

Success Stories

The following are clients who have been helped by Desert Samaritans.
(The pictures and names have been changed to protect their privacy.)

1. Mary (daughter) and Ann (mother) - In Home Supportive Services



Mary was 62 and quit work to take care of her 94 year old mother Ann, who had advanced Alzheimer's. Mary did not want to put Ann in a nursing home. Mary had no job, no income, no health insurance and no assets. They both lived off Ann's \$1650 in monthly Social Security. Rent was \$1000. Mary applied for Medi-Cal for Ann but was told her monthly share of cost was over \$900 so she didn't pursue it. Mary was further told by the County not to bother applying for IHSS because of the \$900 share of cost. If they paid the share of cost they wouldn't be able to pay the rent. Our social worker recognized that because of Ann's advanced Alzheimer's, she should qualify for protective supervision hours through In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) for a total of 274 hours per month. Mary applied and Ann was approved for 274 hours. Mary is her paid IHSS caregiver and now makes around \$2800 a month and has health insurance through her job with IHSS. Ann pays her Medi-Cal/IHSS share of cost each month and there is plenty of combined income to live comfortably in their apartment.

2. Elizabeth - Social Security Retirement and SSI



Elizabeth, a 69 year old divorced woman, was referred to us by her apartment manager. She was surviving on 20 hours a week working for minimum wage in a dress shop in Palm Springs. She suffered multiple health problems and was having difficulty working. When asked why she wasn't collecting her Social Security she said she had tried but was turned away. Our social worker took Elizabeth to the Social Security office and got her Social Security Retirement benefits and SSI started right away. She was able to retire and now has an income of \$865 per month and rent of \$210.

3. Margaret - CAPI, Medi-Cal, Social Security Retirement, SSI, Green Card



Margaret came to us as a 73 year old divorced woman with no income, no health insurance, and no assets. Originally from Germany, Margaret married an American GI and came to the U.S. in the 1950s. A friend was letting her stay with him in his mobile home in exchange for housekeeping. All of Margaret's identification documents (i.e., Green Card, driver's license, etc.) had been stolen about 10 years' prior and Social Security would not give her her Social Security benefits because she could not prove who she was. She tried several times with the help of several organizations to get her identification documents but was unsuccessful each time. Our social worker requested Margaret's immigration documents from the United States Customs

Immigration Service (USCIS) but they could not find her in their system based on the information he was able to provide (i.e., ex-husband's name, date of entry, port of entry, birth certificate from Germany, etc.). Based on what he had he helped Margaret apply for and receive Cash Assistance for Immigrants (CAPI) which provided her with \$835 per month and Medi-Cal. In the meantime, our social worker did a people search on the Internet and helped Margaret find her estranged ex husband. He then took Margaret to Coachella Valley Immigration Services (CVIS). An immigration specialist from CVIS called Margaret's ex husband and pleaded for his cooperation so he looked through some old boxes in the garage and found Margaret's Alien Registration number, which was the only way the USCIS would be able to find Margaret's records.

Once given that number, the USCIS agreed to issue Margaret a replacement Green Card. Once she had the Green Card, our social worker took Margaret back to the Social Security office and got her Social Security Retirement benefits, SSI, and Medicare started right away. In addition, he recently helped Margaret find a subsidized senior apt. where she now lives for \$210 per month.

4. Mark and Susan - Nursing Home Waiver Program



Susan (72) was totally disabled by a stroke several years ago. Her husband Mark (74), did not like the way she deteriorated in the nursing home she was briefly in so he brought her home. Mark hired caregivers for the day time and he took care of Susan at night. Combined they receive about \$2800 a month in Social Security and a pension, and they had about \$70,000 left in a reverse mortgage. Mark predicted he would run out of money to take care of Susan in about a year. Our social worker helped Mark apply for California's Nursing Home Waiver Program so that Susan could receive care in the home instead of care in a nursing home under Nursing

Home Medi-Cal rules. This allows Susan to qualify for Medi-Cal with no share of cost. Mark and Susan get to live on the \$2800 a month and in addition, Susan has 340 hours of monthly in home help provided by the state.

