A LIFESTYLE AND RESOURCE GUIDE FROM NEW MEXICO'S AGING & LONG-TERM SERVICES DEPARTMENT

NEW MEXICO GENERATIONS

SPRING/SUMMER 2025



Health and Wellness
Post-activity stretches to keep you ready for more

Cycling Adventures
7 paved paths for easy riding

Spring Greens
Recipes for a brain-boosting salad and a simple smoothie

Fraud Prevention Guide
How to avoid scams targeting seniors

THE INTERVIEW

Louie Hena
The Rio Grande river guide has devoted a lifetime to protecting the environment and revitalizing traditional Pueblo agriculture

BUBBLING UP

Laurent Gruet

At 59, the longtime vintner is setting out to prove once again that New Mexico is a world-class wine region



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: STEVEN ST. JOHN, COURTESY OF ALTSD, SHUTTERSTOCK



Caring for Caregivers

For many families, including mine, summer in New Mexico is about enjoying warm weather and sunshine with loved ones. Often that means a backyard barbecue, a hike in the mountains, or an afternoon swim. For my family, it's long discussions on the porch with my parents, working on house projects together, and cooking food from the garden.

I'm fortunate to live near my parents, and my daughter gets to see her grandparents regularly. These gatherings are a great opportunity to forge a lasting bond between generations.

As we grow older, it's inevitable that we will all need support at some point. Informal caregiving networks—family, friends, and other loved ones—often step up and provide this assistance. These caregivers are the backbone of our long-term care system because they help seniors remain active, stay involved in their community, and get support.

It's important to remember that caregiving takes many forms. Increasingly, we've seen older adults supporting their kids or grandkids. This is called kinship care, and between 2022 and 2024, New Mexico had the highest percentage of children in kinship care (roughly 9 percent) of any state, nearly three times the national average (3 percent).



Raising a child in any circumstance is difficult. Kinship caregiving, however, can be particularly challenging. Often the children come from disrupted homes. And the seniors who take on the important task of caring for them may struggle to navigate social service systems while living on a fixed income. In 2022, a New Mexico Voices for Children study found that 26 percent of grandparents statewide who cared for their grandchildren were living in poverty.

As New Mexicans, we all need to do a better job of supporting our caregivers. Informal caregivers, for instance, experience tremendous strain, from financial instability to mental health issues. As such, New Mexico Aging Services is committed to supporting them with assistance through the department's Caregiver Respite program, which will launch in Spring 2025, and the New MexiCare Caregiver Health Model, which provides financial assistance and trains people to assist friends and family members with daily activities. New MexiCare helps older adults thrive in their homes and communities, reduces nursing home placements, and is a vital resource for individuals supporting family members as they age. We are in the process of expanding the program to all 33 counties in the state. You can find out more at newmexicare.org.

NMAS's support doesn't stop there. In this issue, among other great stories, we highlight the department's Adult Protective Services, a program that investigates reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults 18 and over. APS also offers a hotline specifically for seniors, first listening to their concerns and then connecting them with the relevant agency for support—a great resource for anyone in need.

As the weather turns warmer and we gather with family and friends, it's a good time to recognize the caregivers who do so much to help the loved ones in our lives. In many cases that caregiver is you, and we at NMAS thank you for your hard work. We'll do our part to make this year brighter for everyone.



Emily Kaltenbach,
Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department

COURTESY OF ALTSD

New Mexico Aging Services

Helping New Mexicans achieve lifelong independence and health.

About New Mexico Aging Services*

Our mission is to serve and inspire the state's older adult community to live active, healthy lives and enhance their connections within their community. The department is a leader in developing programs and building partnerships that support lifelong independence and healthy aging, providing advocacy, support, and resources for seniors and for adults with disabilities.

● *For more information about NMAS, visit **aging.nm.gov** or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and X **@NewMexicoAging**.*

About *New Mexico Generations*

New Mexico Generations is dedicated to enriching the lives of every generation of New Mexican by offering inspiration, resources, and community connection.

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*New Mexico Aging Services is the forward-facing name for the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department. We use the Aging Services name in external communications and with constituents in order to better represent the full breadth of work we do and the people we provide services for across the state.

This publication was paid for in part by grant 90SAPG0067 from the Administration for Community Living.

SHIP
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Navigating Medicare

NM Aging Services Division Overviews

Adult Protective Services: APS is committed to protecting the safety of adults who are not able to protect themselves and to promote personal choice and self-determination among the aging. There are five Adult Protective Services regions serving all 33 counties of New Mexico. Its services include investigation of reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults.

● *If you suspect an adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Adult Protective Services toll-free at (866) 654-3219.*

Aging Network: New Mexico's four Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) provide in-home and community-based services that allow older individuals to remain in their homes and receive support as they get older. Services include home-delivered meals, employment, transportation, healthy aging and prevention programs, and access to the department's network of over 250 senior centers statewide.

Office of Indian Elder Affairs: The OIEA's mission is to coordinate and enhance a system of services that empower American Indian Elders with support and resources to live a healthy lifestyle with joy, respect, and dignity in their tribal communities. Support and assistance offered by the division include meals at Tribal Senior Centers, home-delivered meals, transportation, homemaking services, and exercise and physical fitness opportunities.

● *For more information about the OIEA's services, email oiea.info@altsd.nm.gov.*

Consumer Elder Rights Division and the Aging & Disabilities Resource Center: Together, these divisions help elders, persons with disabilities, and caregivers find services and information to help aging New Mexicans live well and independently. This includes assistance with registering for Medicare and Medicaid, paying for prescriptions drugs, assessing long-term care programs and services, and more.

Ombudsman Program: The program's public advocates, all of whom are volunteers, visit assisted-living facilities and nursing homes on a regular basis, advocating for residents' rights, investigating complaints or concerns with staff, exploring solutions, and ensuring quality of care.

● *To report abuse, neglect, or other concerns, call (866) 451-2901.*

Contact NMAS

(800) 432-2080
help@altsd.nm.gov
aging.nm.gov
@NewMexicoAging

Un tiempo para reflexionar y agradecer



Para muchas familias, la mía incluida, el verano en Nuevo México se trata de disfrutar del clima cálido y del sol en compañía de nuestros seres queridos. Esto a menudo significa una parrillada en el jardín, una caminata por las montañas o una tarde en la piscina. En mi caso, paso largas horas conversando en el porche con mis padres, trabajando juntos en proyectos de la casa y cocinando con alimentos de la huerta.

Tengo la suerte de vivir cerca de mis padres y de que mi hija pueda ver a sus abuelos con frecuencia. Estos encuentros son una gran oportunidad para forjar lazos perdurables entre las distintas generaciones.

Con la edad, todos vamos a necesitar ayuda en algún momento. Y, con frecuencia, son las redes informales de cuidados —familiares, amistades y otras personas cercanas— las que asumen esta tarea. Estas personas son la columna vertebral de nuestro sistema de atención a largo plazo porque ayudan a que los adultos mayores se mantengan activos, participen de la vida en comunidad y reciban el apoyo que necesitan.

El cuidado no se presenta de una única forma. Cada vez es más común ver a adultos mayores ayudando a sus hijos o cuidando a sus nietos. A esto se le llama cuidado de familia extendida y, entre 2022 y 2024, el estado de Nuevo México registró el porcentaje más alto de niños en esta situación (9 por ciento), casi tres veces más que el promedio nacional (3 por ciento).



Criar a un niño nunca es fácil. Y, cuando la tarea recae en un miembro de la familia extendida, los desafíos pueden ser aún mayores. Muchas veces los niños provienen de hogares en crisis, y los adultos mayores que asumen la importante tarea de cuidar de ellos tienen que lidiar con los sistemas de servicios sociales y arreglárselas con un ingreso fijo. En 2022, un estudio de New Mexico Voices for Children reveló que el 26 por ciento de los abuelos y las abuelas del estado que cuidaban de sus nietos vivían en la pobreza.

Como comunidad de habitantes de Nuevo México, debemos hacer más por quienes se ocupan de cuidar a otros. Las personas que prestan cuidados informales sufren enormes dificultades, como inestabilidad financiera y enfermedades mentales. Por eso, el Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México (ALTSD) ha asumido el compromiso de brindarles apoyo. Y lo hará a través del programa de alivio para cuidadores Caregiver Respite, que se lanzará en la primavera del 2025, y del programa de salud para cuidadores New MexiCare Caregiver Health Model, que ofrece asistencia financiera y capacitación a las personas para que puedan ayudar a amigos y familiares en sus actividades cotidianas. New MexiCare permite que los adultos mayores vivan con plenitud en sus hogares y comunidades, reduce la necesidad de recurrir a residencias para la tercera edad y es un recurso clave para quienes acompañan a sus familiares durante la vejez. Estamos trabajando para que el programa llegue a los 33 condados del estado. Si desea obtener más información, visite newmexicare.org.

Pero el compromiso del ALTSD no termina ahí. En esta edición, además de compartir otras historias estupendas, destacamos el trabajo de los Servicios de Protección para Adultos (APS) del departamento. Este programa investiga las denuncias de maltrato, abandono y explotación de personas mayores de 18 años en situación de vulnerabilidad. El programa también ofrece una línea telefónica directa dedicada exclusivamente a adultos mayores, donde primero se los escucha y luego se los pone en contacto con la institución adecuada para que reciban ayuda, un recurso invaluable para todo aquel que lo necesita.

Ahora que empieza a hacer más calor y comenzamos a reunirnos con nuestros familiares y amigos, es un buen momento para reconocer a quienes cuidan de nuestros seres queridos. Muchas veces esa persona es usted, y desde ALTSD le agradecemos su ardua labor. Pondremos todo de nuestra parte para que este sea un año más lleno de luz y bienestar para todos.

Cordiales saludos,

Emily Kaltenbach

Emily Kaltenbach, secretaria del gabinete
Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México

COURTESY OF ALTSD

Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México

Acompañamos a las personas de Nuevo México para que puedan gozar de independencia y buena salud durante toda la vida.

Acerca de los Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México*

Nuestra misión es servir e inspirar a las personas mayores del estado para que lleven una vida activa y saludable y para que establezcan vínculos sólidos con la comunidad. El departamento es pionero en la creación de programas y de alianzas que favorecen la independencia a lo largo de toda la vida y el envejecimiento de forma saludable, ofreciendo protección, asistencia y recursos para personas mayores y adultos con discapacidades.

● *Para obtener más información sobre estos servicios, consulte el portal* ***aging.nm.gov*** *o síganos en Facebook, Instagram y X (****@NewMexicoAging****).*

Acerca de la revista New Mexico Generations

New Mexico Generations busca enriquecer la vida de todas y cada una de las generaciones de Nuevo México, ofreciéndoles inspiración, recursos y oportunidades para conectar con la comunidad.

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*Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México es el nombre que utilizamos para referirnos al Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México. Usamos este nombre en las comunicaciones externas y con la población en general para reflejar completamente el alcance de nuestro trabajo y representar mejor a quienes prestamos servicios en todo el estado.

Información general sobre el Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México

Red para Personas Mayores: Las cuatro Agencias de Área para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México prestan servicios domiciliarios y comunitarios que permiten que las personas mayores puedan permanecer en sus hogares y recibir asistencia durante la vejez. Estos servicios comprenden comidas a domicilio, empleo, transporte, programas para el envejecimiento saludable, programas de prevención y acceso a una red con más de 250 centros para la tercera edad en todo el estado.

