



## EMASS Program launches Healthier Living Workshops

UPAC-EMASS initiated a partnership with Health and Human Services' Aging and Independence Services (HHSA-AIS) program to bring to our perspective communities the Healthier Living Workshop. Agnes Hajek, EMASS Program Manager, and Clarita Florentino, EMASS volunteer, were trained as peer educators. To date, they have completed workshops in Vista Hill Ramona, EMASS Community Center Escondido, and Summercrest Apartment in National City. Some 57 seniors and caregivers completed this workshop. Here are some of the testimonials from the participants:

*"This class helped me learn to take a more active role in managing my chronic illness and how to make an action plan to guide and enhance my success."*

*"I've learned a lot and it has improved my outlook on life."*

*"The Healthier Living Workshop made me a better person: physically, mentally, and socially."*

The Healthier Living, a Chronic Disease Self-Management Program includes a series of 2 1/2 hour workshops presented over a 6-week period by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with a chronic disease themselves. The curriculum includes workshops and appropriate behavior modifications and coping strategies to enable the participants to manage

their chronic diseases and medications and increase physical activity levels. The program enables participants to work on

research base which has consistently demonstrated that the program results in improved quality of life among its participants that have endured for up to two years.



Filipino HLW participants at Summercrest Apartment

It is the process in which the program is taught that makes it effective. Classes are highly participative, where mutual support and

effective communication skills with family, friends, and health professionals.

success build the participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health and maintain active and fulfilling lives.

This workshop has a strong

### Elder Multicultural Access and Support Services: Prevention and Early Intervention Report

Health Services Research Center (HSRC) of the University of California San Diego is commissioned by the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services to monitor the outcomes of the Mental Health Services Act's Prevention and Early Intervention Program fund. HSRC conducted four (4) focus group discussions with EMASS participants. Here are the results:

- Participants disclosed that some of the EMASS activities have helped to increase their knowledge about mental health, to aid in prevention/early intervention of mental health problems for themselves, or others.
- Participants identified that EMASS helped alleviate their mental health issues, specifically depression and anxiety.
- Participants also expressed the idea that in addition to alleviation of mental health symptoms, they have experienced an improvement of physical health symptoms and quality of life.
- Many participants expressed social isolation and lack of social opportunities to be a major problem in their lives before becoming involved with EMASS.
- Across all groups, participants expressed appreciation of the staff and satisfaction with the program.

## Heritage Clinic trains EMASS Promotoras in peer counseling

Heritage Clinic and EMASS partnered to deliver a once in a lifetime educational event via the Senior Peer Counseling seminar for its Community Health Workers.

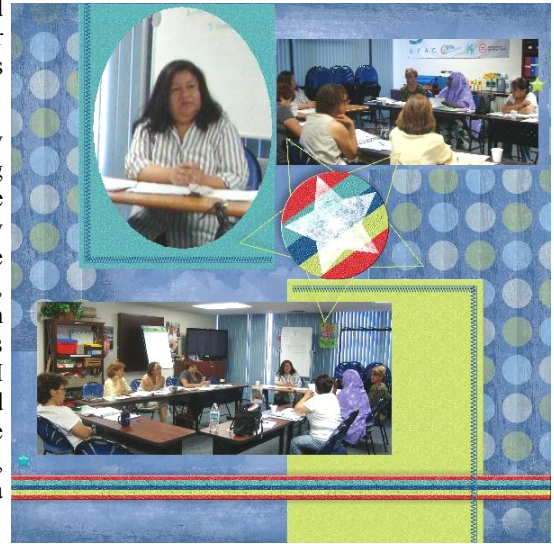
As the Senior Peer Coordinator of Heritage Clinic, I had the opportunity to train EMASS staff just like I trained senior volunteers to become Senior Peer Counselors at our agency. The training covers mental health topics related to older adults in the area of depression, suicide prevention, addictions, family system theory, and creative aging. The Seminar integrated spirituality, emotion, and the physical, essentially the ABC's of counseling and mental health interventions.

