

2021 Look Ahead: La Jolla leaders offer hopes and plans for the new year

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The year 2020 brought more questions than most of us were prepared for: When can concerts resume? Did my favorite restaurant close? Should I wear a mask? The list goes on and on.

We asked the leaders of La Jolla's civic and cultural institutions two more questions, this time about the new year, 2021. Many of them agree that weathering the COVID-19 storm is paramount, along with supporting local businesses, children, senior citizens and arts and culture organizations.

Here's what they had to say:

What is the biggest issue facing La Jolla in 2021?

La Jolla Community Center Executive Director Nancy Walters:

Isolated seniors and the lack of training/education in technology. One of the most crucial problems during the pandemic is the lack of support for one of the most vulnerable populations: our seniors. Seniors are the fastest-growing population ... yet senior programs are the least funded in the nation. As a community-based center focusing on senior programs and services, it is our responsibility to continue to address and solve this serious problem in our community. We need more support from the county, foundations and individuals to allow us to continue providing resources for seniors in need.

- Train and educate seniors on technology and ways they can communicate with family and friends from the safety of their own homes. Starting in mid-January, we are offering "how-to" classes geared for seniors learning to use iPhones and iPads. For seniors, this can mean learning to use Skype to see family from across the country or logging into a Zoom class to see friends.
- Expand our reach to seniors in need of resources. We are expanding our outreach efforts to stay in touch with seniors via friendship calls, letters, emails and social media. We have and will continue to connect many seniors with resources such as meal/grocery deliveries, transportation and referrals to various services.
- Provide quality virtual programs to keep seniors engaged and learning new skills. Since the pandemic, we have provided over 250 free virtual classes, 86 programs/series and over 35 events and concerts. Our goal is to continue to engage seniors with new and interesting programs and events.



La Jolla Community Center Executive Director
Nancy Walters (Courtesy)