

Wordcount 405

June 6, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Camarillo Congregate Meal Program

Is the City of Camarillo recognizing and addressing the needs of its senior population? According to California Department of Finance estimates, Ventura County seniors, those 60 and older, will make up 29% of the population by 2030. The challenge today is to meet the needs of this growing segment of society.

In a review of the senior nutrition programs, the 2015-2016 Grand Jury learned that although congregate meals are available to seniors five days a week throughout the County, they are only available to seniors in the City of Camarillo once a month. The Grand Jury opened an investigation into this issue by interviewing key personnel, conducting research, and reviewing California State and federal legislation.

The Camarillo Health Care District and the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District, as well as the City of Camarillo, provide services and support for senior programs in their area. Prior to 2013, the Camarillo Health Care District and the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District worked together to provide senior congregate meals four days a week. With a Memorandum of Understanding, the park district provided facilities and the health care district managed the program with public funding.

Federal and State funding for nutrition services has been stagnant for several years. Providers must now contribute 10% of previous funding to cover the costs. The Grand Jury also learned that the cities in the County vary widely in their general fund support of senior programs. This support ranges from \$66.83 per senior in Moorpark to \$2.36 per senior in Camarillo.



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As a result of this investigation, the Grand Jury found that the senior population of Camarillo has not been formally surveyed to determine its needs. In addition, the Camarillo Health Care District, the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District, and the City of Camarillo do not adequately collaborate or coordinate efforts to meet the needs of the senior population.

The Grand Jury recommends that the City of Camarillo conduct a "needs survey" of its senior population. In addition, it recommends that the City Council, the Camarillo Health Care District, and the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District work together to determine goals and strategies to best serve the seniors.

The complete report may be accessed at www.ventura.org/grand-jury; click on the Annual Reports tab and consult "Fiscal Year 2015-2016."

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