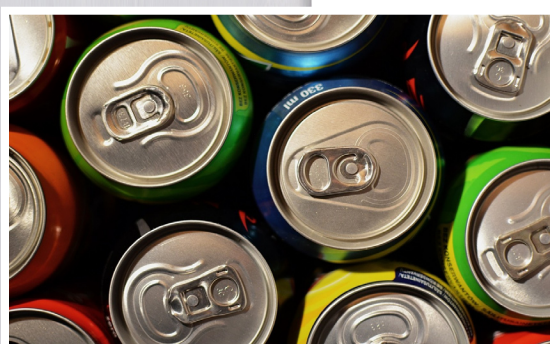




**“Life is 10%
what happens
to me and
90% of how
I react to it.”**

Charles Swindoll



new year, new-trition programs!

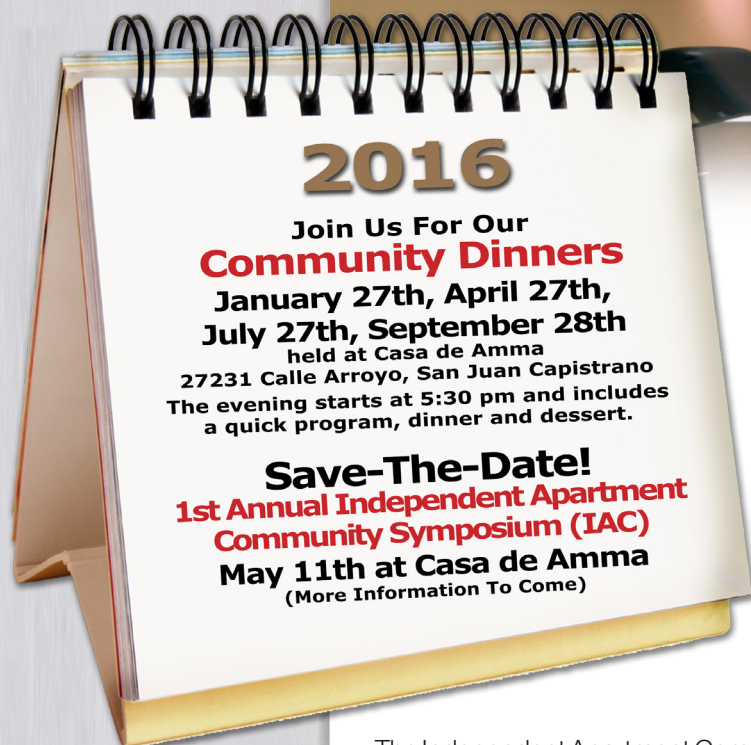
At Casa de Amma we try to give residents every opportunity to positively affect their health in order to help them remain independent for many years to come. Our goal is to avoid medical issues that often affect disabled adults which in turn, can affect their lives. Interestingly, the primary barrier to achieving nutrition goals is also one of our main values at Casa – personal choice. Admittedly for most of us, a donut tastes better than broccoli and even with coaching and education, we all find it hard to make the choices we should. This struggle persists in our efforts to encourage each resident to choose healthier options that lead to a better quality of life.

In 2015 we recognized that residents were more successful when they worked towards their goals with other people in a fun and supportive setting. Events like Casa’s TRY-Athlon, Kettlebell Challenge, Casa Olympics and Reindeer Dash proved that participation in a group increases motivation and ultimately leads to success. While each event took place in just a single day, they all required a minimum of six weeks of “training” and got people to participate at a much higher level than they normally would.

In 2016 Casa will take this successful formula and add nutrition challenges every two to three months beginning with a **Rethink-Your-Drink-Challenge** in February. Staff and residents will be challenged to drink only healthy beverages and avoid things like soda, sugar or artificially sweetened drinks, and energy/sports drinks. Each day that someone is successful they will write their name on our **Rethink-Your-Drink-Challenge** wall calendar. It is our hope that the public recognition of personal success will be contagious and team effort will increase motivation. There will also be ongoing check-in’s, support and incentives as the challenge continues.

