



aging care connections

Your Source For Senior Care

Formerly Southwest Suburban
Center on Aging

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A MESSAGE FROM KEN GRUNKE, AGING WELL MANAGER

Many would agree that Aging Well directly affects all of us, while conveniently existing in our own backyard! But why is Aging Well so important? Please read on!

In response to the demand for collaboratively addressing aging issues in Greater Lyons Township, Aging Well was formed in late 2001. Now based out of Aging Care Connections, the partnership currently includes hundreds of older adults and representatives from more than 130 community-based organizations.

In 17 different communities throughout greater Lyons Township, volunteer-driven Community Action Teams (CATs), comprised of older adults and individuals from community-based organizations, address local aging issues. Activities have included "911 Cell Phones for Seniors" programs to promote safety; a "File of Life" program that provides first responders with accurate personal and medical information; a "Walk for Health" program promoting exercise; "Lock Box" program to assist fire officials who need to safely access endangered older adults in their homes; and a senior discount day at local businesses, among many other activities.

In 2004, Aging Well received a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, through its national program, Community Partnerships for Older Adults, to create a community-based, grassroots strategic plan. This plan has already strengthened and sustained improvement in the long-term care and supportive services system in greater Lyons Township. It should be duly noted that Aging

Well is one of only 16 partnerships, out of almost 500 national applicants, to receive this funding.

Aging Well has come a long way in addressing the need for dignity, self-worth and independence of our older adult community. Additional activities that have contributed to this success are: the distribution of the widely popular, comprehensive transportation directory, creation of a Planning For Your Future guide, development and expansion of the Ambassadors program to strategically disseminate information and resources to the community, on-going creation of materials to educate and inform local law enforcement on how to identify and respond to at-risk seniors; and the list goes on.

As we look toward the future of Aging Well, we continue to have the opportunity and the ability to strengthen an environment in which people can age well in Greater Lyons Township. By building, implementing and continuing Aging Well, together, we can continue connecting older adults with long-term care and supportive services, allowing them to retain their independence for as long as possible. If you would like to learn more about this exciting initiative or find out how you can be a part of it, please contact Ken Grunke at 708.354.1323, ext. 43 or at kgrunke@agingcareconnections.org. You'll be glad you did!

IMPORTANT BENEFIT AND TAX PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

By Louise Starmann, *Director of Social Services*

This has been an especially difficult year for many families and older adults living in our community. Aging Care Connections has summarized a number of benefit and tax assistance programs that are available for your review. Each of these programs requires an application and usually some proof of income. The staff at Aging Care Connections is available to answer questions and assist with applications as needed. Appointments are necessary.

I. Income Tax

Aging Care Connections will participate in the AARP Income Tax Assistance program beginning February 8 in our building at 111 West Harris in La Grange. Appointments must be made; we will begin taking appointments January 19. This tax program is for simple tax returns. The AARP volunteers reserve the right to decline assistance if the tax return is highly complex.

II. Senior Tax Freeze

Qualified senior citizens can apply for a freeze of the assessed value of their property. Over time, in many areas, this program results in taxes changing minimally and often decreasing as surrounding properties continue to rise in assessed value. This is the most valuable homeowner exemption program. The value increases over the years as it eliminates the impact of regular re-assessment increases that may occur every three years. For the 2009 tax year, the applicant must have owned and occupied the home on Jan. 1, 2008 and Jan. 1, 2009 and have been responsible for the 2008 and 2009 taxes.

III. Senior Citizen Homeowners Exemption

Seniors can save \$250 a year in property taxes, and up to \$750 when combined with the Homeowner Exemption. For the 2009 tax year, the applicant must have owned and occupied the property as of Jan. 1, 2009 and must have been 65 years of age or older during the year for which application is made.

IV. The Senior Citizen Tax Deferral Program

The Senior Citizen Real Estate Tax Deferral Program is a tax-relief program that works like a loan. It allows qualified seniors to defer all or part of their taxes and special assessments on their primary homes. The loan from the state is paid when the property is sold, or transferred to an heir.

Who qualifies? Participants must be: Homeowners who are at least 65 years of age by June 1 of the year in which the application is made.

