How Do You Want To Age?
Baby boomers talk about aging.
Welcome!

A MESSAGE FROM KEIRO PRESIDENT & CEO

As we begin 2022, I am optimistic for what the year has in store for us. Each day, as 10,000 Baby Boomers in America turn 65, we realize that we are no longer the future older adults – we are now the older adults. This new wave provides opportunities for Keiro to take innovative strides to address the current and future needs of older adults and caregivers wherever they call home.

When I think about my own future, I want to age in my own home as long as possible – and also not be a burden on my children. But to do that, all of us need to start planning and preparing now.

I am pleased to share that, over the coming months, Keiro will roll out a new series of programming and initiatives to begin preparing for what aging will look like in our Community in the future. Building off of Keiro’s existing community partnerships, grantmaking, and caregiver programs, we will focus on expanding community-based services, launching caregiving initiatives for younger generations, and exploring options to establish permanent presence in the community.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together with your help, Keiro will be there every step of the way, as a resource and trusted asset to care for our aging community!
Old Word, New Meaning

It can often be difficult to determine when one considers themselves “old,” or even understand what that term really means. We first asked the participants, “What do you think of the term ‘old’?”

Teeny: When I think of somebody who is old, I think of the word “experienced.”

Tim: It’s actually not in my vocabulary yet. I don’t consider it being old. I consider it adjusting, in terms of lifestyle, to our body. So I never say “old.”

Deena: I don’t think I’ve used that term too often! I used to think it was a number, but that just flew out the window. I still don’t think I’m old, I just think I’m not as young as I once was!

Tim: Well that’s a way of looking at it, half full versus half empty! I totally understand that. The only times you wonder is when you wake up and you feel an ache that you didn’t have a day before. And you say, “Whoo, why does my shoulder hurt today? I didn’t do anything.”

Teeny: I realized I was kind of old when my former students turned 60. And I was going, “Oh, that means — oh.”

David: When people at work started calling me “sir” instead of my first name, I knew I was old.

Concerns and Accommodations

The conversation then turned towards aging concerns, sparked by the question “What are your biggest concerns about aging?” Some mentioned the changes they were willing to make with their lifestyle and living space, while others noted that setting up plans for future care is an important step they should take.

Deena: Losing your mobility or independence, that’s a huge concern. But what I’m seeing is that the more active you are, you do stay healthier and you keep your mind active, so that’s influenced me in wanting to stay a little more alert and doing things.

Teeny: I’m also ready to get a new bathroom with accommodations, with the low entry or a seat. And I’ll clear away all my clutter so I don’t trip.

David: Mine is Medicare. Health insurance keeps on changing — and then not having any kids of my own, like, who’s going to take care of me?

Deena: Yeah. It’s ideal to age at home, but since I have no children as well, that’s probably not going to happen that way. I think that’s kind of the reality that my husband and I are going to have to face. That’s kind of my fear — that when I get older, who’s going to be taking care of me?

Tim: I know this might sound bad, but I have no concerns. There will always be issues — I figure I’m going to deal with them as they come up.

David: I respect that. There’s a lot of people that have feelings like you do. But the one thing I tell them is make sure you have everything in place so you don’t have to think about it.

article continued on next page
Starting the Conversation

Ensuring everything is in place includes talking to loved ones about the changes in accommodations that may be needed down the road. We asked the interviewees, “Have you had a conversation with your loved ones about future care?”

Teeny: I find it hard to imagine that my two sons will take care of me. Right now it’s like, I’m the only one who does stuff, so I’m going to take care of my husband who’s old, but what about me when I’m at that point? I have long-term care insurance and other plans… I think I’ll be the one to find the place for myself. But I need to communicate to my children what my desires are.

Tim: I think with me it’s pretty clear in terms of what I want to happen. So I think my loved ones totally understand the issues. I just don’t want to have to think about the whole thing because it might not happen that way. When there are issues that I need to address health-wise or mentally, then I’ll address it.

David: I don’t expect [future caregiving from family]. I got my living trust done, and Medicare. When I retired, I got a financial planner. So basically everything is set, in my opinion. I don’t have any kids, so my niece and nephew — I tease them, I say, “You know you’re going to be taking care of me!”

