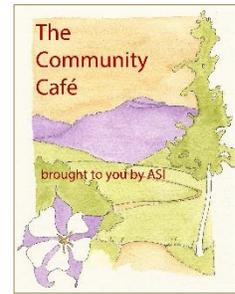


PRESS RELEASE

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Pagosa Springs, CO



NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Vision, hearing, and health

Vision and hearing loss affect our brains. When these changes go untreated, it becomes harder for us to comprehend what our eyes are seeing and our ears are hearing. [This impact](#) takes an unfortunate toll on cognitive function and our emotional and physical well-being. *The loss does not have to be profound to make a significant impact.*

The additional work the brain has to do to process information in a new way is [taking a real toll](#):

- Untreated hearing and vision loss can increase the risk of dementia, as well as reduction in attention, language use, memory, and the ability to identify and locate objects in space.
- Depth perception and the capacity to distinguish contrast (light/dark) make it harder to accomplish daily tasks.
- These factors increase the risk of falls.
- Declining cognitive function in turn leads to less awareness of whether hearing aids or glasses are effectively correcting the loss.

Conversely, correcting or supporting vision and hearing loss is good for our brains and by extension our long term well-being. Moderators are new cues that we can use in our daily environment to improve how we live our lives and better manage with our changing eyes and ears. Steps you can take include simple solutions, such as:

- Regular vision and hearing exams – every year is best. More often if your doctor recommends it due to a specific risk factor, such as glaucoma or diabetes.
- High contrast strips on stairs, dark color toilet seats that improve contrast, and use of mugs that are in high contrast to the liquid being served.
- [Low-vision rehabilitation](#) which is like physical therapy with the purpose of developing “strategies to maximize or substitute for diminished sight in order to maintain independence and a sense of self-worth.”
- Access to audio books for those who become unable to read the written word.
- Speak face-to-face with people and reduce background noise whenever possible.

Think bigger as well – when someone falls due to poor vision and has a major health impact, the medical and social costs to that individual and their family far outstrip the effort needed to make smaller accommodations before an accident occurs.

Our website provides a wide variety of resources on aging, active engagement, provider and caregiver education, and information about ASI programs in Archuleta County, as well as contact information for making reservations at The Community Café for take-out and for Meals on Wheels at: <http://www.psseniors.org/>.

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