

# NEW MEXICO GENERATIONS

WINTER 2025

## 2025 Spa and Wellness Guide

- Best Weekend Retreats
- Most Indulgent Restorative Treatments
- Alternative Therapies to Recharge Your Body and Mind



## Attend a Senior Center Event!

With 250 sites across the state, there's a location—and community—near you

## Snow-Free Adventures

7 Ideas for wintertime fun without the white stuff

## Estate Planning in the New Year

5 tips for long-term peace of mind

THE INTERVIEW

# Roxanne Swentzell

*The award-winning artist has devoted a lifetime to working with clay and advocating for sustainable farming practices. At 62, she's just getting started.*







## SENIOR GAMES ARE EXPANDING! Two State Games For New Mexico

New Mexico Senior Olympics Are Happening  
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or call us at  
(888) 623-NMSO (6676)



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# NEW MEXICO GENERATIONS

## WINTER 2025

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New Mexico's 250 Senior Centers are vital to supporting our state's aging adults, offering a host of opportunities to come together across the state. In this issue, we spotlight a center in Alamogordo that has become one of the best in the state at offering activities and original event programming.



# A Time for Reflection and Gratitude

I grew up in a house down a three-mile dirt road between Madrid and Golden, New Mexico, in the 1970s and '80s. Our community faced a lot of hardships, including economic instability, health issues, and access to medical care. At an early age, I saw how a lack of services can create challenges. At the same time, our neighbors shared a real sense of community. We often came together to take care of one another when needed. There was a deep sense of responsibility in supporting the people who lived among us.

One day a doctor from the University of New Mexico visited a local friend to play banjo, saw the lack of health care in our community, and returned once a week to treat people in the area. UNM set up a roving clinic—at the church, at someone's house—and while we waited for checkups, vaccinations, and other care, we'd visit with our neighbors. The Clinic, as we referred to it, was a social hub and doctor visit rolled into one. That was when I knew that I wanted to focus my career on rural health. I realized that a healthy community means more than access to care—there needs to be opportunities for social engagement, caregiving, access to nutritious food, transportation, and economic stability.

I'm passionate about community health, and I'm honored to advocate on your behalf as the new cabinet secretary designate of the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department. For the past two decades, I've worked in a range of roles in public policy, health care, and advocacy in New Mexico, including leadership positions in this department and in the New Mexico Office of Health Care Reform, where I shaped policy benefiting older adults and people with disabilities.

Our state is special for many reasons, including respect for our elders. Family values run deep here. In fact, not every state has a cabinet-level position devoted to supporting older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers. In New Mexico, we believe that statewide services offered through the government are vital, and we're committed to providing them to raise up all communities.

One top priority of the department is to continue strengthening our aging network, which includes your local senior centers. Senior centers act as community hubs while also serving as

support systems. As such, we will continue to ensure that they have transportation, food, and other resources they need to serve as many New Mexicans as possible.

Another big focus is supporting family and friends who provide unpaid caregiving for the older adults in their lives. There are shortages of professional caregivers across the country, and that means family and friends often step in to fill the gap. They are unsung heroes and the backbone of the long-term-care system in New Mexico. But family caregiving places a strain on time,

health (especially mental health), and finances, with hundreds of thousands of caregivers in our state providing some \$3 billion in annual unpaid care. As such, I'm excited about expanding the New MexiCare health program, which provides financial support and training to caregivers assisting friends or family members with daily activities because of physical or cognitive limitations. It's our department's job to support caregivers with the resources they need to allow their loved ones to age in place—for as long as possible. We also need to elevate long-term facility-based care in high-quality settings where residents' rights are protected. I'm honored to help with these efforts.

This issue of *New Mexico Generations* covers many topics that reinforce Aging & Long-Term Services' commitments to communities across the state, like providing information about New MexiCare, ideas for making homes more accessible, tips for what's new in Medicare in 2025, and an inspiring profile of Santa Clara Pueblo master potter Roxanne Swentzell, who has spent a lifetime working with clay. It also includes a guide to Senior Day at the Legislature on January 27, where I hope you'll join me in person to advocate for senior rights.

Supporting people's ability to age in place and remain active in their communities requires collaboration, a skill I've learned from decades in public health care. I'm excited to work with colleagues across the state and within government to continue to uplift older adults and adults living with disabilities. As I learned growing up, we can all make a difference when we come together, and I'm excited to help in whatever way I can.

Best,



**Emily Kaltenbach,**  
Cabinet Secretary Designate  
New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services  
Department





# New Mexico Aging Services

Helping New Mexicans achieve lifelong independence and health.

## About New Mexico Aging Services\*

Our mission is to serve and inspire the state's older adult community to live active, healthy lives and enhance their connections within their community. The department is a leader in developing programs and building partnerships that support lifelong independence and healthy aging, providing advocacy, support, and resources for seniors and for adults with disabilities.

● For more information about NMAS, visit [aging.nm.gov](http://aging.nm.gov) or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and X @NewMexicoAging.

## About New Mexico Generations

*New Mexico Generations* is dedicated to enriching the lives of every generation of New Mexican by offering inspiration, resources, and community connection.

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\*New Mexico Aging Services is the forward-facing name for the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department. We use the Aging Services name in external communications and with constituents in order to better represent the full breadth of work we do and the people we provide services for across the state.

This publication was paid for in part by grant 90SAPG0067 from the Administration for Community Living.



## NM Aging Services Division Overviews

**Adult Protective Services:** APS is committed to protecting the safety of adults who are not able to protect themselves and to promote personal choice and self-determination among the aging. There are five Adult Protective Services regions serving all 33 counties of New Mexico. Its services include investigation of reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults.

● If you suspect an adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Adult Protective Services toll-free at (866) 654-3219.

**Aging Network:** New Mexico's four Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) provide in-home and community-based services that allow older individuals to remain in their homes and receive support as they get older. Services include home-delivered meals, employment, transportation, healthy aging and prevention programs, and access to the department's network of over 250 senior centers statewide.

**Office of Indian Elder Affairs:** The OIEA's mission is to coordinate and enhance a system of services that empower American Indian Elders with support and resources to live a healthy lifestyle with joy, respect, and dignity in their tribal communities. Support and assistance offered by the division include meals at Tribal Senior Centers, home-delivered meals, transportation, homemaking services, and exercise and physical fitness opportunities.

● For more information about

the OIEA's services, email [oiea.info@altsd.nm.gov](mailto:info@altsd.nm.gov).

**Consumer Elder Rights Division and the Aging & Disabilities Resource Center:** Together, these divisions help elders, persons with disabilities, and caregivers find services and information to help aging New Mexicans live well and independently. This includes assistance with registering for Medicare and Medicaid, paying for prescriptions drugs, assessing long-term care programs and services, and more.

**Ombudsman Program:** The program's public advocates, all of whom are volunteers, visit assisted-living facilities and nursing homes on a regular basis, advocating for residents' rights, investigating complaints or concerns with staff, exploring solutions, and ensuring quality of care.

● To report abuse, neglect, or other concerns, call (866) 451-2901.

### Contact NMAS

(800) 432-2080  
[help@altsd.nm.gov](mailto:help@altsd.nm.gov)  
[aging.nm.gov](http://aging.nm.gov)  
 @NewMexicoAging



# Un tiempo para reflexionar y agradecer

**C**recí en una casa al final de un camino de tierra de tres millas entre Madrid y Golden, Nuevo México, durante las décadas de 1970 y 1980.

Nuestra comunidad enfrentaba muchas dificultades, que iban desde la inestabilidad económica hasta problemas de salud y de acceso a la atención médica. Desde muy pequeña fui testigo de los problemas que genera la falta de servicios. Pero, a su vez, entre nuestros vecinos existía un verdadero sentido de comunidad. A menudo nos uníamos para cuidarnos unos a otros siempre que era necesario. Teníamos un profundo sentido de la responsabilidad a la hora de ayudar a las personas que vivían a nuestro alrededor.

Cierto día, un médico de la Universidad de Nuevo México (UNM) vino a visitar a un amigo de la zona para tocar el banjo. Al ver la falta de asistencia sanitaria en nuestra comunidad, decidió volver una vez a la semana para atender a la gente del lugar. La UNM montó una clínica ambulante —en la iglesia o en la casa de algún vecino— y, mientras esperábamos a que nos atendieran, vacunaran o dieran otros cuidados, los vecinos pasábamos el rato reunidos. La Clínica, así la llamábamos, se convirtió en punto de encuentro social y consultorio médico a la vez. Fue entonces cuando supe que quería dedicarme a la sanidad rural. Comprendí que una comunidad sana no se reduce al mero acceso a la atención de la salud, sino que también deben existir oportunidades de compromiso social, de cuidados, de acceso a alimentos nutritivos, de transporte y de estabilidad económica.

Soy una apasionada de la salud comunitaria y me siento honrada de poder representarlos a ustedes como nueva secretaria designada del gabinete del Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México. Durante las dos últimas décadas, he ocupado diversos cargos en el ámbito de la política pública, la atención sanitaria y la defensa de los derechos en Nuevo México. Entre ellos, me he desempeñado en puestos de liderazgo en este departamento y en la Oficina de Reforma Sanitaria de Nuevo México, donde he dado forma a políticas que favorecen a los adultos mayores y a las personas con discapacidad.

Nuestro estado es especial por muchas razones y una de ellas es el respeto a los mayores. Nuestros valores familiares están profundamente arraigados. De hecho, son pocos los estados que tienen un cargo a nivel de gabinete dedicado a apoyar a los adultos mayores, a los adultos con discapacidad y a quienes los asisten. En Nuevo México, sabemos de la importancia de los servicios que el gobierno ofrece en todo el estado y estamos comprometidos a seguir brindándolos para fortalecer a todas las comunidades.

Una de las máximas prioridades de nuestro departamento es seguir consolidando la red para la tercera edad, en la que se enmarcan los centros locales para adultos mayores. Estos centros funcionan como núcleos comunitarios y, al mismo

tiempo, como sistemas de asistencia. Como tales, seguiremos garantizando que dispongan de transporte, alimentos y otros recursos necesarios para poder asistir a la mayor cantidad de ciudadanos posible de Nuevo México.

Otro objetivo importante es ofrecer apoyo a los familiares y amigos que cuidan de sus adultos mayores de forma no remunerada. El país sufre una escasez de cuidadores profesionales, por lo que a menudo son los familiares y amigos quienes se ocupan de brindar estos cuidados. Son auténticos héroes anónimos y constituyen la columna vertebral del sistema de atención a largo plazo de Nuevo México. El cuidado familiar supone una gran presión sobre el tiempo, la salud (especialmente la salud mental) y las finanzas de cientos de miles de personas que prestan cuidados en nuestro estado. Ellos representan unos tres mil millones de dólares anuales en cuidados no remunerados. Así pues, estoy muy ilusionada con la idea de ampliar el programa de salud para cuidadores New MexiCare, que ofrece asistencia económica y programas de capacitación para quienes cuidan de amigos o familiares con limitaciones físicas o cognitivas en sus actividades diarias. Es tarea de nuestro departamento brindarles a estos cuidadores los recursos que necesitan para que sus seres queridos puedan transcurrir la tercera edad en su propio hogar, el mayor tiempo posible. También necesitamos elevar la atención a largo plazo en centros de alta calidad donde se protejan los derechos de las personas que allí residen. Es un honor para mí contribuir a estos esfuerzos.

Esta edición de *New Mexico Generations* aborda muchos temas que refuerzan los compromisos del Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México para con las comunidades de todo el estado. En esta entrega aportamos información sobre el programa New MexiCare, damos consejos para mejorar la accesibilidad de los hogares y ofrecemos sugerencias sobre lo nuevo de Medicare en 2025. Además, presentamos un perfil inspirador, el de Roxanne Swentzell, una maestra alfarera de Santa Clara Pueblo que ha hecho de la arcilla el trabajo de toda su vida. Esta edición también contiene una guía para el Día de la Tercera Edad en la Legislatura, el 27 de enero; espero contar con la presencia de todos ustedes para acompañarme a defender los derechos de los adultos mayores.

Ayudar a las personas a transcurrir la tercera edad en sus propios hogares y a mantenerse activas en sus comunidades requiere una gran colaboración, una habilidad que he cultivado durante décadas de trabajo en la salud pública. Estoy muy entusiasmada con la idea de trabajar con colegas de todo el estado y del gobierno para seguir ayudando a los adultos mayores y a los adultos con discapacidad. Tal como aprendí mientras crecía en mi comunidad rural, todos podemos marcar la diferencia si nos unimos, y me siento muy feliz de poder aportar todo lo que esté a mi alcance.

Cordiales saludos,



**Emily Kaltenbach, secretaria designada del gabinete**

*Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México*



# Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México

**Acompañamos a las personas de Nuevo México para que puedan gozar de independencia y buena salud durante toda la vida.**

## Acerca de los Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México\*

Nuestra misión es servir e inspirar a las personas mayores del estado para que lleven una vida activa y saludable y para que establezcan vínculos sólidos con la comunidad. El departamento es pionero en la creación de programas y de alianzas que favorecen la independencia a lo largo de toda la vida y el envejecimiento de forma saludable, ofreciendo protección, asistencia y recursos para personas mayores y adultos con discapacidades.

● Para obtener más información sobre estos servicios, consulte el portal [aging.nm.gov](http://aging.nm.gov) o siganos en Facebook, Instagram y X (@NewMexicoAging).

## Acerca de la revista New Mexico Generations

*New Mexico Generations* busca enriquecer la vida de todas y cada una de las generaciones de Nuevo México, ofreciéndoles inspiración, recursos y oportunidades para conectar con la comunidad.

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\*Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México es el nombre que utilizamos para referirnos al Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores y a Largo Plazo de Nuevo México. Usamos este nombre en las comunicaciones externas y con la población en general para reflejar completamente el alcance de nuestro trabajo y representar mejor a quienes prestamos servicios en todo el estado.

## Información general sobre el Departamento de Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México

### Red para Personas Mayores:

Las cuatro Agencias de Área para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México prestan servicios domiciliarios y comunitarios que permiten que las personas mayores puedan permanecer en sus hogares y recibir asistencia durante la vejez. Estos servicios comprenden comidas a domicilio, empleo, transporte, programas para el envejecimiento saludable, programas de prevención y acceso a una red con más de 250 centros para la tercera edad en todo el estado.

### Oficina de Asuntos de Personas Mayores Indígenas (OIEA, sigla en inglés):

La misión de la OIEA es coordinar y potenciar un sistema de servicios que empodere a las personas mayores de la comunidad indígena estadounidense, brindándoles asistencia y recursos para llevar una vida saludable con alegría, respeto y dignidad en sus comunidades tribales. Estos servicios comprenden comidas en los Centros Tribales para Personas Mayores, comidas a domicilio, transporte, tareas domésticas y oportunidades de ejercicio físico para mantenerse en forma.

● Para obtener más información sobre los servicios de la OIEA, escriba a [oiea.info@altsd.nm.gov](mailto:oiea.info@altsd.nm.gov).

### Departamento de Derechos del Consumidor para la Tercera Edad y Centro de Recursos para Personas Mayores y Adultos con Discapacidades:

Estos dos departamentos trabajan de forma conjunta para ayudar a los adultos mayores, a las personas con discapacidad y

a quienes los asisten a encontrar servicios e información para que puedan llevar una vida saludable e independiente. Entre otras cosas, los ayudan con los trámites de inscripción en Medicare y Medicaid, a pagar los medicamentos recetados y a evaluar los programas y servicios de atención a largo plazo.