During the 22 topics discussed, I witnessed how deeply motivated the group was to learn; their inquisitive minds challenged me every week to deliver better lectures. When emotionally elicit topics arose, they were graceful enough to navigate with me these delicate

topics; their dedication to attend each week indicated their commitment to better serve this great group of people.

I learned from them how convicted they were in helping older adults, how easily malleable they were in learning new material, how generous they were with each other emotionally, personally and as we partook in delicious international meals during lunch time and lastly I learned that the training touched their lives as one attendee expressed: "we share, we learn, we laugh, and we always have a good time, Thanks!"

Thank you EMASS for inviting Heritage Clinic to be part of this unique educational opportunity. Heritage Clinic and EMASS are truly partners in the service of older adults in San Diego County.



Sincerely,  
Velia Gitari, MA  
Senior Peer Counseling Coordinator  
Heritage Clinic

## TMI volunteers for the Seniors

By Kim Burrows, TMI Division Director

Toward Maximum Independence (TMI) has been volunteering at UPAC for several months now. The group of 3 individuals work with a job coach volunteering to gain independence with their work skills.

They participate in the Friday program at the Escondido office and assist with many different tasks as they are assigned. The staff at UPAC have been very welcoming and supportive of our agency and have assisted the team

members to continue gaining their independence with their work skills. The group's focus is to find paid employment so they work on completing volunteer duties at various non-profit agencies until that happens.



## Welcome to the new member of EMASS Team

Rosa Lopez is a new addition to the EMASS team. She was hired part time by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), San Diego. Rosa is Latina and has been a dedicated volunteer *promotora* for many years with



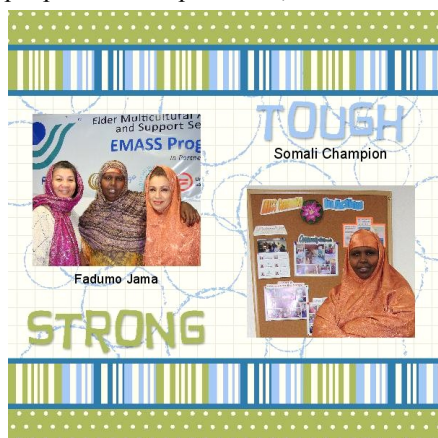
various non-profit organizations around North County. She is bilingual and loves to help underserved populations. She has an excellent wealth of community resources that she uses to advocate a good mental and physical health for her constituents. She has also been involved with the community clinics in North County. Her favorite aspect of being a volunteer is helping those in need and getting others involved

in the community. She believes that "we all should help each other, just because we never know when we will need help ourselves." Welcome aboard Rosa!

## Somali Community Service Champion

On a daily basis countless Somali Seniors are referred to Somali Family Service, because of the wide array of free service the organization provides. One senior (name withheld) in particular was referred by Molina Health Care; this senior was dealing with many different issues. The senior was living off of income that was essentially next to nothing in order to support five people. On top of this, the client

housed a child with disabilities. Although, this client's situation was dire, Fadumo Jama, one of Somali Family Service Community Health workers for EMASS program, took charge and ensured this client received her undivided attention and guarantee that the client received the help they needed. Some of the things Fadumo has helped the client with include, but were most certainly were not limited to, driving to and from appointments, setting up appointment, and ensuring the client received all the services she was eligible for. The client now, is benefiting from services that were once nonexistent to her and this is the most important part of Fadumo's job, reaching out to seniors and informing them about these services that are there to help them. Somali Family Service ensures that seniors such as these are able to have the stable home they deserve and are benefiting from all the services that are allocated for senior citizens in the Somali community.



At EMASS Community Center

- September 6, first day of Healthier Living Workshop. Six (6) Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Every Tuesday and Friday from 11:30-12:30 Senior Nutrition-Congregate Hot Lunch (donation of \$3.00 for seniors and \$3.50 for non-seniors)
- Social and Recreational Activities every Tuesday and Friday from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
  - Laughter Class
  - Video Karaoke
  - Zumba
  - Physical Exercises
  - Computer Class every Tuesday

## Up Close & Personal with EMASS Participant

Senora Teofila learned about the UPAC-EMASS Program when she was at a participant's home. She was with them when the Mobility Coordinator arrived to pick her friends up to bring them to the EMASS Senior Nutrition luncheon. She decided to attend as well and has become a regular participant on Fridays.