- Those whose household income is \$50,000 or less.
- Surviving spouses of previously approved applicants who are at least 55 years of age within six months of the taxpayer's death.
- Those who have owned and occupied the property or other qualifying property for at least the last three years.
- Those who have fire or casualty insurance.
- Those who do not owe outstanding property tax or special assessments.
- Those who have written approval from the spouse, if filing jointly, or trustee if the property is held in a qualifying trust, to participate in the program.

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2010 CENSUS

WE NEED YOU!

Please join Aging Care Connections in assuring every older adult is counted in the United States Census 2010. With only 10 questions, the 2010 Census questionnaire is one of the shortest questionnaires in history and takes only a short time to complete. Census questionnaires will be delivered or mailed to households via the postal service in March 2010.

It is important for you to know how vital census data is to the future of Aging Care Connections. Much of the state and federal funding received by our organization is based on census data and the number of older persons “counted” in the census. We want and need for every older adult (60+) who resides in our

service area to be counted in 2010! Be sure to look for your census questionnaire in the mail over the next few months and please complete it. Should you need assistance completing your census form, you may contact our office at 708-354-1323, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

One more important piece of information for you to know about the census – your personal information is confidential and will not be shared with others! We appreciate your assistance in helping us to achieve a complete and accurate count of older adults in our community.



Introducing the Manager of Aging Well

Kenneth Grunke, MSW

It is a pleasure to introduce Kenneth Grunke, Manager of Aging Well, an initiative focused on creating an environment in which older adults can age well. This partnership includes 20 communities in the greater Lyons Township area and is comprised of hundreds of older adults and more than 130 community based organizations. Aging Well re-located to Aging Care Connections from AgeOptions this year.

Formed in late 2001, volunteer-driven Community Action Teams have been working locally to create elder-friendly communities from the project’s inception. In 2004, Aging Well received a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its national program, Community Partnerships for Older Adults. The grant enabled Aging Well to engage in an 18-month planning process to develop a community-based, grassroots strategic plan to expand and enhance long-term care and supportive services for older adults. These services include any assistance that provides older adults and their families with support to meet their changing needs as they age.

In 2006, Ken received his master’s degree in Social Work with an emphasis in Gerontology after receiving a bachelor’s degree in Psychology with a focus in Social Services, both from Dominican University, River Forest. Most recently Ken was Director of Individual and Major Gifts at Pillars, La Grange Park. Previously, he served as Director of Development and Community Relations at Aging Care Connections. As manager of Aging Well, he will lead and direct its strategic initiatives in the greater Lyons Township area.

Ken’s interests involve considerable volunteer work in the community including recently being named to the Board of Directors of the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, membership in the Rotary of LaGrange Chapter, Chair of the Chamber Foundation’s Non-Profit Resource Council, projects at Wellness House, Dominican University, coaching speech at Hinsdale Central High School, and involvement with the National Association of Social Workers, Young Not-for-Profit Professional Network, Fundraising Success Magazine editors panel, Donor’s Forum of Chicago and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.



invite you to join an

Early to Mid-Stage Dementia Exercise Program
For Those Experiencing Memory Loss and Their Caregivers

Who: Caregivers and Older Adults

When: Fridays, 10am-10:45am

Where: Aging Care Connections
111 West Harris Ave., LaGrange
(formerly Southwest Suburban Center on Aging)

Cost: \$56 per couple for six-weeks
Please call 708-354-1323 to register.

Recent research indicates aerobic exercise is beneficial for improving brain function as well as:

- Improving physical health and motor function
- Improving balance
- Improving mood and sleep
- Providing socialization and enjoyment

Benefits Application

If you have Medicare and live in Illinois, you may fill out one form to apply for the following benefits:

- Help paying for your prescription drugs
- Circuit Breaker grant
- License plate discount
- Transit card for the People with Disabilities Ride Free program.

Beginning January 1, 2010, to qualify for benefits, your yearly income must be less than:

- \$27,610- one person (yourself)
- \$36,635 - two persons (yourself and spouse, or yourself and a qualified additional resident)
- \$45,657 - three persons (yourself, spouse* and at least one qualified additional resident, or yourself and at least two qualified additional residents)

* If your spouse lived with you in 2009, you must include his/her income.

* A qualified additional resident is someone other than your spouse living in your household in 2008 and 2009 for whom you provided more than half their financial support in 2009. Do not include the income of a qualified additional resident.