### Programa de Defensoría del Pueblo:

Este programa cuenta con defensores públicos, todos voluntarios, que visitan periódicamente los centros geriátricos y las residencias para personas mayores con el fin de defender los derechos de quienes residen en ellos, investigar denuncias o problemas con el personal, buscar soluciones y garantizar la calidad de la atención.

● Para denunciar maltrato, abandono u otros asuntos, llame al 866-451-2901.

### Póngase en contacto con los Servicios para Personas Mayores de Nuevo México

800-432-2080

[help@altsd.nm.gov](mailto:help@altsd.nm.gov)

[aging.nm.gov](http://aging.nm.gov)

@NewMexicoAging





● **From left:** Start seedlings indoors; try whole-wheat bread for health; caregivers are being recognized at games.

easy-to-grow produce like lettuce, beans, and kale. Planting times vary widely, so review tips and resources at [mastergardeners.nmsu.edu](http://mastergardeners.nmsu.edu).

### 3. Eat More Whole Grains

You can improve your health by skipping the empty calories in white rice, white bread, and plain pasta, and instead opt for more whole-grain options. For instance, our bodies digest brown rice and whole-wheat bread more slowly, making them a better choice for blood-sugar levels.

## Nutrition Month: Three Tips to Boost Your Health

March is National Nutrition Month, sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. And with spring around the corner, it's a great time to start focusing on healthy eating. "While many people choose to set resolutions at the beginning of the year, March is an excellent opportunity to renew our focus on health," says Ophelia Steppe, the state nutritionist for New Mexico Aging Services. "Take these three steps and try to make them a monthly habit."

### 1. Discover Healthy Meals from Around the World

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers healthy, delicious recipes on its website. The dishes are sourced from around the world, allowing you to explore a variety of nutritious meals from a range of cuisines. Check them out at [eatright.org](http://eatright.org).

### 2. Grow an Indoor Garden

Get an early jump on planting. Start seedlings indoors, then move them outside once temperatures rise. Try

### Celebrate National Caregivers Day with New MexiCare

February 21 is National Caregivers Day, a moment to celebrate the people who take care of the ones we love. At New Mexico Aging Services, these community heroes are uplifted year-round, thanks to the New MexiCare program.

Launched in 2023, New MexiCare provides up to \$1,400 in financial assistance as well as training to caregivers across the state who are assisting friends or family members who have physical or cognitive limitations with daily activities. The goal of the program is to help older adults thrive in their homes and communities, reducing nursing-home placements and emergency-room visits. Currently available in 31 counties, the goal is to expand the program statewide. "Family caregivers are the backbone of support to many aging adults in communities across the state," says Jennifer Vigil, deputy director of the agency's Adult Protective Services Division. "Through implementation of New MexiCare, we hope to provide some extra support so our older adults can thrive in their homes and stay in their communities of choice."

Learn more about New MexiCare at [newmexicare.org](http://newmexicare.org) or by calling (866) 654-3219 and selecting option four.





## CAREGIVERS ARE THE TRUE CHAMPIONS

At college sporting events in New Mexico, crowds are commemorating the real heroes of our communities—caregivers—in a new program from New Mexico Aging Services. “Our Caregiver of the Game series is an opportunity to highlight the unseen work our caregivers do,” says Brittany Espinoza, the program contractor. “It’s great to give them recognition on the field.”

Since August, New Mexico Aging Services has sponsored a Caregiver of the Game to highlight family and professional caregivers. In partnership with New Mexico State University Athletics, the initiative invites communities to nominate a caregiver, who, if they are selected, is then invited to a game and recognized on the field.

Know a caregiver who deserves to be celebrated? Nominate them today at [aging.nm.gov/community](http://aging.nm.gov/community).

## VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Stay active and engaged while making a positive difference in your community!

Volunteers of all ages can sign-up to participate in our **Volunteers in Action** program, while volunteers ages 55 and over are eligible to participate in our trio of **AmeriCorps Seniors** volunteer programs.

ONE ALBUQUERQUE senior affairs



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● Estate planning is a important way to care for yourself and offer loved ones clear directives in trying times.

ning services to people aged 60 and older residing in central New Mexico with small estates. “A will alone doesn’t necessarily take care of everything. What happens if you can no longer make decisions for yourself and need someone to oversee your care and finances?”

One of the goals of estate planning is to avoid probate, a time-consuming and sometimes costly court process. “By law, probate takes a minimum of six months,” Downing says. “And anybody that has acted as an executor of an estate can tell you that it is tons of work.”

To simplify the process, Downing suggests that you first decide who will be your beneficiaries. “Is it family members, a charitable organization, or a religious organization?” she asks. “An attorney then advises you on how to accomplish your goals under New Mexico state laws. That could involve a will, a trust, or other instruments, depending on the assets.”

Everyone’s circumstances are unique, so it’s important to consult with a local attorney to address your specific needs. While the following should not take the place of legal advice, here are five tips for beginning your estate planning.

### 1. Set up a power of attorney.

Power of attorney is a document that allows you to name someone to handle your health care or financial decisions if you can no longer make decisions for yourself. “Powers of attorney are important because they impact your quality of life while you’re living,” Downing says. “They allow you to plan for any potential period of losing autonomy.”

For example, if you’re in a car

## 5 Tips for Estate Planning

*How to start the New Year with long-term peace of mind.*

**T**he New Year invites us to reflect on what matters most, making it an ideal time to ensure that our affairs are in order. For older adults, this can mean revisiting estate planning—a thoughtful way to care for yourself and offer peace of mind to loved ones.

Estate planning designates different legal documents for different needs, including power of attorney (overseeing affairs in case of incapacitation, when someone is unable to make and

communicate decisions for themselves), a payable on death designation (for transferring financial accounts), a transfer on death deed (for real estate), and a will (for personal property like vehicles and household items). “Lots of people are so focused on making a will that they skip the important part, which is making sure they’re being properly cared for while they’re still living,” says Brwyn Downing, executive director of the Senior Citizens Law Office, which offers low-cost estate-plan-



accident and fall into a coma, someone will need legal authority to speak on your behalf regarding your medical care—a designation known as a health care power of attorney. In addition, everyday obligations like rent and credit card bills still need to be paid, a role you can designate to someone with a financial power of attorney.

Powers of attorney apply only when you can't make decisions on your own, and it's crucial when the time comes. "You need someone to be able to speak on your behalf and handle the business of life," Downing says. If you don't have these documents in place, a guardianship proceeding can be initiated, which may result in a court assigning a certified professional to act on your behalf. This person likely won't know what your preferences are. "They don't know your religious background, what is important to you, anything like that," Downing says.

## **2. Set up a payable on death designation for bank accounts.**

Setting up a payable on death (POD) designation is quick and easy, and it ensures that your bank and other financial accounts will seamlessly transfer to a beneficiary upon your death. Simply contact your bank, request and fill out a POD form, and they keep it on file. "This ensures the bank knows who the money goes to without family members having to probate or hire a lawyer," Downing says.

Banks make this process relatively seamless, because they want to have a record of who should receive money left behind after the death of an account holder. When a person doesn't come forward with proper legal authority, the bank treats the account as unclaimed property, and it will be transferred to the state after a period of years. "There is misinformation we hear around this, such as clients saying, 'I need a will so the state doesn't take my stuff,'" Downing says. "That's not how it works. The State of New Mexico doesn't want any-

body's stuff, and banks love the POD designation so they know what to do with the money when an account holder dies."

## **3. Get a transfer on death deed for real estate.**

A transfer on death deed (TODD) is similar to a POD designation, but specifically for real estate. New Mexico law allows owners of real estate to sign a TODD during their lifetime, enabling the property to transfer to designated beneficiaries upon death without probate. TODDs are recorded in the county clerk's office where the property is located, and the property is only transferred once a death certificate is recorded. "Transfer on death deeds are a really clever instrument for a number of reasons," Downing says. "They help you protect your property while you're living, because it keeps it in your name. Then, upon passing, the TODD makes it easy for your listed beneficiary to receive the property."

When it comes to real estate and bank accounts, Downing doesn't recommend joint ownership with someone who isn't your spouse. New Mexico is a community-property state, which means that spouses are generally responsible for each other's debts. For example, you put a child's name as a joint owner on your house, that child will be a partial owner during your lifetime, which comes with certain risks. First, you lose sole control of your home, and will need the child's permission if you want to sell it. Second, if a child has debt, then a creditor—after going through the legal process—can place a judgment lien against your home and initiate foreclosure proceedings to take possession of it. Downing advises holding property solely in your name during your lifetime, then passing it on to designated beneficiaries with a legal instrument like a TODD.

"Don't add a person who is not your spouse onto the titles of your assets," Downing says. "We suggest folks use other tools that protect property while allowing for an easy transfer."

## **4. Create a will for all other assets.**

Once you've worked with a legal professional to set up powers of attorney, POD designations, and TODDs, focus on assigning beneficiaries for remaining assets in a will. It's a good idea to identify all beneficiaries by name, instead of, say, designating one child to distribute the property fairly.

"Not everybody needs a will," Downing says. "Someone may just be passing on real estate, which can be handled with the transfer on death deed. But a lot of personal possessions can be passed through a will, including vehicles."

## **5. Learn more by attending a free session at a senior center.**

The Senior Citizens' Law Office offers free, hourlong presentations at senior centers primarily across central New Mexico. "It's a popular program in which we cover lots of material, including how to avoid probate," Downing says. "We're happy to serve seniors, and advise everyone to meet with a lawyer to get individualized legal advice about their estate planning."

Another great resource is the Legal Resources for the Elderly Program provided by the State Bar of New Mexico. The program offers a free statewide help line for residents 55 and older. Call the number and get connected with staff attorneys who provide legal advice in English and Spanish.

### **Estate planning resources:**

**Senior Citizens' Law Office:**  
[sclonm.org](http://sclonm.org)

**State Bar of New Mexico:**  
[sbnm.org](http://sbnm.org)

**Free statewide help line for residents 55 and older:**  
**(505) 797-6005**  
**(800) 876-6657**

● A buffalo dancer at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center.



# Indigenous Wintertime Traditions

*How tribal communities across New Mexico celebrate the season.*

by Tara Gatewood

**I**n Native American teachings, winter is a special time of year. “There’s a place for every season,” says Sara Candelaria, a member of San Felipe Pueblo. “Winter is a time of calming and bringing things down, kind of like a hibernation period. It’s also a time when people recuperate and reset.”

As director of the Pueblo of San Felipe Elderly Services Program, Candelaria has the honor of absorbing lessons from her community’s

elders on a regular basis. “They share how winter helps us to learn and grow from everything we’ve been through,” she says. “It’s also the time when snow and frost provide for our communities, nourishing Mother Earth and everything else that will be brought to life with the coming of the New Year.”

Throughout New Mexico’s Native American tribes, winter is often a time to visit friends and family, enjoy winter traditions, and, with

some tribes, share stories that are reserved for this time of year. Winter traditions include the Zuni Shalako celebration, as well as the Diné shoe game, or *késhjéé*, of the Navajo Nation, which reflects the cycles of life. For Pueblo people, winter is when new leadership is welcomed with the passing of the canes. These canes were gifted by the United States government, Mexico, and Spain, and they signify tribal sovereignty and are passed

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**“Winter is a time of calming and bringing things down, kind of like a hibernation period. It’s also a time when people recuperate and reset.”**

**—SARA CANDELARIA**

from one tribal administration to the next.

“During the winter months, when the nights are long and there isn’t much to do, families sit inside by the warmth of the fireplace listening to stories about the animals, to our creation stories, or from our elders about their youth,” says Emmett Shkeme Garcia, a Native American storyteller from Tamaya. “The stories may seem like conversations, but they represent the significance of oral traditions. Grandparents and parents reflect upon how our people came to be and where our people settled. Winter is a good time to share information about culture, language, and customs, often with a lot of laughter. It’s a time to be with family and friends.”

At this time of year, most tribes in New Mexico open up their communities to visitors to enjoy the songs and dances that have sustained their people for generations, including the Pueblo winter buffalo dances. These dances call upon a time when the bison provided sustenance, and reflect upon the Pueblo peoples’ historical—and present day—cultural ties to the bison.

Passed on through generations, the buffalo dance reflects this symbiotic relationship within the songs and the dancers’ movements, and each tribe has unique teachings about why it was gifted to their people. When asked what this dance means to them, Pueblo elders may share stories of joy that evoke the holiday season. “The teachings of the elders say the buffalo dance calls for the snow blessings,” says Candelaria. For Anthony Garcia, an elder from Ohkay Owingeh, the buffalo dance is a celebration of the winter clan and life. “Hearing these songs gives me a good feeling in my heart,” he says. “They say the drum is the heartbeat of Mother Earth. Today when I pick up the drum, it makes me whole-hearted and happy to be here.”

Across New Mexico, Indigenous peoples’ connection to the winter traditions that have been passed on to them are key to cultural resilience. “It’s what carries us on our journeys through life, wherever life may take us,” Candelaria says. “It always comes back to these teachings, words, and cultural practices.”



## Health Tip Corner

### Three Subtle Symptoms of High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a common chronic health condition among seniors. Some people don’t know they have it because they may miss early symptoms or have no symptoms. It’s important to have your blood pressure checked at least once a year.

**Here are three subtle symptoms to watch for:**

**1. Feeling exhausted constantly**

High blood pressure can damage arteries, making the heart work harder, leading to fatigue and shortness of breath.

**2. Blood spots in the eye**

Tiny blood vessels in the eye can burst, causing red spots.

**3. Dizziness**

Can be associated with high blood pressure. Sudden dizziness with trouble walking could indicate a stroke.

High blood pressure is associated with a greater risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and dementia. Regular checkups and monitoring are crucial for early detection and management.

A healthy diet, staying active, and avoiding smoking are some ways to help prevent or manage high blood pressure.

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Content is for general informational purposes only and not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for professional health care. See your physician for medical advice personalized to your situation.



### Consult With an Expert

Sometimes it's better to let the professionals identify areas of concern for home safety. Every house is different, and these folks have the experience to spot areas of concern. Home Modification Solutions can help with everything from remodeling solutions to simple fixes to make your home safe. [homemodsw.com](http://homemodsw.com)

● Accessible furniture now comes in a range of options and designs to suit all needs.

designers are offering more—and better looking—options to improve safety. From beds and dressers to grab bars and shower chairs, home accessories and accessible furniture come in a range of options to suit all needs. Often, all it takes are a few items or household adjustments to make a life-altering difference. “A few small changes can sometimes mean you get to stay in your home,” Davis says. “People should feel empowered to make these decisions in order to age in place.”

Here are some tips and suggested furnishings to consider for making your home more accessible.

### Get a Better Bed

Michael Graves was an architect who began focusing on assistive design after he became paralyzed from the waist down in 2003. Now his range of furnishings for outlets like Pottery Barn and CVS offer both accessibility and refinement, like his Farmhouse canopy bed (from \$2,699; [potterybarn.com](http://potterybarn.com)), with integrated armrests for getting in and out of bed, side grips for safety, and a built-in bench for dressing.