She loves coming (to EMASS Community Center) because she enjoys being around people who understand her. She likes to talk and to learn new things. She says the food is very good. She is always looking forward to Fridays.

*“La actividad favorita es la clase de risa, dice que al principio no se sentía muy cómoda riendo sin*



*razón, pero que después empezó a sentir que se estaba riendo en verdad fue cuando empezó a sentir los beneficios de la risa.”*

Her favorite activity is laughter class. She says that at the beginning she was not feeling comfortable laughing about nothing, but later, she said, I started to laugh for real and I found the true benefit in laughter.

*“Este programa me ayuda porque me hace sentir entendida, con apoyo, yo me río, hablo, disfruto de buena comida y todavía mandan por mí! Que mas puedo pedir?”*

*“This program helps me because I found understanding and support, I laugh, talk, have good meals, and you guys send transportation! What else can I ask for?”*

# IRC's Golden Door Project helps EMASS Participants

## My Healthier Living Story by Espie Umali

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) through its "Golden Door Project" helped more than 20 participants to start the process of their US citizenship. Since last year there were some 10 participants who completed the paper trail and are

studying and waiting for the citizenship examination and interview. There were already six (6) EMASS Latino participants who did the swearing in and got their citizenship certificate.

Mrs. Maria P. Stated "I feel relieved now that I have the worry of my naturalization citizenship off my mind. The process is so tedious that without the help of IRC and UPAC-EMASS I would not have been able to complete



the paperwork or process."

Mr. Rafael has been in United States for over 35 years. He worked and retired but he admitted that he did not give much importance to it and he did not know where and how to start. He also stated that he cannot learn English and is fearful of failing in the

interview and examination. He stated "I thank Gina and Rosa very much. Because of their help I was able to obtain my US citizenship. I also thank Laura who patiently assisted me to gain my confidence to review and passed the exam."

Gina and Rosa expressed that they are pleased with the outcome of their efforts and determination to help their fellow Latinos.

I have been living in Summercrest apartments for many years. Through our Senior Coordinator, Vicky Fernandez, health and social services programs from different organizations were implemented in our site. One of the best programs I joined is the Chronic Disease Self-management Workshop facilitated by the EMASS peer educators, Agnes and Claire.



Most of us who attended are in our 80s and we need this education very badly. Through this workshop we have changed our lives by living

healthier and putting into practice what we have learned. We appreciate what this workshop has done for us. Since I completed the workshop in May 2011, I do regular exercises, I make healthy choices on what I eat; practice better breathing and relaxation exercises. I feel that I am aging gracefully by taking care of my health conditions well. I believe I am healthier than before; now that I know the tools in managing my difficult emotions; pain; fatigue; and stress. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity.



Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.

## Partner's Report

On July 15th, 16th, and 17th Stephanie Wilson, CHW for the EMASS Program, (and employee of the Urban League of San Diego County) worked at the 2011 National Stand Down Medical Tent with Dr. Arnold Gass. Stand Down is an annual event held to offer homeless veterans an avenue to get the medical and daily living essentials that they lack. The following letter was sent to our agency to thank her for her efforts.

Dear Ms. Wilson;

*I would like to thank you for your invaluable service to our Veterans at Stand Down 2011. Not only was this event the largest Stand Down to date, it has been by all accounts the most successful.*

*During my tour, I was impressed by not only the organization of the event and the scope of services offered, but the spirit of people like you who contributed so much of their time to help out those less fortunate Veterans who were truly in need. This was quite an accomplishment.*

*Your commitment and effort has allowed the VA San Diego Healthcare System to be a vital and remedial element in the lives of the many men and women who gave so much of themselves in serving our country. Special thanks for your generous assistance to Dr. Gass.*

Sincerely,

Robert M. Smith, MD

Acting Director