Oficina de Asuntos de Personas Mayores Indígenas (OIEA, sigla en inglés): La misión de la OIEA es coordinar y potenciar un sistema de servicios que empodere a las personas mayores de la comunidad indígena estadounidense, brindándoles asistencia y recursos para llevar una vida saludable con alegría, respeto y dignidad en sus comunidades tribales. Estos servicios comprenden comidas en los Centros Tribales para Personas Mayores, comidas a domicilio, transporte, tareas domésticas y oportunidades de ejercicio físico para mantenerse en forma.

● *Para obtener más información sobre los servicios de la OIEA, escriba a oiea.info@altsd.nm.gov.*

Departamento de Derechos del Consumidor para la Tercera Edad y Centro de Recursos para Personas Mayores y Adultos con Discapacidades: Estos dos departamentos trabajan de forma conjunta para ayudar a los adultos mayores, a las personas con discapacidad y a quienes los asisten a encontrar servicios e información para que puedan llevar una vida saludable e independiente. Entre otras cosas, los ayudan con los trámites de inscripción en Medicare y Medicaid, a pagar los medicamentos recetados y a evaluar los programas y servicios de atención a largo plazo.

Programa de Defensoría del Pueblo: Este programa cuenta con defensores públicos, todos voluntarios, que visitan periódicamente los centros geriátricos y las residencias para personas mayores con el fin de defender los derechos de quienes residen en ellos, investigar denuncias o problemas con el personal, buscar soluciones y garantizar la calidad de la atención.

● *Para denunciar maltrato, abandono u otros asuntos, llame al 866-451-2901.*

Póngase en contacto con los Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México
800-432-2080
help@altsd.nm.gov
aging.nm.gov
@NewMexicoAging



New Mexico Senior Olympics, with 25 different events, is an excellent way to meet friends and test your skills in a friendly competition.

Join Senior Olympics

The annual games take place June 18–22 in Las Cruces.

In the 1980s, Cecilia Acosta was working as a bookkeeper at the senior center in Roswell when she began helping her boss oversee a sporting competition called the New Mexico Senior Olympics. "It was an annual event for aging adults, with competitions like horseshoes, Frisbee, and even pie eating," she says. "It was just a lot of fun."

Seeing how much seniors loved the games, Acosta helped organize events in the eastern part of the state. But after a few years, the volunteer board running the State Olympics felt overwhelmed and needed support. To ensure the games continued, Acosta was hired as the first staff member of the organization, initially running it from her kitchen. Now, with funding from New Mexico Aging Services, she and her staff oversee the statewide games from an office in Roswell—inspiring participants as old as 101 to join in friendly competition across the state. "You don't stop playing because you grow old," Acosta says. "You grow old when you stop playing."

Held each summer in Las Cruces, the New Mexico Senior Olympics (NMSO) is the largest multi-sport event in the state for older adults. Comprising 25 different events, the nonprofit games feature everything from track and field and softball to shuffleboard and pickleball, with state winners going on to compete at the national level. In even-numbered years (like 2024), the Senior Olympics hosts tryouts, with the top four finishers in each age division invited to return to compete the following year. But even in a non-qualifying year, Acosta urges everyone to come check it out. "We encourage senior-center members to watch and have a good time," Acosta says. "The competition level is relaxed, friendly, and fun."

In addition to the annual summer games, New Mexico Senior Olympics organizes year-round events, including softball, volleyball, and basketball tournaments. The NMSO also sponsors fitness classes in 18 cities throughout the state, meeting three times a week to focus on balance, flexibility, and cardio with a certified instructor.

No matter your skill level or desired sport, Acosta—a dedicated power walker—says the games are ultimately about one thing: having fun. "We have something for everybody," she says. "Participating gives you satisfaction while also offering a way to get together with peers. It's a great social outing."

Learn more about the Senior Olympics and the June 18–22 summer games at **nmseniorolympics.org**.

Celebrate Feast Days

Throughout the year, native communities across the state celebrate Feast Days, a time to host traditional dances, participate in cultural activities, celebrate Native foods, and see local arts and crafts. While many pueblos are happy to welcome visitors, it's important to observe proper etiquette. For instance, although most pueblos are open to the public during daylight hours, the homes are private, and some pueblos prohibit photography. Call the pueblo in advance to make sure it's open to visitors and confirm how to observe the festivities appropriately.

To learn more, check out the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center's website at **indianpueblo.org**.

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NEW MEXICO SENIOR OLYMPICS

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Scams targeting older Americans are increasingly common. One antidote: a healthy amount of skepticism.

5 Tips for Preventing Fraud

How to stay safe online and beyond.

Fraud targeting senior citizens is on the rise nationwide. According to FBI data, a total of $3.4 billion in losses by aging adults were reported in 2023, up 14 percent from the previous year. Criminals are using increasingly sophisticated tactics to scam seniors, who are perceived to be vulnerable and trusting. Luckily, there are easy ways to protect yourself. "There are a lot of simple actions that can deter fraud," says Stephanie Telles, the founder of Otoño Consulting, an Albuquerque firm that focuses on fraud prevention for aging adults. "It's about building habits to protect yourself."

Here are five tips to avoid becoming the victim of a scam or deception.

1. Make fraud prevention a daily habit.
One of the best ways to protect yourself is to practice fraud prevention every day. Review your financial statements, use strong pass phrases—like a favorite song lyric—instead of simple passwords, and keep personal information private. Also, don't share too many details on social media. Scammers read about the lives of their targets to seem more legitimate when they make contact. "It's very easy to gather personal information and manipulate that into a story," Telles says. "A fraudster can use that to take advantage of you if they catch you off guard."

2. Be skeptical of urgent requests.
Scammers often try to create a feeling of urgency to rattle you into making poor choices. Whether it's a supposed IRS agent demanding immediate payment, someone claiming to be your grandchild in distress, or a utility company insisting on a wire transfer to avoid power being shut off, fraudsters try to force people into taking quick action. "If someone is pressuring you into a snap decision involving money, personal information, or any type of unsolicited offer, they're likely trying to take advantage of you," Telles says. "Pause and think things through during those moments. One of the greatest tools at your disposal is the ability to simply say no."

3. Verify before you trust.
Scammers usually try to establish immediate trust to defraud you, and many do this by pretending to be a well-known company or person. Whether it's an email that claims to be from your bank or a call from a supposed Medicare representative, always corroborate the institution before sharing personal information. "Trust but verify," Telles advises. "If you receive an unsolicited request for information, go directly to the source. Look up the phone number and call them

SHUTTERSTOCK

> **"Healthy skepticism can protect you. If it feels too good to be true, then take a minute to pause. It probably is."**
>
> —STEPHANIE TELLES, FOUNDER OF OTOÑO CONSULTING

back yourself. Never use contact details provided by the person reaching out to you."

Another tactic fraudsters use is impersonating people on reality shows—quasi-celebrities whom seniors will recognize and feel an affinity with, but are not famous enough to arouse suspicion. The figure may reach out on social media, claim to have shared interests, and then spend weeks developing a relationship before finally asking for money. "They might suddenly say they need help with a vet bill or a frozen credit card, ask for money to be wired, and promise to pay you back soon," Telles says. "From there, the requests for money will only increase. Remember that celebrities you watch on TV will never contact you on social media."

Seniors should also be cautious of embedded links in emails and texts, which can lead to fake websites designed to steal information. "Don't ever click on links that are sent to you unless the message is from someone you really know and trust," Telles says. Fraudsters will even create websites or emails that look official, sometimes with just one letter off in the URL or domain name. Always type in the web address manually, and carefully review an unknown person's email address to ensure that the source is accurate. Also, if a company's website doesn't list a physical location or a customer-service line, that should be an immediate red flag.

Again, always look up the organization yourself and call it directly to ensure a request is authentic. "Healthy skepticism can protect you," Telles says. "If it feels too good to be true, then take a minute to pause. It probably is."

4. Stay connected to a support system.

One of the biggest vulnerabilities for aging adults is an emotional one—loneliness. "Fraudsters take advantage of lonely, isolated people," Telles says. "They can give them a sense of safety and trust and make them feel good that somebody is paying attention to them."

An easy way to be safe is to remain connected to others. Staying socially active, whether through family, friends, or community groups like New Mexico senior centers, provides an extra layer of protection. Regular check-ins with loved ones can help seniors spot potential scams and get advice before making major financial decisions. Fraudsters thrive in secrecy, so simply discussing a suspicious request with others can prevent regrettable decisions. "Make sure you have a circle of trust with friends and family to not become isolated."

5. Be aware of the most common scams.

Keeping up on current fraud trends can help you avoid falling victim. Here are some of the most prevalent scams targeting older adults.

Romance scams: Fraudsters build fake relationships online, gaining trust before asking for money. They can use platforms like dating apps and social media to create fake accounts making someone feel wanted, before finally getting a payment—then disappearing.

Imposter scams: Criminals pose as government officials, tech support, or even family members to steal money or information.

Investment and crypto scams: Cryptocurrency scams are expected to skyrocket in 2025. Fraudsters claim they have an opportunity for you to make a lot of money quickly in crypto, show fake reports and even fake websites, and then abscond with your money. Talk to a licensed financial adviser if you're interested in new investment opportunities.

Lottery and charity scams: Scammers claim that a mark has won a prize but must pay fees up front to collect. Fake charities are also used to defraud people, especially in the wake of disasters. Make sure to verify that an organization is legitimate before donating.

Check out fraud prevention resources, share your stories, and sign up for scam alerts with New Mexico Aging Services at **aging.nm.gov/fraud**.





● Alzheimer's is a devastating diagnosis for many families. Look for early warning signs.

How to Spot and Treat Alzheimer's Early

A new campaign is helping people live longer, fuller lives.

When Julie Rogers was in college, she got a surprise phone call—her grandmother had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. "She had been forgetting the occasional conversation, but we were like, 'Oh, she's just 94,'" Rogers recalls. "The disease progressed very quickly, and she died within three years. Like many families, we thought some memory loss was a normal part of aging, which we now realize is not necessarily true."

After college, Rogers was inspired by her grandmother to join the Alzheimer's Association, a national organization dedicated to ending the disease. Now Rogers is the community-engagement manager for the New Mexico chapter. Based in Albuquerque, she helps to promote the "Take Action. Talk" message about Alzheimer's. The initiative, a partnership with New Mexico Aging Services, informs seniors and family members about how to spot Alzheimer's and dementia early and begin treatment. "It was an obvious choice to take this role," she says. "This work is very personal to me."

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia and affects memory, thinking, and behavior, primarily for people 65 and older. The disease, which has no cure, causes increasingly worsening symptoms, from mild memory loss to forgetting basic things like how to eat. Yet treatment breakthroughs are being made. In the past two years, new medications that may slow Alzheimer's—donanemab and lecanemab—have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The medications can help reduce plaque-causing amyloid proteins in the brain, which some researchers consider a hallmark of the disease, to slow its progression. (As always with drugs, consult with your doctor about its benefits and risks.) In addition, healthy eating and regular exercise are proven ways to delay the onset of Alzheimer's. On average, a person can live anywhere from four to twenty years after being diagnosed—and prompt detection is the key to longevity.

"Early diagnosis when people first begin showing symptoms is important because it gives you choices," Rogers says. "It allows you to try these FDA-approved treatments, which only work in the early stages of the disease. It also allows families to plan for the future together, because Alzheimer's patients are not legally able to make certain decisions about their own care and finances after a certain point. The earlier Alzheimer's is detected, the more control, dignity, and autonomy a person has in shaping their journey."

