

A Letter to Community and Partners

From the Blueprint for Aging

There have been many new and exciting changes with receipt of our Robert Wood Johnson implementation grant. Expanded staff at the Blueprint include:

Virginia Boyce, Project Manager. Virginia joined the Blueprint For Aging in May, 2006. Virginia's background includes oversight of Catholic Social Service's RSVP and Grandparents as Parents programs.

Rachel Dewees, Pilot Project Coordinator. Formerly the Blueprint For Aging's Administrative Coordinator, Rachel manages Blueprint pilot projects. These include Community Volunteers Project, Transportation Voucher Project, and Respite Voucher Project.

Maureen Gallagher, Administrative Coordinator. Maureen joined the Blueprint for Aging in July 2006. Her background includes coordination of community programs.

Bethany Burge, Eastern Michigan University Gerontology Student Intern. Bethany has played a supportive role in S.A.W. and F.A.N.G. groups as well as in administrative duties.

Deborah Renner, University of Michigan Masters of Social Work Intern. Deborah helped organize and plan the October 6, 2006 "Aging with Attitude" Community Event. In coming months she will be involved in many aspects of implementing Blueprint workplan goals.



Jill Kind, Project Director. Jill continues to lead the project and the team with vision, dedication and long hours.

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Did you know....

- The Blueprint will host a series of Positive Aging Events. Details on page 2.
- Happen to miss the August SAW Town Meeting? Read about it on page 3.

Blueprint Hosts Positive Aging Event

The Blueprint for Aging, a collaboration of government agencies, private agencies and citizens of Washtenaw County working together to meet the needs of our growing senior population, presents the first in a series of events discussing and celebrating positive aging.

Story continued on page 2.

Positive Aging Event Continued...

The community program, *Start a Revolution: Age with Attitude*, will be held October 6, 2006, from 9:30 a.m. to noon in the first floor dining room of the Village at Saint Joseph Mercy Hospital, 5341 McAuley Drive.

As a citizen interested in aging issues, make your voice, ideas and attitude known.

Frank Cambria, Deputy County Administrator of Washtenaw County and new Chair of the Core Leadership Team, will give an introduction to the Blueprint's work in Washtenaw County.

A video from U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow congratulates Washtenaw County for its collaborative effort on behalf of seniors.

Local leaders will illustrate four positive attitudes for aging that will strengthen community participation in the Blueprint.

Attitude of Leadership
Attitude of Collaboration
Attitude of Discovery
Attitude of Innovation

There will be opportunities for exploring ways to contribute your experience and knowledge to the Blueprint for Aging.

Play a part in Washtenaw County's commitment to creating a more aging-responsive community by joining a Blueprint work group, committee, or special projects group.

SPA : A Shared Point of Access to Facilitate Interagency Collaboration

From Dale Fitch

This pilot project, within the larger scope of other Blueprint efforts, is seeking to use technology to help seniors access and receive services. Specifically, this project will be prototyping the use of a Shared Point of Access, or SPA, to facilitate interagency case management involving access to information about seniors receiving or needing to receive services. The SPA is an online database system that includes secure and limited access to basic identifying information for seniors; address information and history; list of services with date, category and provider contact; and a provision for electronic referrals. The SPA's design, development and implementation have all occurred with compliance to HIPAA requirements in mind. The consumer using this service will have complete control over who sees their information.

On the consumer side, older adults have difficulty locating services among the maze of human service agencies. Confusion is exacerbated because various agencies and caseworkers collect the same or similar data. Numerous phone calls oftentimes take place to obtain the necessary services. On the provider side, human service professionals spend countless hours collecting information that has already been collected by other service providers resulting in duplicated efforts. The lack of collaboration and communication taking place between agencies hinders the ability to ensure the best services are provided to older adults and their families.

We believe our Shared Point of Access will facilitate interagency case management involving access to information about seniors receiving or needing to receive services and will initially involve a collaboration between Catholic Social Services, Neighborhood Senior Services, HelpSource, and the Housing Bureau for Seniors. Once underway, we envision broadening the scope to include other nonprofit, county, and possibly, state agencies.

Senior Advocates of Washtenaw (SAW) Town Hall Meeting features State Representative Pam Byrnes

Seniors and other interested community members gathered to “Focus On Seniors” at a Town Hall Meeting on August 28, 2006 at Brecon Village in Saline. Special guest State Representative Pam Byrnes offered her views and experience with senior policy planning and legislation. Representative Byrnes invited key figures from a variety of agencies to address important issues that face seniors today.



