



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COMMISSION ON AGING

PO Box 8119 San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8119
June 17, 2011

*Kathleen Bellefontaine, Chair
Member at Large*

*Marilyn Hamilton, Vice-Chair
District 5 Representative*

*Maryanne Zarycka
District 1 Representative*

*Alice York
District 2 Representative*

*Anita Shower
District 3 Representative*

*Judy Mishoulam
District 4 Representative*

*Charles Carlson
AAA Advisory Council*

*Mal Towery
Area Agency on Aging,
Board of Directors*

*Elias Nimeh
Senior Nutrition Program*

*Carol Schmidt
Senior Service Provider*

*Marie Pounders
Member at Large*

*Diane Maiorano
Member at Large*

*Chrys Barnes
Member at Large*

*Jo Dennison
Member at Large*

*Margaret Ensminger
Alternate Member at Large*

*Suzanne McFarlane
Alternate Member at Large*

*Judy Salamacha
Alternate Member at Large*

*Francesca Nemko
Alternate Member at Large*

*Nancy Norwood
Alternate Member at Large*

SLO County District Attorney

SLO County Mental Health

SLO County Social Services

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
County Government Center
1055 Monterey Street, Rm D430
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Dear Supervisors:

In accordance with the Bylaws of the SLO County Commission on Aging, Section 3 f, I hereby submit the annual report for the 2010-11 (June-June) year and Goals and Priority Issues for 2011-12.

The Commission meets every third Friday of the month (except in December) at the Veteran's Building, 801 Grand Avenue in San Luis Obispo. Our liaison and Department of Social Services Director, Lee Collins, has provided SLOCOA with a Representative from Adult Services who attends COA meetings and keeps members updated on DSS ability to meet needs of the most vulnerable. Additionally, DSS administrative support electronically transmits COA affairs to the Supervisor's office, updates the SLOCOA website, and provides copy support when needed.

Our Commissioners serve and represent senior groups throughout the County. In addition to the Supervisors' appointees, we have representatives from local agencies such as the Area Agency on Aging, District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program, County Mental Health and Senior Nutrition. Our members at large are Senior advocates informed about a variety of senior concerns including, but not limited to, housing and financial matters, delivery of affordable medical and social services, senior centers, volunteerism and senior mental health. Our members serve without pay for travel and time.

SLOCOA Goals

Two major COA goals in 2010-2011 were to

1) Continue to collect information from Seniors about their concerns and solutions. One way to collect information is to encourage attendance at our meetings. These are the avenues used:

The **SLOCOA website** offers information to residents about COA meetings. **SLOCOA** rack cards are in their 3rd printing and distributed by members. **Tribune** posts notice of SLOCOA meetings regularly in the Senior Section. The **Speaker's Bureau** is still available and in its 2nd year.

COA still has work to do to encourage more input from the community.

2) Provide relevant and timely information to the Board of Supervisors.

Two way communication between the COA and Supervisors was significantly improved this fiscal year. Credit is directly due to the Supervisors' support of the Commission by selecting enthusiastic, concerned District Representatives.

Due to the work of Maryanne Zarycka (Mecham) and Anita Shower (Hill), a job description for the District Representatives has been written. This guidance will help Representatives, now and in the future, to understand their role in communicating concerns and advocating for policies with their Supervisor that will protect our most vulnerable Seniors.

SLOCOA Priority Issues

2010-2011 issues followed were 1) affordable senior housing; 2) senior safety from abuse; 3) senior isolation and depression; 4) impact of current Health Care Reform; 5) monitor affordable services that keep people in their homes; 6) Transportation Options. (see attachment A).

SLOCOA Chair's Report

SLOCOA has grown in membership and public interest while at the same time experiencing a decrease in DSS administrative support (because of State budget cuts). This report will show how COA has adjusted and improved because of these changes.

Change leads to Internal Strengthening

- ◆ Increase in membership has led to
 - 1) Clarification of our mission to newcomers. A Job Description for Supervisor Representatives has been written. A job description for Commissioners has been revised and hopefully will be approved at the June meeting.
 - 2) The Nominating Committee, in its second year, setting a foundation for a consistent COA appointment and re-appointment process, guided by the Bylaws.
 - 3) Our first Advocacy Committee formed to increase awareness of County Seniors with hearing loss.
- ◆ DSS budget and staff decreases have led to
 - 1) Chair's duties increasing and need to form an Executive Planning Committee. This committee incorporated the duties of the Planning Committee to reduce the number of outside meetings. Besides conducting the annual planning process, the members of the Exec Planning Committee assist the Chair in preparing the agenda and in Speaker selection.
 - 2) COA members took on new duties i.e. responsibility for Minute Taking, for supplying updated materials to website, for mailings to members, etc. Members have risen to this challenge and this has increased cohesion in the group.

What have we achieved by this emphasis on Internal Strengthening?

SLOCOA now has full membership (17) and full alternate membership (5) for the first time since the Chair has been a member, 2006. Public attendance at our meetings has exceeded past years. This new interest in the Commission has tested COA to show how it is useful to the community. COA has attracted people who want to learn about Community resources available to themselves and their elderly family members. They want to utilize their wisdom and talents while they still have the vigor to do so, and they don't want to waste their precious time!

Recent work in the last few years to clarify the purpose of COA, through bylaw changes, a planning process established for setting goals, and an appointment process that is transparent have set a foundation of understanding about what the Commission means to the Community. Excellent monthly presentations about current community resources, as shown in Attachment A, continue to provide all members with valuable information to disseminate to family, friends and neighbors.

This year's internal strengthening through establishment of COA committees that allow for meaningful member involvement beyond the work done at monthly meetings and the definition of Commissioner's duties has added substance to the meaning of being a Commissioner. If COA benefits by retaining motivated members, this year's focus has been an achievement.

We hope that this summary and the Attachments provided will help clarify our activities in the past year and goals for the next fiscal year. Please feel free to offer any suggestions or requests that would facilitate our communication with the Board.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Bellefontaine, Chairperson
SLO Commission on Aging

cc: DSS

Approved by COA 6/17/2011