

## WISE & Healthy Aging Dedicated to Improving Lives of Seniors

*By Taber Falconer*

At WISE & Healthy Aging, the Santa Monica-based nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of those 50 and older, clients have access to an incredible variety of services – many of them free or low-cost. Physical fitness classes, games, social events, and psychological support are all available at their three-story facility at 1527 4th Street.

WISE & Healthy Aging took its present form in 2007 when WISE Senior Services and the Center for Healthy Aging joined forces to create a community resource unlike any other. It's a one-stop shop for the Westside's aging population that can make navigating the second half of life a much smoother ride.

Among the organization's more innovative initiatives is their Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. The program advocates for individuals in long-term care facilities, not just on the Westside, but across Los Angeles County, helping to identify and prevent cases of elder abuse. It's a particularly important program given the fact that Los Angeles County is home to more long-term care facilities than all other counties in California combined.

Their Adult Day Service Center is a compassionate space where individuals with degenerative memory diseases can be comfortable and cared for during the day, providing primary caregivers some relief. Support is also available for Spanish-speaking patients.

Grace Cheng Braun, President and CEO, put the nonprofit's main focus into clear terms: "What's most important to us is being able to increase our clients' dignity and quality of life."

So what's the secret to longevity? "Keep your body moving and your mind stimulated," Grace described. From the individuals practicing advanced tai-chi in the exercise room to the folks celebrating Norooz in an adjacent dining hall, it was obvious that the clients of WISE & Healthy Aging have taken this philosophy to heart.

To contact WISE & Healthy Aging about their services, or to donate or volunteer, call 310-394-9871, or visit <http://www.wiseandhealthyaging.org>.



*Stan Fox, center, owner of Fox Laundry on Montana Avenue, was honored last month by WISE & Healthy Aging with their "Compassion in Caring" award. He has provided Marie "Mimi" Haist, on his left, with a place to stay for over 20 years. She had been homeless since her 50s. His laundry staff is also shown above. Filmmaker, Yaniv Rokah, was recognized for his work on the "Queen Mimi" film documentary which came out last year.*



*CEO Grace Cheng Braun, left, with Fred Deni, center, who received a "Caring for Our Community" award from WISE & Healthy Aging at their luncheon last month. Far right, Santa Monica Mayor Ted Winterer.*