

PacificSun

Vivalon Reaches Covid-19 Response Milestone in Marin

By Charlie Swanson Jun 4, 2021

As the largest nonprofit in Marin County serving older adults and people with disabilities, Vivalon (formerly known as Whistlestop) has seen it all in 67 years, including now the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the start of Marin County's shelter-in-place order in March of 2020, Vivalon had to temporarily close the doors of the Healthy Aging Center and adjust to social distancing measures. Undaunted, the staff and the nonprofit's volunteers expanded existing services and created new pandemic-related programs to better assist older adults, individuals with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, low-income families and individuals with other access and functional needs in Marin County.

This week, Vivalon announced that its Covid-19 pandemic response program has provided 500,000 services to Marin County's highest risk residents.

These half-million pandemic-related services include phone check-ins, social phone and in-person visiting programs, distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the creation and distribution of face coverings and activity packets.

In partnership with Marin Health and Human Services, Vivalon also created a new call center to aid in vaccine registration and transportation, led the county grocery delivery program, and led intake for the Great Plates Program—in which older adults can get three free, restaurant-quality meals delivered to their home.

Additionally, Vivalon enhanced its transportation services, expanded its food assistance and home delivered meals programs to serve the unprecedented number of people in Marin County in need of food during the pandemic, and hosted hundreds of virtual classes and events by video and phone to help thousands of older adults stay active and connected.



“When Vivalon had to temporarily close the doors of the Healthy Aging Center last March, our staff pulled together to find new and creative ways of continuing our essential work,” said Anne Grey, Vivalon CEO in a statement. “We are grateful to our staff and our volunteers, who went above and beyond on countless occasions to ensure that nobody in the community went hungry, that nobody felt alone, and that older adults in the community had opportunities for engagement and connection while sheltering in place. We are grateful to our many community partners who worked with us to create new programs so that we could reach more people in need. And we are grateful to our donors for their generous financial support, allowing us to focus on providing these critical services. We are inspired by the power of community.”

Currently, Vivalon is in the process of reopening the doors to its Healthy Aging Center and welcoming vaccinated members of the public back. As of now, the center is hosting limited in-person classes, and on June 14, the center plans to reopen its Jackson Café for indoor dining Monday to Friday, 11:30am–2pm. More information on safety procedures and protocols will be made available closer to reopening based on Marin County Public Health and California State guidance at that time.

For more details on Vivalon's reopening plans, and for information about Vivalon services, programs, and volunteer opportunities, please visit www.vivalon.org.