Blueprint staff and partners pose with Representative Byrnes at a Town Hall Meeting hosted by BreconVillage and sponsored by SAW in partnership with the Blueprint for Aging

Terri Blackmore from the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study described county transportation planning efforts. Ms. Blackmore’s presentation focused on the Long-Range Transportation Plan for Washtenaw County, the Western Washtenaw Regional Coordination Transit Study, and the Non-motorized Plan for Washtenaw County. Attendees received information about the Travel Training Program for Seniors and area transportation contact information.

Mike Head, Long Term Care Director for the Department of Community Health, gave an overview of important long-term care issues facing seniors. This included long-term health insurance and home-health care, as it relates to the Medicare/Medicaid waiver plan (“MI Choice”).

Area Agency on Aging 1-B Director of Advocacy and Planning, Jim McGuire, presented information on the often misunderstood state spending cap initiative ballot proposal, Stop Over-Spending (SOS). Mr. McGuire explained the potential adverse impact that this initiative may have on future funding for senior health services if approved by voters. He described a similar amendment passed in Colorado in 1992. Passage of this amendment resulted in major reductions in essential quality of life services in that state. Colorado voters, in 2005, suspended and fundamentally changed this amendment.

Thank you to all who contributed to the great turnout for, and success of, the dialog. Brecon Village provided a delicious lunch for participants. Carolyn Grawi, from the Center For Independent Living, arranged transportation to Saline for participating individuals. Senior Advocates of Washtenaw members were in attendance, and encouraged participation in upcoming SAW events and membership in the organization. This event was hosted by Brecon Village and sponsored by Senior Advocates of Washtenaw in partnership with the Blueprint For Aging

The next SAW meeting, October 23, 2006, will feature guest speaker Andy Farmer, AARP Associate State Director for Health and Supportive Services. Mr. Farmer will discuss advocacy and collaboration.

For more information about Senior Advocates of Washtenaw or the Blueprint for Aging, please contact Maureen Gallagher at 734-712-0548 or visit our website at www.BlueprintForAging.org.

Core Leadership Team Update

From Jill Kind

When the elephants fight, the grass suffers.

—Kikuyu People

In the case of services for older adults, Washtenaw County elders suffer without effective leadership.

Consider the many separate entities in our community-- agencies, government, consumers and business, all with interests and agendas. A critical role of the Blueprint is to provide a structure for all to work together and to achieve shared goals.

This metaphor describes the difficulty and importance of the process. Presumably, negotiation, compromise and collaboration leave a lighter tread than competition. We can clearly understand the danger of ignoring or trying to placate an elephant. We can see the futility of a singular idea not embraced by the group. It also describes the kind of leadership that is required, leadership that is skilled, resourceful and that builds trust. We can see the damage to grass roots, local initiatives when larger forces compete.

The Blueprint is very pleased to announce that Frank Cambria, Deputy County Administrator of

Washtenaw County, will chair our Core Leadership Team. His demonstrated expertise and skill with collaborative bodies has brought important county initiatives to fruition in areas of homelessness and health care. Frank's experience contributes a broad network of contacts, establishes credibility for a high functioning and effective process, and encourages other community leaders to participate.

The Core Leadership of the Blueprint builds on the work of those in the planning stage. This team will take care to maintain a structure that will best implement the strategies our community values. Its charge is responsibility for the overall direction of the Blueprint, developing and finding resources and evaluating its strengths and capabilities. Core Leadership is charged with sustaining and building an infrastructure that is creative and responsive to change and new ideas.

As the roster of Core Leadership members is finalized, we are developing a regular schedule of partnership meetings. Look for this posting on our website and for profiles of these hard working partners.

Blueprint Support to Community Partners

Second Baptist sponsors play reading event at WCC to increase Alzheimer's awareness , September 9, 2006



Maureen and Bethany show off SAW and Blueprint brochures at the event

FANG member addresses the Housing Bureau for Seniors

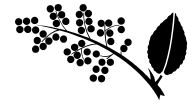
Al Feldt, U of M Professor Emeritus, addressed the Housing Bureau for Seniors Annual Meeting on September 14, sharing with the audience information about a neighborhood-based approach that can help seniors age in place using a variety of formal and informal services. Mr. Feldt, an avid member of the Blueprint FANG committee (Friendly Aging Neighborhoods Group), has been

instrumental in development of the Community Volunteers Pilot Project.



Feldt

FANG Update
Development Phase of Grant Produces
Community Volunteers Pilot Project
 From Rachel Dewees



As the partnership learned in May of this year, the Blueprint for Aging has been funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to implement plans developed over 18 months. Previous efforts of workgroups, in addition to information gathered from seniors in Washtenaw County through community forums, surveys and interviews, shaped a Strategic Plan that strives to build a community prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the County's rapidly growing older adult population.