Deena: I do the same thing! I don’t think I’ve talked to anybody about aging… I don’t expect my nieces to have to worry about me. I think it’s something my husband and I do need to talk about, because it is just us. I think I have to talk to more family members about the future, because you never know how fast that future comes.

The baby boomers closed the discussion with plenty of laughter and smiles, having become quick friends over the course of their conversation. All agreed that they would be taking time to think about the questions from the day, considering how they can best prepare to enter the next chapter of their lives.

For the full article, visit keiro.org/news.

Stay tuned for the release of the video of their discussion!

DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to the Japanese American National Museum for generously providing the location for this project.

David, 63

David lives on his own and has no children. Working at UPS for 36 years, he has focused his life on taking care of himself and reconnecting with friends and family. He enjoys exercising, walking his dog, doing yard work, and detailing his car.

Deena, 64

Deena lives with her husband, Bob, and has no children. Deena worked as a pediatric occupational therapist for 39 years. Deena enjoys going on walks with her dog and volunteering with Pasadena Nikkei Seniors for their lunch deliveries.

Teeny, 71

Teeny lives with her husband, Sei, and has two children. She was a teacher at Belmont High School for 37 years and still keeps in touch with her students. She enjoys spending time in her garden at home and looks forward to planting more fruit trees.

Tim, 67

Tim lives with his wife, Sandy, and beloved dog, and has no children. He retired from Automobile Club of Southern California. Tim is currently president of the board of directors of East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center.

Keiro interviewed Michelle Hirano, family member of an Iyashi Care patient, who shared about her experience with Iyashi Care and how it may be beneficial to others in the community, including the Millennial generation.

For Michelle and her family, her grandmother was a key caretaker who kept the family together. With time and her grandmother aging, that role began shifting. Going from the primary care provider in a large extended family to accepting care from others was a difficult transition both for Michelle’s grandmother and mother.

Living alone became more dangerous for her grandmother, and eventually the family looked into other options. For Michelle and her family, her grandmother first heard about the Iyashi Care program through Keiro’s quarterly publication. “My mom realized it would be impactful for her grandmother and mother. How Iyashi Care can Benefit the Millennial Generation.

For more information about Iyashi Care, contact us at 213.873.5791 programs@keiro.org.

For the full article, visit keiro.org/news.
Memory Loss – Is This Normal?

As we age, we may start to notice changes in our bodies and in our memory. For some people, there is a different level of worry when it comes to experiencing forgetfulness. There are a variety of factors in our lives that can cause forgetfulness or mild cognitive decline without necessarily indicating early signs of Alzheimer’s or dementia.

What’s “Normal” Memory Loss?

Debra Cherry, PhD, executive vice president of Alzheimer’s Los Angeles, shared with us that as we age, our brains do experience changes. According to Dr. Cherry, our memory peaks when we are in our 20s, but after our 40s, there is a modest and gradual decline, mostly at an unnoticeable level.

She shared, “If you were looking at these normal changes and were comparing them to a dementia, like Alzheimer’s or vascular dementia, losses due to dementia get so severe that they interfere with our functions of daily living.” Experiencing mental changes that impact daily function or quality of life may be a sign to consider checking in with a doctor.

Memory Loss That Isn’t Necessarily Dementia

Memory loss, especially if it starts suddenly, can be temporary and caused by reasons other than dementia and Alzheimer’s. Some factors that may contribute to temporary memory loss include grief, depression, medication interactions, vitamin deficiencies, and more.

Margaret Shimada, LCSW, director of service programs at Little Tokyo Service Center, has interacted with individuals who have experienced different stages of forgetfulness. She has seen in cases of grief when someone loses a loved one, they become more forgetful, scattered, and less focused. Once they were able to grieve or work through their depression with therapy, support, or medication, the fog lifted and they became more alert.

The Next Steps

The first step to take, regardless of whether you are experiencing memory loss or not, is to establish a baseline, or what is normal for your memory. Dr. Cherry recommends that if you have concerns, you should let your physician know how your current function differs from your baseline. During one short physician visit, it might be difficult for your doctor to notice a substantial change. If you feel like your memory and thinking differ from your baseline, it may be beneficial to ask your physician for a referral to a specialist in memory disorders, usually a neurologist or a geriatrician.