### Update the Bathroom

If you do nothing else, update your bathroom for accessibility. “The

## Making Everyday Living More Accessible

*Easy tips and furnishings for the mobility impaired.*

**P**eople prefer to age at home—but not all household furnishings are suited to meet their needs. According to an AARP survey, 77 percent of adults want to stay in their own home. Yet most household furniture and fixtures haven't been designed to suit the needs of those with mobility

concerns. “The number one risk for injury in the home is falling,” says Stacie Johnson-Davis, a co-founder of Home Modification Solutions, an Albuquerque company that remodels houses for accessibility. “As we get older, we need to make sure we have a safer environment.”

Today, home builders and interior



● **From top:** The Farmhouse Canopy Bed and Sausalito Collection from Michael Graves Design and Pottery Barn have multiple accessibility features.

most common place for falls to happen is in the bathroom,” Davis says. “We’re just doing a lot there in a confined space.” Homeowners often make the mistake of using a towel bar to lift themselves up, which may not be anchored into a stud and can be pulled out. To ensure safety, install grab bars into studs. “Grab bars come in a range of materials and colors to suit your home,” Davis says. “They’re the least expensive option but can make such a difference for safety.” In addition, a bathtub can be converted into a walk-in or roll-in shower-bathtub, with nonslip flooring that can save seniors from a fall.

### Get a Shower Chair

A shower chair is an easy way to stay safe while sitting comfortably. These affordable yet functional—and stylish—chairs from Michael Graves Designs (\$89; cvs.com) are lightweight, durable, and corrosion-proof. The backrest can be removed to become a stool, while the seat angle easily drains water.

### Increase the Lighting

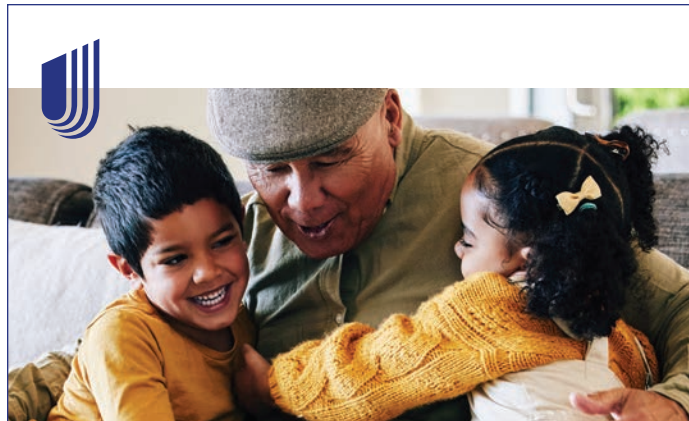
Add lights with higher wattage to bathrooms, bedrooms, and anywhere else you may walk at night. Motion-sensing lights and touch light switches are ideal, especially if you can dim them so your eyes can adjust more easily when they are turned on in the dark.

### Add Levered Door Handles

As we age, we lose our grip and the ability to turn things. Levered door handles and faucets (those that go up and down rather than rotate) are an easy way to ensure that you can continue to perform household tasks with ease.

### Quick Tips to Make Your House Safer

- 1. Remove Throw Rugs:** These are a leading cause of trips. Get rid of them to create clear passages.
- 2. Don't wear slippers:** Feet can easily slide out of slippers that are open at the heel, causing a fall. Wearing shoes is best indoors, followed by closed slippers that cover the heel.
- 3. Use a Detachable Showerhead:** Find a showerhead that detaches for bathing while seated.



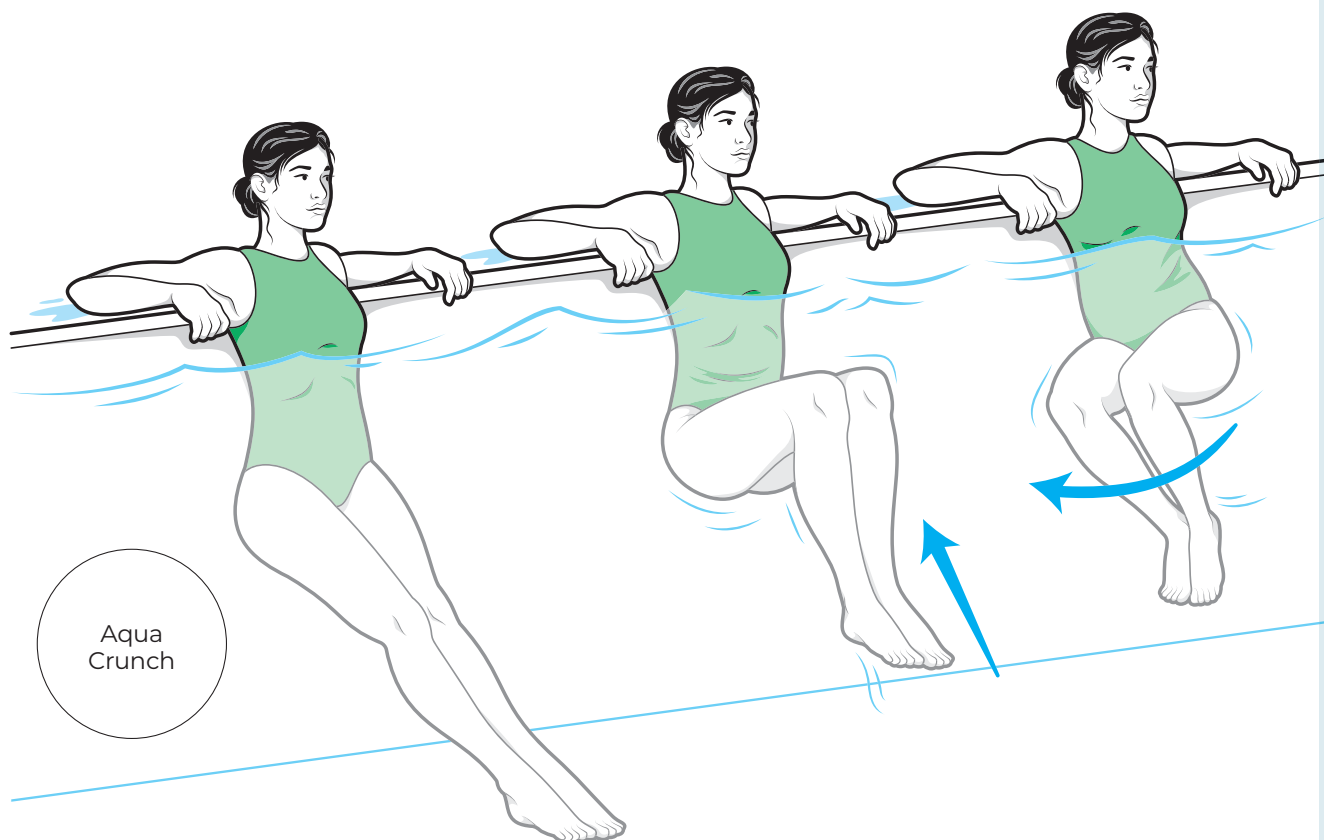
## There for what matters

To learn more about how UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of New Mexico is partnering with community organizations across the state, visit [uhccs.com/NM](https://uhccs.com/NM).

United  
Healthcare  
Community Plan



UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of New Mexico is a product of UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company.



## Pool Party

*There's a reason swimming is considered one of the best workouts you can do: It's great for your body, without the impact.* **By Marjorie Korn**

**W**hile most people are aware of the benefits of walking, we often overlook what may be the best all-around exercise: swimming. It's perhaps less convenient than taking a stroll, but swimming can be better for you, because it keeps your heart rate up while taking much of the impact stress off your body. It also builds endurance, muscle strength, and cardiovascular fitness.

"The great thing about swimming is that it's for all ages," says Kent Vigil, aquatics division manager for the Albuquerque Department of Parks and Recreation. "It really is an exercise that can be adapted for all skill and fitness levels."

Many swim routines are group-oriented, which is also beneficial. If you've ever attended a water-aerobics class, there's chatting between movements, and pals often grab a bite to eat afterward. The best way to start a swim routine is to check the schedule at your local pool. Many have group classes or swim teams to join. You can also do it on your own. Here, Vigil offers his suggestions for two types of routines, one for strength and the other for cardio, plus tips for swimming laps to increase endurance.

One note: Go at a pace that feels comfortable to you. And if you're unsure in the water, swim at a public pool with a lifeguard on duty.

### STRENGTH MOVES

#### Press Downs

Stand in a section of the pool where the water is at shoulder height. Hold a pair of foam dumbbells in front of you, one in each hand, with your palms facing each other and your elbows at roughly 90 degrees. Keep your palms facing each other throughout the whole movement. Push down your arms, maintaining the bend at the elbows, until your forearms are parallel to the pool floor. Extend your elbows and press

For public pools near you, see page 18.



the dumbbells down to your thighs. Your arms should be parallel to your body. Reverse slowly and with control for one rep. Do three sets of 8 to 12 reps on each side. If it feels too challenging with two dumbbells, hold one dumbbell with both hands in front of your chest and perform the movements described above.

### Aqua Crunch

Stand in shallow water with your back to the edge of the pool. Place your arms along the pool's edge so your shoulders are out of the water but your torso is mostly submerged. Slowly draw your knees up toward your chin, then rotate your torso to the right. Reverse to the starting position. Repeat on the left side for one rep. Do three sets of 12 to 15 reps. If rotating feels too challenging, skip that part and focus on bringing your knees to your chin.

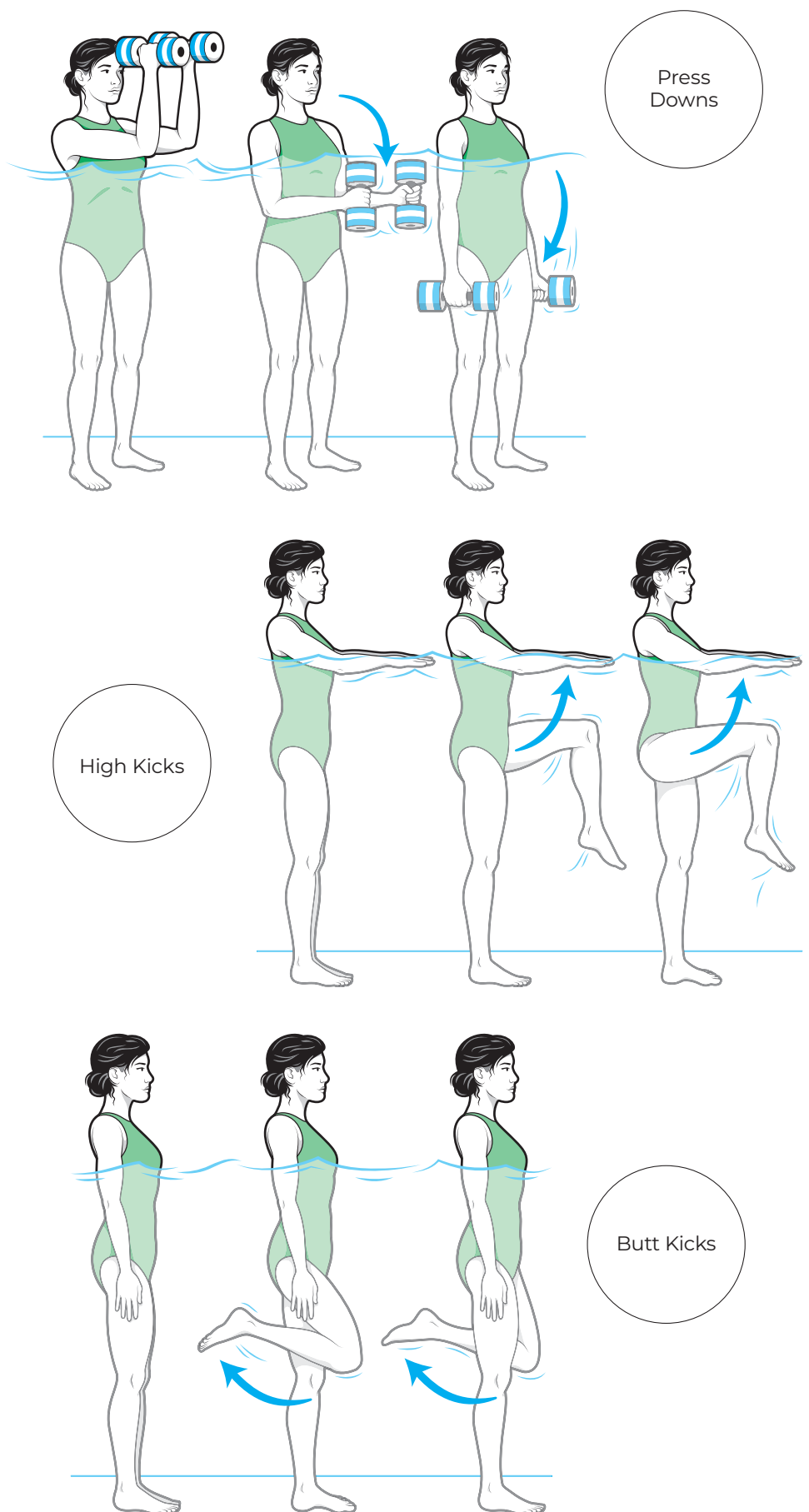
## CARDIO EXERCISES

### High Knees

Stand in chest-high water with your arms floating at the surface and your hands about six inches in front of your chest, palms down. Draw your left knee up toward your right palm, then reverse to the starting position. Repeat with your right leg and left palm. Continue as fast as is comfortable while maintaining balance for one minute. Rest two minutes and repeat once or twice. If it's too challenging at first, steady yourself at the edge of the pool; do 30 seconds on the left, then 30 seconds on the right.

### Butt Kicks

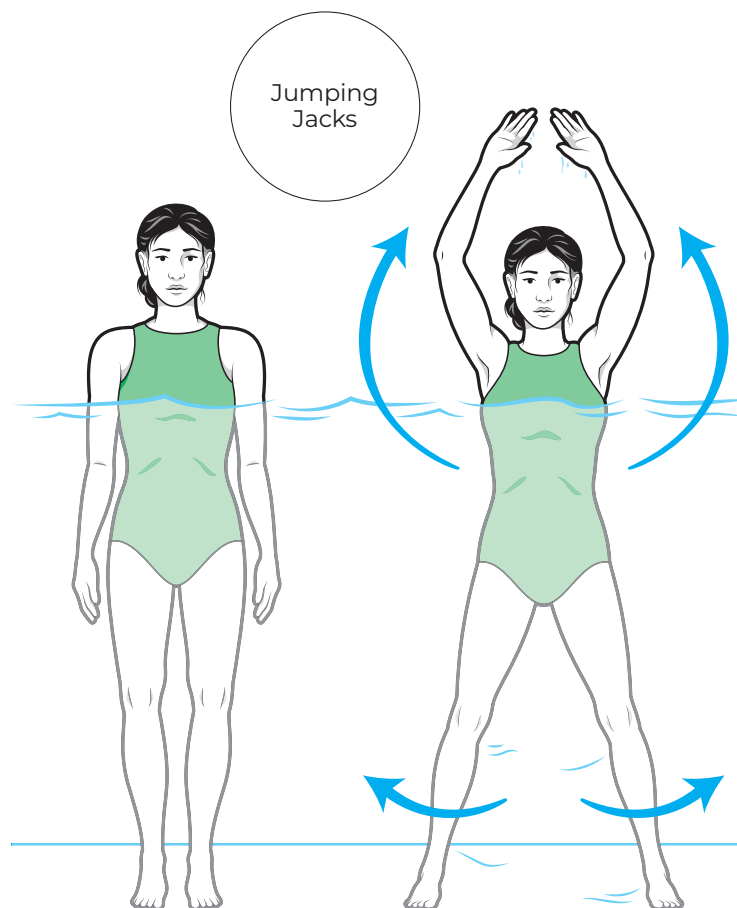
Stand in chest-high water, arms at your sides and fingers extended toward your feet. Shift your weight onto your left side, then bend your right knee until the heel touches your butt (or comes close), then return to the starting position. Repeat on the opposite side for one rep. While maintaining balance, alternate sides for one minute. Rest two minutes and repeat once or



twice. If that's too challenging, use the pool edge for balance; do 30 seconds on the left, then 30 seconds on the right.