Spotting Alzheimer's early is more important than ever. According to the Alzheimer's Association, nearly seven million Americans currently live with the disease, a number projected to rise to nearly 13 million by 2050. Rogers works daily to share tips and resources that can help aging adults and their families in New Mexico detect Alzheimer's in its early stages and begin treatment. "That was such a tough journey for me and my family," she says. "So I'm committed to making it as easy as possible for others. I feel like I'm honoring my grandmother's memory by educating people about the disease, helping them access early diagnosis and treatment, and ensuring they have more autonomy and control."

Here are seven tips to spot and treat Alzheimer's.

SHUTTERSTOCK

1. Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.
Perhaps the most important step for preventing Alzheimer's is also the easiest—ending embarrassment surrounding the disease. For decades, dementia was viewed as a weakness or even a punchline regarding the elderly, which in turn made people less willing to acknowledge the issue and seek help. For instance, Alzheimer's kills more people each year than breast and prostate cancer combined—but receives less public funding and attention. "Everyone knows what the pink ribbon means, but does anyone know about the purple ribbon?" Rogers says. "My sense is that there is less awareness and funding because of the stigma surrounding it, although thankfully that's changing."

2. Look for early warning signs.
If you have any concerns about memory loss in yourself or a loved one, schedule a diagnosis just to be sure. That said, the general rule for seeing a doctor is when memory changes begin to impact the ability to engage with daily life. If you forget where you left your car keys, then remember their location an hour later, you're probably OK—the ability to recall is a good sign. However, if you forget entire conversations, get confused about where you are or what month or year it is, or suddenly become lost on familiar routes—like to the grocery store and back—then consult a doctor. "Changes in personality can also be a sign of Alzheimer's," Rogers says. "If someone's been happy-go-lucky their whole life and now is forgetful as well as angry or irritable, speak to a medical professional about getting a diagnosis."

3. Start conversations about memory loss early.
Often it's immediate family members who are the first to notice a loved one's memory loss—but bringing it up can be a difficult conversation. To help, "Take Action. Talk," a partnership between the Alzheimer's Association and New Mexico Aging Services, offers resources on how to help friends and loved ones feel more comfortable discussing their symptoms and seeking a diagnosis. "Some people are very open to these conversations, and some people understandably experience a lot of denial," Rogers says. "The main thing is to simply be present, listen, and address things from a place of concern instead of accusation." One helpful technique for spouses is to offer to take a memory test together. "Make it sound like a routine thing, like, 'Hey, my friend said that all people over 65 should be getting these screenings. Let's get one next time we go see the doctor,'" Rogers suggests. "Do it together instead of making it feel like something may be wrong with the other person."

4. Visit your medical provider for a diagnosis.
Your doctor can give you a brief memory test, which will determine if there's enough concern to refer you to a neurologist. The neurologist will then conduct tests designed to rule out other potential causes of dementia-like symptoms, like stroke, traumatic brain injury, or stress. Once these have been eliminated, more-targeted tests for Alzheimer's can be administered. "If you're past 65, then I recommend getting an annual memory screening," Rogers says. "It's a great way to track your progress over time and more clearly see if any changes occur."

5. Review new treatment options for Alzheimer's.
There are two new treatment options for the disease recently approved by the FDA, but they only work with patients who are diagnosed early, so getting tested at the first sign of potential symptoms is important. "The new treatments, donanemab and lecanemab, can slow disease progression by up to 30 percent," Rogers says. "For some people, this disease can last 15 years. So that's potentially five years of life you've given back to someone—five Christmases, five birthdays, five more years with their grandchildren. That's a big deal."

6. Eat healthy and exercise.
About 5 percent of the population are genetically predetermined to develop Alzheimer's disease. The remaining 95 percent can significantly reduce their risk by eating healthy food, exercising regularly, and challenging their brains. Try to incorporate more meals from the Mediterranean diet or the DASH plan, which emphasizes grains, vegetables, and dark, leafy greens. Engage your brain by connecting with friends, playing chess, or learning a new musical instrument or a foreign language. And try to exercise 30 minutes a day five days a week. Activities like walking, swimming, biking, and even dancing can make a huge difference.

7. Help caregivers access resources early.
Alzheimer's impacts entire families. Luckily, there are resources available to help everyone. During the early stage of the disease, locate resources and strengthen support systems. "Caregiving can be a round-the-clock job, but it doesn't have to be," Rogers says. "When a loved one gets early treatment and diagnosis, that is the time to start setting up support systems with family and friends so you don't walk this journey alone."

Resources for spotting and treating Alzheimer's, along with information about how to join community events to raise awareness about the disease, are available from:

Alzheimer's Association
(800) 272-3900 (24-hour hotline)
alz.org/talknm

New Mexico Aging Services
Aging and Disability Resource Center
(800) 432-2080
aging.nm.gov/alzheimers



Stay-Ready Stretches

Carve out an extra ten minutes or so after activities for a flexibility routine to ensure your body will be primed for more the next time out. **By Marjorie Korn**

A key mantra when it comes to aging well is to stay active, but you can add another: Stay flexible.

"Flexibility is especially important as we age so that we maintain full range of motion in our joints, muscles, and connective tissues, which helps avoid stiffening up and injuring ourselves," says Aura Garver, a yoga and fitness trainer and the owner of Aurafitness in Taos. "Stretching helps us maintain a more supple way of being in our bodies to move and feel better."

After a period of activity, your muscles are warm and pliable, making it an optimal time to work on mobility. But stretching is a good idea at any point in the day. Some swear by it just before bed. That makes sense: You've been active all day, and you may be carrying tightness. If your body is looser and more relaxed, you may sleep better.

Every body is different, but Garver has a few stretches she says are universally beneficial. Do these after you've been active, or in the morning or evening if it feels right. When you're performing the movements, it's normal to feel pressure. But you shouldn't feel pain. Take it easy at first and go slow, increasing your range with every stretch.

Flexibility doesn't happen in one session or even one week. But stick with the routine and watch your range of motion improve over time.

Seated Hamstring Stretch

Sit toward the front of a chair with your knees bent at a 90-degree angle. Extend one leg so the heel is on the ground in front of you. Place your hands on your thighs or hold the sides of the chair, then point your toes up and backward as far as you can while keeping your leg straight. Bend forward slightly for extra stretch. Hold for 30 seconds, then release. Switch sides. Repeat 1–2 times.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN

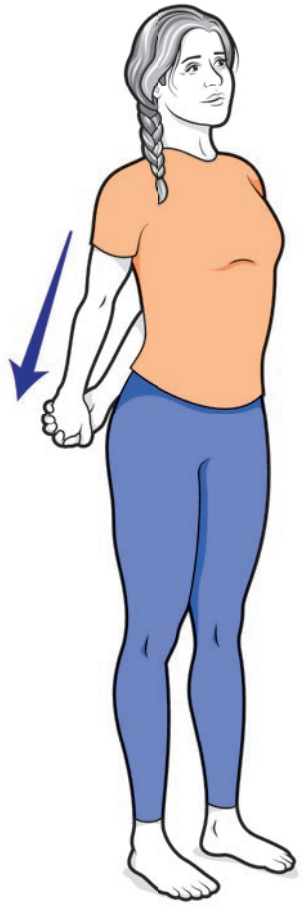
Seated Side Bend
Sit in a chair, feet slightly apart, with your arms at your sides. Lift your right arm above your head and bend to your left until you feel tension in your right arm and torso. You can grab the nearest chair leg with your left hand to balance yourself and stretch farther. Hold for 30 seconds, then release. Switch sides. Repeat 1–2 times.

Chest Opener
Stand with your feet hip width apart and your hands at your sides. While looking straight ahead, put your hands behind your back and interlace your fingers, then lift your chest toward the ceiling. Press your hands toward the floor behind you. Hold for 30 seconds, then release. Repeat 1–2 times. If you have trouble interlacing your fingers, hold either end of a yoga strap or small towel.

Seated Back Stretch
Sit in a chair with your right leg crossed over your left knee. Place your hands on your right shin. Inhale and rotate your body to the right. If it's comfortable, hook your left elbow behind your right thigh. Breathe calmly for ten breaths, then release. Switch sides. Repeat 1–2 times.



Seated Side Bend



Chest Opener



Seated Back Stretch



Brain-Boosting Spring Greens

Delicious leafy recipes to improve your health and smarts.

As the weather warms, it's a great time to focus on eating leafy greens to support brain health. These nutritious foods are rich in nutrients like folate, vitamin K, and lutein, which may help reduce inflammation and slow cognitive decline. In addition, according to the Mayo Clinic Health System and Harvard Medical School, dark leafy greens have antioxidant properties shown to mitigate age-related memory loss, while potentially reducing stress and promoting resilience.

"Incorporating these leafy greens into your diet is simple," says Ophelia Steppe, the state nutritionist for New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department. "Kale, spinach, collards, broccoli, Swiss chard, and arugula can be easily included in a variety of meals like smoothies, soups, wraps, pasta sauces, casseroles, and dips."

Here, Steppe shares a couple of her own delicious recipes—a simple smoothie and a power greens salad.

Simple Green Smoothie

1 cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
1 very ripe banana
½ cup spinach*
½ cup kale*
½ tablespoon ground flaxseed
½ tablespoon chia seeds
¼ cup silken tofu
½ teaspoon cinnamon (optional)

Preparation

In a blender, combine the almond milk, banana, greens, flax and chia seeds, tofu, and cinnamon. Blend on high until the mixture is smooth. Add water or almond milk for desired consistency.

Power Greens Salad

2 cups chopped kale*
2 cups chopped spinach*
1 cup chopped broccoli
2 cups shredded carrots
1 cup chopped purple cabbage
½ cup chopped green onions
½ cup raisins
For additional protein, add 1 cup cooked chickpeas or black beans

Dressing

1 teaspoon dijon mustard
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 pinch pepper
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Preparation

Mix salad ingredients in a large bowl, whisk together dressing in a smaller bowl, and combine to taste.

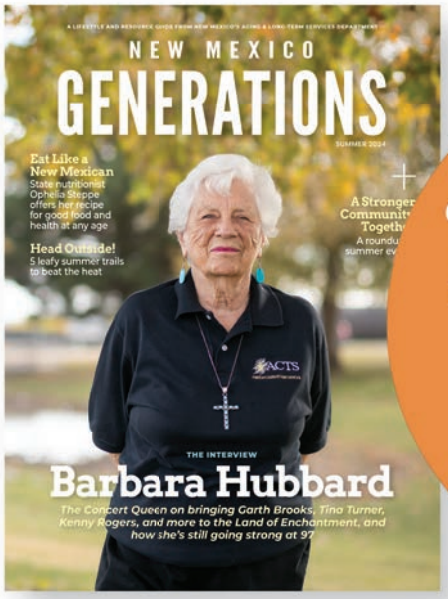
***SHOPPING NOTE:** *Purchasing greens by the bunch and chopping them yourself is a more cost-effective option than buying packaged greens. When available, organic vegetables are usually fresher and better for you.*



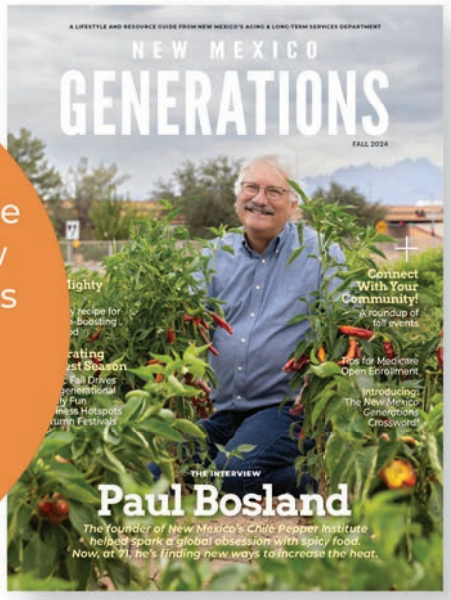
SHUTTERSTOCK

NEW MEXICO GENERATIONS

A new magazine dedicated to enhancing life for New Mexicans as they age.