If you do not have Medicare, you may still qualify for Illinois Cares Rx and Circuit Breaker. Please visit www.illinoiscaresrx.com, or call Aging Care Connections to speak with our Benefits Assistance Department. Circuit Breakers may be completed on-line for the quickest response.

BENEFIT AND TAX PROGRAMS

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How do I apply?

- Applications are available at the Cook County Treasurer's Office after January 1 through the March 1 application deadline.
- Fill out an application, answering all questions and providing required documents.
- You are required to return your application to the Cook County Treasurer's Office no later than March 1.
- You must apply each year you want to participate.

How much will it cost?

- 6% simple interest per year payable at the time the home is transferred to a new owner or, if the participant pays off the senior-deferral loan before then.

How much tax can be deferred?

- You may defer up to 100% of property taxes and up to 80% of your equity interest in the home.

What if there is a mortgage?

- Lender's approval is not necessary for qualified applicants.
- You may want to check with your lender if there is a reverse mortgage on the property.

What If I change my mind?

- The program is flexible. A homeowner may withdraw, keep the loan, pay off the loan and/or re-enter the following year.

REMINDER: Last day to file is March 1 of the year the taxes otherwise would be paid.

New Program for Alzheimer's Caregivers

Caring for a family member with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease can be challenging, stressful, and lonely; 50% of caregivers are depressed. Not surprisingly, caregiver strain is associated with an increased mortality rate. Aging Care Connections is dedicated to enriching the quality of life of older adults and their families. Several members of the Social Service Department have recently completed a training program called **REACH** (**R**esources for **E**nriching **A**lzheimer's **C**aregiver **H**ealth in the **C**ommunity).

REACH is a structured program offered in the caregiver's home. The program is designed to educate and assist the caregiver in developing interventions for the Alzheimer patient's behavior. Concern for the caregiver's own health, safety in the home, and stress management techniques are part of the program.

Aging Care Connections will have two staff members (an Interventionist and a Group Leader) working with each caregiver over a span of six months. The Interventionist will screen each caregiver to determine eligibility for the program. Nine home visits and three telephone calls will be completed by the Interventionist. The Group Leader will complete five structured telephone support group sessions.

The staff at Aging Care Connections will report to the REACH Community Program located at the VA Medical Center in Memphis. REACH Community has trained Interventionists and Support Leaders around the country. REACH was developed by the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving at Georgia Southwestern State University. Research has indicated REACH lowers the level of depression among caregivers and adds one hour of free time to the caregiver's day. This is accomplished by enhancing the emotional and physical health of the caregiver.

Donations to cover the cost of the program manuals are **welcomed**, as this cost is not funded. Each caregiver's manual is \$20. For information on the REACH Program, please contact Ruth Folkening, Caregiver Specialist, at 708-354-1323, extension 28.

The Second Time Around



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren SUPPORT GROUP

Wouldn't you like to know you are not alone in caring for your grandchildren? Aging Care Connections, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the well-being of older adults, would like to invite you to the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group. The group focuses on giving grandparents a place to share their thoughts and ideas on the challenges of raising grandchildren. Facilitators will be available to help guide and connect you to the right resources and assist in helping you take care of yourself and your grandchildren. If you are a grandparent raising grandchildren and feel this group may be for you, we welcome you to the next meeting and hope you will join us.

When: The last Thursday of the month

Time: 10:00am-11:30am

Where: Summit Public Library
6233 S. Archer Road, Summit

To Register: Please call 708-354-1323



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NINTH ANNUAL Sports Ball Benefit Gala

Friday, April 30, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.
HARRY CAREY'S AT THE WESTIN HOTEL, LOMBARD

Guest Emcee, Paula Faris, NBC5 Chicago

New this year! Overnight accommodations at The Westin may be reserved for \$89 per night!

Aging Care Connections Annual Appeal

Please mail your Annual Appeal donation in the envelope you received or contact Niki Chibucos at 708-354-1323, if you have not received it. We need YOUR help to continue to deliver quality services to the older adults in our community.

Thank you!

Leaving a Lasting Legacy to Aging Care Connections

Have you considered leaving a meaningful legacy for older adults by making a bequest to Aging Care Connections? When establishing or reviewing your will with your attorney, we hope you will consider Aging Care Connections as part of your charitable giving. Your gift will help us help thousands of older adults today and in the future. It's as simple as asking your attorney to include language in your will or trust as follows: "I bequeath the sum of \$ _____ or _____% of my estate to Aging Care Connections, La Grange, Illinois, to be used for the general support of the organization or as its Board of Directors deems appropriate."