One of the Blueprint's work groups from the development phase, the Long-term Care Systems Change Work Group, produced a subcommittee, the Service Restructuring group. This group conducted research, generated new ideas and, in March of 2006, held a community-wide symposium addressing neighborhood-based approaches to connecting at-risk seniors with the resources and services they need. Energized by the enthusiasm and interest from this well-attended event and armed with Blueprint plans, the group entered the implementation phase as FANG: *Friendly Aging Neighborhoods Group*. The primary purpose of FANG in this phase is to oversee the Community Volunteers Pilot Project.

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS PILOT PROJECT.

In the focus groups, one-on-one interviews and surveys mentioned above, residents repeatedly stated they did not know what services were available or how to access them. They reported having a low level of trust for social service providers while at the same time highly valuing recommendations from people they know. With this information in mind, the Community Volunteers Pilot Project was developed. FANG members created a Request for Proposals and went out into the community to determine, in a wide variety of neighborhoods, inter-

est in such a project. The response was uniformly positive and validated earlier information.



Former Project Manager, Dana Bright, speaks during a symposium entitled *Aging Friendly Neighborhoods: Can We Be More Supportive?* Held on April 8, 2006 at Turner Senior Resource Center

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PILOT PROJECT OVERVIEW.

In several test neighborhoods in Washtenaw County, two residents will be oriented to serve as trusted and familiar contacts to older adults living in their communities. Through face-to-face, phone and email (as appropriate) contact, these Community Volunteers will provide information about programs and services available in this county in a way that is easily accessible, helpful and confidential. At the same time, the volunteers will communicate neighborhood needs and issues to Blueprint staff and project committee members.

Neighborhoods throughout the County are being invited to submit proposals that will be accepted until October 20 at which point the pilot neighborhoods will be chosen and training of Community Volunteers will begin.



Rave Review for Advocacy Training Course Sponsored by Blueprint for Aging and the Learning In Retirement Program of the University Of Michigan

July 25, 2006

As a resident of Washtenaw County, I recently became aware of the Blueprint for Aging project and its efforts to involve the community in developing a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of our older adults both today and in the years to come. The level of collaboration and commitment that various agencies, professionals, and consumers have brought to this effort is impressive.

So I was eager to take a six week course entitled "Raising a Public Voice for Long Term Care Reform" sponsored by the Blueprint for Aging and the Learning and Retirement Program of Turner Geriatric Clinic (part of the Geriatrics Center of the University of Michigan Health Systems). I was not disappointed; the course was excellent. Taught by Carolyn Lejuste, Program Manager of the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, the course provided background on crucial long term care issues facing the state of Michigan, examined the politics and legislation impacting these issues, and outlined the role that consumers can play in advocating for change.

I learned that among the most critical long term care issues facing Michigan is the need to control the spiraling cost of long term care in the face of increased demand as the state's older population continues to grow. In addition, Michigan's long term care services/programs are often fragmented and difficult for consumers to access. As Michigan's aging population continues to grow, significant labor shortages in long term care workers are also anticipated.

The course outlined efforts to reform the state's long term care policy including development of Single Points of Entry (SPE) with a focus on "person centered" planning. These SPE would serve as clearinghouses for long term care services and enable consumers to access comprehensive and consistent information. They would also assess consumer eligibility for publicly funded long term care services. Proposals to expand the Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver program were also presented.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the course was the continual emphasis the instructor placed on the advocacy role that consumers could play in promoting significant long term care reform. She continually encouraged class members to become involved in a number of concrete ways. Detailed information on key long term care legislation was presented and we were encouraged to make state legislators aware of our viewpoints. The role of the state Long Term Care Commission was outlined and we were urged to attend their monthly meetings. Carolyn also provided contact information on the entities within our own communities that had filed applications to become SPE and suggested that we become involved in their planning process.

As designed by the instructor, the course was a mixture of lecture and discussion. Students represented a wide range of backgrounds and class discussions were lively and

challenging. Each week numerous handouts, such as the Michigan Long Term Care Task Force Report, further enriched our learning. I think my fellow classmates would agree that the course not only increased our awareness and knowledge of long term care issues, but also provided us with opportunities to participate in the discussion and decisions that will shape long term care policy in Michigan. I commend the Blueprint for Aging and Learning in Retirement for offering this course and hope that this will be the first of many such courses.

Beverly Mandich Bagozzi

5361 McAuley Drive
P.O. box 995
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Phone: 734-712-3625
Fax: 734-712-7765

**Start a Revolution: Age
with Attitude**



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You can access this
newsletter at**