New Mexico Generations magazine is an initiative of New Mexico Aging Services and is distributed at its statewide network of 250-plus senior centers.



ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

Each issue of the magazine is devoted to healthy-aging in New Mexico—its people, places, food, arts, and culture. We'll cover stories from all corners of the state and people from all walks of life. The goal for each issue is to feature inspiring seniors living their best lives while offering guides, resources, tips, and a listing of premier community events where seniors can gather.

REGULAR TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

- Healthy eating
- Exercises for aging well
- Guides to Medicare and senior health issues
- Resources from NMAS departments and overlooked benefits from NMAS
- Spotlights on all the dedicated people at NMAS working to make seniors' lives better

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Easy Rider

The best paved biking paths for any ability level.

Riding a bike is one of the best ways for aging adults to stay active, offering a balance of cardiovascular exercise, joint-friendly movement, and fresh air. Unlike high-impact activities like running, biking is gentle on the knees while promoting heart health, muscle strength, and balance. It's also a great way to enjoy nature, reduce stress, and maintain mobility for years to come.

New Mexico is an excellent place to explore on two wheels, with an abundance of paved cycling paths that combine a smooth, accessible ride with breathtaking scenery. The following options are great for any ability level. Whether you prefer riverside views, a peaceful park setting, or a route that offers cultural activities along the way, these seven paved trails provide the perfect opportunity to enjoy some time in the sun on two wheels.

1. Paseo del Bosque Trail, Albuquerque

This 16-mile paved trail, running parallel to the Rio Grande, is well known to Albuquerqueans. It's the city's premier multi-use trail, with more than half a dozen access points along its north–south track. For cyclists it's particularly nice, as it offers a car-free way to explore an ample stretch of the city, plus access to popular points of interest like the Albuquerque Biological Park and the Rio Grande Nature Center (don't forget to bring a bike lock!). There are even art installations along the way that beautifully complement the river scenery.

2. Canyon Rim Trail, Los Alamos

Beginning across the street from the Los Alamos Cooperative Market on State Highway 502, this wide, 2.5-mile

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From left: Albuquerque's Paseo del Bosque Trail; a section of the Animas River Trails in Farmington.

path offers excellent views of the canyon below and the mountains beyond. Parking is available at both ends, and the surface was recently repaved, providing a relaxed, scenic ride.

3. Spring River Recreation Trail, Roswell

This path, which runs east to west through the north side of town, offers just over four miles of paved cycling bliss. There are technically two sections, separated by a brief two-block stretch on residential streets; other than that the trail is car-free. The route, from Loveless Park in the east to Enchanted Lands Park in the west, winds through a series of green spaces and the Nancy Lopez Golf Course, and takes riders past attractions like the

Tips to Make Your Ride Even Smoother

Choose the Right Bike: Opt for a step-through or hybrid for easier mounting and greater riding comfort. Electric-assist bikes can help with longer rides. Recumbents are also a great option, and they're easier to ride than they look.

Get a Proper Fit: Adjust the seat and handlebars for a comfortable upright position to reduce strain on joints. A local bike shop is a great place to get questions answered and dial in fit.

Don't Forget the Safety Gear: Always wear a snug-fitting helmet and bright clothing for visibility. Cycling gloves can provide extra comfort and grip. Make sure your bike has reflectors, and front and rear lights are great add-ons—even in daylight, they help others see you.

Stretch Before and After: Gentle mobility work can improve flexibility and reduce stiffness.

Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water before, during, and after your ride, especially in warm weather.

Ride Defensively: Follow traffic rules even on dedicated bike trails. Pedestrians can sometimes move into your path without warning as you pass them. Stay alert.

JEREMY WADE SHOCKLEY



Roswell Museum and Art Center and the Spring River Zoo. You can easily spend a whole afternoon on the trail while taking in the cultural options.

4. La Llorona Trail, Las Cruces
Paralleling the Rio Grande, the La Llorona Multi-Use Path is a smooth four-mile trail on the west side of town. It stretches from La Llorona Park in the north, where there's a small parking lot, to the town of Mesilla's Calle del Norte Trail Head in the south. There are no road crossings, ensuring a safe and gentle adventure. The city of Las Cruces is in the process of creating additional paths around town, and offers an excellent map of its current offerings at visitlascruces.com/things-to-do/outdoors/biking.

5. Animas River Trails, Farmington
The city of Farmington manages eight-plus miles of trails alongside the Animas River for much of its length through town, providing a scenic route for cyclists. The paths are a mix of pavement, compacted dirt, and cobblestones, but all sections are smooth enough for a mellow ride, and there are multiple access points, with Animas Park and Berg Park the most popular. All Veterans Memorial Plaza and Riverside Nature Center can be accessed from the trails too, so there are good opportunities to stop and take a break.

6. Santa Fe Rail-Trail, Santa Fe
For locals, this 15-mile path starting in downtown Santa Fe has become a cherished rail-to-trail conversion and draws riders nearly year-round. The first four miles are paved, starting at the Santa Fe Railyard and running to the Rabbit Road Trailhead, just south of I-25. This is the most popular section and you can take it in pieces. It's also a great round trip for ambitious riders. South of town the path transitions to packed dirt all the way to the town of Lamy. The route provides a mix of urban and natural landscapes, including the high-desert environs. Extra fit riders can tackle the whole thing in a day, but many people opt for smaller sections of the paved path. If you travel north to south, it's downhill most of the way.

7. Lovington Highway Walking Trail, Hobbs
This roughly seven-mile path, considered an easy route, stretches from just north of Lea Region Medical Center to its end point at the intersection of Lovington Highway and Bender Boulevard. The path is a wide cement sidewalk that winds back and forth through a dedicated area next to the highway and is especially good for road cyclists as an out and back. There's an occasional road crossing, but on the whole it's a smooth, steady ride.





● Vigil is widely considered one of New Mexico's greatest muralists.

Layers of Life

Fresco artist Federico Vigil spent years learning the techniques required to create an unforgettable masterpiece. At 79, he's nearly a decade into one of his grandest projects yet. **By Ungelbah Dávila**

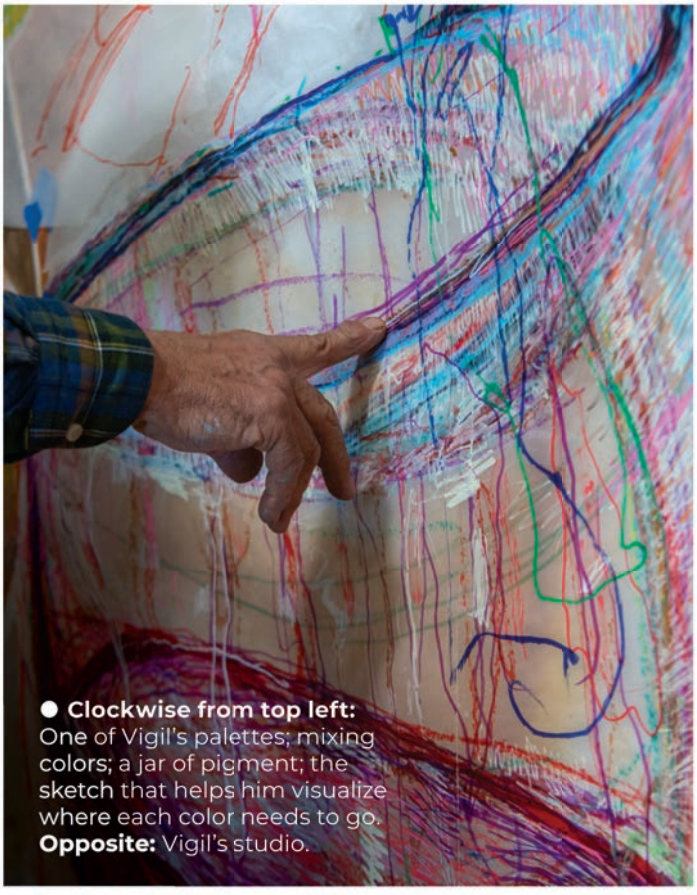
The beauty of a fresco is that the longer it sets, the more luminous its colors become.

For fresco master Federico Vigil, one might say that the aging process of his murals is a metaphor for his career. He began one of his most well known works, *Mundos de Mestizaje*—located inside the Torreón on the campus of the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque—in 2003 and finished it in 2010. At least according to the NHCC. Vigil says it's only recently that the 4,000-square-foot concave painting "came together." Frescoes are created using successive coats of plaster with

UNGELBAH DÁVILA







● **Clockwise from top left:** One of Vigil's palettes; mixing colors; a jar of pigment; the sketch that helps him visualize where each color needs to go. **Opposite:** Vigil's studio.





colored pigments, and it can take years after the last brush stroke before the oldest and newest sections dry and reach full luminosity.

Vigil's frescoes are a dance with the wall, he says. Lime, sand, water, and pigment all play their part in creating a *tableau vivant*, or living picture. Quicklime is mixed with water to create slaked lime, which is mixed with minuscule grains of sand to produce the plaster that is applied to a wall. Before it dries or "cures," an artist paints the plaster with pigment. In this way, the fresco becomes a part of the wall itself. It also acquires a patina over time, getting better with age—not unlike Vigil himself.

At 79, Vigil keeps his mind sharp and body limber by working every day, designing elaborate artworks and climbing up and down scaffolding to transfer those mental images onto a wall or ceiling. He also stays young by surrounding himself with college apprentices and high school art students. He offers hard-won wisdom to both on the 3,000-year-old artform he began learning in 1984. His current project, at the Albuquerque Convention Center, depicts the history of viticulture in New Mexico, one of the oldest wine producing regions in North America. He began the elaborate fresco in 2017 and still has plenty of work ahead of him, a prospect he cherishes.

Born in 1946 in Santa Fe, Vigil was one of five sons. His father kept him out of trouble by putting him to work plastering buildings with adobe and laying rockwork. As Vigil got older he took up painting, but his love for the tactile work he'd done as a kid never waned. When the opportunity arose to attend a workshop by Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Pope Dimitroff, assistants to the Mexican muralist



● At work on the 2,500-square-foot monumental fresco at the Albuquerque Convention Center.

and fresco master Diego Rivera, Susan Jamison, then director of the Santa Fe Council for the Arts, scrounged together $3,000 so Vigil could attend. The workshop, held in Gualala, California, lasted three weeks, and he learned to tell stories through plaster and pigment.

"I was lucky, and I lived with them for three weeks, in the chicken coop," he says, chuckling. "There were eight artists, I think, and they were from all over the country. Bloch and Dimitroff talked about Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Edward West, and Tina Modotti. Looking back, I wish I had taken more notes."

One of the stories Vigil recalls hearing is about Dimitroff's first time meeting Rivera.

