-3012)

Open Monday – Friday

8:00 am – 2:00 pm

Frank O’Brien Papen Dining Room

304 W. Bell Ave.

[\(575\) 541-4315](tel:(575)541-4315)

Open Monday – Friday

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Sage Café

6121 Reynolds Dr.

[\(575\) 528-3151](tel:(575)528-3151)

Open Monday – Friday

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Henry Benavidez Community Center

1045 McClure Rd.

[\(575\) 541-2006](tel:(575)541-2006)

Open Monday – Friday

10:30 am – 1:00 pm

RoadRUNNER Vamonos Transportation Service

[\(575\) 541-2777](tel:(575)541-2777)

Intake & Assessment

975 S. Mesquite St.

[\(575\) 541-2451](tel:(575)541-2451)

- Congregate Meals
- Home Delivered Meals
- Homecare
- Respite Care & Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

A Unit of the National Council on Aging