### Jumping Jacks

Stand in chest-high water with your feet together and your arms at your sides. Jump and extend your legs out to each side while simultaneously arcing your arms and hands upward until they're at the surface of the water. Quickly reverse the movement to the starting position. Continue at a pace that's challenging but controlled for one minute. Rest two minutes and repeat once or twice. If that's too hard, step your right foot out while reaching up with your right arm, then repeat on the left side.



## Building Endurance

### A quick-start guide for swimming laps.

Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to the pool, you can benefit from lap swimming, especially when it comes to endurance. Building endurance will help in all parts of life, enabling you to go on longer walks, jogs, or bike rides without tiring as easily.

#### > IF YOU'RE NEW TO IT, HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO KNOW:

**Form is paramount.** It makes swimming easier and reduces the risk of tweaking a muscle. If you want to make swimming part of your workout life, it's worth taking a lesson or joining a swim group.

**Breathe right.** One of the top complaints around lap swimming is the difficulty of mastering side breathing. It takes practice! Try this

pyramid approach. Start with two strokes, keeping your face in the water for one, and breathing to the side for the other. Then reset, adding two strokes every time. If you hit a plateau in the number of strokes, stay there until you're comfortable. You'll become a natural in no time.

**Use swim aids.** There are many tools, like kickboards and snorkels, that can help you get more comfortable breathing, available for free at recreation centers and community pools.

**Switch up your stroke.** Balancing out your time doing freestyle, backstroke, and breaststroke will help spread out the muscle fatigue that can develop in your shoulders and chest.

#### > IF YOU'RE A LONGTIME SWIMMER, HERE ARE WAYS TO MAXIMIZE TIME IN THE WATER:

**Intervals are your friend.** Go all-out for one length of the pool, then go slow and regain your breath on the way back. This can help increase your  $VO_2$  max, a measure of how much oxygen your body can use during intense exercise, and an indicator of overall health and fitness.

**Tools are your friend, too.** Get your hands on a resistance parachute (they're under \$20), which increases drag and makes it more challenging to move through the water—a good thing! Adapting to the added drag will make you speedier when you swim without it.

**Don't get stuck in a stroke.** Just like newer swimmers, switch it up among freestyle, backstroke, and breaststroke, which helps balance muscle fatigue. Butterfly is the hardest stroke on your body. Proceed with caution.





Swimming is good for  
your heart and mood.

# Snow-Free Winter Adventures

*While winter in New Mexico is renowned for the amazing ski opportunities, there are plenty of other activities you can do when the state is blanketed in white. Here are five great ideas for getting out and about.*

## Idea #1

### Take a Long Walk Indoors

Everyone knows that walking is a great way to stay fit and active. Walking works multiple muscle groups, including quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, ankles, glutes, lower back, and abdominals. If you pump your arms with each stride, you'll see benefits to your upper body, too. Walking with friends also allows you to catch up and enjoy a laugh. Stanford University researchers even found that walking boosts creative inspiration, supporting mental agility as we age.

Too often, though, winter puts a damper on outdoor activities, because of slippery trails or sidewalks. But you don't have to stop walking. If you want an accommodating place for a stroll inside, malls are a great option for

getting in a few laps—including Cottonwood Mall in Albuquerque and Mesilla Valley Mall in Las Cruces. Many recreation centers also have walking and running tracks or gymnasiums to help you stay in shape through the colder months. Here are three worth considering to enjoy a long walk with friends.

### Albuquerque Metro North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center, Eastside

In addition to cardio machines and a gymnasium, there's an indoor track for walking and jogging. Lunch is available for free to those 60 and over Monday through Friday (a \$2 donation is appreciated). Membership is \$20 per year (fee waivers available).

## Northeast

### Genoveva Chavez Community Center, Santa Fe

The indoor track at the GCCC is wide enough to accommodate walkers and runners alike, and offers sweeping views of the surrounding landscape. \$4 entrance fee for seniors 60 and over; \$236 per year.

## Northwest

### San Juan College's Health and Human Performance Center, Farmington

The HHPC's extensive amenities and resources include a group exercise studio, a weight room, a climbing wall, and an elevated indoor track for walking and running. \$25 per month for seniors 65 and over; \$265 per year.

## Idea #2

### Visit a Museum

As any resident knows, New Mexico has a wealth of amazing museums, from those dedicated to history and art to others focused on Native and Hispanic culture. Winter may be the best time of year to drop in on one you've never been to before. It's easy with New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs' CulturePass (\$30; [nmculture.org](http://nmculture.org)). It gets you a single admittance to every state museum and historic site over a 12-month period. This makes it simple to plan a winter full of museum visits.

Of the 15 museums and historic sites accessible with the pass, often overlooked are the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo, with a series of excellent exhibits charting the early days of celestial exploration, and the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces, which showcases the 4,000-year history of agriculture and husbandry in the region. The CulturePass also gets you access to the site of the historic Gusewa Pueblo, established around AD 1350 in what is now Jemez Pueblo.

For history buffs, ticking off all the options on the CulturePass may just be the best idea yet.



### Idea #3

#### Go for a Swim

Swimming is often considered an ideal exercise for older adults. It's low-impact, meaning that it's great for people suffering from arthritis or poor joint health. It's an excellent cardiovascular exercise, so it's good for your heart. Like yoga, it helps improve flexibility and range of motion. Even just immersing yourself in water has proven to increase blood flow to the brain, which can help improve memory, mood, concentration, and cognitive function. And, with many pools being indoors, it's a perfect winter option, as the temperature drops and snow begins to fall. For workout suggestions, see page 14. Below is a list of pools for a quick dip.

### INDOOR PUBLIC POOLS

#### Albuquerque Metro

**West Mesa Aquatic Center, Westside:** Olympic-size pool with lap swimming; \$1.50 entrance fee for seniors.

**Rio Rancho Aquatic Center, Rio Rancho:** Lap swimming and free aquacise classes; \$3 entrance fee for seniors.

#### Northeast

**Richard L. Lucero Recreation and**

**Aquatic Center, Española:** Lap swimming with occasional water-aerobics classes; \$3 entrance fee for seniors.

**Taos Aquatic Center:** Lap swimming, water-aerobics classes, and a therapy pool; \$7 entrance fee.

#### Northwest

**Los Alamos Aquatic Center:** Olympic-size pool with lap swimming, exercise classes, a therapy pool, and amenities and access for people with disabilities; \$25 for ten day passes or \$250 per year for seniors.

**Lions Pool, Farmington:** Lap swimming in 25-yard, five-lane pool with an ADA-compliant lift and adult indoor water programming year-round; \$2.50 entrance fee (discount options available).

#### Southwest

**Las Cruces Natatorium:** Lap swimming and exercise classes; \$3 entrance fee for seniors.

**Las Cruces Regional Aquatics Center:** Lap swimming and exercise classes, plus a fitness center on the second floor; \$3 entrance fee for seniors.

**Western New Mexico University C-Rec Pool, Silver City:** Two-lane lap pool and water-aerobics classes. \$10

● **From left:** Petroglyph National Monument offers rock art; the Albuquerque Botanic Garden has two large indoor greenhouses.

entrance fee or \$50 for 25 day passes for community members.

### Southeast

**Roswell Recreation and Aquatic Center:** Eight-lane pool for lap swimming and fitness classes; \$3 entrance fee for seniors.

**Center of Recreational Excellence, Hobbs:** Start-of-the-art competition pool and therapy pool. \$3 entrance fee for seniors.

### Idea #4

#### Relax in an Indoor Garden

The Albuquerque Botanic Garden comprises 32 acres of trails and greenery, with plants from the American Southwest and around the world. Most of it is outdoors, but there are a number of indoor areas to explore too, including the Butterflies and Bees exhibit, which features 40 species of native butterflies and moths, as well as other important pollinators.

The Botanic Garden features two large greenhouses home to the Mediterranean Conservatory and the Desert Conservatory. The Desert Conservatory features plant species like saguaro cactus and paloverde trees from the Sonoran Desert. The Mediterranean Conservatory shows off a variety of plants native to coastal areas with hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters, like those found in the Mediterranean.

Both are excellent places to get a dose of filtered sunlight in the winter while immersing yourself in a plant-rich environment. Studies have shown that even a few minutes in the company of greenery can improve mood. In one study, participants felt happier and more satisfied after spending five to ten minutes in a room with houseplants. So if you have the winter blues, the Botanic Gardens is a great place to visit, stretch your legs, and sit in the presence of plantlife. It may even feel a bit like summer. \$5.50 entrance fee for seniors.



## Idea #5

### Take a Dry Hike (Without the Snow)

In the winter, the mountains are sure to be covered with snowfall, making the trails up high hard to navigate (unless you're into snowshoeing). But in the valleys and the southern part of the state, winter may be the best time to get out in the fresh air without exposing yourself to high temperatures. Here are four snow-free hikes that are better in winter.

#### Petroglyph National Monument, Albuquerque

This monument on the east side of Albuquerque offers a small number of easy trails to see the rock art that gives the National Park Service site its name. Rinconada Canyon, located

just off Unser Boulevard, is one of the more accessible options, with a two-mile round-trip trail that passes by as many as 300 petroglyphs. The trail is considered undeveloped, but it's easy to follow, and there's a vault toilet at the parking area.

#### Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, Mesilla

Adjacent to Las Cruces, this state park offers approximately 2.3 miles of flat trails navigable with a self-guided trail booklet. If you want an easily accessible, short hike with birding opportunities along the Rio Grande, this is the one.

#### Organ Mountains, Las Cruces

If you're ready for a challenging hike, the six-mile-long Baylor Pass Trail

offers great views of the surrounding peaks. The trail is long, but it's well maintained and an easier uphill hike than most. The area occasionally gets snow, so check the weather to ensure it hasn't stormed recently, which can make the trail slippery. There are parking areas at either end, at the east and west trailheads, and less elevation gain if you start at the east.

#### White Sands National Park, Alamogordo

There are half a dozen trails in this iconic park, home to the largest gypsum sand-dune field in the world. The Dune Life Nature Trail is a one-mile loop, while the Alkali Flat Trail is a five-mile round trip. There's no shade or water available, so be sure to bring a thermos and a snack to refuel.



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# Grand Designs

*Using gold, precious stones, and cutting-edge technology, a Vietnam veteran produces museum-worthy jewelry on Isleta Pueblo.*

**By Ungelbah Dávila**

**M**ichael Kirk doesn't look his age. Nor does the 75-year-old act it, especially as he goofs around for photos, pretending to leap into his bison corral. To see him work his ten bison, tend his garden, drive his ATV, and produce one-of-a-kind luxury jewelry with gold, diamonds, and bison horn, you'd never know that this Vietnam veteran survived not only a war, but also three rounds of cancer from exposure to Agent Orange.

"Making jewelry helps me get away from the public," the Diné and Isleta

elder says, looking around his private jewelry studio on Isleta Pueblo, 20 minutes south of Albuquerque, nestled between the Manzano Mountains and the Rio Grande. "I'm fine out here," he says. "I love it in my shop, because I can focus on making jewelry, and it takes my mind away from it."

"It" is Vietnam, a place and an experience that, for most veterans who lived through the war, never quite resolved itself. Still, glancing at Kirk, you see a man who is content. A man who has breakfast every day with his wife and great-grandson. Who

loves nothing more than spending the day in his jewelry studio surrounded by machines, stones, metals, and ideas. Who has built his company, Kirk Jewelry, into a successful family business. No two pieces are the same, and he enjoys creating designs that are totally unique.

Kirk won his first award for jewelry making in 1981, earning top honors at the Gallup Inter-tribal Indian Ceremony that year, and he's been racking up accolades ever since, including Best of Division at the 1993 Santa Fe Indian Market and Artist of the Year at the Indian Arts and Crafts Association in 1997. His pieces have also been acquired by the Smithsonian.

Yet, like his artwork, Kirk has a deeper well of emotion beneath that impressive exterior, an inner fire that drives the doting grandfather. He has lived his entire life on Isleta Pueblo, except between 1969 and 1971, when he went to college and then into the Marines—an experience he's reminded of every day.

"I still flip out every once in a while," he says, looking into the distance. "I don't know what God has in mind for me, but in the meantime, I try to do what I like."

## Forged in Battle

In 1969, Kirk was studying computer engineering at New Mexico State University when he was drafted by the Army to serve in Vietnam. Arriving at the recruitment office in Albuquerque, he saw four different lines. He opted for the shortest—a decision that resulted in him joining the branch of the military with the highest percentage of casualties relative to troop size. "I accidentally got into the Marine Corps line," he says, chuckling. "So I

● Michael Kirk making jewelry in his private studio on Isleta Pueblo.

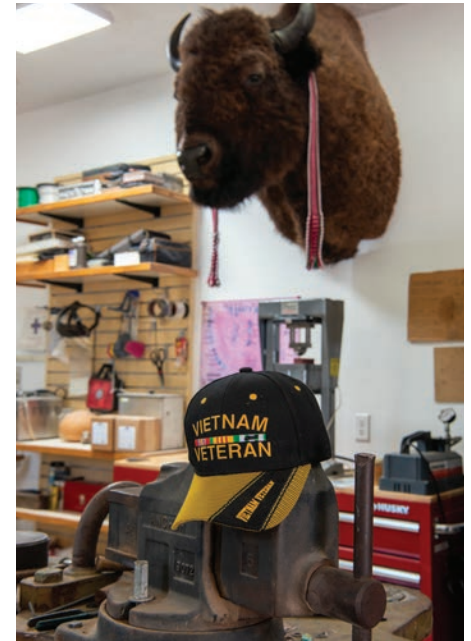


UNGELBAH DAVILA





● **Clockwise from left:** Kirk always works on multiple pieces at once; a mount of the first bison that started Kirk's herd, named Spiderman by his grandson; a one-of-a-kind reversible pendant made with 14-karat gold.



got drafted by the Army, but the Marine Corps is where I did my duty."

Kirk remained in Vietnam for three years. He endured endless rain in remote places, causing his clothes to rot off his body. When he turned 21, he celebrated with a can of salted turkey from a decades-old World War II C-ration. He remembers one firefight in particular that he still doesn't know how he survived. "One night at the end of a battle, we were taking stock of casualties, and I was lying on the ground right beside my foxhole," he recalls. "When I raised myself, there was a grenade near me. It didn't go off, so I started yelling for the bomb squad, and they came and picked it up."

In 1971, Kirk returned home and was soon diagnosed with PTSD at a Veterans Affairs hospital. Despite the hardship, he's proud of his service, and says that in some ways it was a great adventure for him and other Native American soldiers he met. According to the United Services Organization, almost 19 percent of Native Americans have served in the







● Kirk works on a piece made with 14-karat handmade gold beads and turquoise stones.

Armed Forces, compared with an average of 14 percent for other ethnicities. “We’re a warrior nation,” says Kirk. “That’s what we are brought up to do.”