"He was working in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and he found out that Rivera was in town, at the Detroit Art Institute," Vigil says of Dimitroff. "He wanted to be a painter, so he left his job and walked into the Detroit Art Institute. Diego was on a diet and eating chicken. Stephen walked up to him, and Diego waves *get out of here.* Frida felt sorry for him, so he was sent to work with the master plasterers, and he became a plasterer. Lucienne was a photographer for them. She was good friends with Frida."

After that life-changing trip, Vigil put his new skills to work. He calls it on-the-job training and says that even today he's still learning. Apart from the apprenticeship, he mostly made it up as he went. Armed with brushes and baby-food jars full of pigments he'd purchased at the workshop, Vigil start-

> **"Murals are accessible to the public. It's not like a $5 million painting in a house that only so many people can see. Rivera would put in political statements, and in Italy there was religious propaganda. It's a way to express history."**
>
> —FEDERICO VIGIL

ed making frescoes in small churches in exchange for food.

With experience as an adobe plasterer, he says, he felt immediately comfortable with the fresco process and knowing when and where to apply lime along the wall. As a painter, he was at home creating the images for the murals.

One of the first steps is making what fresco artists call a cartoon, which is basically a scale sketch of the final image. The cartoon is then "pounced" onto the wall with a series of tiny punctures. When I met Vigil at the convention center, his mural was in various stages of completion, from cartoons to finished frescoes.

Much like the most famous fresco master of all, Michelangelo, Vigil, who has a degree in biology, is a blend of scientist and artist, poet and researcher.

"When you add a molecule of water with a molecule of lime, you slake that lime," says Vigil, explaining the fresco process. "Then, when you apply the resulting plaster to the wall, the wall craves water, so you're applying more water, but with pigment this time. An oxygen molecule comes at the same time, which will revert the layers back to its original state, calcium carbonate—limestone with color, essentially."

Vigil researches his subjects in depth to create well-rounded narratives that will be both visually uplifting and educational for generations to come. *Mundos de Mestizaje* tells the 3,000-year history of the mestizaje, the race that was created in the Americas through the blending of European, African, and Indigenous peoples. The project covers 2,500 square feet in a prominent section of the curved ceiling. One of the first elements you see when walking into the room is the Bird Cave in Armenia, where archaeologists discovered one of the first wine-making facilities in the world. When finished, the work will be seen by the tens of thousands of visitors who walk through the convention center's doors each year.

"Murals are accessible to the public. It's not like a $5 million painting in a house that only so many people can see," says Vigil. "Rivera would put in political statements, and in Italy there was religious propaganda. It's a way to express history." ●



Health Tip Corner

Three Subtle Symptoms of High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a common chronic health condition among seniors. Some people don't know they have it because they may miss early symptoms or have no symptoms. It's important to have your blood pressure checked at least once a year.

Here are three subtle symptoms to watch for:

1. **Feeling exhausted constantly**
   High blood pressure can damage arteries, making the heart work harder, leading to fatigue and shortness of breath.
2. **Blood spots in the eye**
   Tiny blood vessels in the eye can burst, causing red spots.
3. **Dizziness**
   Can be associated with high blood pressure. Sudden dizziness with trouble walking could indicate a stroke.

High blood pressure is associated with a greater risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and dementia. Regular checkups and monitoring are crucial for early detection and management.

A healthy diet, staying active, and avoiding smoking are some ways to help prevent or manage high blood pressure.

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IMPROVING *with* Age

Over three decades, Laurent Gruet's namesake winery showed that New Mexico has what it takes to produce remarkable wines. Now, at 59, he's setting out to prove himself again.

By Elizabeth Miller

Photographs by
STEVEN ST. JOHN



● Gruet at Vara Wineries' Balloon Fiesta Park Tasting Room in Albuquerque.

At the back of a warehouse stacked with 300,000 bottles of sparkling wine, vintner Laurent Gruet selects a near finished bottle of brut and prepares to disgorge it.

Dégorgement, as the French have it, is the relatively simple process of uncapping a bottle and removing the dead yeast and sediment before a cork is inserted. Today disgorging is almost always done by a machine that can handle up to 8,000 bottles a day. But winemakers like Gruet, the head vintner at Albuquerque's Vara Winery and Distillery, still do this by hand occasionally. It's a delicate skill that can take years to master. The trick is to let the pressure inside the bottle force out the sediment without losing a glassful—or more—of the good stuff.

Gruet has had more practice than most. In late 1999, as sparkling-wine sales soared ahead of the New Year's Eve parties that would ring in the new millennium, Gruet's machine failed. He was forced to disgorge 30,000 bottles by hand.

So, at the warehouse, when he holds the bottle of brut in his hands, it's clear that these movements are second nature to him. With the bottle inverted, Gruet uses a disgorging key to swiftly flick off the cap, then he swings the bottle upward. A short burst of yeast flies out, which Gruet catches in a plastic cup. A few drops speckle the warehouse floor, but the bottle remains remarkably full and sediment-free.

As Gruet pours from the freshly opened bottle into two glasses, he remarks on the threads of tiny bubbles streaming through the amber-colored brut. The expelled yeast makes the room smell as if a fresh brioche had been pulled from the oven. Gruet swirls the effervescent liquid in the glass and then tastes it.

"That's what I do," he says with a smile, as if that sip summed up his entire life. "That's my wine."

LAURENT GRUET, 59, IS STILL MOSTLY associated with the winery that bears his name, which his family started in 1984. Gruet Winery proved almost single-handedly that New Mexico's climate could produce quality wines. Over three decades, the Gruet family grew and harvested the grapes, did the pressing and fermenting, and aged and bottled each vintage.

In 2014, however, Gruet's three sisters decided it was time to sell, and ownership shifted to Precept Wine, one of the country's largest alcoholic-beverage producers. Gruet stayed with the company for a few years, but found himself laboring under a different philosophy and new priorities. He started talking to a distributor he'd worked with for two decades, Doug Diefanthaler, who'd sold his company, too, and then invested in a startup winery in Albuquerque in 2013: Vara. Both Gruet and Diefanthaler had always preferred to devote their time to producing quality wines, even if it meant the yield was smaller. Gruet knew it was time for a change, so he left for Vara in 2020.

Gruet was born in the Champagne region of France to a winemaking family. Even as a child, he felt his happiness swell with every harvest. He thought nothing of rising at 3 a.m. to do the hard work necessary to produce great wines. While traveling through the American Southwest on a family vacation, his father visited vineyards in New Mexico and saw possibilities in the dry climate with warm days and cool nights. He began buying land. Gruet was 18 and only spoke French when he moved to New Mexico with his sister Nathalie to oversee their parents' first plantings of chardonnay and pinot noir grapes. The first year of production they released just 2,000 cases, but that soon grew to 5,000. Then 10,000.

"It was exciting, and it came with a lot of work and passion," he says.

Viticulture in New Mexico goes back 400 years, when Spanish missionaries smuggled grapevines into the region to make sacramental wine. Production peaked in the mid-1800s, then waned during Prohibition. It didn't regain much ground until an influx of European expertise arrived in the 1980s and 1990s to reignite the winemaking scene. The Gruet family settled in the state amid a wave of other Europeans—Paolo D'Andrea from Italy, who started Luna Rossa Winery; Germany's Bernd Maier, who founded Amaro Winery; and Hervé Lescombes, of France's Burgundy region, who established the Lescombes Family Vineyards, among others. Even with experienced hands, though, it was mostly a trial and error process.

"In France, I'd have the old guys. I could say, 'What about that plan? What about that land?' " Gruet says. "Here there was no asking the old guys."

Some vineyards failed. Mistakes were made and learned from, but that often took years. Gruet persisted, believing that if you made good wine—and priced it reasonably—people would drink it. Now events like the Santa Fe Wine and Chile Fiesta are a testament to the foresight the Gruet family and other winemakers had about the state. Today the New Mexico Wine and Grape Growers Association tallies 56 wineries in the state, including six new ones in the past three years. Vineyard acreage has in-



● Gruet was an early believer in New Mexico's sparkling-wine bona fides.

creased in recent years. Chris Goblet, executive director of the association, says those European families helped create a tradition-infused winemaking industry.

"I think the Gruets are the ones who really showed that it could be done, that New Mexico had the climate and the business environment to succeed," Goblet says. "They wanted to prove themselves, and I think that's evident when you talk to Laurent—how passionate he is for proving himself to anybody who doesn't think that he or New Mexico can make quality products."

Gruet Winery became known for *méthode champenoise* wines, a traditional French approach. *Méthode champenoise* distinguishes itself by requiring a second fermentation in the bottle, during which yeast and sugar interact to create carbon dioxide—naturally fizzy bubbles, unlike the artificial ones pumped into some other sparkling wines.

"To make good wine, you have to have good grapes, especially in a climate like New Mexico, where it's a little warmer. You have to pick at the right time."

—LAURENT GRUET

"Champagne you can have only once in a while," Gruet says. "*Méthode champenoise* you can have every day."

Gruet's wine would go on to earn accolades at the International Wine



● Gruet at Vara's aging and bottling facility.

Sip for Yourself

Sample Vara's latest wines at its tasting rooms in Albuquerque (315 Alameda Blvd. NE and 201 Hermosa Dr. NE) and Santa Fe (329 W. San Francisco St.). Vara wines are also available online at **varawines.com**.

and Spirits Competition and a spot on one of *Wine Spectator*'s lists of the top 100 wines. But the recognition that meant the most to Gruet, he says, was submitting his sparkling wine to a blind taste test among his French peers—and coming in third out of 12.

"To me that's better than a gold medal," he says.

France's Champagne region has an amazing terroir, the combination of environmental and climatic factors that imparts distinctive flavors to the wine. (Only sparkling wine from the Champagne region of France can be called Champagne, otherwise it's all referred to as sparkling.) But he contends that New Mexico's can compete. He still loves watching new drinkers express pleasant surprise.

"That's what feeds you," he says. "Then you go, 'I want to make more wine.'"

AFTER 33 HARVESTS AT HIS FAMILY winery and an estimated three million bottles of wine produced, Gruet could have easily drifted into retirement. But he still felt the passion bubbling inside him. Vara offered Gruet the chance to return to producing sparkling wine, and to make it how he wanted to: by finding the perfect balance between old ways and new.

"It's exciting," he says. "It's not easy, but I've been there before. I started from zero with Gruet."

The sticking point he wouldn't compromise on, the one that compelled him to jump ship for Vara, happens at harvest. Machines can pick grapes, and

"Laurent is certainly bullish on New Mexico's sparkling wine, because it's him. None of it would have happened without his unbelievable, radiant energy. He's just a force."

—TIMOTHY DONAHUE

many vineyards have automated that labor-intensive process. But a machine can't sense whether a grape is tender or needs another day or two on the vine. A machine won't set aside what's just a little overripe. A food chemist can solve problems that arise from mechanized plucking, but that often involves using chemicals to reset the balance. Gruet argues instead for handpicking. The choice affects how the yeast and sugar mingle, how much acid arises, whether it reaches the right percentage of alcohol, and even the bubble size.

"To make good wine, you have to have good grapes," he says. "Especially in a climate like New Mexico, where it's a little warmer than Champagne, you have to pick at the right time."

Precision is critical during all phases of winemaking. Too much yeast and the bottles explode. Too little and it won't ferment. Too cold and the yeast dies.

