

Commonwealth Council on aging
2008 Best Practices Award Winners

Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) Transportation Program

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MEOC Transit has spent 30 years building a Coordinated Transportation program. Through coordination, MEOC is able to provide service to more people without duplication of resources. For example, Aging Services, including Congregate and Home Meal Delivery, are provided on the same vehicle at the same time as Public Transit services, Mental Health and Mental Retardation Contract services, Medicaid services, and transportation services for various other programs and clients. Thus, rather than five or more agencies utilizing separate vehicles and drivers to traverse the same area, a single agency is able to serve all these clients with far fewer total resources. This provides a savings to the participating agencies, as well as a savings to the taxpayers who thus are not charged five or more times for transportation in the same geographic area, simply because each agency has its own separate funding stream. This economic efficiency does not reduce the attention to individual client needs. Extensive interagency training and cooperation and innovation in problem solving, keeps client needs uppermost in everyone's mind.

The Korean Senior Center Certified Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) Program

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According to a 2006 report, the population of older Koreans in Fairfax County is second only to the Latino population. Locating health care workers who can provide culturally and linguistically sensitive services to this population is a challenge for families. The PCA Certification Program addresses the need for these workers. The PCA Certification Program addresses three issues: it provides a pathway for Koreans to become certified as CPAs, it provides a program that will allow older and disabled Korean seniors to remain in the community, and it also provides immigrants with job skills and employment opportunities. The program is built on a unique partnership between the Korean Presbyterian Church, the Northern Virginia Community College, county health care agencies, and private organizations such as the Inova Health System and Capital Hospice. Since its creation in 2004, more than 60 CPAs have graduated and been certified by the program.

The Community Partnership for Improved Long- Term Care

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The “Partnership” was launched by the Legal Aid Justice Center in Oct. 2003 in response residents’ family members and others who were frustrated about not being able to secure satisfactory nursing home care. High turnover rates (e.g. 142% for Directors of Nursing; 73.2% CNA's) and many other factors contribute to care that is not in compliance with federal standards. Before the creation of the Partnership, many felt alone, lacking the information and advocacy to help them address long-term care problems. In the 12 nursing homes in Region Ten with over 930 nursing home beds, there were no viable family councils to advocate for better care. When one small family council attempted to raise community awareness about quality of care issue, the nursing home responded aggressively, with suits in circuit court for injunctive relief, defamation, and contempt. Clearly, nursing home consumers needed an alliance with a strong enough voice to have a positive impact on policy makers, legislators, and the regulators who enforce quality standards, and to seek accountability from facility operators and corporate owners. Residents, their loved ones, ombudsmen, and other stakeholders needed a forum for mutual support and effective action. The Partnership became that vehicle, offering safety and strength in numbers to speak out and work towards improving care. The Partnership operates on a consensus model, and its agenda is set and moved forward by talented volunteers from diverse backgrounds including social workers, the clergy, and ombudsmen from all walks of life. It has built strong working relations with medical professionals and with other experts on aging and quality care such as the local Alzheimer’s Association, the UVA Department of Geriatrics, the UVA Institute on Aging, the Jefferson Area Board for Aging, and other allies such as Piedmont Virginia Community College.

Williamsburg Area Faith in Action Program

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Williamsburg Area Faith in Action helps meet the needs of the elderly, chronically ill, and disabled neighbors in Williamsburg City, James City County, and York County Virginia. Faith in Action is a unique organization that provides a support system through an interfaith coalition of volunteers from almost thirty-five area churches. They provide non-medical support services without fees or eligibility requirements to help residents maintain independence in their own homes. Some of the services include transportation to doctors, dentists, grocery stores, pharmacies, veterinarians, and hair dressers,

grocery shopping, light house and yard work, friendly visitors, telephone reassurance calls, and respite care for caregivers. They have even been willing to transport clients to appointments over an hour away from Williamsburg, all with no charge to the client. All of these services require the coordination of over three hundred volunteers in this community. For more information contact Rita Smith, Executive Director, Williamsburg Area Faith in Action, at 757-258-5890 or wfia@tni.net.

