



Alice Oestreich and Jack Kahn

Commission on Aging

November 1

2013

The Commission on Aging serves as a catalyst for improving public awareness of the senior and aging community.

Annual Report 2013





(Time Travels performers, Creative Aging Festival, 2013)

Mission

The Commission on Aging advocates for and advises the Mayor, City Council and others about the status and needs of older adults in Bloomington and serves as a catalyst for improving public awareness of issues facing the senior and aging community. We work in collaboration with diverse community members and organizations to build bridges, open dialogue, celebrate accomplishments, encourage programming, and explore issues and concerns of older adults. Our intent is to promote solutions to the challenges of an increasing older adult population and celebrate the contributions of our older citizens.

The members of the Commission on Aging are Georgia Schaich, Lauren Cowan, Connie Pepler, Mary Boutain, James McLary, Julie Hill, Sophia Hauserman, Jack Kahn (Vice-Chairman) and Alice Oestreich (Chairman).

Activities 2013

2013 was a busy year for the Commission on Aging. We re-evaluated the commission's initiatives, co-sponsored a presentation and community discussion on Age Friendly Communities, held a community meeting to discuss the creation of an older adult community center and sponsored the third annual Creative Aging Festival.

In November of 2012, the Commission on Aging completed a strategic planning session to identify areas of focus and make plans for the upcoming year. The Commission determined that continuing the Creative Aging Festival was essential. The festival is a popular activity and is gaining support throughout the community. In addition, the Commission also decided to continue its work with emergency preparedness for older adults and advocating for an older adult community center. The issue of how we create a community for a lifetime for all ages and abilities has been identified as the larger umbrella issue under which these initiatives live.

Initiatives of the Commission on Aging

- A. **Creative Aging Initiative** - Coordinate and assist the development of community events and collaborations that enrich the lives of older adults with an emphasis on encouraging best practice programming and workforce development opportunities.

Current project:

- Creative Aging Festival (Julie Hill, Alice Oestreich, Georgia Schaich, Lauren Cowan, Sophia Hauserman) A celebration to promote wellness, lifelong learning, and creative engagement for older adults and the fostering of inter-generational relationships during the month of May, which is National Older Americans' Month. A public face to the Commission on Aging, the Creative Aging Festival aims to cultivate a more positive perception of aging by focusing on the strengths, potential and achievements of our older citizens through a multitude of events and activities organized by various community agencies and groups.

- B. **Building a Community for a Lifetime** - Advocating for policy change, systems development and programming that makes Bloomington a great city for all ages and abilities. We are building a community that values and supports people as they age.

Current projects include:

- Advocating for the establishment of a community center for older adults – (Sophia Hauserman, Lauren Cowan) Advancing a community discussion of the benefits of a community center for older adults and educating potential commercial partners of those benefits. Engaging older adults in the discussion and advocacy of such a center.
- Emergency/Disaster Supports for Seniors – (Connie Pepler, Georgia Schaich) Work with Emergency Preparedness planners to include older adults in county-wide emergency preparedness planning. Use public forums such as Senior Expo and Senior Day at the Monroe County Fair to educate and encourage older adults to prepare for natural disasters and other emergencies. Work with neighborhood associations to enhance the safety of older adults in their neighborhoods.
- Sharing of Information – (Mary Boutain, Jack Kahn, James McLary) Inform and advise City Council members, City staff and the general public of proposed policy changes, aging issues and concerns. Collaborate with other City commissions and coalitions to further advance initiatives that support elements of a Community for a Lifetime such as affordable housing, addressing accessibility in the built environment and home construction and rehab, and accessible transportation options.

Special Event: Age Friendly Cities

In conjunction with the Center on Aging and Community, the Commission on Aging sponsored a public presentation in City Hall on Age Friendly Cities on March 7, 11th. Dr. Alan DeLaTorre, from Portland State University Institute on Aging, presented information to over 50 attendees on lessons learned and the process of participating in the World Health Organization Age Friendly Cities Project. Dr. DeLaTorre shared data from focus groups and policy makers on how decisions were made in Portland to become an Age Friendly City. The focus groups identified the features of an age friendly community such as the

locations of grocery stores, transportation options and health care services and the barriers to age friendliness, affordable housing and transportation options. DeLaTorre's presentation sparked lively discussion among the participants of the needs of the Bloomington community.