While giving me a tour of the Vara warehouse, he pulled out a bottle from a stack of wire racks that nearly reached the ceiling. As he held it to the light, clouds of sediment darkened the sides of the bottle—the yeast removed with disgorging. The machine-powered version of *dégorgement* involves submerging the bottle's neck upside down in minus-23-degree-Celsius glycol, so the sediment freezes against the cap, which another machine then extracts. Gruet isn't against mechanization, especially where disgorgement is concerned. A machine handling glass is preferable to one handling fruit.

Lately, Gruet has a new source for blending old and new. Toward the end of 2023, his nephew Sofian Himeur returned from Iron Horse Vineyards, a California vintner known for sparkling wines, to join Vara's staff.

"It's very good with both of us here at Vara, because we exchange ideas, the old and the young," Gruet says. "The goal is to make the best wine, whatever it takes."

Vara sources grapes from California, Spain, New Mexico, and Washington, but Gruet spearheaded efforts to release the winery's first vintages made entirely from grapes harvested in New Mexico, including some from vines tracing their roots to the early Spanish missionaries. Last summer the winery released a rosé from grapes grown in the Mission Hills Vineyard in Mesilla. In October, it debuted a *méthode champenoise* brut made with 100 percent New Mexican grapes harvested in Anthony and Vado, in southern New Mexico, and from Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Vineyards.



● Showing off the final product, a vintage for the ages.

"I wanted to show what the terroir is," Gruet says. "There's a reason why I started here and it was successful. So let's do it again. Let's do the same process, but with a bit more experience."

The result could be good for the state. "This is positioning the New Mexico wine industry for another renaissance," says Goblet, "and I think it's not just Laurent 2.0 for Laurent's sake. I think it's for everyone's benefit."

Gruet hopes to see New Mexico wine continue to improve with an infusion of young people like his nephew. This fall he dropped in on a two-week red wine course at CNM Ingenuity, a nonprofit partnership with Central New Mexico Community College dedicated to fostering economic development. For students it was a first foray into winemaking as a potential career path. Timothy Donahue, owner of Horse Thief Wine Consulting, taught the course. It yielded 300 gallons of rosé that Gruet will help finish, and Donahue continues to talk with Goblet about ways to develop New Mexico's leadership in sparkling wine.

"Laurent is certainly bullish on that, because it's him," Donahue says. "None of that would have happened without his unbelievable, radiant energy. He's just a force."

Gruet still drives out to see the grapes at one of the first vineyards in the state he worked with. He likes to look out over the rows of vines, contemplating past seasons. But it also offers him the chance to assess the seasons ahead—a blend of where he's always been and where he hopes to go next. ●

Second Acts

If you're thinking about your own second career, whether it's starting a passion project or getting back in the workforce to earn some extra income, Central New Mexico Community College has a job portal through its Engagement Connection Center to help adults aged 50 and up find job opportunities that leverage their unique skills and experiences. You can sign up at **ingenuity-cnm-csm.symplicity.com**.

Sacred CURRENTS

Louie Hena has spent a lifetime getting to know the Rio Grande River Valley and sharing the land's bounty and wisdom with rafters.

Story and photographs by Ungelbah Dávila



● Hena and his wife, Serena, with some of the Native foods they serve on their guided river trip.

The road from Tesuque Pueblo to Taos, following the Rio Grande River Valley for much of its length, is a journey through landscapes—the piñon trees north of Santa Fe, the earth tones around Española, the black basalt canyon near Pilar. It is here, along the river four miles north of Pilar, that I meet Louie Hena, the 68-year-old raft guide and Tesuque and Zuni elder, and his wife, Serena (Ohkay Owingeh/Hopi). Every summer, along with a few Pueblo and Apache river guides, the couple host a guided river trip through these landscapes called the Native Cultures Feast and Float. It is an experience like no other. "We put people in the center of the raft and tell our Native stories," Hena says. "People often come to this region to see the art, but we're giving them another story—one that is etched into these boulders."

Started in the 1990s, this day-long experience runs regularly from the end of March through October and exposes visitors to the northern New Mexico landscapes as well as Tewa and Tiwa stories—Indigenous knowledge that, according to Hena, you won't find in any history books. At the end of the trip, organized through the Taos outfitter Los Rios River Runners, guests enjoy a feast prepared by Serena, during which they learn about precolonial diets and taste the wild plants mentioned on the float—like cota tea, a chamomile-like plant that's high in magnesium. "It's great medicine," Hena says. "It enhances my immune system."

Many of the state's 19 pueblos are located near the Rio Grande, including Tesuque, where the Henas live. The people of Taos, Santa Clara, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Nambe, and Pojoaque all live in ancient communities along the river's tributaries and celebrate it in different ways. Hena and his guides share experiences and stories to educate guests with a renewed understanding of humanity's connection to what Hena calls "Earth Mom." "We're connected to everything around us," he says. "Everything out here are brothers and sisters to us."

When Hena isn't floating the river, he's gathering wild plants and herbs, such as yerba mansa, cota, juniper, and prickly pear, and sharing Pueblo culture with youth from neighboring communities. One of his favorite concepts is that of the spiral, which he points out can be found everywhere in nature, from the river and wind to bighorn sheep and the swirl of hair atop a baby's head. With a spiral in mind, he asks you to imagine pulling it from side to side, like dough, and seeing how it becomes waves and mountain ranges, the changing terrain as you climb or descend, or even the curves of a human body. In this way he shows how we are all one with our Earth Mom. "Everything has a bigger purpose," he says. "And recognizing that energy can have a global effect."

You're a member of both Tesuque and Zuni Pueblos. Where did you grow up?

Hena: I grew up here in Tesuque, on the river with my dad, mom, and sisters. We spent a lot of time out here. My dad was instrumental in the creation of Navajo Community College [in Arizona], so I also grew up in Many Farms, on the Navajo Nation, and in Tempe, because that was part of an Arizona State University project. Then he was the assistant to the secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Louis Bruce [under the Nixon administration], so we lived in the D.C. area. I spent a lot of time at the Smithsonian and the national parks surrounding D.C. Then we moved back and I graduated from Farmington High School.

Is there a particular moment when you experienced something that made you want to devote your life to the outdoors and guiding?

I've always been part of the outdoors. As Native individuals in our communities, it's just who we are. The first time I took somebody out, I'm standing there laughing to myself, thinking: I guess this is how professional ballplayers feel—I'm getting paid to go play around.

What happens during your Native Cultures Feast and Float rafting experience?

It's basically a float trip, and we tell our stories. Serena, my wife, has the feast at the end. She'll make short ribs, *chicos* [dried sweet corn], red chile chicken stew, *calabacitas* [sautéed squash and corn], and Anasazi beans. We started the Native Cultures Feast and Float in the 1990s. Our kids grew up on the river, and now our grandkids are doing the same. They love it.

Was there a big market for learning about Native cultures in the 1990s?

Within northern New Mexico, people come here to see all the arts. However, we're giving them another venue to come to and share our stories and this beautiful country with them.

That's what I share—our landscape, how we use the plants, water, everything out here.

Are all of your guides Indigenous?

Yes, from all the pueblos. We have another guy from Arizona. He's Apache. It's important to get the real history out there from different viewpoints.

What are the types of stories you share with guests?

I instruct my guides to tell our story, not "his-story." Meaning that when I was growing up, I learned "his-story," the Western stories. My generation, we created our stories, and all the younger generations are now hearing our stories. That's what I tell the guys to share. Nothing in a book, but how they grew up in their communities.



● Hena pointing out one of the Rio Grand Gorge's many petroglyphs.

What do you hope guests will take away from the experience?

Who we are as Native people, that we still live off the land. We're stewards of the land. From the middle of this river to the top of those mountains, the Sangre de Cristo and the Jemez ranges, is my pantry and my pharmacy.

On the riverbanks we have willows, which are used for aspirin, basketry, and ceremonial purposes. We have cottonwoods you can use for medicine, handles for rattles, and drums. We use the juniper. We'll boil the leaves and soak it up in a cloth, then wrap our sore muscles and joints. And then we have the yucca and sage. I use all these plants to enhance my immune system. On top of the peaks, we have our bighorn sheep, deer, elk, bear, and turkeys. We get the fish and the water itself. And one of the good things about New Mexico is that we have water-quality standards. For me to practice my ceremonies, I have to immerse myself in the river. So the river has to be clean.

Aside from being active on the river, how do you stay healthy?

About 15 years ago, there was a group of us that went on a traditional, pre-colonial diet. I lost 40 pounds. I felt so good and still do. So when people come on the Feast and Float, they learn about that diet.

One of the things I get asked about our ceremonial dances is "What's the message you're sending?" I say, "I want everybody to get up off your butt and move around." Because that's what we're doing, creating energy with all the dance moves. It all means something, but the main thing is we're moving.

You're recognized for your river work, but you also have plenty going on off the water. Can you tell me about that?

I'm part of a sustainable continuous design course housed at the Camino de Paz Montessori School outside Española that is going on its 30th year. It's a two-week course. Every day, we take young men and women out and show them hands-on work. It's based on permaculture, and we say permaculture actually means "permanent culture," and agriculture is just one part of our culture. All these young men and women that have taken the course are going back to their communities and sharing it.

I'm also cofounder of the New Mexico Food and Seed Sovereignty Alliance. It's our 20th year together, and we have a seed-blessing ceremony. We have kids bring seeds from their communities, exchange them, and then enjoy a feast. I also developed environmental programs in three different communities—Tesuque, Picuris, and Santo Domingo. By going into those communities, I'm just sharing my experience with them, too.

It seems like much of what you do ultimately ties back to the same place, the land.

People might see this as a desert, but there is so much food out here. We point out foods that we still use as we come down the river. At the end of the trip we serve a sampling of what people would enjoy if they came to one of our feast days. There was a high school class from Texas that did this float for their senior trip going across the country. Afterward, I think they forgot the rest of the U.S. ●

To join a Native Culture Feast and Float, contact Los Rios River Runners: (575) 776-8854
losriosriverrunners.com

Inside the Office of Adult Protective Services

How Juanita Washington followed her calling to help aging adults across New Mexico.



Juanita Washington (second from left) and members of Adult Protective Services.

COURTESY OF ALTSD

In the 1990s, Juanita Washington was working at a care facility in Las Cruces when she noticed something troubling—the abuse and neglect of people living there. "I was in college at New Mexico State University and told my adviser I was concerned about it," Washington recalls. "She said, 'Oh, you should be a social worker.'"

While attending college, Washington began an internship with New Mexico's Adult Protective Services, a program that investigates and responds to reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of incapacitated adults 18 years and older. A single mother caring for her aging parents, Washington wanted to join APS full-time, but there were no positions available that matched her schedule. So she moved to Albuquerque and began working for the child-abuse hotline of the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department, then joined APS as an investigative social worker in 1998. In 2024, she was promoted to regional manager at APS and now oversees a dedicated team that safeguards vulnerable adults. For Washington, working with APS is more than a job. "I want to make a difference in people's lives," she says. "This is my way to serve."

APS is designed to serve all of New Mexico's incapacitated adults, but it predominantly helps senior citizens. The program grew out of the state's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Act of 1972, which created a system to advocate for residents in long-term care facilities, which in turn led to the Adult Protective Services Act of 1978. Today APS is part of New Mexico's Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD), and works with a range of partners, including law enforcement, health care providers, and behavioral-health agencies, to ensure the safety of adults who are unable to protect themselves. APS offers a hotline, its case workers visit homes to investigate allegations, and the state requires citizens and financial institutions to report suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation. APS acts as a general resource to help seniors in need—listening to their situation and then connecting them with the appropriate agencies for care. "Our biggest job is helping people find the relevant resources in their community that are available to them," Washington says. "We provide short-term care to help people find the longer-term support they need."