For further information on how to leave a lasting legacy to Aging Care Connections, please contact Niki Chibucos, Director of Development and Community Relations at 708-354-1323, ext. 26.



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REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS

Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group: A support group that meets the first Friday of the month from 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for caregivers of someone diagnosed with Alzheimer's diseases. Please note that the January meeting will take place on Friday, January 8, 2010.

Please contact: Intake Office, 708-354-1323, extension 15 for questions or to register.

Arthritis Exercise Class: A class that meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. for those with arthritis and those who want to keep their bodies limber.

*Instructors: Pat Michet and Shelley Anderson.
Fee: \$4.00 per class or \$32.00 for nine classes.
Please call: 708-354-1323 to register.*

Caregivers for Mentally Ill Adults: A support group that meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Group leaders: Cheryl Anderson and Christine Bumgardner.

Please contact: Christine Bumgardner, 708-354-1323, extension 34 for questions or to register.

Caregivers Support Group: "The Lunch Bunch" is a group of caregivers who chat over lunch. The group meets at Bakers Square Restaurant, 942 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, the first Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m. Each participant pays for his or her lunch.

Please contact: Ruth Folkening, Caregiver Specialist, 708-354-1323, extension 28 for questions.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group: A support group that meets the last Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the Summit Public Library, 6233 S. Archer Road, Summit.

Please contact: Sue Murphy, Care Coordinator, 708-354-1323, extension 21.

Health Clinic: Dr. Nyaeme, a geriatric physician with Adventist Midwest Geriatric Specialists, sees patients Thursday mornings by appointment.

Please call: 708-245-4073 to make an appointment.

Legal Assistance: Attorney Erik Peck is available the second Wednesday of the month for consultation on matters pertaining to estate planning and legal issues. There is no fee for the consultation.

Please contact: Intake Office, 708-354-1323, extension 15 to make an appointment.

Memories—Gone But Not Forgotten: A group that meets the first Friday of the month from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. for older adults experiencing early stages of memory loss who enjoy the company of others and reminiscing about "old times."

Please contact: Intake Office, 708-354-1323, extension 15 to register.

Men's Support Group: The Friday Morning Regulars is a group of men that meets on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. to discuss issues related to aging.

Please contact: Intake Office at 708-354-1323, extension 15 for questions or to register.

Early Dementia Exercise: A six-week fitness program for those with early to mid-stage dementia and their caregivers offered in partnership with Right-Fit Sport Fitness Wellness, Willowbrook, that meets from 10:00 a.m. -10:45 a.m. on Friday. Cost for six-weeks is \$56 at the time of registration.

Please call: Ruth Folkening, Caregiver Specialist, 708-354-1323, extension 28, for questions or to register.

Communities Served

Bedford Park	La Grange
Bridgeview	La Grange Highlands
Broadview	La Grange Park
Brookfield	Lyons
Burr Ridge	McCook
Countryside	North Riverside
Hickory Hills	Riverside
Hinsdale	Summit Argo
Hodgkins	Westchester
Indian Head Park	Western Springs
Justice	Willow Springs

Aging Care Connections' Mission

.....to enrich the quality of life of older adults and their families through a range of programs and services that enhance their well being and independence



Vision Statement

“To be recognized as the premier, aging resource expert and the point of entry for aging services in our community, dedicated to meeting the needs of older adults and providing support for their families through a comprehensive range of information, programs and services to which we bring an unbiased, objective perspective as a trusted non-profit organization.”

- We will be recognized as the one-stop senior care connection; sought out by older adults and caregivers to find solutions to their independent living needs.
- We will be the leaders in providing client-centered care, built on a foundation of professionalism, knowledge, experience and expertise in aging services.
- We will take the leadership role in the community to continuously inform, enlighten and offer home and community-based services relating to: (a) guidance and support (b) caregiving and care management (c) safety and well-being.
- We will have a reputation among clients, caregivers, partner agencies, health professionals, administrators, and public policy makers as a valued community resource; caring, compassionate and committed to excellence.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Aging Care Connections does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment or employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging. For information, call Aging Care Connections at 708-354-1323.