The Creative Aging Festival



(Georgia Schaich and Jan Hively)



(Sara Hatch)

The Commission on Aging is charged with celebrating the contributions of older adults and enhancing intergenerational understanding in our community. The third annual Creative Aging Festival took place in the month of May. 35 events were held throughout Monroe County in a variety of venues.

The goals of the Bloomington Commission on Aging in sponsoring the festival are threefold:

- To identify and promote best practice efforts that create opportunities for older persons to explore, discover, and tap their potential;
- To increase older adult participation in creative and civic activities; and
- To enhance the quality of life for the citizens of our community.

In short, people are living longer and the population is aging, thus, this festival provides an opportunity to engage in conversations about age-related issues, and more importantly, supports the development of a workforce serving the older adult population by advancing the intersection of research, policy, and practice.

Planning Committee: The 2013 Festival was planned and executed through the collaborative efforts of a Creative Aging Festival subcommittee of the Bloomington Commission on Aging:

Julie Hill, Bloomington Commission on Aging, Festival Chairman

Alice Oestreich, Bloomington Commission on Aging

Georgia Schaich, Bloomington Commission on Aging

Sophia Hauserman, Bloomington Commission on Aging
 Mela Hatchet, Active Aging Coalition
 Dayna Thompson, Indiana University Bloomington Hospital
 Sue Owens, City of Bloomington Office of Community & Family Resources
 Bill Ream, City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department
 Phil Stafford, Indiana University Center on Aging and Community
 Stacey Goffinet, Comfort Keepers
 Ann Segraves, Monroe County Public Library
 Allison Carroll, Area 10 Agency on Aging
 Kristi McCann, Alzheimer's Association
 Joe Yonkman, Home Instead Senior Care
 Ashley Woodcox, Sterling House
 Katrina Jones, Ivy Tech Bloomington

Guided by the festival objectives, the planning committee accepted submission forms for 35 events to be included in the festival program guide.

Fundraising: A three-tiered level of giving plan was introduced this year that generated \$3,700.00 in donations to the Bloomington Commission on Aging in support of the festival. The giving plan included Partners at \$500 (either cash or in-kind), Sponsors at \$250 and Contributors at \$100 or less. The following organizations and individuals contributed to the 2013 festival:

Partners: City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department, Bell Trace, Comfort Keepers, Center on Aging and Community, WTIU, and Home Instead Senior Care

Sponsors: Area 10 Agency of Aging; Gene Arnholt, Attorney-At-Law; Brute Squad, LLC; Ivy Tech Community College-Bloomington; Mental Health America of Monroe County, Inc.; Neurology Specialists, PC; and William and Georgia Schaich

Contributors: Julie and Ted Hill, Maria and Lee McKinley, and Alice and Skip Oestreich

Event Evaluations Data: Festival Evaluation data forms were collected from 22 of the 35 events capturing the response of 272 festival participants. *Senior Expo* and *Places with a Purpose* collected evaluation data independent of the festival. Of the 35 events that were included in the program guide, 29 events were free and 6 events required a fee for admission.

The top four attended events were:

- *Senior Expo:*
 Attendees – 600
 Exhibitors – 69
 Health Screeners – 15
 Estimated exhibitor/screener staff – 150
- *Time Travels: Intergenerational Song and Story Extravaganza:* - 200 hundred tickets were sold prior to the event, leaving many people disappointed that were there planning to purchase at the door.

- *Cross Train your Brain: Enhancing Brain Health* - Nearly 100 people attended this free lunch and lecture by Dr. Kevin O’Neal, Clinical Professor in the Department of Aging and Mental Health at the University of South Florida, at the Fountain Square Ball Room.
- *Places with a Purpose: Placemaking for Lifetime Communities* - Approximately 65 people attended this all day workshop at Ivy Tech.

Data collected from the Festival evaluation forms indicated that, 238 people responded from Monroe County, while 27 were from surrounding counties [Owen, Lawrence, Green, Brown, Bartholomew, Marion, Martin, and Hamilton]. Two people indicated that they came from out of state, one from Michigan and one from Illinois.

