# EMERGENCY RESCUE CARDS

Helping seniors in San Diego living in poverty be prepared for emergencies

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## CHALLENGE

Emergency Preparedness is a universal need. The majority of the human population is impacted by natural disasters or medical emergencies at some point in their lives.

Historically, seniors are one of the most vulnerable populations making up majority of victim demographics. Seniors make up 15% of the US population and is one of the fastest growing populations and is projected to grow 25% by 2060.

## TARGET POPULATION

- 13% of SD ppln are 65+ yrs
- 10% live under poverty level (40k people!)
- 36% have some disability
- 25% live alone
- Vulnerable physically, mentally, financially, etc.

Problem: Basic needs such as housing, food and medical care are not met.

How can we support and encourage seniors to think about the importance of identification and community in case of an emergency?

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

### INSIGHTS: SENIORS

Through volunteering, surveying, and interviewing seniors, we learned about their perception on emergency preparedness.

- Seniors tend to stick to themselves or to people they know
- Low-income seniors prioritize living day to day rather than long-term plans
- Many considered emergency preparedness to be very important, including having identification, but it is not a priority in their lives

"Emergency preparedness is important - but there aren't many in San Diego...so I'm not worried about it."
Serving Seniors client

### INSIGHTS: SERVING SENIORS STAFF

To build a connection and get an outsider's view on the issues seniors face, we interviewed the administration, social workers, nurses, and volunteers at Serving Seniors.
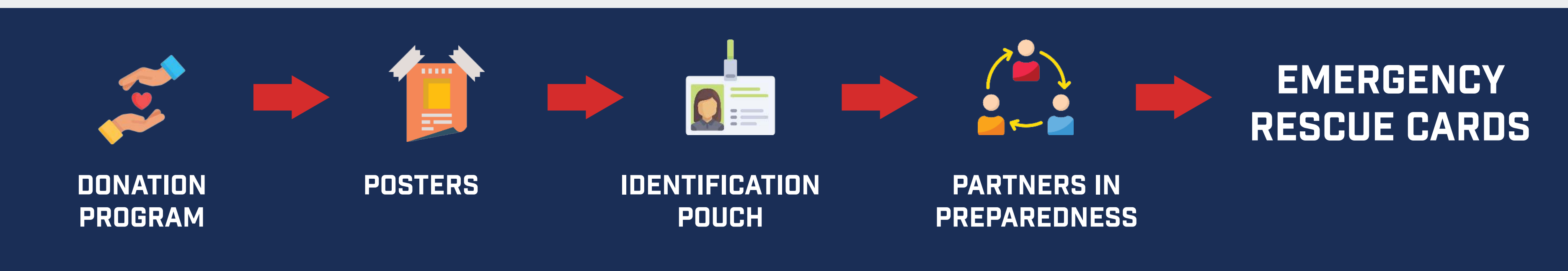
- Seniors often lose, misplace, or get their identification stolen
- Identification is important to low-income seniors in order to get access to many vital services
- Seniors should be part of a community
- Emergency kits are helpful, but aren't designed to solve senior-specific issues
- Mobility is restricted by the amount of things they carry, their age, and location

### INSIGHTS: FIRST RESPONDERS

To get an expert view on emergency preparedness, we contacted the San Diego Fire Department, local paramedics, and emergency management services.

- Having a plan and a community is an important aspect of emergency preparedness
- San Diego has various resources to help the population as a whole (Alert SD), but requires people to seek out the information and are sometimes costly
- Having identification at all times is important

"The smallest emergencies could be big to seniors. The message is to help us help you, have the knowledge, get the resources, get the tools. Make a bad situation a little bit better."
Joseph Amador, Community Education Program Manager

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

SHORT TERM → LONG TERM

- Seniors know about basic emergency resources in San Diego
- Seniors have necessary identification, a point of contact, and a plan in case of an emergency
- Seniors and first responders effectively work together to mitigate the effects of emergencies

## INITIAL PROTOTYPE

Partners in Preparedness Plan:
- Seniors would partner with another senior as their emergency buddy, make bead key chains and help eachother fill out the cards

**Personal Information**
Name:
Birthdate: ___ / ___ / ___  (Month / Day / Year)
Contact Number: ( ) ___ - ___

**Emergency Contact**
Name:
Contact Number: ( ) ___ - ___
San Diego Information Center.............. 211
In Case of Emergency.......................... 911

**Medical Information**
Medical Conditions
Medications | Dosage

**Medical Information**
Allergies
Do you require medical assistance?
Yes [ ]   No [ ]



DONATION PROGRAM → POSTERS → IDENTIFICATION POUCH → PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS → EMERGENCY RESCUE CARDS

## FINAL PROTOTYPE

Emergency Rescue Cards

Our final prototype was tailored towards the issues relevant to our target demographic. The cards aimed to be easily translatable, scalable, non-intrusive, and educational (i.e. get seniors thinking about the possibility of potential emergencies).