5. Joan - SSI, Medicare Part B, Medi-Cal



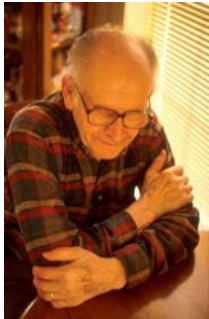
Joan was a 71 year old divorced woman living on less than \$850 per month. She had an emotionally controlling and abusive live-in male companion. She did not have Medicare Part B because she said she could not afford the \$96 monthly premium. Our social worker helped Joan apply for and receive SSI, Medi-Cal and Medicare Part B. When Joan's companion beat her up and was convicted of battery he helped her and her dog Macy relocate to a senior subsidized apt. where they are happily living for \$210 a month.

6. Kathy - 250% Working Disabled Medi-Cal Program, SSDI, IHSS

Kathy (63) called us for transportation assistance. Her spouse (65) was in the hospital with multiple problems. Her 88 year old mother was on hospice and living with her. Kathy was on oxygen 24/7 due to lung failure. Kathy's early Social Security Retirement was \$1162 per month and her husband's was \$1365. Mom was on SSI. They still were paying on a mortgage. Kathy's only insurance was Medi-Cal with a \$1400 monthly share of cost. That's pretty worthless unless

you're in a hospital. Because she was disabled, our social worker told Kathy to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) instead of early Social Security Retirement. She did so, and it boosted her income by about \$300 a month for the rest of her life. In addition, now that she was on SSDI, he told her to apply for 250% Working Disabled Medi-Cal. He had to push the Medi-Cal worker to reprocess her Medi-Cal under the 250% program (she resisted). Once she did, Kathy qualified for full Medi-Cal with a monthly premium of \$125 per month. Now that she had Medi-Cal he told her to apply for IHSS and she did and was approved for 48 hours per month.

7. Benjamin - IRS Garnishment



Benjamin, a 71 year old widower, was living on the \$800 he made monthly as a self-employed janitor and the \$533 he received from the county to take care of his two junior high aged granddaughters. His rent alone was \$900 per month. The IRS was garnishing 100% of Benjamin's Social Security check because he owed self-employment taxes. Despite seeking and paying for the assistance of a lawyer and an accountant neither helped him file a Hardship Exemption with the IRS. Our social worker helped Benjamin file a Hardship Exemption with the IRS which was approved. Now, Benjamin receives his entire Social Security check and makes a restitution payment of \$75 per month to the IRS.

8. Wayne - Medi-Cal, IHSS, MSSP

Wayne (75) is a Korean War Veteran. He is disabled after having lung cancer and is on oxygen 24/7. After his wife died, he lost his VA pension benefits and his Medi-Cal. His Medi-Cal benefits were cut off in error. Despite being on a County case management program (i.e., MSSP), no one from MSSP helped him keep his Medi-Cal. Instead, they kicked him off MSSP. He was skipping doctors appointments because he couldn't afford the co-pays and his IHSS was in jeopardy. Our social worker provided MSSP with all the documents MSSP needed to get Wayne's Medi-Cal reinstated, but they refused to do anything, so our social worker went to the Medi-Cal office with the necessary documentation and had Wayne's Medi-Cal reinstated on the spot. He then told MSSP to immediately reenroll Wayne.

9. Bob - Unemployment Insurance, State Disability, Veterans Aid & Attendance



Bob, an 85 year old WWII veteran, called us after being laid off from his security job two months' prior. He wasn't able to pay his \$750 rent and car payment on his Social Security Retirement and small VA disability pension which was a combined \$1100 a month. When asked, he said he had applied for unemployment but was still waiting for a check. We accompanied him to the unemployment office only to find out they had denied him saying he was not ready, willing or able to hold a job because of his health condition. Knowing that a protracted appeal was not a viable option for Bob, our social worker instead helped Bob apply for State Disability Insurance (SDI) which he was approved for retroactively and for a total of 12 months. Given his age and health, our social worker assisted Bob in applying for Veteran's Aid & Attendance so that he can receive up to \$1644 per month in financial assistance to pay for an assisted living facility or help in his home when he needs it.

10. Joe - Veterans Service Connected Disability Pension

Joe, an 87 year old WWII veteran, was trying to get by on less than \$800 a month (due to an IRS garnishment). He called us because his Medi-Cal and IHSS benefits had been cut off. Our social worker got his benefits restored. In addition, our social worker referred Joe to the Riverside County Dept. of Veterans' Services to be screened for a VA service connected disability pension due to hearing loss Joe suffered as a Navy pilot. Joe was found to have profound hearing loss and was awarded \$25,000 in retroactive benefits and \$2700 a month thereafter. Joe can now live comfortably in his mobile home with his little companion dog.