- 4 people indicated that they stayed overnight
- 162 people responded that this was the first event that they had attended in 2013, and 95 indicated that they had attended other events.
- Of those who responded, 259 rated the event a 4 or 5 [very satisfied/satisfied]; 4 rated the event 3 [neutral]; 1 rated the event a 1 [very unsatisfied].
- The age break down of those participants who responded:
 - Ages 1-18 – 1 responded
 - Ages 19-30 – 14 responded
 - Ages 31-49 – 32 responded
 - Ages 50-65 – 84 responded
 - Ages 66-79 – 118 responded
 - Ages 80+ - 10 responded

Conclusion: This was the third Creative Aging Festival to be hosted in Bloomington. It appears to be getting better each year. There were approximately 100 elder artists showcased throughout the month, which is about the same as last year. Our goal is to double this number in 2014. The evaluation comments on the whole were extremely positive regarding the quality of the programs. “More of the same” was a typical comment in response to those events that showcased elder artist. The most prevalent comment across the board was the need for “better publicity.”



(Sophia Hauserman and Lauren Cowan)

Gathering Place Meeting May 9, 2013

The Commission on Aging hosted a community meeting at the Fairview United Methodist Church to provide an opportunity for community members to express their thoughts on creating an older adult community center. The group was made up of 20 older adults and service providers who were interested in using a community center.

Participants suggested they would like to see an actual center where people could gather to socialize together. Several participants suggested there were enough fitness-related facilities already in existence, but a place to have a cup of coffee, take a class, or socialize with people their own age was something they really wanted to see.

Possible funding sources included developing a co-op model or putting the center inside an existing business such as a café like those in Chicago --the Mather Lifeways café model had strong support. Next steps included the creation of a task force to delve more deeply into researching possible models and funding sources.

Emergency Disaster Preparedness for Older Adults

Commission members distributed emergency preparedness information at the Senior Expo in May and at Senior Day at the Monroe County Fair in July. Pamphlets provided by the Red Cross were distributed about how to prepare an emergency kit and to emphasize the need to be ready in a case of natural disaster or other emergency. We will continue to work with neighborhood associations to engage their support in keeping older adults safe in emergencies and encouraging neighborliness.

In September, National Emergency Preparedness Month, the Commission on Aging honored three long-term volunteers at the Active Aging Coalition luncheon for their service in emergency preparedness in Bloomington and across the country.

Robert Althausen: Bob took his first Red Cross disaster relief class in 2001. His hurricane relief effort includes listening to families and learning their immediate needs. Working with Katrina volunteers was very difficult because the work of multi-tasking was never ending, challenging, and intense. He put in hundreds of hours on that assignment alone. Bob was most recently in Colorado helping flood disaster victims.

Carl Zager: Carl has greatly contributed to the safety and security of the local community as an amateur radio operator and trainer of others radio operators in Monroe County. Amateur radio operators are the eyes and ears of the National Weather Service and provide important emergency capabilities as a back-up resource during state and national emergencies. Carl has contributed to the safety and security

of the local community for his adult life. By recognizing Carl we salute the fine efforts of all amateur radio operators.

Shirley Scherschel: Shirley joined the Monroe County American Red Cross in the year 2000 and quickly became active helping coordinate a plan, setting up and running shelters in times of disasters. She helped shape the group by evaluating and improving their services. She has responded to well over a hundred local emergencies but has also served on the national level in the past 13 years.



(Carl Zager & Shirley Scherschel)

Sharing Information

Commission members participated in bi-weekly tabling at the Bloomington Farmers' Market throughout the season. The intent was to help those with questions about aging and local services, to distribute pertinent informational materials, such as on emergency preparedness, and to promote our initiatives, among them intergenerational projects, the Creative Aging Festival, and the forming of a nucleus of energy to promote a senior center/Gathering Place.



(Sophia Hauserman and Connie Pepler)

Recommendations

We hope to engage city officials in a lively dialogue on how best to make Bloomington not only a great place to grow up but a great place to grow old-- creating a community where all people can live with independence regardless of age or ability. We would welcome the formation of a city-wide task force to conduct community assessments on elements of a Community for a Lifetime such as transportation and housing options and affordability and the provision of healthcare.

We look forward to continued dialogue with the Mayor, the City Council and City employees as well as older adults in the community on how to best make Bloomington a city where older adults thrive and live purposeful lives.

The Commission on Aging meets the second Tuesday of every month from 4:30-6:00 pm in the Hooker Conference Room at City Hall, and we welcome all who would like to join us. Please contact us via our city Liaison, Sue Owens, at owenss@bloomington.in.gov or 812-349-3468.