APS offers a range of short-term services, from emergency placement to home care to legal support. But Washington sees a need to protect seniors from a growing issue—fraud. "Sometimes cognitive abilities begin to decline with elderly people," she says. "And that's when the scams come in."

ACCORDING TO THE FBI, ELDER-FRAUD cases are on the rise. In 2023, $3.4 billion in losses involving older adults were reported in the United States, with fraud complaints increasing 14 percent from the previous year. "Empowering our seniors and their friends and family with education surrounding elder-fraud schemes is critical to protecting them and their hard-earned money," says Michael Nordwall, the assistant director of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division.

At APS, protecting New Mexico's aging incapacitated adults against fraud is a daily mission for Washington and her team. "Today there are a slew of different scams that didn't exist when I began my career," Washington says. "It used to be just family members or caregivers who committed the fraud. Now there's wire-transfer fraud, lottery scams, romance scams, and more."

Washington even worked a case in which a woman got scammed at her church. A person told the elderly woman that he was visiting from Mexico, where he worked on a pipeline. He got

her contact information and began communicating with her on Facebook, saying that he needed money to get back to her in the United States. The woman tried to wire him the funds, but because of the peculiarity of the request, her bank refused and then contacted APS. Washington visited the woman in her home and witnessed the arrival of a message sent by the man in real time. "We tried to convince her that this was a romance scam, that there was no pipeline in Mexico, but she wouldn't listen," Washington says.

Washington and her team have several best practices for seniors to protect themselves. First, surround yourself with trusting friends, and continue to be social, visiting community hubs like senior centers. "There was nothing wrong with the woman's cognition when she sent that man money," Washington says. "She just suffered from loneliness." APS also recommends that seniors never share a bank account number, never send money, and never click on links or call numbers in texts or emails that weren't sent by people they know personally. "The ramifications of giving away money that is needed for your own livelihood are huge," she says. "Once you lose it, it's gone. You can then lose your home and the ability to take care of yourself."

Ultimately, Washington recommends staying safe with a simple rule—if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. "Look for red flags," she says. "If you won a lottery but didn't buy a ticket, that's an issue." If people want to donate to charity, case workers can help ensure that the organization is trustworthy. And always contact APS for the latest on fraud safety. "We have a working group with the Attorney General's Office dedicated to learning the latest scams," Washington says. "We educate ourselves in order to help all adults across New Mexico."

Learn more about Adult Protective Services and how to prevent yourself from becoming a victim of fraud.
Call APS 24/7 at (866) 654-3219
Visit aging.nm.gov/fraud

COURTESY OF ALTSD

Faces Behind the Policy Advisory Committee

Otoño Consulting founder Stephanie Telles

To ensure that New Mexico seniors get the best resources possible, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham appoints people from across the state to Policy Advisory Committees (PACs), groups of experts in various fields who meet regularly to share ideas with state leaders. In this issue, we chat with ALTSD PAC member Stephanie Telles, the founder of Otoño Consulting, an Albuquerque-based firm that offers comprehensive solutions focused on fraud prevention for aging adults.

What inspired you to dedicate your career to helping seniors and caregivers?
Telles: A native of New Mexico, I spent part of my childhood in Belén, where my mom worked nights in a factory while raising three kids. One night she slipped on the job due to hazardous conditions and became disabled for life. So I began acting as a caregiver at age ten, while my father worked and my older siblings grew into adulthood. That experience shaped my understanding of the immense responsibility and emotional toll caregiving takes on families. After we moved to Las Cruces, I attended New Mexico State University, where I continued to care for my mom while studying philosophy and government, eventually earning an MBA at the University of New Mexico. I worked for years in banking and for the state, and then founded Otoño Consulting in 2023 to support a growing need for financial protection for seniors, especially against fraud and exploitation.



What are the current fraud issues impacting seniors across the state?
Scammers are becoming more sophisticated, exploiting aging adults through social media, fake charities, and imposter scams. Isolation is another major challenge. Many seniors live alone and lack strong support systems, making them more vulnerable to fraud and neglect. Additionally, caregivers—often unpaid family members—struggle to balance work and caregiving responsibilities. We need better policies to support working caregivers and increase public awareness of these issues.

How does your work help address these challenges?
I understand the challenges that caregivers and their loved ones face. Coupled with my background in anti-fraud education, this perspective allows me to contribute meaningfully to the policy advocacy team, offering insights that can help address these important issues. We work on improving protections for seniors, enhancing financial literacy programs, and ensuring that resources are allocated where they're needed most. I also volunteer my time to educate families about recognizing and preventing fraud.

For more information about how to prevent, detect, and report fraud, go to aging.nm.gov/fraud.



Welcoming Our Newest Deputy Cabinet Secretary

I'd like to personally welcome Dr. Angelina Flores-Montoya to the department as a deputy cabinet secretary. Dr. Flores-Montoya comes to ALTSD with over 25 years of experience in health care, education, and research. Her deep knowledge of health care systems and proven track record in policy and program leadership make her an invaluable addition. Our team is dedicated to working to ensure the safety and well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities living in New Mexico. Expanding the team with people like Dr. Flores-Montoya helps us to better serve the people of New Mexico.

—Emily Kaltenbach, ALTSD Cabinet Secretary

Ask ALTSD

Who is a good person to talk to about health insurance?

The State Health Insurance Assistance program provides free, unbiased, expert information, counseling, and assistance to New Mexico residents and their families—including how to navigate Medicare. **To learn more, call 800-432-2080.**



Growing a Community in Farmington

How Jack Lowery uses the Garden Project to nourish connection.

After 13 years in the U.S. Army, Jack Lowery decided to devote himself to a new kind of service: helping aging adults find fulfillment. "I wanted to do something besides organizing bullets and blankets," he says. "And that's what led me to senior centers."

In the military, Lowery specialized in logistics, helping to organize supply chains. Upon leaving, he took a job in a nursing home in Washington State, then used his organizational skills to run senior centers in Illinois, Colorado, and Montana, as well as 21 meal-service sites in Washington with Catholic Community Services. In 2017, he took over the Bonnie Dallas senior center in Farmington—and instantly fell in love with New Mexico. "It's by far the best place I have ever worked," he says. "I'm a hands-on guy, so managing senior centers and nutrition programs fits well for me. This is where I belong and where my heart is. I consider this work not just my profession but a ministry."

Every day, Lowery and his team serve 245 meals to local residents at the senior center and deliver 100 more to homes. When he first arrived, the center had a thriving garden run with the support of local residents, but it shuttered during COVID. Then one day, while cooking meals, Lowery had an idea, one that would provide both fresh vegetables and offer a way for locals to gather—to renovate the garden and encourage seniors to tend to the plants, offering them both nutritional and social nourishment. "The garden and its wooden structures were decaying," Lowery says. "So I decided to apply for the gardening grant to

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rehabilitate it."

To start, Lowery reached out to Ophelia Steppe, the state nutritionist for the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department. Recently, Steppe had started a Garden Project at four senior centers, helping them create their own small plots for growing. "I am committed to promoting gardens as a valuable avenue for older adults to participate in activities that improve physical health and foster social interaction," Steppe says. "Additionally, participants have the opportunity to harvest produce to take home, allowing them to incorporate fresh ingredients into their meals and enhance their diets."

With the support of the Garden Project and Steppe's guidance, Lowery began revitalizing the Farmington senior-center garden. He constructed raised beds designed to be accessible for seniors, set at a comfortable working height that minimizes bending and kneeling. He installed overhead awnings to provide shade, which protects plants and gardeners alike. "This can lower the temperature by approximately 15 degrees," he notes. "It's quite beneficial." He also engaged with senior-center visitors by conducting surveys to determine meal and produce preferences. In summary, Lowery found success with a straightforward principle: If the garden flourishes, interest will follow and the community will participate. "Once people lay eyes on it, it inspires them to do something on their own," he says.

Lowery cultivates a variety of produce, including potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, melons, and onions. He donates a portion of the harvest to visitors at the senior center and composts the organic waste back into the soil to enrich it. "The garden can produce everything the senior center needs for salads, stews, and more," he says. Lowery also invites expert gardeners to visit the senior center and give presentations on growing techniques. "They spark people's imaginations," he says. Now



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the Farmington senior center is a shining example of what the Garden Project can do. "Jack's garden is really impressive," Steppe says.

For Lowery, working out the logistics of the garden allowed him to use his army skills in a new way. "This is taking me back to my military days, when I brought different people and agencies together to make supply chains work," he says. "It's a good feeling."

For other senior centers interested in gardening, Lowery suggests contacting Steppe and Denise King, the Aging Network Division operations director for ALTSD. "Ophelia and Denise played a vital role in assisting me throughout this process," he says. "Their support, encouragement, and unwavering commitment were essential. I maintain regular communication with them."

Ultimately, Lowery envisions the garden uniting the senior center in new ways—everyone digging in the dirt together to forge lasting bonds. "All it takes to get going is a little imagination," Lowery says. "Now we have a good future for the garden."

To start a garden at your own senior center, and to learn more about ALTSD's Garden Project, contact Ophelia Steppe at:
(505) 629-8885
ophelia.steppe@altsd.nm.gov

Spring/Summer 2025 Events

A look at the upcoming opportunities to get out and about in your community.

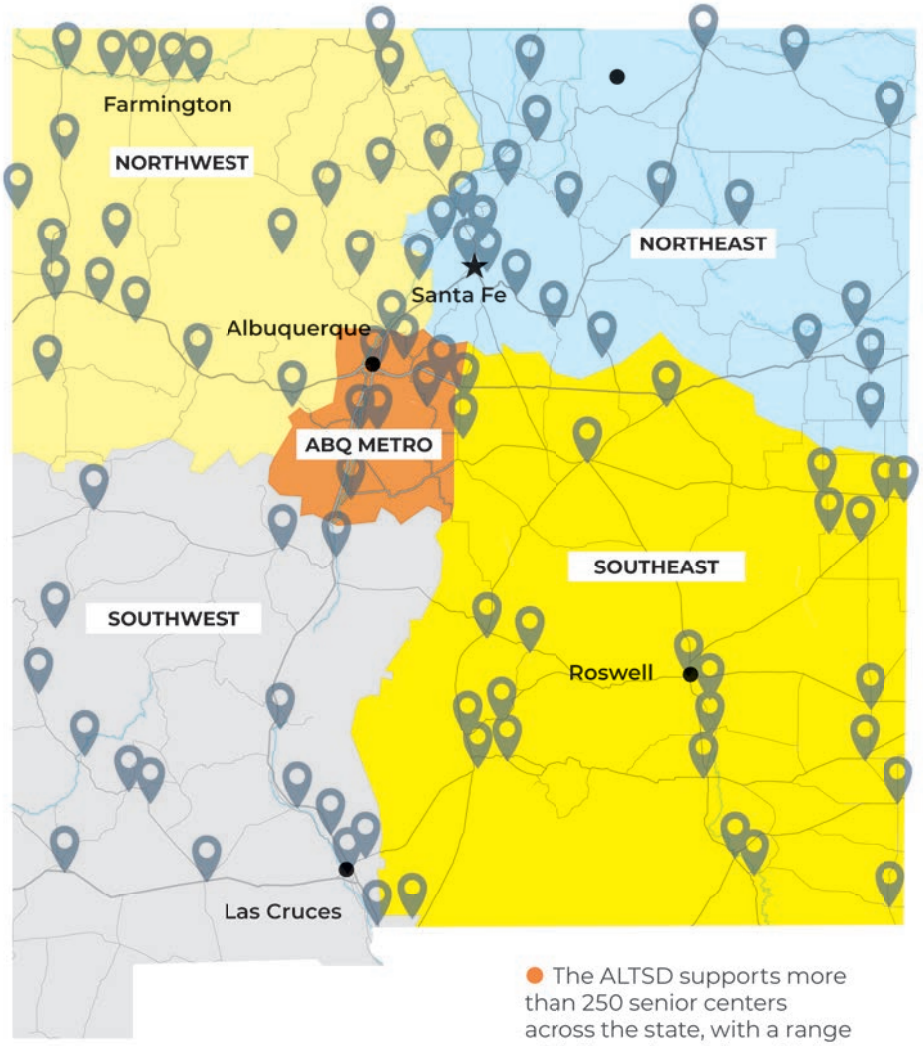
April

National Volunteer Month
April is National Volunteer Month, a time to celebrate and recognize the contributions of volunteers. This is a great opportunity to thank those who help out in local communities and to volunteer yourself, if you're able. Learn more at **volunteer.gov**.

