

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION WORKGROUP MINUTES



Date: 07/16/2020

Time: 1:00 PM

Facilitators: Lucky Sohi and Terri Hansen

In Attendance

Terri Hansen	Lucky Sohi
Kathleen Krintz	Stuart Rosenthal
Debbie Burgio	Kelly Kesler
Mae Beale	Jim Sanders

Minutes Approved

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First: Mae Beale

Second: Stuart Rosenthal

Announcements:

None

Old Business:

Research report out continued from June meeting

Stuart reported the following but noted that he was unable to get information from the Baltimore Sun which prints the Howard County Times and Columbia Flier (Terri received the information and will share).

- There is Howard Magazine which is published monthly.
- The Villages have a newsletter which is emailed to people.
- Her Mind Magazine is published once a year and online, they mail 26 thousand copies to affluent Women and Women of Business.
- Business Monthly publication prints 25 thousand a month subscription \$25 yearly also distribute copies in the Library and around the County.
 - You can submit a 500-word article but not guaranteed to publish
- Columbia Flier free weekly; prints over 37 thousand copies and delivered throughout Columbia.
- Howard County Times around 14 thousand copies; subscriber-based paid circulation. To view online you must pay the Baltimore Sun subscription rate.
- The Howard County Beacon prints 17 thousand copies and is free. Aimed at 50+. 17,000 copies distributed at 300 locations throughout the County. Currently we are limited to distribution due to COVID at grocery stores and pharmacies.
- The other papers Howard County Times, Columbia Flier are all local news. The Beacon is a feature paper with subjects aimed at older adults. Sections are:
 - Health and Fitness

- The Law and Money
 - Technology
 - Arts and Style
 - Leisure and Travel
- Attached stories from 2019 are in the google drive.
 - 50 – 64 is 46% - Readers
 - 65 – 75 is 41% - Readers
 - 75 over is 13%
 - 2/3 are female readers and 1/3 are male.
- Terri asked how the Beacon gets its demographics.
 - Stuart stated they do yearly surveys of our readers.
- All the papers including the Sun accept advertising. Went over advertisement costs for the different papers.
- Jim asked about Foreign press as we have a very large Korean and Chinese community.
 - Terri stated that there is a Korean newspaper. OAI has had articles in the Korean Times newspaper.
- Mae stated she has read a lot of articles in the Beacon and like how it relates to the older population. What would we need to do as a communication task force to be able to put information into the Beacon if it is not a conflict of interest? Also wanted to know what the \$6.00 fee was for since you can pick up the paper for free.
 - Stuart stated the fee is if you want the Beacon mailed to you. As far as getting everything out that this committee wants to do, we use the pages that are set aside for the 50+ Connection (OAI's publication in the Howard County Beacon).
- Mae asked if we want to use it for publishing and advertising what our task force is doing how would that work.
 - Such as pertinent to our findings to our survey or an article that we want to get out to people.
 - Mae was hoping it could be a vehicle that we can use to get Age-Friendly information out there.
- Jim stated there are methods that allow persons with limited vision to still access community newspapers. What do we know about that?
 - Stuart stated almost all these papers are available online and people can adjust the size of the type for their reading needs.
- Jim asked if anyone is aware of programs that promote access to print for low vision readers. As advocates for accessibility of information we want people to be aware of community activities. Are we aware of anything in the print space where people have done that?
 - Stuart mentioned the technology of this has been addressed in Beacon articles.
- Jim stated on the question of access, the Library carries free major newspapers. To what extent does the Library support publications relative to the aging community?
 - Stuart stated most papers that are in the County want to have them in the Library because it is a good place to reach older adults.
- Jim is concerned we are a fragmented community. He asked if our communication tools work countywide. The Library is working to get information out as is ACS.
- Terri mentioned that a lot of good points were brought up about a need for a more concerted effort to get information from all the print media to individuals of all ages and abilities and a focus on older adults. Everyone has their favorites that they are going to get information from. And publications have a different focus; the Business Monthly is geared towards businesses, but we also want to reach out to business with Age-Friendly initiative

news. Baltimore Sun Media Group also has the Laurel Leader, Howard Magazine (every other month) and does a lot of digital. As we talk about providing communication tools in a variety of ways we need to keep that in mind too. Print is important, as is social media, and recognizing the need to reach out to publications written in different languages. Someone needs to do some research to see what other publications are out there in different languages, or find an online presentation about how to get information out to non-English speaking residents. It is important that as we put together information about Age-Friendly and plan events from our action plans that we advertise to everyone. Getting information out is going to be a collective effort.

