



**County Executive
Isiah Leggett's**

SENIOR SUMMIT

**Accomplishments by
Workgroups**

2008-2009

WWW.MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV/SENIOR

**One-Year Anniversary Event
Monday, November 30, 2009
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.**

**Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850**

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To download the complete County Executive Isiah Leggett's Senior Summit 2008-2009 Annual Report, visit the Senior Site at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Senior

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Civic and Social Engagement

- A new outreach program, *It Pays to Visit a Senior Site*, conducted in partnership by Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Department of Recreation, was implemented in September 2009 to recruit new seniors to senior centers and neighborhood senior programs. The program offered \$5 gift cards to seniors that brought a new participant to the center during the month of September. As a result of this one time program, 277 new seniors visited the center, representing 554 gift cards being distributed.
- Expansion of intergenerational programs by Interages with 48 additional senior volunteers, as well as increased hours of volunteering at several new sites. OASIS is training and will add an additional 25 tutors. Interages created greater awareness of the opportunities for intergenerational engagement through an enhanced website and expanded meetings of the Montgomery County Intergenerational Committee.
- Addition of one senior congregate meal site, which has the benefit not only of improving nutritional status, but also increasing social interaction and engagement among senior participants.
- The Montgomery County Volunteer Center expanded two promising programs, the Pro-Bono Consultant program and the RSVP-AARP Tax-aide program. The Pro-Bono Consultant program enables participants to maximize their contribution by fitting around busy personal and professional schedules to assist nonprofits with skilled help. Twenty-one projects were completed with 24 new volunteers over 55 registered. The Tax-aide Program enabled 187 more returns to be filed in 2009 than the prior year.
- The Jewish Council for the Aging's (JCA) SeniorTech sites taught computer classes to an additional 49 seniors (495 seniors during the past year). The JCA has added a new site at B'nai Shalom of Olney, which will serve Leisure World and seniors in the surrounding area.

Communication and Outreach

- In addition to existing outreach efforts (e.g., county fair, county cable television, public service announcements), DHHS did a targeted mailing to 10,000 low-income seniors in the county to inform them about the Senior Resource Line provided by Aging and Disability Services (A&D).
- A new County Senior Website was developed to facilitate access to information regarding senior and caregiver services (with a feature that allows users to increase the font size to make reading easier). The Department of Public Libraries system also enhanced a portion of its website geared specifically to seniors.

- In terms of print media, the county published and distributed via senior centers, libraries, and other settings, 7,000 copies of a 24-page color booklet titled *Living and Thriving in Montgomery County*. Additionally, the county contracted with the Senior Beacon to create a page devoted to senior issues and resources in Montgomery County that appeared quarterly in that publication.
- The county also continued and expanded its use of public events and forums to convey information important to seniors. A variety of Aging in Place forums have been held, and the county was an active participant with Councilmember Roger Berliner in holding public three events in the Bethesda region.

Employment

- Supported *50+ Employment Expo* that was held in May 2009, with approximately 2,600 older job seekers attending. Extensive outreach was conducted to inform Seniors and employers about the Expo, including advertising in English, Chinese, and Spanish. Based on employer evaluations it appears that every company which participated was able to identify numerous potential employees.
- Continued to support the Senior Fellowship Program. This program provides temporary part-time job opportunities for experienced and seasoned professionals. Three Senior Fellows currently serve in the County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships.
- The Office of Human Resources (OHR) participated in the AARP Workforce Assessment conducted in December 2008 to complete a demographic study of the county's workforce. The statewide study focused on identifying the workplace practices, potential challenges and projected hiring needs of jurisdictions. The AARP Workforce Assessment collected information to create awareness of skill shortages as a result of aging workforce trends.
- On June 2, 2009, the OHR Director participated in a national webinar broadcast sponsored by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence that addressed the impact of the economy on local jurisdictions and older workers.

Health and Wellness

- Given that exercise is a proven benefit to maintaining health and independence, the county initiated several exercise-related services, including:
 - Silver Sneaker Program a free program that allows residents age 55 and older to use any of the Department of Recreation weight and exercise facilities. Since January 2009, more than 1,153 seniors have made use of this program.

- Active Adult Fitness Clinics - in conjunction with Silver Sneakers, provides classroom educational sessions on health enhancement and demonstration of proper use of exercise equipment. This program has served 347 seniors.
- County Aquatic Facilities – served more than 19,000 seniors last year in activities such as water aerobics, water exercise for arthritis, and recreational and lap swimming.
- The county is exploring further collaboration with Holy Cross Hospital to implement evidence based Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs that help individuals better control and monitor their own health.
- The county is preparing to conduct a comprehensive Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). As part of this larger effort, the Senior Summit has alerted the county to the need to incorporate specific health related indicators of special interest to seniors as part of this surveillance and monitoring effort.
- Department of Recreation has initiated Thursday evening activities and Saturday programs at the Holiday Park Senior Center, as well as indoor walking programs in community centers.
- Bone Builders exercise classes, run by volunteers coordinated through the county, have increased from four to eight since November 2008.

Home and Community Based Services

- Facilitated numerous public/private discussions of "villages" among county neighborhoods (forums, newsletter, listserv, volunteer training).
- Provided expertise and guidance to neighborhoods in helping develop neighborhood surveys and analyzing survey results.
- Providing limited financial and in-kind support to emerging "villages" in defraying 501(c)(3) filling costs and other start up costs including printing.
- Implemented and is evaluating the cost-effectiveness of an innovative new approach to helping older adults remain independent in the community. The new program, Better Living at Home, provided by the DHHS in collaboration with Howard County's Office on Aging.