American Indian Week
April 22–27
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque
This annual event offers cultural dances, self-guided tours of the IPCC's permanent and temporary exhibitions, and dining at the Indian Pueblo Kitchen. Plus, there are dozens of Native artists you can meet and buy from directly. Free for museum members. Learn more at **indianpueblo.org**.

May

Older Americans Month
Every year in May, Older Americans Month recognizes the immense contributions of aging adults across the nation. It's a great way to recognize the numerous ways seniors have helped sustain their communities, whether by raising and mentoring children, volunteering, or even serving their country. Older Americans Month also raises awareness about elder abuse and neglect. The 2025 theme, Flip the Script on Aging, focuses on transforming how society perceives, talks about, and approaches aging. It encourages individuals and entire communities to challenge stereotypes and dispel common misconceptions.



● The ALTSD supports more than 250 senior centers across the state, with a range of daily and weekly activities.

Vamanos Santa Fe Walks
Santa Fe
Beginning in May and running through October, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust is organizing hikes around the Santa Fe area, including ones for seniors. It's a great chance to explore Santa Fe's trails, get some fresh air, and meet new people. The first one is on May 1. To learn more, visit **sfct.org/vamonos**.

Senior Night at the Isotopes
May 3
Isotopes Park, Albuquerque
Along with being the presenting sponsor for the Isotopes baseball season, New Mexico Aging Services is sponsoring two games during the year, May 3 and June 13. Join the Isotopes on May 3 for Little League Night as kids from across the metro area parade with their team banners. And stick around afterward for fireworks. The game begins at 6:35 p.m. Learn more and buy tickets at **milb.com/albuquerque**.

June

New Mexico Senior Olympics State Summer Games
June 18–22, 2025
Las Cruces
Don't miss out on the opportunity to be a part of the action at the 2025 Ernesto Ramos State Summer Games, whether you're competing in one of the events or simply cheering on friends and family. Events include everything from archery and basketball to pickleball, golf, billiards, and race-walking. The registration fee is $60. For more information, go to **nmseniorolymics.org**.

Senior Night at the Isotopes
June 13
Isotopes Park, Albuquerque
This is the second promotional night for the Isotopes sponsored by New Mexico Aging Services. The first 3,000 fans will receive a ball cap, so be sure to arrive early. The game starts at 6:35 p.m. Buy tickets at **milb.com/albuquerque**.

July

Silver City CLAY Festival
July 14–20
Taking place every July, the CLAY Festival gathers artists, collectors, educators, and families for a series of events celebrating clay in its many forms. Artists host workshops and lectures, and jury the exhibition. Learn more at **clayfestival.com**.

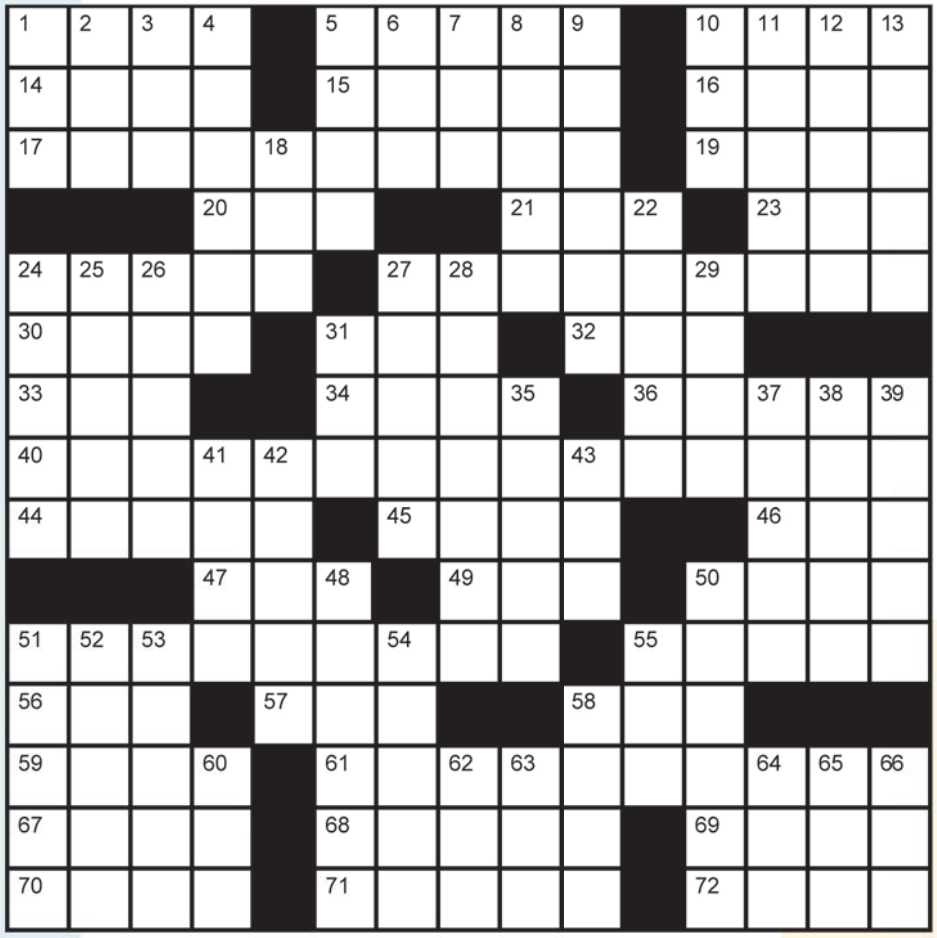
August

Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial
August 1–10
Gallup
The 103rd annual celebration of tribal culture and tradition in New Mexico has it all: parades, a rodeo, arts and crafts, dances, food, auctions, an opening gala, and more. Most events are open to the public. Learn more at **gallupceremonial.com**.

THE CROSSWORD

Solution to the Winter 2024/2025 puzzle:

M	O	N	■	L	O	M	A	N	■	S	A	X	E	S
I	P	O	■	E	V	I	L	S	■	E	B	E	R	T
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O	N	O	■	U	R	I	■	■	O	T	T	O	■	■
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A	P	E	D	■	■	M	A	O	R	I	■	I	D	O
■	■	■	G	N	C	■	N	O	O	N	■	N	A	P
A	R	E	Y	O	U	K	I	D	D	I	N	G	M	E
L	O	U	■	I	R	I	S	■	S	T	A	■	■	■
P	A	R	■	R	A	T	E	D	■	■	N	A	P	E
S	N	O	B	■	T	H	E	B	A	Y	A	R	E	A
■	■	S	U	M	O	■	■	A	N	O	■	E	R	R
B	A	T	T	E	R	Y	A	C	I	D	■	N	I	T
T	H	E	T	A	■	A	S	K	M	E	■	A	S	H
W	I	P	E	D	■	N	A	S	A	L	■	S	H	Y



The Crossword

A New Mexico Generations Original

By Brendan Emmett Quigley

The solution to the puzzle will be printed in the following issue, and available online at **newmexicogenerations.com** in early May.

ACROSS

1. Counterfeit
5. Satanic feature
10. Fully fit
14. Frankenstein's assistant
15. Be ready for
16. Soldering need
17. "Greater" New Mexican bird
19. 1984 Peace Nobelist
20. Painter's medium
21. Some like it hot
23. Poet Hughes
24. "Dark-eyed" New Mexican bird
27. Bird that spends the winter along New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley
30. Spanish articles
31. Loser's place?
32. Louse-to-be
33. Collection agcy.
34. Poseidon's brother
36. Church offering
40. New Mexican bird with a long, scythe-shaped bill
44. Before the due date
45. Pinocchio, at times
46. Comic Philips
47. Put it to
49. Record store purchases
50. Just slightly
51. New Mexican bird in the Great Basin Desert
55. Sandhill ____ (New Mexican bird seen in the Rio Grande and Pecos River Valleys in winter)
56. Freudian topic
57. Mincemeat dessert
58. Spam producer
59. Countertenor
61. "Scissor-tailed" New Mexican bird
67. Woodpile word
68. Graybeard
69. Atmosphere
70. Worked the soil
71. Prescribed amount
72. Office Depot purchase

DOWN

1. Cone bearer
2. In the past
3. Hawaiian timber tree
4. Characters in *The Pitt*, for short
5. Drag
6. Have
7. Competed in a 10K
8. Former Mexican president Enrique Peña ____
9. Here and there
10. Sternward
11. Popeye's rival
12. Pandurinas
13. Give off
18. Ipanema locale
22. Gut feeling?
24. Electricity, slangily
25. Post-WWII refugee-aid org. of the '40s
26. Emphatic denial
27. Hex
28. Brand with a spinnaker logo
29. ____ Elevator Company
31. She sang with Kendrick Lamar during the Super Bowl LIX half time show
35. Disreputable
37. Eighth Greek letter
38. Macho dude
39. Wear away
41. Put in stitches
42. Bulletin board VIP
43. Four Monopoly properties: Abbr.
48. Cut through
50. Elaborately decorated auto
51. Georgia product
52. White house?
53. ____ Dame
54. Wiggly dessert
55. Camp sack
58. Sots' spots
60. Unusual
62. QB's gains: Abbr.
63. Middling mark
64. Clamor
65. Baseball stat
66. Stuff



Endless Summer

Famed Southwest photographer Harvey Caplin, who spent most of his life in Albuquerque, captured this image of locals relaxing at Bottomless Lakes State Park, 15 miles southeast of Roswell, in 1958. The park, which consists of eight lakes (and one private one), has been a popular recreation site for more than a hundred years, and Caplin was there working on a tourism campaign promoting the state. The Bottomless Lakes, which are technically cenotes or sinkholes, earned their name because early ranchers couldn't determine their depth, even after tying multiple ropes together to reach the bottom. The lakes—all are individually named—range in depth from 17 to 90 feet and are fed by underground water tables, not surface drainage. This makes the clear, cool water especially appealing on warm summer days. That's why it's no surprise that the Bottomless Lakes became New Mexico's first state park, established as a state monument in 1933 for its recreational benefits. At the time, the Civilian Conservation Corps had just been commissioned by Congress, and CCC workers constructed most of the original facilities. Many of them are still used today by the thousands of tourists who visit each year.

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