Our choice of soda, sugar, artificially sweetened drinks, and energy/sports drinks is because those categories are some of the largest contributors to excessive weight gain and poor health. According to an article published by the *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*, children and youth in the US averaged 224 calories per day from sugary beverages in 1999 to 2004 which was nearly 11% of their daily calorie intake! From 1989 to 2008, calories from sugary beverages increased by 60% from 130 to 209 calories per day, and the percentage consuming them rose from 79% to 91%. On any given day, half the people in the U.S. consume sugary drinks; one in four get at least 200 calories from such drinks; and 5% get at least 567 calories which is equivalent to four cans of soda. Sugary drinks (soda, energy, sports drinks) are the top calorie source in teen diets (226 calories per day), beating out pizza (213 calories per day). A 20-year study on 120,000 men and women found that people who increased their sugary drink consumption by one 12-ounce serving per day gained more weight over time – on average, an extra pound every four years than people who did not change their intake. People who consume sugary drinks regularly, 1 to 2 cans a day or more, have a 26% greater risk of developing Type-2 diabetes than people who rarely have such drinks.

We aren’t expecting most residents and staff to completely abstain from these drinks during our **Rethink-Your-Drink-Challenge** but we are hopeful that this challenge and the support surrounding it, will lead to better health choices and a brighter future. At Casa we realize the goal of healthy living is less of a destination and more of a direction. Because of that, our goal is to reward direction, not perfection. If you are up for the challenge let us know- we would love to have you participate in a healthier future with us!



Save-The-Date! first annual independent apartment community symposium

Throughout 2015, Casa de Amma had numerous requests for information and guidance from families and the professional community. Each month we met with approximately 10-15 individuals or groups who requested a tour and/or a meeting with our residents and staff. While we certainly are thankful for the notariety, we realize we cannot serve the needs of all who wish to be part of Casa’s unique model which provides for independent living, individualized support, social opportunities and community integration. Because of this need we are excited to announce the **First Annual Symposium For Independent Apartment Communities** which will be held on May 11th, 2016 here at Casa de Amma.

The Independent Apartment Communities group (IAC) is a newly formed association of organizations, professionals, families and individuals that believe that Independent Apartment Communities represent a unique, beneficial and preferred option for housings and supports for those individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The IAC exists to offer education, resources, networking and support for those that want to create Independent Apartment Communities in their local area and to support existing Independent Apartment Communities to best fulfill their mission in a sustainable and person-centered focus. The symposium will have three main purposes; First it will offer successful examples of IAC’s and serve to cast vision for those not familiar with Independent Apartment Communities. Second, we will provide education, resources and present practices on how to build, fund and operate an Independent Apartment Community. Finally, we will offer networking opportunities and consulting services for those interested in creating an Independent Apartment Community in their local area. This day-long event will be offered at no cost to attendees and will include a variety of speakers. An invitation will be available soon, however if you want to RSVP to secure a spot or request more information, please email Aaron Vorell at avorell@casadeamma.org.

INDEPENDENT APARTMENT COMMUNITY DISTINCTIVES —

- Offer housing and support services for adults with development and intellectual disabilities
- The programming and supports offered by the IAC are comprehensive, optional, individualized, flexible and person-centered
- IAC’s avoid the creation of community rules that limit individualization, person-centered plans, and freedom of each resident
- Individual apartments in the building with no shared bedrooms or bathrooms
- A building with a shared front door to access the apartment community
- All residents have their own building front door and apartment key and can access the building and their apartment independently at any time
- Common areas that create social opportunities in a safe and responsive environment
- Shared meals offered in order to create a family dining experience
- 24-hour staffing is provided as a part of an IAC
- Any IAC will offer a lease agreement with all the legal protection of any landlord/tenant agreement