Upon leaving the Marines, Kirk wasn’t sure what he’d do next—but there was a divine plan.

“I guess God had something in mind for me,” he says. “I’ve been through two car accidents, three bouts of cancer, and a war, and I’m still here.”

### An Artist Emerges

When Kirk returned home to Isleta Pueblo, his brother was taking jewelry courses at the University of New Mexico, so Kirk decided to do the same. “All the hippies were making Indian jewelry,” he says, laughing.

Kirk and his brother began working for a dealer who had a jewelry shop in Albuquerque’s Old Town. Soon the brothers surpassed their teacher. “He said, ‘Well, you’re gonna have to open your own shop now,’” he recalls. “So we did, and goddamn, we were wildly

successful. You know, that was the seventies. We were some of the first ones that started working with gold.”

In 1975, Kirk married Marie Reyes and soon after had two children, Elizabeth and then Lawrence. Elizabeth grew up in the Isleta studio. In 1994, she began working with her father in his shop and helping him with the business at markets and shows. Since then she has helped Kirk expand his craft with new tools, including a laser welder and a hydraulic press, allowing him to make jewelry more efficiently and with less stress on his hands and eyes.

Today, Kirk and his daughter are known for their dynamic designs, which use materials like Argentium silver, 14-to-24-karat gold, precious and semiprecious stones, liquid ceramic, and inlay. They are also one of very few Native jewelry artists to incorporate e-coating, an 11-step process that allows them to color precious metals by applying a ceramic coat with electroplating technology.

Through e-coating, the Kirks’ iconic feather bracelets can be ordered in a variety of colors.

Kirk likes to tease buyers by telling them that each bracelet is a real feather dipped in silver or gold—that’s how lifelike the pieces are. The truth is that the bracelets are engraved by hand to create a one-of-a-kind texture. Some are left in their natural silver or gold coloring, while others are e-coated to achieve a vibrant red, blue, or purple. Instead of using a heavy hammer and a tree stump to transform a flat piece of metal into a perfectly curved cuff, Kirk uses a hydraulic press.

“Native jewelers, they just get run over,” says Kirk, about pushback he’s received for using modern techniques and equipment. “The store owners, the gallery owners, the collectors and people in charge—they don’t like us to use new methods. They want us to do everything with a hammer and chisel. They don’t put those same restrictions on other artists, only



**Upon leaving the Marines, Kirk wasn't sure what he'd do next—but there was a divine plan. "I guess God had something in mind for me," he says. "I've been through two car accidents, three bouts of cancer, and a war, and I'm still here."**

Indian artists."

"I have been blessed to work with my dad for so many years, because it has allowed me to see him beyond the role of father," Elizabeth says. "He is Michael, my mentor, my creative partner, my rock, and my biggest champion. Every day is an adventure, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

### **Growing the Herd for Future Generations**

Today, the Kirks' jewelry is renowned for its innovative designs and sold to collectors as far away as Japan.

At home in New Mexico, Kirk is also known for his bison, whose horns and hide he has sold to friends and donated to nonprofit groups, like the Dakota Access Pipeline water protectors, for ceremonial use.

In 2022, Kirk was diagnosed with cancer for the first time, likely from exposure to Agent Orange. His doctors recommended a vegan diet, which his daughter helped with. Kirk ultimately returned to eating meat, but he looked for natural, unprocessed sources, which led him to acquire his first bison, a bull his

grandson named Spiderman, then a cow his granddaughter named Luna.

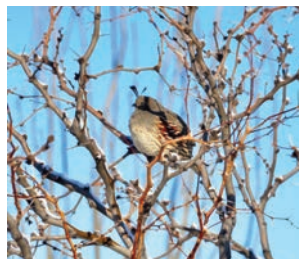
Today the herd has grown, but it remains in a corral at Kirk's home on the pueblo. While bison are not domestic animals, they treat their keeper with surprising gentleness and patience. When he isn't in the studio, Kirk is hanging around his herd, watching and talking to them. In the time of Kirk's grandparents, bison still roamed as far south as the Manzanos and were a cornerstone of survival for Indigenous people.

Isleta no longer performs ceremonies around bison, and Kirk doesn't think of his herd as a return to the old ways. But three cancer remissions later, the Vietnam vet and world-renowned artist doesn't deny the medicinal benefits of caring for his animals.

"By all accounts, I should be dead," says Kirk. "Generally, once you get cancer three times, that's it. But I'm still here—and I enjoy every day."

## **WINTER RECREATION OPTIONS ARE ABUNDANT IN NEW MEXICO STATE PARKS!**

*During the winter months, seniors can embrace the season at state parks with a variety of activities, including birdwatching, scenic hikes along snow-dusted trails, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and exploring visitor centers. Enjoy winter-themed programs, wildlife sightings, photography opportunities, and even experience the adventure of winter camping!*



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# The Art of Relaxation at Any Age

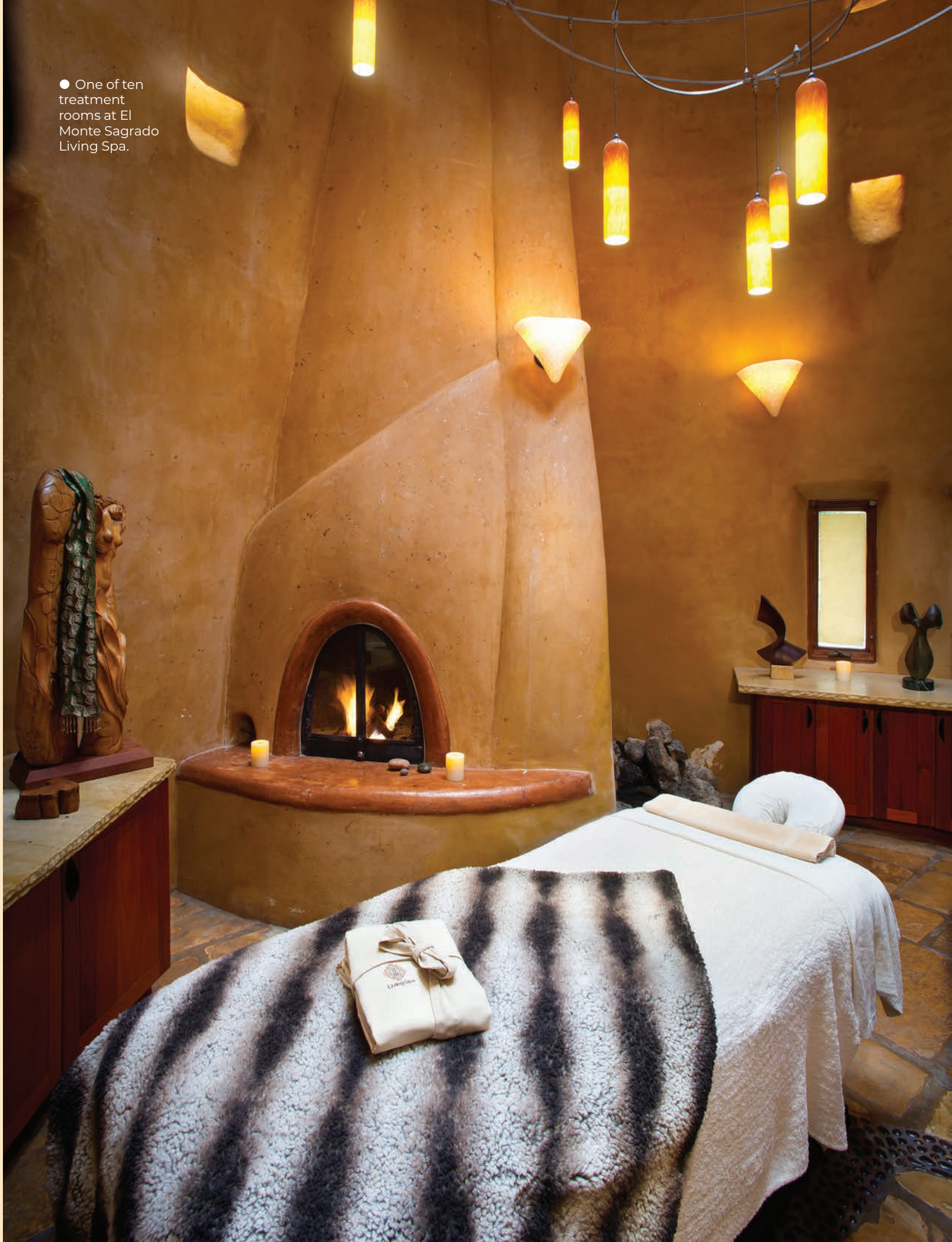
**A**S WE GET OLDER, STAYING ACTIVE AND MENTALLY ENGAGED IS IMPORTANT, but so is indulging in a little self-care. Many spa treatments, such as massage, can enhance circulation and promote cardiovascular health. Hydrotherapy can alleviate chronic pain. Facials and other skin-care treatments hydrate aging skin.

Wellness is essential at any age, and taking the time to pamper yourself with a spa treatment isn't an indulgence if it boosts overall well-being. Lucky for us, New Mexico is a hotbed of spa and wellness options, and while January is a month when many people focus on health, there's really no bad time to rejuvenate your body and mind. Here's a local's guide to the best wellness facilities, spa treatments, and self-care experiences to help you recharge and reboot in the New Year.

**BY COURTNEY HOLDEN, MARJORIE KORN, AND RYAN KROGH**



● One of ten treatment rooms at El Monte Sagrado Living Spa.





● **From left:** Spa at Chaco; Ice Glow at Ski Taos; relaxing at Ten Thousand Waves.



## The Best Spa Treatments for Seniors

### 1. Journey to Purification at the Spa at Chaco, Albuquerque

Booking a three-hour treatment is a commitment, but purification takes time, and this one is worth it. Not only will it leave you relaxed, but it can help you cleanse your entire outlook on life. It starts with a turquoise-sage foaming salt soak and turquoise-sage detox wrap. Sage oil has antimicrobial properties, and some find it relaxing and healing. The treatment also includes a lymphatic massage to help with swelling and skin texture; a rain-stick exposure to release tension; and smudging, in which sage or palo santo is burned and the energy within a space is cleared. Congratulations, your inner and outer being are restored.

### 2. Immunity Boost Ritual at the Spa at Loretto, Santa Fe

Stress not only takes its toll on the

mind; it can hamper our immune defenses. If you're wired, this 100-minute treatment might be for you. It starts with 20 minutes of dry brushing, an Ayurvedic technique that exfoliates the skin and may help with circulation. This is followed by a mineral bath and a full-body massage, both of which utilize stimulating scents like eucalyptus and lemon. At the end, you're provided with a fresh juice shot for an additional dose of immune-boosting wellness.

### 3. The Ice Glow at Ski Taos, Taos

People who spend time outdoors—particularly at high elevations, where dry air combines with acute sun exposure—can experience damage and dehydration in their face. That's where the Ice Glow facial comes in. The treatment involves natural alpha-hydroxy acids—an exfoliant intended to treat hyperpigmentation (age spots), fine lines, and wrinkles—as well as cryotherapy ice rollers to increase blood flow. If you have time,

add on the *gua sha* massage, which can improve blood flow while helping to decrease inflammation.

### 4. Abhyanga Massage at Blue Lotus Day Spa and Yoga, Ruidoso

Some people find a Swedish or deep-tissue massage too intense, particularly if the practitioner isn't well-versed in treating those who've undergone joint replacement, have reduced mobility, or experienced trauma. Abhyanga massage is a traditional Ayurvedic practice that tends to be gentler. It focuses on infused aromatic oils that are warmed, poured over the body, and massaged into the skin to nourish surface and deep tissue while encouraging circulation and calm.

### 5. Body and Sole Massage at Ten Thousand Waves, Santa Fe

This treatment is for tennis players, pickleballers, golfers, runners, and other active seniors. If your feet are





achy or if plantar fasciitis has been dogging your dogs, the Ashi Anma foot treatment—a blend of Japanese shiatsu-style finger pressure mixed with Swedish-style massage strokes—can provide relief. This comes *after* 55 minutes of bodywork to help loosen the muscles and fascia that connect with your feet, making the Ashi Anma more effective. Be sure to leave time to visit the spa's wet and dry saunas, cold shower and plunge pool, waterfall, and giant outdoor tile pool. This resort really is worth a full day of relaxation.

## New Mexico's Best Wellness Experiences

### 1. Sound Meditations at Emergence, Truth or Consequences

Sound therapy is an ancient practice that's becoming popular owing to a growing body of research about its health benefits, including the ability to increase calming and positive emotions, promote healing, and reduce physical pain. At Emergence, a healing-arts center in downtown Truth or Consequences, you can experience sound bathing in the center's Acoustics Room, which is outfitted with traditional instruments like crystal bowls, chimes, flutes, a didgeridoo (the wind instrument from Australia), and the West African stringed *n'goni*. People find that the novel harmonic frequencies produced by these instruments resonate beneficially within us. Simply find a position that's comfortable for you and relax to the vibrations filling the atmosphere. Emergence also offers

accommodations at Riverside Hot Springs Retreat, a three-bedroom, two-bath home on the banks of the Rio Grande, with its own hot-springs tub for soaking muscles and relieving arthritic discomfort.

### 2. Yoga for Everybody at High Mesa Natural Healing Center, Alto (near Ruidoso)

Barbara Mader, who worked as a registered nurse for six decades, founded High Mesa in 1992 to offer alternative options for common ailments. Today the center offers a suite of body and mind therapies that can be geared toward those with stress, anxiety, or trouble sleeping—issues that are com-

mon among postmenopausal women, for instance. Think chakra balancing, reiki (energy balancing), thermal massage, and access bars (a type of hands-on therapy focusing on 32 points around the head). A good entry point for exploring alternative therapies is the gentle Yoga for Everybody class on Wednesday mornings. It costs \$10, and there's a special focus on balance, which is great for anyone who wants to be steadier on their feet, an important component of preventing falls.

### 3. Montezuma Hot Springs, Las Vegas

New Mexico is known for its plethora of natural hot springs, thanks to





● **From top:** Spa room and lavender harvest at Los Poblanos.



the state's geothermal activity. The problem is getting to them, as many can be accessed only via challenging hikes. Not so with Montezuma Hot Springs, located six miles northwest of Las Vegas. These warm, mineral-rich springs first hosted local Native Americans. Today the healing waters bubble up and flow into a series of open-air cement pools, initially constructed in the late 19th century for guests of the Montezuma Hotel. While the hotel is gone, you can still luxuriate in the 120-degree Lobster Pot or the 102.7-degree Africa pool, so named for its shape. Whether the healing effects are real or a placebo effect, it's hard not to feel better after a good soak.

#### 4. Private Meditation Instruction at Mountain Cloud Zen Center, Santa Fe

Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years, and Western medicine is just now discovering the science behind its benefits, which include stress reduction and lower blood pressure. If you've been working on a meditation practice on your own—perhaps through an online guide or with an app—that's great! But many people discover additional benefits from a one-on-one meditation

class with personalized cues. There are free classes around the state, and one of the best is the Sunday morning Introduction to Zen meditation at Mountain Cloud Zen Center, situated in the hills off Old Santa Fe Trail. The group mediation is preceded by community tea; combined, they may be the best way to start off the week with a fresh, relaxed outlook.