Housing and Zoning

- Subsequent to the Senior Summit, the county continued its active role in developing affordable senior housing options. This program is in support of the County Executive's goal to provide affordable housing in an inclusive community,

and in keeping with the objectives of the Senior Summit to make Montgomery County a better place for seniors to live and retire. These efforts include:

- Victory Forest (Capitol View): Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) funded the acquisition and rehabilitation of Leafy House, previously owned by the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC). Victory Forest is a high-rise senior facility, 181-units of affordable senior housing, which will be rehabilitated by Victory Housing. One hundred and thirty-six units will be kept affordable of households earning no more than 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and 44 units will be kept affordable at 40% of AMI.
- Marian Assisted Living (Olney): DHCA agreed to subordinate a loan to Victory Housing for Marian Assisted Living, which will assure long-term financial viability of the level 1 and 2 care facility.
- Washington-McLaughlin Apartments (Takoma Park): DHCA provided \$47,000 to the ownership to cover auditing and professional fees for these nine affordable senior independent living units. DHCA continues to work with the principals of Washington-McLaughlin to determine the rehabilitation program for the property.
- Victory Court (Rockville): DHCA is assisting the new construction of an 84-unit building for mixed-income seniors in Rockville. The developer is Victory Housing, and the project is being constructed on a county-owned site just blocks from the Rockville Town Center. The project is securing its development approvals from the City of Rockville.
- Welcome Home Group Home (Rockville): DHCA is funding the acquisition and renovation of an 8-person group home for formerly homeless elderly women in Rockville. The housing provider/owner is Interfaith Works (formerly Community Ministry of Montgomery County). Renovations were completed and residents occupied the home in June 2009.
- Town Centre Apartments (Rockville) and Bauer Park Apartments (Rockville): Town Center Apartments (110 affordable senior units) and Bauer Park Apartments (142 affordable senior units) are existing HUD-assisted senior independent living developments. Both properties faced significant rent increases due to escalating costs and maintenance requirements. Rather than subsidize operating expenses at the properties, DHCA secured HUD approval to maintain an escrow account in return for limiting rent increases to 6%.
- DHCA also administers contracts for “new or expanded levels” of service under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. These services have benefited more than 1,300 seniors with limited incomes since the Senior Summit was held. Activities covered a wide range of services, including support to enable seniors to age in place and health related services including chronic disease care and prescription assistance.

Safety

- Revised Neighborhood Watch program trained approximately 500 residents and continues to do outreach to get additional communities to join.
- Provided “Fire Safety Awareness” training, which is geared to any organization, group or business that may interact with an At Risk senior in their home. By looking for a few key items that may demonstrate concern such as smoke alarms, space heaters, cooking practices etc. a senior fire fatality may be prevented. *A&D Services, Meals on Wheels, Robert Medical Supply and the Community Emergency Response Team* are just some of the groups that have received training.
- Worked with our senior centers to not only provide fire safety tips to seniors who visit the centers but also to ask those participating seniors to be our advocates for fire safety. Seniors are asked to talk to other seniors in their neighborhoods who may not be able to travel to the centers due to mobility concerns and ask them to invite Fire and Rescue Services to conduct a free fire safety evaluation of their home.

Transportation and Mobility

- Continued free RideOn and Metrobus service for seniors.
- Conducted pedestrian road safety audit (PRSA) along a portion of Maryland Route 355, from Hubbard to Congressional Lane, as well as in the Piney Branch area, between Flower and New Hampshire Avenues. The PRSA identified potential improvements that could be made to enhance safety for elderly pedestrians. Montgomery County Department on Transportation (DOT) is working in conjunction with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to implement further improvements.
- Pedestrian safety has also become a priority in the Friendship Heights Transportation Management Districts. The Advisory Committee now urges county officials, SHA and others to make signal crossing times more favorable for seniors and people with mobility impairments. The committee added its voice to other community organizations in getting improvements at several major Wisconsin Avenue intersections, including improved Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access, crosswalk enunciators and countdown timers.
- Pedestrian countdown signals were installed at the intersection of Cherry Hill Road and Clover Patch/Plum Orchard in Silver Spring, to benefit seniors at Riderwood Retirement Community.
- Pedestrian refuge islands and extended sidewalks (“bump-outs”) have been installed to enhance access and safety for senior pedestrians. Street signs at various pedestrian crossings have also been enhanced to improve safe access to bus stops.
- Improvements made on Arcola Avenue in Wheaton, by enlarging street name signs, and installing brighter, more durable pavement markings to enhance senior driver safety.

- In compliance with the ADA, pedestrian improvements were implemented on Second Avenue in Silver Spring. A significant number of engineering improvements were also made, including the installation of ADA accessible ramps and bump-outs, upgraded crosswalks and pedestrian signals, in addition to the relocation of a bus shelter. These improvements were particularly important to a high number of seniors living in adjacent buildings, and for senior participants in the Holy Cross Senior Source Programs.
- DOT also completed sidewalk and handicap ramp repairs to ensure safe pedestrian access to the Coffield Senior Center in Silver Spring, and other pedestrian destinations in the surrounding areas in compliance with ADA. Directional signs were also installed along East-West Highway, to direct visitors to the Coffield Community Center.
- Pedestrian Safety campaign in parking lots, with a focus on senior residents' safety issues has been initiated.
- RideOn Route Changes:
 - Effective April 2009—Route #98 was changed to enhance service to the Churchill Senior Building in Germantown.
 - Effective September 2009—Routes #18 and #25 were changed to serve Victory Towers, providing more transportation access to the facility.
- Enlarged the bus shelter at Waverly House, a HOC property, located in the Bethesda district. This enlargement will facilitate better shelter for the many seniors leaving the facility, as they await transportation services.
- A fourth income category to Call N Ride Program was added. This allows the Program to serve more seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income county residents.
- Surveyed county senior center directors to ascertain level of un-met transportation needs.