**Personal Information** · Información Personal
Name / Nombre
Birthdate / Fecha de nacimiento — Month (Mes) Day (Día) Year (Año)
Language / Lengua primaria
Phone Number ( ) ___ - ___

**Emergency Contacts** · Contactos de Emergencia
Name / Nombre
Phone Number ( ) ___ - ___
Name / Nombre
Phone Number ( ) ___ - ___

**Medical Conditions** · Condiciones Médicas

**Medical Information** · Información Médica
Visually Impaired / Discapacidad Visual — Hearing Impaired / Discapacidad Auditiva
Mental Conditions · Condiciones Mentales

**Medication Card** · Tarjeta de medicación
Medication · Medicación | Dosage/Freq · Dosificación y frecuencia

**IMPORTANT**
DO NOT GIVE: / Medicamentos que no deseo: | Allergies · Alergias

**Resources** · Recursos
San Diego Information Center — 211
In Case of Emergency — 911
Community · Recursos de la Comunidad
Serving Seniors..............................(619) 235-6572
ElderHelp.......................................(619) 284-9281
Peninsula Shepherd Center...........(619) 223-1640
Aging & Independence Services...(800) 510-2020

**Resources** · Recursos
Food Banks · Despensas Comunitarias
SD Food Bank..........................(858) 527-1419
Feeding San Diego..................(858) 452-3663
Shelters · Refugios
Brother Benno's Center............(760) 439-1244
Interfaith Shelter Network.......(619) 702-5399
Our Lady of Guadalupe............(760) 357-0894
San Diego Day Center..............(619) 230-7390

## TESTING

At the civic engagement meeting at Serving Seniors, 15 seniors tested out the rescue cards.

Feedback:
- Medication card: Specify where to put medication and dosage
- Medical Conditions: Specifiy if there are visual or hearing impairments, section for mental health
- Allergies: Add a section to include medication people do not wish to take
- Add color to the cards to highlight features and help first responders identify the cards

Observations:
- Asked for clarifications about the medical cards
- Enjoyed having physical cards
- Seniors asked to keep the "Resources" card
- Lack of interest in the bead key chain activity

## IMPLEMENTATION

To further test our assumptions, we distributed the emergency rescue cards at the Gary and Mary West Wellness Center. In order to cater to seniors' daily routine, we set up a table in the cafeteria during multiple lunch sessions.

**DAY #1: LUNCH SESSION 1 AND 2**
- Set up in cafeteria while seniors waited to get lunch
- Had cookies, cards and lanyards with clear badge holders
- Seniors lined up before receiving their lunch to get a set of cards, lanyard and badge holder, and a cookie

Issues:
- Initial setup did not allow enough time for seniors to fill out the cards in front of us
- Seniors were incentivized by the cookies and took the cards to their table
- Confusion due to the lack of descriptions on the cards
- Language barriers (large Mandarin and Spanish population)
- Gesturing helped the Serving Seniors team inform seniors on what to do
- Seniors struggled filling out the medication section

**DAY #2: LUNCH SESSION 3**
- Set up in the cafeteria with rescue cards, laminating paper, and cookies
- Seniors came up to us out of their own interest
- Filled out cards in front of us or at their table

Changes:
- Made announcements in English and Mandarin
- We described what each card's purpose was
- Gave cookies after they filled out the cards
- Helped them fill out the cards and laminated cards if they completed them

## FEEDBACK FROM SENIORS

Generally, seniors who were genuinely interested in the cards were very appreciative. Seniors showed particular interest to the badge holders because they could be used for multiple things.

"I have a friend who can't walk and he's always losing his ID, so this will be very useful for him."

"Okay I'll take it to my social worker and they could help me fill them out."

We learned that some seniors were more interested in these cards than others. Some seniors did not find it necessary to fill out these cards because they did not have health problems, emergency contacts, or a community to look after them.

"I've got everything taken care of."

"I have friends but they don't even care, so I don't need these cards"



## TAKEAWAYS

From testing our idea, we learned that many of our assumptions were wrong and learned more about the seniors needs.

| Assumptions | What We Learned |
|---|---|
| Seniors are socially isolated | • True for some, false for others<br>• Many do not have emergency contacts, but they do have a community within themselves<br>• The people we interacted with may be more inclined to take advantage of the resources available |
| Seniors are resistant to receiving help | • Some (Day #2) wanted to learn more about the program<br>• Some (Day #1) were more motivated by hunger |
| There would be a language barrier | • We underestimated how serious it was<br>• Lots of gesturing, volunteers were needed to do translations<br>• Many translated papers/posters in the facility |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For future iterations, the rescue cards should be distributed at different locations. Since many seniors had questions about medication, a possible method to distribute the cards would be through the nurses at Serving Seniors. Nurses would be able to provide one-on-one help with the medical cards. Social workers at Serving Seniors would also be another channel for distribution since they have meetings with seniors.

Pairing the rescue cards with a program to strengthen the community would be ideal for future interactions.