#### 5. Lavender Harvest and Distillation at Los Poblanos, Albuquerque

Spa trips are often about reconnecting with yourself. This boutique resort is an opportunity to reconnect with the earth. The organic lavender grown here is put through a steam distillation process to extract the essential oil, which goes into the



COURTESY OF LOS POBLANOS



historic inn and farm's signature products and amenities. Going at any time of the year is great, but if you book a stay in mid-July, which is typically when the lavender harvest starts, you'll have the opportunity to help gather it. But even if you don't work the land, you can get the full benefit of the bounty with the spa's 1934 treatment, which includes a lavender-oil scalp and body massage.

## The Best Destination Spas for a Weekend Getaway

### Southern NM

#### Sierra Grande, a Ted Turner Retreat, Truth or Consequences

Sometimes a popular gem is overlooked even by locals, and that's too often the case with this historic 17-room lodge and hot-springs resort located in the heart of downtown Truth or Consequences. Once a charming but sleepy hotel, it was bought by media mogul Ted Turner in 2013, and the resort has elevated its offerings ever since. Those upgrades include a reimagined spa that provides visitors with a range of holistic services, including massages (deep tissue, hot stone, aromatherapy), skin-care treatments, and bodywork enhancements. The main attraction, however, is the geothermal hot springs on-site. Sierra Grande has three indoor



● Hot springs from an underground aquifer at Sierra Grande.

and one outdoor soaking pools, which are replenished by 104-to-107-degree water from an underground aquifer. Each hot tub is entirely private, and the water is full of enriching minerals to rejuvenate your body and skin. The hotel rooms are a soothing mix of sumptuous and rustic, and those staying overnight receive one complimentary 30-minute soak per day. Plus, since the property is centrally located, exploring town, which is full of art galleries and shops, is easy. *Room rates from \$148.*

**Don't Miss:** Sierra Grande is a great launching point for exploring

the outdoors, including Elephant Butte Lake State Park and Ted Turner Reserves' two other properties in the area, Ladder Ranch and Armendaris, where you can visit a ghost town, e-bike, and go on wildlife tours. Sierra Grande is just 23 miles away from Spaceport America, where Virgin Galactic has launched manned flights to space. The site is an active test facility, so it's closed to the public, but Final Frontiers, a Spaceport America partner, offers private tours to the world's first purpose-built commercial spaceport. Tours must be booked in advance by calling (575) 267-8888.

## Community Wellness Centers with Spa-like Facilities

**Sometimes you just want a regular steam room or hot tub. Here are a few options around the state.**

### North Central Genoveva Chavez Community Center, Santa Fe

In addition to a regulation basketball court, racquetball courts, and a 50-meter pool, GCCC

has hot tubs for relaxing and a sauna. \$4 entrance fee for seniors 60 and over; \$236 per year.

### Albuquerque Metro The Ronald Gardenswartz Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque

The center is open to people of all faiths and backgrounds to participate in a variety of social, cultural, recreational, and educational programs and services centered on Jewish identity. Like most other JCC locations, this one has an excellent recreation program, with group fitness classes, pickleball courts, a

25-yard lap pool, and a therapy pool. There's also a hot tub and a steam room. Monthly membership is \$51 for seniors, \$70 for couples.

### West Cecil Garcia Fitness Center, Gallup

Situated on the western end of town, this facility has three racquetball courts and a weight room with cardio machines, including treadmills, elliptical trainers, bikes, steppers, and rowers. It also has a steam room and a sauna for relaxing after a workout. \$10; \$35 per month for seniors.



### Northern NM El Monte Sagrado, Taos

Situated only a few blocks from Taos Plaza, this is one of the state's premier resorts for a weekend of rejuvenation. The property is surrounded by willow and cottonwood trees, and there are walking paths on the premises that wander past stone water sculptures, a wooden footbridge, and a stocked trout pond. Accommodations range from Southwestern-style hotel rooms with soaking tubs and gas fireplaces to casita suites with private courtyard patios. There's even an award-winning restaurant, De La Tierra, and a lively bar, the Anaconda, in the main lodge. But the real highlight remains El Monte Sagrado's Living Spa, with ten treatment rooms and services like the forest-bathing massage, which uses essential oils from various trees to replicate the immune boost and other health benefits that come from being in nature. The spa, one of the best in all the Rocky Mountains, also

has its own line of natural and organic products, including the Sagrado oil blend, designed to promote a healthy equilibrium of body, mind, and spirit. After a massage or other treatment, unwind further in the adjoining well-

ness center, stocked with two hydrotherapy tubs and a saltwater pool. With Taos at your doorstep, there are hundreds of worthy reasons to explore the area, but a staycation at the resort might just be the most satisfying thing you can do. *Room rates from \$174.*

**Don't Miss:** Taos is full of great shops and restaurants, among them the Love Apple, a cash-only establishment in a former 19th-century chapel that emphasizes local, organic home cooking. One of the most charming offerings in town is Tea.o.graphy, a tea shop that sources its leaves and herbs from small farms across the globe. Each tea is mixed and packaged by hand in Taos, with exotic blends only available here, from herbal mixes like High Desert Sage to traditional-style black teas like Georgia Peach. Bring some home to relive your weekend.

### Central NM Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa, Santa Ana Pueblo

An easy 30-minute drive from downtown Albuquerque, this 550-acre resort on the banks of the Rio Grande is a world away. The on-site spa, Tamaya Mist, is one of the best in the state, named for the morning mists that often hover above the valley's cottonwood trees. The spa treatments



● **From top:**  
El Monte Sagrado;  
Tamaya Resort  
and Spa.

COURTESY OF EL MONTE SAGRADO, COURTESY OF HYATT REGENCY TAMAYA RESORT AND SPA



are as relaxing as that image suggests, including a lavender-oil therapy and an Ancient Drumming massage in which the therapist drums on your body with sage-infused poultices. For sore joints and muscles, Tamaya Mist offers a healing-hands massage, where the anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties of CBD are used to reduce inflammation. The resort is expansive, with over 350 rooms, a pool area with cabanas, and several

restaurants, including Corn Maiden, a farm-to-table experience that focuses on flavors and ingredients indigenous to New Mexico. *Room rates from \$274 with payment in advance.*

**Don't Miss:** Tamaya is located on Santa Ana Pueblo, with access to unique experiences in New Mexico, including a dream-catcher workshop, a cultural learning center, and basketmaking tutorials. You can also book a baked *huruna*

(oven bread) tasting with a variety of butters and preserves, as well as a traditional storytelling night. For those inclined to explore outdoors, there's the Twin Warriors Golf Club, an 18-hole championship course, and guided hikes along the Rio Grande. Equestrians can visit the nonprofit Tamaya Horse Rehab and support a worthy cause with a hop in the saddle (\$90 per person for a 90-minute group ride). ●

RBA Luminous Mask



Sandia Soap



Taos Bee Mesa Man Big Daddy Trio



## Spa-Worthy Products for Home

**When there's just no space in your schedule to book a massage or visit a hot spring, these New Mexico-made face brighteners and skin soothers bring the spa to you.**

### RBA Luminous Mask

Made with cactus enzymes, aloe vera, and extracts of pineapple and papaya, the Luminous Mask from Santa Fe's own RBA Skincare has a fresh, citrusy scent and "powerfully hydrating" properties, says RBA founder Jen Scott. It also stimulates collagen growth for supple skin while minimizing fine lines, wrinkles, and age spots. \$42; [rba-skincare.com](http://rba-skincare.com)

### Loam High Desert Bath Salts

The scenery around your tub at home likely can't compete with the

desert cliffs above Ojo Caliente or the rugged canyon walls near Black Rock Hot Springs, but a soak with a couple of tablespoons of these bath salts—made with locally crafted big sage, juniper, and chaparral hydrosols—will create a calming experience and oasis all its own. No travel necessary. \$18; [loam.earth](http://loam.earth)

### Sandia Soap Jemez Morning

This top-selling six-ounce bar from Sandia Soap, a one-man show run by Albuquerque-based Christopher Norton, blends a trio of luxurious, moisturizing oils and pine fragrance sure to enhance your cleansing routine. \$8; [sandiasoap.com](http://sandiasoap.com)

### K&K Zinc Oxide Sun Shield Moisturizer

While New Mexico's plentiful sunshine is proven to elevate the body's vitamin D supply (often deficient in older adults), harsh

rays at higher elevations can wreak havoc on your skin. Before heading out for an adventure, cover exposed areas with a pea-size dollop of Zinc Oxide Sun Shield Moisturizer from New Mexico True—certified K&K. The rich cream hydrates and protects, says Katie Uilk, cofounder and CEO, adding, "We're able to do multiple things for aging skin." \$48; [kkskinproducts.com](http://kkskinproducts.com)

### Taos Bee Mesa Man Big Daddy Trio

If Kit Carson walked into a spa, his products of choice might just be the so-called Big Daddy Trio from Taos Bee: Mesa Man Coconut Body Cream, Mesa Man Beard Oil, and Mesa Man Body Spray. Together they soothe raw skin, tame unruly mustaches, and add a heady fragrance—with notes of boot leather, firewood, and tobacco—fit for any cowpoke. \$65; [taosbee.com](http://taosbee.com)

# A *Life* *in* Clay

Santa Clara Pueblo master potter Roxanne Swentzell has spent a lifetime working with clay and advocating for Indigenous diets and sustainable farming practices. At 62, her voice—and passions—are as strong as ever.

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Story and photographs by Ungelbah Dávila





● The famed artist began working with clay at the age of three.



**E**mbedding emotion in pottery is not a skill that's easily acquired. Yet for Roxanne Swentzell, the descendant of a long line of Tewa artists, it became a lifeline at a young age. When she was three, a speech impediment prevented her from being understood, so her mother, a potter, handed her a piece of clay.

"I began to create little figurines, and I used them to communicate for me," Swentzell says. Dirt from the earth mixed with water became a medium for expressing herself. It would also become her vocation. "When people ask, 'How do you see yourself as an artist?,' that's a strange question for me, because art was first about communication," she says. Today, the famed artist from Santa Clara Pueblo is well-known for her sculptures, some of which are on display at the Tower Gallery in Pojoaque Pueblo. They radiate feelings, experiences, and stories.

Swentzell found success with her pottery early on. By 19, her art was being showcased at the Four Winds Gallery in Pittsburgh, and Swentzell was selected to be an artist at the prestigious Santa Fe Indian Market. While her life's work has revolved around working with clay, she has devoted time to learning new skills and promoting traditions. In 1987, she cocreated the Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute to teach sustainable farming practices.

Today, it is home to a vast seed bank, offers cultural and farming workshops, and is the base of the Pueblo Food Experiment, which advocates a return to a precolonial diet. Currently, the institute is building a retreat center at Abiquiu Lake that will be open to both tribal members and the general public. In 2016, through the Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute, Swentzell published *The Pueblo Food Experience Cookbook: Whole Food of Our Ancestors*, which "promotes healing and balance by returning to the original foodways of the Pueblo peoples."

During those years, ceramic art remained central to her creative endeavors. She has received numerous awards for her work, which has been exhibited around the world, including at the National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. In 2019, she was presented with the New Mexico Governor's Art Award, one of the highest honors an artist can receive from the state.

Now 62, Swentzell—a mother, grandmother, artist, activist, farmer, author, teacher, and Tewa elder—remains as full of life and creative energy as the land she resides on. She's become a prominent figure in New Mexico culture, inspiring others to live actively, value community connections, and empower themselves through healthy aging. We chatted with her about her life and ongoing work.

**Can you explain how clay figurines helped you communicate when you were a child?**

**Swentzell:** I had a very severe speech impediment, so the sounds I made were not forming words that you could understand. Imagine a little girl starting school, and she's trying to talk to other kids and they're laughing at her because they don't understand. School was very, very difficult for me, but I had this incredible medium of clay.

I remember coming home one day, and I wanted to explain to my mother how difficult it was in school. I was five or six years old at this point, and I created a little figure of a girl crying at a desk, and then I could hand it to my mother so she would understand what I was going through.

**How did you go from those early days of art being an essential part of communication to realizing that you could do it for a living?**

I went to the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe in high school, and while I was there I was offered a one-woman show at their museum. I was so excited, and I gathered all my sculptures, pots, cups, and everything I had made that year and put them in the museum. They put up a big sign with my name on it. And then they said, "Well, where's your price list?" I went, "What?" It had never dawned on me to put a price on anything.

At that particular show, there were two men who had come from New York, and they were impressed and wanted to take the whole show to a gallery in Niagara Falls. I said, "You have to go talk to my mom." Instead of saying, "Oh, that's wonderful, that's amazing," she scolded them. She told them, "Shame on you. She doesn't need to be exposed to that world. Leave her alone. Don't force her there right now. Let her just be who she is."

It was an incredible lesson for me that I still think about. My mother was trying to point out that not everything has to be about Western success or money. What I was doing, which she





● Swentzell advocates for Indigenous diets.

told me very clearly was of value, was making things from my heart. It wasn't for money or ego. It was just about what was beautiful and wonderful to me. I'm so grateful that she made that view prominent so that I wouldn't get lost. I think there's a need for just letting children bloom first.

#### **How do you characterize yourself as an artist today?**

I describe myself as a sculptor of human emotions.

#### **Can you explain the significance of art in your culture?**

Art in the Pueblo culture is very prominent, although it wouldn't necessarily be referred to as art. It's just what you do. The fine line between crafts and art is not noticed in the culture much. You make what you can,

**"My approach to everything is very place- and earth-based. As I grew, we built our own house out of adobe, which is earth-based. I continue to build with the materials around me."**

**—ROXANNE SWENTZELL**

whether it's your clothes, a pot, a belt, or a garden. It's all artistically done.

A lot of our cultural beliefs are seen on, say, the outfits of our ceremonial and pottery pieces. They often show patterns and pictures of our belief systems in symbols. And those symbols you can't

go buy in a store. We have to make them ourselves. They have stories connected to them, because they have meanings, and those meanings are passed down from generation to generation.

#### **How has working with clay, gardening, and your other creative outlets supported you throughout your life?**

My approach to everything is very place- and earth-based. As I grew, we built our own house out of adobe, which is earth-based. I continue to build with the materials around me. As I got older, where our food comes from became more [prominent] in my consciousness. I was planting and growing gardens in the fields around me, which is a place-based, culture-based, earth-based thing. It's all tied to who I am and how I am connected to this place, the people





● Swentzell helped create a vast seed bank of traditional Pueblo foods.

of this place, the plants of this place, the air of this place. It's all connected.

My mother made our pots because we needed dishes to eat from. If you need a pot to cook something in, you can go make it. There was very much an independence within yourself. And I'm lucky to have grown up with that perspective, because it gave me a real sense of empowerment. When people know that they can feed themselves, that's empowerment. When they know that they can make themselves a pair of shoes, that's empowerment. When you can make shelter for yourself, that's empowerment.

**What are some lessons you've been able to transfer from your mother to your own children and grandchildren?**

**"Community is so important. I couldn't do anything that I've done without the people around me. The older I get, the more it becomes obvious that nobody lives in a bubble."**

**—ROXANNE SWENTZELL**

I homeschooled my kids for seven years and my grandkids for a couple years. And the thing that I have tried to pass on to them is, again, the understanding that they can figure out whatever it is that's in front of them. So if they run

into car problems, it's like, "Well, let's see if we can figure it out." If they want to sew something, it's like, "Well, let's figure this out." It's all in our world to be able to figure it out.