“There’s such a stigma to dementia, Alzheimer’s, and memory loss that, as a way of self-preservation, we start to become defensive and come up with ways to not appear to have that memory loss.”

- Margaret Shimada, LCSW
Director of Service Programs, Little Tokyo Service Center

Normalizing a Judgment-Free, Honest Conversation

Other than maintaining our brain health, normalizing honest yet judgment-free conversations with loved ones about these signs of forgetfulness or memory loss is important. “There’s such a stigma to dementia, Alzheimer’s, and memory loss that, as a way of self-preservation, we start to become defensive and come up with ways to not appear to have that memory loss,” Margaret explained. “But denial oftentimes contributes to the problem. At the same time, we also do not want to jump to conclusions. That’s when the conversation with our family and physician becomes so important.”

When we have those conversations that are open and free of judgment, we are not instilling fear in the individual, but rather taking that step in normalizing the idea that “This is okay.” With this new mindset, we’ll be able to look at the individual holistically, and take the proper steps to approach forgetfulness and memory loss.

For the full article, visit keiro.org/news.
Mental Health Support During the Pandemic

Partnership between Little Tokyo Service Center and Keiro

According to a recent AARP survey of older adults, most rated their mental health during the pandemic as excellent, very good, or good. But more than half of respondents also said they were feeling anxious about things and/or having difficulty falling or staying asleep. More individuals sought mental health support services offered in partnership by Keiro and LTSC during the pandemic as well. One client, Kaede, sought out help when she realized how the pandemic was affecting her.

Kaede was very socially active, but with the pandemic, her hobbies, projects, and trips were suddenly cancelled, with only feelings of anxiety to replace them. This eventually led to symptoms commonly associated with panic disorder. She was unable to sleep and found herself waking her husband up in the middle of the night.

It was then that Kaede’s Japanese-speaking psychiatrist recommended counseling alongside medical treatment. “It seemed like a good option because I didn’t want to be too reliant on medication,” said Kaede, “and I could talk freely in Japanese.”

Kaede began her counseling sessions at LTSC virtually once a week with her therapist, Yuka Kato. “We started by having Kaede talk about what was making her anxious. Then we talked about calming and relaxation techniques.” Kaede now meets with Yuka once every three weeks. She is also re-embracing her diverse interests and has restarted several activities.

Initially, Kaede was hesitant to seek help. “I didn’t want to be thought of as this crazy person. I hated the idea of being labeled as having a mental illness,” she explained. “But I knew that I was failing apart, and I was scared.”

Kaede concluded, “Thanks to counseling, I now feel like I have enough strength to think positively, and to be able to shift my feelings towards gratitude. If there’s someone around me experiencing this, I would encourage them to seek counseling. Because the best first step you can take is to try talking about it.”

For the full article, visit keiro.org/news.

Technology with a Twist:
Enjoy Life More and Live Better

Debra Satterfield

New technology is always on the horizon, and it keeps us constantly learning new things! Some new technologies are found in the gadgets and things we use every day such as digital watches or a smart phone. So, what is coming next?
Here are three things to watch on the technology horizon:
• The Metaverse is a term for a future world that is made up of computer-generated virtual communities, digital technologies, and entertainment. It is based on augmented and virtual reality, also called “AR/VR” or blended reality.
• The Internet of Things, also known as “IoT”, are small devices that connect us to the internet and allow us to participate in the metaverse.
• Deep Learning and Machine Learning will help us to find things or direct us to things we might enjoy. This is also known as artificial intelligence or “AI.” The basis for all AI is computer codes and statistics or probability formulas.

The combination of AI, IoT, and the metaverse will seamlessly create a new world of opportunities for all of us in our daily lives. Here are just a few ways these emerging technologies can support our future lifestyles:
• Independence with Driverless Cars and Personal Mobility: Many of us do not want to give up their keys, but in the future, with automation, IoT and other technology, driverless cars will be a new method of transportation.
• Worry Free with Responsive Smart Homes: Today we worry about being a burden to our loved ones and needing help in our homes, but in the near future, our homes themselves will be smart and can help support our daily lives.
• Connecting to a Fulfilling Life in our Metaverse Communities: In the metaverse, we will have new ways to stay connected with the people we care about and to keep doing the things we love.