- Jim would like to add another focus related to print. People look for access to resources in print particularly related to health issues. He identified three places to look.
 - Office on Aging and Independence Resource Guide
 - Commercial Directory of Coalition of Geriatric Services
 - Pro-Aging Directory

He said the most common questions are “Who does that?” and “How do I find it?” Part of our review needs to look at the directory problems.

- Stuart mentioned that Howard County’s Master Aging event will not be held this year, but the Beacon will hold its 50+ Expo this year and it will be virtual, and run for three months starting in November. Anyone can participate.
- Winter Grace Senior ministries is having one as well which will be virtual during the first two weeks of October.

Kelly Kesler reported out. The Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) uses the same communication channels as the County; uses Constant Contact through the Health Department.

- Through the LHIC we have flexibility to adjust, but the two main things that we utilize are the digest (monthly newsletter) and we are adding a pop up so anyone can sign up for the newsletter. Within that we have a section that is specifically about healthy aging.
- Also have a tool called action alert that goes out once a month with 1 to 3 items - specific things we want you to take action on.
- Within the school system and the Office of Children and Families there are newsletters that we can consider as additional venues to communicate healthy aging messages. Be able to look at them with a different lens and how can we utilize them.
- We certainly have options and opportunities through our various social media.
- Something very positive that has come out of the COVID response are focus calls that have representatives from all the community agencies all on one call – this enables County public information officers to share ideas with each other.
- Jim stated going forward he would be interested in Foreign language access.
- Kelly stated that one entity missing from this group is organizations such as FIRN, which target outreach into foreign born and new immigrant communities with unique and differing communication needs. She suggested extending an invitation to groups like FIRN or other organizations to join or speak to this group so that we are inclusive of all adult communities.
- Jim, said it makes sense to look at the various communities that are users and find out how they use the information and what the gaps are. Dr. Ball’s administration has had informational specialists focus on how to better communicate with the Korean and other ethnic communities. Start with what have we learned already about communicating to these communities and then determine the gaps. One of the administration’s focus areas is to create better methods to communicate to different communities. Who could we get that is skillful about the current communication methods and practices?

- Terri will investigate if there is an individual within County Government who is tasked with that and is available to speak with us.
- Jim, we are not just limited to print, there is a whole mechanism that skillful communication people use to have access to different communities.
- Mae recently did a project with Howard County Leadership working with Grassroots to find out why Hispanics, Korean and Chinese do not utilize their services.
 - Terri asked Mae if she could share the report that will be helpful.

Terri asked if anyone has ideas for speakers to please let her, Kim or Lucky know. She reminded the group that since we are still in data gathering mode, this helps us determine next steps.

New Business:

- Discussion of the survey; Terri asked for comments.
 - Mae noted people with lower income are the most vulnerable.
 - Jim stated the survey reached a certain population, but is concerned that men were not well represented. Many economic issues affect the whole family not just women. Our call to action is to better understand how to communicate broadly.
- Terri went through the portions of the survey that directly relate to this work group. In the survey not as many people knew about and use the MAP information line as we at the Office would have liked to see. In an Age-Friendly community this is something we need to improve upon. One of the challenges is to help the average individual understand that the Office on Aging and Independence is a resource for everyone.
 - Mae stated that people do not like to come for the services, because they do not want to answer the questions about their personal business. And the perception is you must be very poor to get services.
 - Jim suggested OAI may need to rebrand itself to be more relevant to the active aging community, referencing Terri's statement that the OAI is a trusted place for everyone to learn about age related topics, prevention, etc. and separate out the portion that addresses the entitlement programs.
 - Terri asked the committee to further consider this rebranding matter and consider whether it will become part of the Action Plan.
 - In addition, regarding the faith-based community, this is an untapped resource in working with the older adult community and Terri suggested that this work group consider how to better get information out to the community at large through Howard County's faith-based organizations.
- Terri told the group she is meeting with all the Age-Friendly workgroup co-chairs on July 23 so they can share what their groups have been working on. On Friday July 10, Calvin Ball came to the Housing work group meeting and would now like to meet with each work group as his schedule allows. Please think about how we want to present what we have been doing in this work group and what we want to say when he visits with us.

Homework Assignments:

Go over the survey results again, especially pages 9-14, and page 21.

Lucky will assign action plans at the next meeting she would like you to research, looking specifically at what others have done.

Next Meeting: 08/20/2020 – 1:00 PM