Today, information is so available, but the hands-on part is lacking. Many people know a lot of information, but they don't know how to put it into practice. So what I often do now is teach basic skills like how to make a little bowl and how to fire it, because people have disconnected from that part of their lives—how to make their clothes, their houses, their food, an expression of themselves. I just want to encourage that in everybody. My kids are successful in their own right, and I think it's because I didn't encourage them to be just one thing. I encouraged them to enjoy learning.



**How does being outside and creating help your health, your mental wellness, and your spirit as you get older?**

We've been building [our retreat center] up at Abiquiu Lake. And the days I go up to work, it's physical labor, but we only really work hard for like three hours. Then we have a really good lunch and enjoy the scenery and talk to each other, and you feel very accomplished, like, "Wow, I did stuff and I got exercise, and I didn't have to go pay a gym fee."

I realized this fall, when everyone was getting sick, I was outside mixing concrete for walls and feeling healthy. I think all that vitamin D is good for me.

I encourage everybody to go outside. If we spend too much time inside, we get sick. Being outside keeps us healthy.

**How important is community to the aging process?**

Community is so important. I couldn't do anything I've done without the people around me. The older I get, the more it becomes obvious that nobody lives in a bubble. Everybody has a community around them, and it's not just the people. It's the sun that rises on the mountain, the water you drink, the birds in your yard. It's the bigger community, and our communities are what hold us up. When we diversify that community

and add more wonderful things to it, that community becomes stronger.

**How do you personally connect with your community?**

We built a traditional women's house in Santa Clara Pueblo. The women gather there to do traditional women's activities, mostly concerning corn, because corn is female in our culture.

It's so wonderful when we gather, because the men come too, and they'll help out by singing to us, or help guard, or just take care of what needs they can provide. When you have an activity that's happening that's good and feels good, it attracts others, and then they want to help.



● Swentzell's art has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world.





● Swentzell considers art, cooking, and building all related as labors of love.

### How is food and community connected in your culture?

Corn is very seasonal, so there's different activities throughout the year depending on the season. The Pueblo dances that happen in the villages are seasonally connected to the crops or hunting time or spring-time and the things that happen in that season. It's place-based, community-based thinking.

In the beginning of the fall, in August and September, we have a lot of harvest dances. And then we hang our corn up to make sure it's nice and dry. Through the winter, we can take the dried corn down—it's either seed corn or food corn, and gets segregated into those piles—and then throughout the year the corn is available as needed, whether it's for replanting, ceremonial use, or eating.

### What are some Pueblo corn dishes you make?

We do a corn soup—*chicos*—from dried, roasted sweet corn, as well as posole and tamales. Another is with blue corn. We grind it into flour and roast it, and make what we call *buwah*, which is a very thin, paper-like bread.

### Are there traditional winter activities that are important in your community?

In the winter, you start to go indoors because it's cold. A lot of crafts can be done in wintertime—basketmaking, weaving, sewing, pottery, all while sitting inside by a warm fire.

### How are art, cooking and building houses all related for you?

They're related through a love story. They're related because I wanted

to make a sculpture that showed somebody looking at somebody else with a particular feeling they had. I grew red sweet corn because I loved the thought of having an ear of red sweet corn.

### It seems like you've learned new things throughout your entire life. What would you tell people to let them know they can pick up a new craft at any age?

Creativity is the tool you use, but love is what moves it. The desire and the enjoyment of it, the joy it brings you, the feeling afterward that I did that by myself with my hands, is what connects them all.

Stay in the place of just being excited about learning. Stay in the place where you always feel good. ●





● The state government invites seniors to visit the capitol building in Santa Fe every January.

## Celebrate Senior Day

*Visit the state capitol on January 27 to meet peers and elected officials, make new connections, find resources, hear about issues facing the aging community, and advocate for services that enhance the quality of life, independence, and dignity of older people and adults with disabilities statewide.*

**E**very January, the state government invites seniors to visit the capitol building in Santa Fe and let their voices be heard—a special tradition known as Senior Day. “Senior Day is what it sounds like, a day for seniors to make an impression on the government,” says Toby Kessler, former president of the Alliance for Area Agencies on Aging. “You thank the legislators for all they do, and let them know how funding can make a difference in your life.”

In 2000, Senior Day started as a way for aging adults to directly advocate for funding for senior center services during the annual legislative session. “When the House Appropriations Committee held a hearing on a bill for

funding senior programs, we’d pack the room with 400 seniors,” Kessler recalls. “Different people would testify about how important all the programs were, including [for] Alzheimer’s. Having that many voters in a room would impress the legislators.”

Today this type of advocacy is more important than ever to ensure senior center services like meals, transportation, and communal events continue. Every year, the state legislature makes capital outlay appropriations to New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) to fund senior center projects statewide like new construction, renovations, and the purchase of equipment and vehicles. Budgets can vary yearly—which means

that showing up and advocating for these services can make a real difference. “Senior centers perform so many vital roles,” says Neil Segotta, the current director of the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging. “It’s important to visit Santa Fe and let your legislator know what your center does.”

This year, Senior Day is being held on January 27—and New Mexico Aging Services is inviting all seniors, caregivers, and anyone else willing to advocate for senior services to attend. It’s a fun event where people can learn about the resources and services available in their community, connect with peers from across the state, and meet with elected officials to advocate for high-quality aging services.



● Senior Day is an opportunity to create connections with state legislators.

## Ask ALTSD

### What's new in Medicare for 2025?

This year there are changes in enrollment periods at the federal level to protect people with Medicare from aggressive marketing tactics. Kris Winterowd, a bureau chief at the New Mexico Consumer and Elder Rights Division, shares the top five updates to know about.

- All people with Medicare will have a \$2,000 cap on prescription drug costs.
- Everyone with Extra Help on their prescription drugs will receive the full amount of assistance.
- A new Prescription Payment Plan allows the cost of expensive medication to be spread over the course of the year instead of being due all at once.
- People with Extra Help, Medicare Secondary Payer, or other assistance can change drug plans monthly.
- People with Medicare Advantage Plans can change them from January to March during the Special Enrollment period.

“We’re there now to ask for additional funding to what’s been budgeted, or to keep the current funding alive,” Segotta says. “Budgets are not a done deal by January 27, so showing up really matters.”

In addition, Senior Day participants can play a deeper long-term role—creating connections with state legislators that can open hearts and

minds for future relationships. “Senior Day is like the World Series,” Kessler says. “To get there, you’ve got to play several games to build up communication.” Kessler advises aging adults to reach out to their local representative and invite them to a senior center to learn about its programs. “Senior services are one of the best-kept secrets in the state,” Kessler says. “Often legislators aren’t old enough to know about them yet, so invite them to visit. Once your legislator learns about all the programs and understands your needs, they’ll advocate for you even more during the session.”

At Senior Day, attendees can expect engaging speakers, interactive activities, refreshments, and opportunities to see state government in action and learn about the legislative process. Transportation may be provided by your senior center leader, so be sure to talk with your local director to see what they have planned. You can also request updates (and RSVP for the event) at [aginginnm.org](http://aginginnm.org).

### Share your Thoughts Now!

New Mexico Aging Services wants your feedback on the services at your senior center. Scan the QR code to share them.



## Supporting Senior Services

New Mexico’s Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) provide a range of programs to assist older adults, from senior center meals and activities to transportation and home-delivered meals. To help these AAAs give the best possible support, New Mexico Aging Services offers regular training to program leaders. “We’re focusing on high-quality services across our network, and that includes providing leadership courses to our network providers,” says Denise King, the New Mexico Aging Network Division operations director. “It’s all about supporting our seniors.”

Every six months, participating service providers receive advanced training in subjects including business leadership, grant writing, and working with diverse populations. It’s just one way that New Mexico Aging Services continues to strengthen its offerings for seniors. “New Mexico Aging Services is being incredibly supportive of this program,” says David Markwardt, of Markwardt Consulting. “Leadership programs like this help educate and motivate people to stay committed and grow in their roles.”



## Faces Behind the Policy Advisory Committee

**Retreat Healthcare founder  
Dr. Lena Galvan Ernst**

To ensure that New Mexico seniors get the best resources possible, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham appoints people from across the state to policy advisory committees (PACs), groups of experts in various fields who meet regularly to share ideas with state leadership in various departments, including the ALTSD. In this issue, we chat with ALTSD PAC member Dr. Lena Galvan Ernst, the founder and clinical director of Retreat Healthcare, an organization in Rio Rancho that specializes in care for people with dementia.

### What inspired you to create a better care facility for people with dementia?

*Ernst:* In 1992, I was working as a long-term-care administrator in a traditional nursing facility and realized that people with neurocognitive disorders, like Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, did not do well in those environments. At the time, I was also getting my master's degree in business and came across the literature about how a person's environment can impact their behaviors. That inspired me to build a new type of facility in 1994, the first assisted-living program in our state dedicated to dementia. We have three guiding principles that help people feel better while struggling with dementia: each facility is small, has a higher staff-to-patient ratio than most programs, and offers care on the physical, emotional, and spiritual level, like aroma and touch therapy, gardens, and music.



### How do you bring your expertise in dementia to help seniors across the state?

People with dementia are a growing demographic, so we continually work to incorporate the latest research into our facilities, which then translates across the state. For instance, this year Retreat Healthcare received the Joint Commission accreditation for assisted living, the first time this national nonprofit accreditation has been awarded to an organization in New Mexico. We spent years preparing to achieve this certification in 13 different domains of health care, and will continue to be inspected on a yearly basis—an approach to ongoing improvement that I love.

All the lessons from this process help me to better serve our growing population of seniors living with brain disorders and their caregivers across the state. New Mexico, for instance, has been very progressive about expanding programs to support this population. New Mexico Aging Services even created the Office of Alzheimer's and

Dementia Caregiving, which coordinates services and efforts to address the needs of people living with the disease and their families. Most people who live with neurocognitive disorders are being cared for by families, and they need support with education. So, in my role on the PAC, we're looking at how to use online information systems to give them the tools they need. In addition, we're getting the word out to younger generations about the importance of staying healthy, not smoking, and avoiding obesity to prevent the risk of dementia. If it's good for your heart, then it's good for your brain.

### What inspires you to help care for people with dementia?

I'm originally from Las Cruces, where my father was a lawyer and a judge. He was a great support to me in building this business, and then, as happens with so many families in New Mexico, he became diagnosed with Alzheimer's himself and spent the last four years of his life at my facility. For me it was a wonderful experience to see my dad every day, but it also gave me insight into what the experience is like for our families. I of course wanted to give my dad the very best care, and I didn't feel like we had to change anything in our approach, which made me proud of our program. Since then I've also cared for my mother-in-law and my sister's mother-in-law, and look forward to using my experiences and learning to help the PAC continue to ensure people with dementia in New Mexico can live their best lives possible.

**For more information about Alzheimer's, including support and services offered to New Mexicans, go to [aging.nm.gov/alzheimers-caregivers](http://aging.nm.gov/alzheimers-caregivers).**



● The Alamo senior center in Alamogordo offers a range of events, including fitness programs and trips.



“It’s always amazing to see how senior centers come up with so many incredible activities,” says Denise King, the Aging Network Operations Division director for the ALTSD. “Many centers have senior-led activities like pool games, card games, puzzles, book clubs, computer labs, and arts and crafts. Some sites even host craft fairs, selling their art to raise funds for other activities.”

At the Alamo Senior Center, Morales takes a creative approach to event programming—and offers something new every day. Drivers working for the senior center take locals grocery shopping on Mondays and Wednesdays. Bingo is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Thrift store outings are on Thursdays, and everyone goes to the mall on Fridays. “We also organize trips to beauty shops, barber shops, doctors’ offices, and the bank throughout the week,” Morales says. “We even go to El Paso to visit the zoo and go shopping. It’s a great way to have fun while staying safe in a group.”

Everyone has different interests, so Morales tries to create events and opportunities that appeal to a diversity of interests. “We have a lot of younger seniors coming in,” Morales says, “so finding things that are interesting to a range of ages can sometimes be a challenge.” In addition to card games, dominoes, pool tournaments, quilting, and crafts, the senior center has created

# Making Music in Alamogordo

*How Magdalena Morales uses events to keep her community inspired.*

**A**t the Alamo Senior Center in Alamogordo, Magdalena Morales invites community members to make sweet music together—literally.

“We feature music every day starting at nine a.m., and all our bands are senior center locals,” she says. “Our senior center members who play music for us include a pianist, a country band, a soloist with a beautiful voice, and more. The music is beautiful and helps boost everyone’s energy. It just makes this a happy place.”

For 35 years, Morales has been working at the Alamo Senior Center, ascending from the role of administrative assistant to home-services supervisor to manager. This in-depth, firsthand look at the inner workings of the senior center has given the Alamogordo native a deep under-

standing of what resonates with locals—especially in terms of activities and events. “I oversee every program with the help of 19 great staff members, and I absolutely love it,” she says. “It’s really special for people to come have a meal, socialize, and take part in all the activities and special events we offer every day.”

Across the state, the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) and other agencies offer a range of resources to help senior centers with activities, including art options offered through the Department of Cultural Affairs, senior discounts to visit museums supported by the Tourism Department, and fitness classes from the New Mexico Senior Olympics. But it’s the creativeness of the senior centers themselves that makes local programming truly come alive.



a fitness program. Morales says that the program is expanding in popularity, and her staff offers new fitness activities to see what resonates. “The fitness program is busy, with participants every day. All classes are taught by volunteers who are senior center members themselves,” Morales says. “We look at every group and try to provide activities that will interest them.”

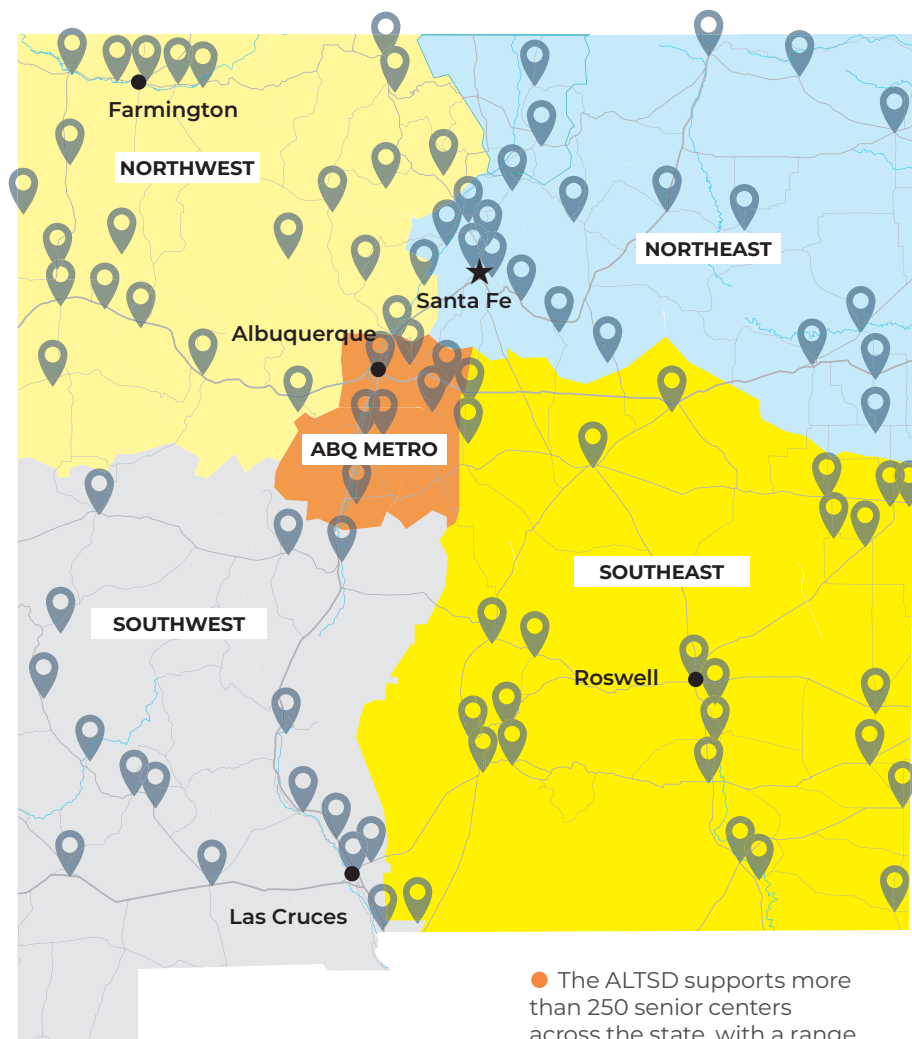
Another key to success is creating intergenerational events. During the summer, local schoolchildren are invited to visit the Alamo Senior Center to play games like Chutes and Ladders and Hungry Hungry Hippos. Every Halloween, the senior center hosts trick-or-treaters. “The kids dress up, and our seniors love it,” she says. “Some of them don’t have grandchildren, so it makes the event special. Their eyes just light up.”

