

Ready for Beach Walks? ‘Speed Friending’?

By Denis Grasska



“Are you looking to find Catholic friends? Are you looking for activities to not only meet (others), but to get out and enjoy San Diego?”

“We provide those,” said Nancy Wesseln, director of San Diego Catholic Adult Community (CAC).

Thanks to the ministry’s “ACTIVE 60s+” group, that includes ongoing events for those past retirement age.

The ministry was founded almost 15 years ago. It has three age-specific groups — in addition to ACTIVE 60s+, there is also Young Adults (for ages 18 to 39) and the Adult Community (for late 30s through early 60s). The ministry hosts additional events, like its annual Epiphany Party and summer bonfires, where members from all three age groups are invited.

It’s supported by three parishes — Our Mother of Confidence in University City; St. Brigid, Pacific Beach; and the St. James-St. Leo Catholic Community, Solana Beach — but its events are open to Catholics throughout the diocese.

Of CAC’s 1,897 active members, there are currently 629 in the ACTIVE 60s+ group, Wesseln said. Ranging from their mid-60s to mid-70s, they



SOCIALIZING: The ACTIVE 60s+ group, organized by San Diego Catholic Adult Community, held a Mardi Gras “speed friending” event in February at the DoubleTree hotel in Del Mar.

include single, married, divorced and widowed members.

“Just like (with) young adults, there’s different stages of being a retired person,” said Wesseln, 65, who explained that the members of this group include recent retirees who aren’t ready for the slower-paced activities offered at the typical parish-based senior ministry.

“They like hiking, they like walking, they like being out in the community serving,” she said, “and they don’t feel like they fit what parishes are offering.”

Every week, ACTIVE 60s+ offers pickleball on Tuesday, a walk at Mission Bay on Wednesday, and a beach

walk starting at St. Brigid Parish on Friday.

Monthly events include a Zoom session on a faith-related topic every second Monday, trivia at the DoubleTree in Del Mar on fourth Thursdays, and a walk around Lake Murray on third Saturdays.

Wesseln said that there are also monthly socials. The format for these varies; depending on the month, it could be a happy hour, a potluck, or a “speed friending” event. The latter was held May 31 at the DoubleTree, attracting more than 25 people.

“Speed friending” follows a format

similar to speed dating, with attendees seated at tables of four and then being made to rotate a few times. Wesseln contrasted it with parties where “you only meet one or two people.”

“This (‘speed friending’) makes sure you meet everybody briefly,” she said, “and, at the end, then you get to socialize.”

At other socials, she will have attendees change tables after each course. For example, attendees will enjoy their appetizer at one table, before moving on to other tables for their salad, main entrée and dessert.

What feedback has Wesseln received about ACTIVE 60s+?

“Usually, it’s that they’re so happy that they found me,” she said. “And they come back. It’s not a ‘one-and-done.’ I am so impressed with how many keep returning.”

She believes that what keeps them attending is that, “when they come, they feel welcomed and connected.”

“My goal,” said Wesseln, “is that people know that they are welcomed wherever they are in San Diego and wherever they are in their walk with Christ.”

Learn more and sign up for the weekly newsletter at sandiegocac.org.



FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS FINDING PURPOSE IN SERVICE

IVC helps adults 50+ live the call to a faith that does justice.

We are accepting applications for the 2026-2027 Program Year to fill these available volunteer positions!

Advancing Students Forward

Admin Assistant
Student Mentor

Brother Benno’s

Development Assistant
Self-Sufficiency Volunteers

Diocese of San Diego

Mental Health Ministry Assistant

Our Lady’s School

Instructional Aides
Math & Reading Tutors
Development Assistant

Pope Francis Center

Family Preparedness Volunteer

St. Patrick’s School

Instructional Aides

St. Madeleine Sophie’s Center

Day Program Volunteer

St. Mary’s School

Reading Support Aide
Middle School Aide
Advancement Support

St. Rita’s School

Instructional Aides
Librarian
Student Mentors

San Diego Center for Children

Academy Assistant

Stand Up For Kids

Mentor
Mentoring Lead

Reading Legacies

First Teachers Program Volunteer

CONTACT:

CURRAN GAUGHAN
IVC REGIONAL DIRECTOR
cgaughan@ivcusa.org
858-822-9814

IVC Members make a 10-month commitment to serve 1 or 2 days per week with a nonprofit Partner Agency, integrating their life experience, faith, and skills to bring hope, dignity, and compassion to those who need it most.

SCAN TO LEARN ABOUT JOINING THE CORPS