Communities Against Senior Exploitation (CASE)

Virginia Beach Department of Human Services
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To respond to the community's need to protect older adults from financial exploitation, the Virginia Beach Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney and the Virginia Beach Department of Human Services Adult Protective Services Program launched the CASE program in 2007. CASE is an acronym for Communities Against Senior Exploitation. The program's goals are to prevent financial frauds and scams against senior citizens, increase fraud detection and reporting by human services and law enforcement organizations, and provide victim support through partnerships with faith communities, advocacy groups, and public agencies. The CASE partnership provides monthly fraud alerts to individuals, organizations, faith groups, and agencies. CASE partners also provide training and education to faith groups, law enforcement personnel, and advocacy groups and professional human services staff. By the end of 2007, 23 local churches and advocacy groups had signed partnership agreements with CASE and fraud alerts are now reaching more than 9,000 individuals and organizations.

Workplace Partners for Eldercare

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Workplace Partners for Eldercare is a collaborative Project of Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging, and the Richmond Area Caregivers Coalition. The program was started in 2006 with a grant from the Richmond Memorial Health Foundation. The purpose of the project is to work with employed caregivers and their employers to provide resources and encourage the provision of benefits that support working caregivers. Workplace Partners for Eldercare provides support for employers through education, awareness and resources. The goal of Workplace Partners for Eldercare is to enhance the wellbeing of employees who are providing care for older relatives and friends. Workplace Partners for Eldercare provides customized programs and services, community resource guides, speakers for seminars, and general support for eldercare friendly companies. A product of Workplace Partners for

Eldercare is *CareCompass*, a marketing and education campaign to help caregivers connect with services such as information and referral, transportation, respite breaks, temporary home care, and adult day care. To connect with *CareCompass*, caregivers and others can visit www.seniorconnections-va.org.

The Senior Center, Inc.: Program for Independent Living

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Founded in 1960, Senior Center Inc. is a nonprofit organization for adults 50 years or better with a mission to involve, enrich, and empower seniors in our community. We aim not only to benefit seniors directly but empower them to benefit the community as well. Our program includes one hundred activities that are offered each month. We have twenty wellness activities, including aerobics, dancing, bowling, hiking, golf, walking, tennis, softball, yoga, Tai Chi, and a water workout in partnership with ACAC Fitness Center. Special classes are offered for people with Parkinson's, ALS, or who have had a stroke or heart attack. Social activities include, card games, chess, singles' events, lunches, Red Hat Society, and fishing. Lifelong learning opportunities include the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, language lessons, Current Affairs discussions, book clubs, Socrates Cafe, travel, and an active computer club and lab with both Macs and PCs with one-on-one instruction, classes, lectures and workshops. Creative and performing arts include the 60-piece Second Wind Band, singing groups, drama, and a tap dancing troupe, all of which give concerts or performances in the community. Health promotion workshops include healthy cooking classes, blood pressure checks, health insurance counseling, various support groups, and manicures and pedicures. We strive to create a caring culture and a safe place for all to age and find fun, meaning and purpose. We actively encourage volunteering, and last year our members donated 26,000 hours of service to the community in over 80 different locations and at the Center. Volunteer collaborations include making hats and mittens for Head Start children, Pinkie Puppets for children at UVA Hospital, and Journeys Bearables to help children grieve. Through volunteering, dozens of community collaborations, and our multigenerational programs, we position seniors as active adults who are a vital part of the community, just older than most, but with essential wisdom to share with others. We demonstrate to the greater community that retirement offers a time to give back, and that without our seniors, Charlottesville would be a less rich community. Finally, we offer scholarships for membership dues, program fees and transportation to and from the Center for those in need.

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Students & Seniors Program

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The Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging (SAAA) partners with local schools, colleges, and universities to provide its students with a place for them to conduct their clinicals and to perform community service projects. As part of their curriculum, they work with the aging population to provide health related programs in Active Living Centers, Respite Centers, the main office, and with the homebound clientele. The partnership between SAAA and the educational community is a unique partnership that pairs students with seniors giving the students a hands-on introduction to the aging population, and gives the seniors the benefit of connecting with the younger generation. For further information, please contact Pamela Dodge, Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging at 540.635.7141.