Ultimately, Morales says, the best approach to finding events that resonate is to try new things. “We ask people what they would like,” she says. “Then we say, ‘Sure, we’ll give it a try.’” The senior center doesn’t have the staff to run all its events. So by inviting seniors to lead an activity, it helps to grow programming while also giving retirees a sense of purpose. “We guide the volunteers and ensure they’re following rules, but it’s their activity,” Morales says. “It gives them a feeling of ownership and pride.”

It was this open-minded approach that led to many senior center members playing music every day, which has now become an ongoing source of joy for everyone. “All our musicians are registered at the senior center,” Morales says. “It increases the energy level and happiness for everyone.”

Morales says that this enthusiasm extends to all programs, like the senior center volunteers who help bring prepared food to homebound seniors in the Home Delivered Meal Program. “We have a total of 100 volunteers assisting staff throughout the week in every program area,” she says. “There are people helping everywhere!”

● Discover fun events to suggest for your senior center at [ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org).



● The ALTSD supports more than 250 senior centers across the state, with a range of daily and weekly activities.

## Winter 2025 Events

**A look at the upcoming opportunities to get out and about in your community.**

### January

#### Legislative Prayer Breakfast

**January 3, 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.**

**Alamo Senior Center, Alamogordo**  
Enjoy breakfast and a prayerful occasion with Otero County legislators as they depart to Santa Fe for the 2025 Legislative session. Contact the Alamo Senior Center at (505) 439-4150 to reserve tickets.

#### Fifties Sock Hop Party

**January 8, 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.**

**North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center,**

#### Albuquerque

Shake, rattle, and roll at the 1950s Sock Hop Party. Bring your dancing shoes and twist those feet in honor of Elvis's birthday. All ages welcome.

#### Cooking Classes

**Fridays, January 10–31, 12:30 p.m.**

**Rio Bravo Senior Center, Albuquerque**

Learn cooking skills, discover how to save money at the supermarket, and explore food health and safety.

#### New Mexico Senior Olympics North Games

**January 13–16**

**Santa Fe**

Sign up and compete at one of the largest multi-sport events for seniors 50 and over, with age divisions in five-year increments

## EVENTS CALENDAR

(50–54, 55–59, 60–64, all the way to 95-plus). Events include basketball, billiards, bowling, corn-hole, frisbee, pickleball, shuffleboard, soccer kick, swimming, and table tennis. Registration is \$30 for the first sport and \$10 for each additional sport. Sign up online at [nmseniorolympics.org](https://nmseniorolympics.org).

### Tax Preparation Seminar

**Wednesday afternoons, January 15–October 15, 2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.**

Peace Lutheran Church, Las Cruces

AARP TaxAide personnel share tips on filing your 2024 federal and state income taxes. The presentation and Q&A will get you ready to prepare your taxes and answer questions about changes to the process.

### Family Dinner Night

**January 17, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

North Domingo Baca  
Multigenerational Center,  
Albuquerque

Enjoy dinner and create memories with the whole family. Dinner is free with a Department of Senior Affairs membership, and served until 6:30 p.m. Call (505) 764-6475 to sign up.

### 2025 Kickoff Event for the Los Alamos Scam Prevention Advisory Group

**January 29, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

SALA Event Center, Los Alamos

The Los Alamos Retired and Senior Organization is hosting a special screening of the action-comedy film *Thelma*, followed by an informational presentation from the local FBI on scam prevention. The event is free and brings some humor (plus popcorn and soda) to the serious reality of scams targeting older adults.

### End of Life Planning and Empowerment Seminars

**Various locations and times,**

**January to June, Bernalillo County**

A free, in-depth exploration of rights, choices, and options on subjects like aging in place, advance health-care directives, dementia considerations and directives, estate planning, and after-death options. Classes meet once a week for two hours over an eight-week period. Adults 50 and over residing in Bernalillo County get priority, with four locations in Bernalillo County, including: Rio Bravo Senior Center (January 9–February 27, 1 p.m. to 3

p.m.); South Valley Multipurpose Senior Center (February 26–April 16, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.), and Paradise Hills Community Center (April 30–June 18, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.).

## February

### Senior Connection Trade Show

**February 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Jewish Community Center  
Ballroom, Albuquerque

This show features vendors with products and services for today's seniors, entertainment by seniors, and door prizes. The event is free and open to the public.

### Valentine's Dinner and Dance

**February 14, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Alamo Senior Center,  
Alamogordo

The annual Valentine's Day Dance with live music is once again held in the dining room at the Alamo Senior Center. Dinner is served during the dance. For more information, contact (575) 439-4150.

### Santa Fe Film Festival

**February 21–23**

Santa Fe

The Santa Fe Film Festival is an annual celebration of the best in cinematic arts, and this year is the 25th annual edition. Come for screenings, panels, jury awards, and Q&As with filmmakers. The 2025 All Access Pass Early Bird Special is \$125.

## March

### 2025 Annual Cowboy Days

**March 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; March 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

New Mexico Farm and Ranch  
Heritage Museum, Las Cruces

The 25th anniversary of this annual event features the Parade of Breeds cattle program, cowboy demonstrations, music, food trucks, and activities that celebrate the state's ranching traditions. Admission is free; \$20 parking pass.



**RETREAT VILLAS**  
ELEGANT ASSISTED LIVING

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The Retreat Villas is a part of the Award-Winning Retreat Healthcare campus. Retreat Healthcare is a dementia capable organization, privately owned and operated in New Mexico.

For Tours or More Information Call 505-896-8087 or Visit [RetreatVillasnm.com](https://RetreatVillasnm.com)



● **From left:** Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham welcomed attendees; guests enjoyed a range of events.



## Celebrating Another Amazing Conference on Aging

This year, the Conference on Aging welcomed 37 sponsors and hundreds of attendees from across the state, with exciting panels, activities, and a dance to cap off the day. Here are some highlights from the October event.

- People joined virtually from across the state at senior center watch parties, including over 90 attendees in Hobbs—our largest group of the year.
- The New MexiCare Program panel, about the state's initiative to provide financial assistance and training to caregivers, was at maximum capacity, with over 85 attendees.
- Cooking workshops by dietitians included wellness recipes to boost cognition, fall cooking demonstrations for recipes like butternut squash soup, and information on community programs that support cooking and food skills, active living, and well-being.
- Art workshops were hugely popular, with participants enjoying classes in landscape painting and holiday tin crafts.
- Everyone was invited to join fun games throughout the day like Resident Rights Bingo, in which participants scored points while learning about the legal rights of nursing-home and assisted-living residents.

### THE CROSSWORD

Solution to the Fall 2024 puzzle:

T	V	M	A			B	L	U	E			W	H	I	T	E
R	O	U	X			L	E	A	R	N		H	A	N	K	S
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O	R	A		M	E	H					N	E	T	P	A	Y
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				L	O	B		E	N	Y	A		D	U	D	S
	R	I	O	G	R	A	N	D	E	G	O	R	G	E		
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## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS CARE? WE CAN HELP!

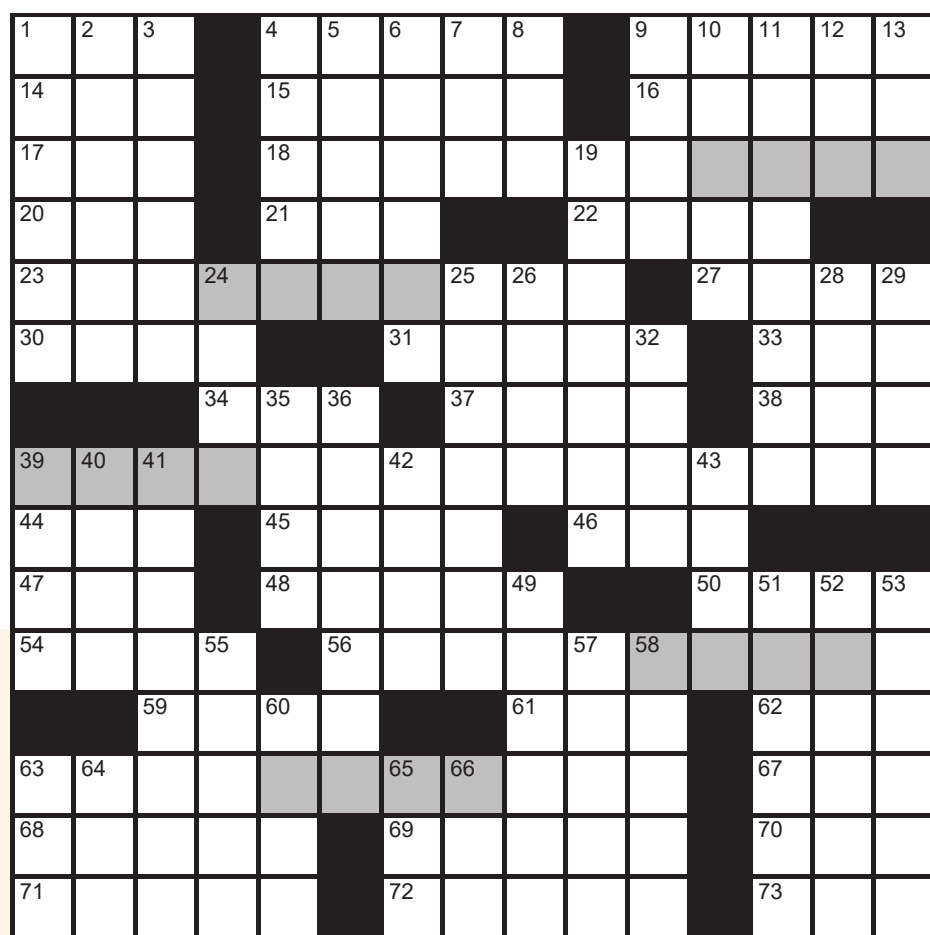
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The solution to the puzzle will be printed in the following issue and available online at [newmexicogenerations.com](http://newmexicogenerations.com) in early February.

67. Col. hoops competition  
68. Sorority letter  
69. "I can help"  
70. Shade of blonde  
71. Exhausted, with "out"  
72. Kind of spray  
73. Diffident

#### DOWN

1. Brunch drink  
2. Police order  
3. What a goner has  
4. Furry primate  
5. Egg producer  
6. Sister of Moses  
7. Journalist Yashar \_\_\_\_  
8. Hush-hush govt. group  
9. Branch  
10. Decrease  
11. Making a duplicate  
12. It comes before long  
13. Farm pen  
19. Drag race participants  
24. Nervously irritable  
25. "OK to have a look?"  
26. Where the boyz are  
28. Cheese type  
29. Endure  
32. Monogram unit: Abbr.  
35. Black, as la nuit  
36. Museum VIP  
39. Mountain range crossed by Hannibal  
40. Reddish-brown  
41. Crafty zigzagging basketball move  
42. Friends and neighbors  
43. Pop's mom  
49. Arizona team, in headlines  
51. Aggie Memorial Stadium and The Pit, e.g.  
52. Pass on  
53. Unrefined  
55. Elephant \_\_\_\_, New Mexico  
57. Soul  
58. Alpine song  
60. Honey drink  
63. Incidentally, in email shorthand  
64. Yellowfin tuna  
65. Celebrity chef Martin  
66. Simile words

# The Crossword

A New Mexico Generations Original  
By Brendan Emmett Quigley

NEW YEAR RE-SOLUTIONS

#### ACROSS

1. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, e.g.: Abbr.  
4. Fictional salesman  
9. Jazz instruments  
14. Nasdaq debut: Abbr.  
15. Contents of Pandora's box  
16. Critic Roger  
17. Just so-so  
18. The only artist in history to have a No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in four different decades  
20. Lennon's Yoko  
21. Altdorf's canton  
22. Town in Santa Fe county with a German man's name  
23. Boat for the ultra wealthy  
27. Prez, e.g.  
30. Parodied  
31. Polynesian language  
33. Courtroom affirmation  
34. Vitamin and supplement chain  
37. "High" time  
38. Kindergarten break  
39. "Get outta here!"  
44. Singer Reed or singer Rawls  
45. Black \_\_\_\_ (Georgia O'Keeffe painting)  
46. Rio Metro stop: Abbr.  
47. Average score at Las Campanas  
48. Deserved  
50. Scruff  
54. High-hatter  
56. San Francisco and surroundings  
59. Kind of wrestling  
61. Year abroad  
62. Be off  
63. Bad coffee, informally



# NEW MEXICO GENERATIONS

A new magazine dedicated to enhancing life for New Mexicans as they age.



Offering resources, inspiration, and a sense of community to those 55+

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*New Mexico Generations* magazine is a quarterly publication published by the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, whose mission is to serve and inspire the state's older adult community to live active, healthy lives and enhance their connections within their community.



## Winter Warmup

**I**n the 1950s, when this image was taken at Sandia Mountains' La Madera Ski Area, waxing one's wooden skis was critical to getting good glide on the snow. Without it, the skis would stick and eventually warp from the moisture.

At that time, La Madera—now called Sandia Peak Ski Area—was home to one of the longest T-bar lifts in the U.S., rising 1,000 feet. The T-bar, installed in 1946, was a significant upgrade for the fledgling ski area, the first in New Mexico, having opened in 1935. In 1938, the Civil Conservation Corps helped construct the day-use lodge seen here to offer protection from the elements and help keep skiers warm. Still, the resort struggled. In the 1951–1952 season, La Madera operated at a loss by the City of Albuquerque. A six-day ski lesson cost \$12. The next year, the Albuquerque Ski Club took over operations and charged \$25 for a season pass. Eventually, the resort was purchased by lawyer Robert Nordhaus and balloonist Ben Abruzzo, who later would help found the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

The resort's fortunes changed in 1960, when a new paved highway to the base transformed what was a multi-hour journey up a pitted road into a 45-minute cruise. It was also around this time that wooden skis gave way to fiberglass, and soon the sport as we know it began to develop. In 1983, the old stone building was replaced by a new lodge, the one that still welcomes skiers today.



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