We will be able to enjoy more active lives with greater ease and comfort. And all of this is so you can live better and enjoy life more. Welcome to the metaverse!

For the full article, visit keiro.org/news.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debra Satterfield is a professor at California State University, Long Beach. She holds an MFA degree in design from Iowa State University and a BS in computer science from Morningside College. Her research is on smart home technologies, aging in place, service design, and human experience design.
Friends of Keiro

Donors, supporters, and volunteers help Keiro to enhance the quality of life for Japanese American and Japanese older adults wherever they call home. Your support allows Keiro to adapt and meet the changing needs of Our Community. We sincerely appreciate all those who join Keiro to ensure the quality of senior life in Our Community. 

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December 2021.
Recently retiring during the pandemic, Janis Parkinson spent the first year of her retirement committing to focusing on herself and making the most out of her day.

After over 40 years at her job, she felt that retiring at the age of 64 was the perfect fit for her. “I wanted to change my habits to be a bit healthier. Now I have more time to do healthier things.” A fun activity that Janis regularly takes part in is regularly going to Knott’s Berry Farm to spend time with her sister.
CONSIDER MAKING A RECURRING GIFT TO KEIRO

Monthly giving helps continue our mission to enhance the quality of senior life in our community and to resources and means to meet their changing needs. A monthly gift forms a predictable source of income, providing assurance that resources to meet their changing needs.

A gift to Keiro is a thoughtful way to honor someone, by remembering and celebrating a key milestone in a loved one’s life. Your gift not only supports Keiro’s work to improve the quality of life for older adults but also pays special tribute to your loved ones. Consider making a tribute gift today.

Contact support@keiro.org or visit keiro.org/support.

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TEACH ME SERIES

We started a new video project called Teach Me Series. In these videos, we ask older adults to be our teachers, sharing their stories related to an activity they enjoy doing.

WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK!

Thank you for helping us create meaningful stories. We value your feedback. Please send it to feedback@keiro.org.

60TH ANNIVERSARY

Keiro celebrated its 60th anniversary with a virtual celebration honoring the organization’s history and vision for the future in October.

A gift to Keiro is a thoughtful way to honor someone, by remembering and celebrating a key milestone in a loved one’s life. Your gift not only supports Keiro’s work to improve the quality of life for older adults but also pays special tribute to your loved ones. Consider making a tribute gift today.

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KEIRO NO HI FESTIVAL

Keiro and Japanese American Cultural & Community Center presented the fourth annual Keiro no Hi Festival virtually in September. The event brought our community together through an online video premiere, fine arts showcase, and bento and gift package pickup at community hubs.

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WINTER 2022 | ANNUAL PUBLICATION
LEAVE A LEGACY WITH KEIRO

Anyone can leave a legacy with Keiro. Consider leaving a lasting impact on improving the quality of life for Japanese American older adults. Legacy giving is the transfer of assets to Keiro during one’s lifetime or as part of an estate plan. It is a win-win approach to philanthropic donations that supports Keiro and improving the quality of life for Japanese American older adults. Legacy giving is a blessing and continue to share your gifts.

Anyone who is turning 65

TED YASUNAGA (100) is a Nikkei Senior Gardens resident who was part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during WWII. Even after his milestone 100th birthday, he continues to be independent, managing his own finances, and staying up-to-date on the latest news, especially about sports.

SAKAYE ARATANI (102) is the wife of the late George Aratani. Her family, including her great-grandchildren, is a large part of what keeps her going. Her curiosity to explore also keeps her busy, including earring creations, which she began during the pandemic.

“Don’t take your health for granted. Each day is a blessing and continue to share your gifts.”

“Take it easy and don’t worry too much. You need to relax!”

“Patience is very important. And being grateful.”

For the full article, visit keiro.org/news.
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Upcoming Events

- **2022 Caregiver Conference:**
  - Understanding Long-Term Care
  - Tuesday, March 8
  - Navigating Challenging Conversations
  - Wednesday, March 16
  - Stress Management for Caregivers
  - Saturday, March 26

- **Speaker Series:**
  - A Mental Health Conversation
  - May 2022

- **Alzheimer’s Conference**
  - June 2022

- **Keiro no Hi Festival**
  - September 2022

*Dates are subject to change

For more information on Keiro’s upcoming events, visit keiro.org/events.