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**THE GARY AND MARY WEST SENIOR WELLNESS CENTER MARKS  
ARRIVAL OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF SENIOR CARE IN SAN DIEGO**

*Senior Community Centers Opens Innovative Center to Provide Solutions to the Changing Needs of Seniors*

**SAN DIEGO - April 21, 2010** - Imagine your grandma's senior center. The Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center is anything but that and dispels everything you ever thought you knew about aging in San Diego. Visitors to the Center will immediately note its bright colors, technology, skylights and appreciate that it has been rated LEED Gold for energy efficiency. But most noticeable is that it has the vibe of a college campus. It opens today at 4<sup>th</sup> and Beech downtown and will be Senior Community Centers' flagship facility.

"Our vision is to transform the aging experience into something positive and life-fulfilling," said Gary West. "Senior Community Centers shares that vision and has the expertise to make it a reality." The Gary and Mary West Foundation's \$4 million gift was instrumental in making the center and its innovative programming possible.

"The concept of retirement and aging as we know it is constantly evolving, and today's senior is not one to sit home alone in a rocking chair," said Paul Downey, president and CEO of Senior Community Centers. "Age is not a barrier to learning, contributing to the community and participating in active, healthy life-styles."

Just some of the programs and services to be offered include:

- **Senior Nutrition Center**, serving up to 500 meals a day.
- **Center for Healthy Aging**, offering seniors access to physical and mental health care, case management, and referrals to partners in the aging network. A unique partnership with San Diego State University's College of Health and Human Services, also supported by the Gary and Mary West Foundation, will provide an interdisciplinary "learning laboratory" to help students better understand the importance of providing an integrated system of care for older adults in order to achieve optimal health and wellbeing while helping train the next generation of geriatric professionals.
- **Lifelong Learning Center**, offering:
  - Classes from crafts and cooking to fitness and photography at the enrichment center;
  - The Center's civic engagement program that will assess seniors' skills and abilities and match them with meaningful volunteer opportunities at the Center and in the community; and
  - The Cyber Cafe, an intergenerational experience where seniors will learn how to use a computer and receive hands-on training conducted by at-risk high school students to access their medical history and obtain health benefits information.

"The innovative programs and services developed by Senior Community Centers are a model for the rest of the country on how to provide aging services, especially for low-income seniors," said Robert Blancato, Executive Director of the National Association of Senior Nutrition and Aging Services Programs based in Washington D.C. "The addition of life-long learning and civic engagement will be

excellent compliments to the agency's stellar programs meeting basic needs such as nutrition."

The dynamic array of services has also caught the attention of the Director of the California Department of Aging, Lynn Daucher. "When seniors receive the care, socialization and mental stimulation they'll find at the Center, their overall well-being and quality of life is improved, which means less strain and impact on our social services and health care system, and increased positive interaction within our communities."

The Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center has received tremendous pro bono assistance and donations from many entities, including: HomeAid San Diego, Luce Forward, Smith Consulting Architects, the Ledcor Group, Integrated Project Management, Fredrick Schnaubelt, and Sons and Avoico.

"The total cost of acquisition and renovation of the project is \$8 million," said Downey. "Senior Community Centers is reaching out to the community to help us raise the final \$1.8 million to completely fund the project."

He noted that there are many opportunities throughout the building where people can name rooms in honor or memory of a loved one.

Senior Community Centers is a nonprofit agency transforming the aging experience for San Diego seniors by providing meals, social, medical and mental health services, homeless, and housing assistance and wellness activities. For more information, visit [www.serving seniors.org](http://www.serving seniors.org), or call 619/235-6572.

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