2018 Programs of Excellence Awards

NISC SENIOR CENTER PROGRAMMING AWARDS

AWARD WINNERS
2018 Programs of Excellence Awards

NCOA’s National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) Programs of Excellence Awards are designed to honor and promote outstanding efforts made by senior centers throughout the nation to offer innovative, creative, and replicable programs for older adults.

A NISC Committee selected the award winners from 92 programming nominations. Eight award winners, along with seven honorable mentions, were chosen. This year’s highlighted category was Social Isolation Prevention. The complete listing of submissions will be available as a NISC member benefit. Each program is proof of the important work that happens at senior centers.

Entries were accepted in the following eight categories:

1. **Community Development, Leadership and Intergenerational** — programs that increase community involvement in senior centers, enhance diversity appreciation and understanding, and develop strong leaders and volunteers.

2. **Cultural Programs** — programs that showcase performing and visual arts, music, and literature.

3. **Fundraising** — programs designed to generate revenue or in-kind sponsorship for the senior center.

4. **Health and Wellness** — programs designed to improve the health of seniors through programs, screenings and education.

5. **Nutrition** — programs geared to improving nutritional health or combating malnutrition.

6. **Special Events** — programs designed as one-time events or projects. May be intergenerational, thematic, seasonal or patriotic.

7. **Technology** — programs that teach the use of technology, or use technology in program delivery.

8. **Highlighted area of Social Isolation Prevention Programming** — programs that were focused on preventing social isolation. We asked that nominations include 4 related social isolation prevention outreach activities that occur within the program and were offered to an under-served or marginalized population.

NISC members will have access to all submitted ideas. These programs may inspire you to tweak your current programming or add a new program that will be a winner for your participants. Excellent programming ideas are found throughout the booklet, and after reading, you might consider adding an older adult entertainment program like the Open Mic and Poetry Slam or the Seniors Got Talent fundraiser. You may host a technology expo or simply showcase your community connections over a hundred cups of coffee.

Whatever new programming you develop look for your opportunity to be part of the next NISC Programs of Excellence Awards competition and share your best programming idea to inspire others during Senior Center Month in September.
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TECHNOLOGY AWARD WINNER

MAKING TECHNOLOGY EASIER FOR SENIORS EXPO
Robert and Pearl Seymour Center, North Carolina

TECHNOLOGY HONORABLE MENTION

GET YOUR FEET WET WITH TECHNOLOGY
Catonsville Senior Center, Maryland

PREVENTING ISOLATION PROGRAM AWARD WINNER

SENIOR SHOPPING MALL
Senior Services Associates, Inc., Elgin, Illinois

THANK YOU!
Community Development, Leadership and Intergenerational Award Winner

100 Cups of Coffee: Developing Relationships and Expanding Community Partnerships

NORWELL COUNCIL ON AGING, MASSACHUSETTS

The “100 Cups of Coffee” is an inexpensive and personal way to meet older adults, caregivers, and leaders across all aspects of our community. The purpose was to educate people about Councils on Aging/Senior Centers and how we support our community. We also wanted to learn more about older residents that we don’t currently serve and what we could offer that may be of interest to them. We also wanted to learn about local businesses and organizations and identify possible partnerships opportunities to help meet the needs of our community. This program has created several outreach opportunities that didn’t previously exist.

Building networks is a key to success in any community. It helps us identify needs, develop relationships, gain new perspectives and discover opportunities to partnership and collaborations. Our Director announced the program at a Selectmen’s meeting. Following the meeting, the local newspaper interviewed her and wrote an article encouraging community members to participate. An article was also published in the March 2018 edition of our newsletter, inviting residents to come visit us for a cup of coffee. The majority of the coffee meetings resulted from community members reaching out directly to us, most of which were people we hadn’t met before. During these casual meetings, we took notes so that later on we could go back and look for trends and possible program ideas. We also took selfies with each person, then put those on coffee cup cut-outs and posted them on the wall in the center. It became a conversation piece for others when they came to visit. In some instances people we met with referred us to others they thought we should meet. Coffee meetings gave us an opportunity to get to know several new community members and from those conversations introduce new programs, identify concerns and work with local organizations to help meet their needs. While we knew it would be exciting to meet new people, the program as far exceeded our expectations and has inspired others.

Here are a few examples of how our organization and community has benefited:

- 3 new individuals have become Board members
- 1 new person has become the community liaison to our ASAP Board
- 4 new people have joined the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- 2 new meals on wheels drivers
• We have extended our operating hours to offer two new regular evening programs, based on suggestions from older residents.
• Hosted a weekend housing panel discussion based on suggestions from older residents. Some of the panelists came from coffee meetings.
• Collaborations with three community organizations for new off-site programs.
• Partnering with a local farm for a weekly produce delivery to the senior center, beginning summer 2019.
• Virtual dementia tour facilitator training for one staff and one community member.
• Received $500 unsolicited grant from the Women’s Club.
• 94 Jamber coffee mugs were donated to the center.

**Observable measures** We took notes during each meeting. This gave us the chance to go back and look for trends and opportunities. We also took selfies and used them to make a collage on the Director’s office wall. It became a conversation starter. The outcomes noted above are quantitative indicators for success.

**Number of Volunteers** 1 staff person - Director This program could include a number of staff and Board members.

**Expenses** $25 cost of cans of coffee. **Revenue** $500 cash. $1,175 in-kind **Net Profit/Loss** $475 cash, $1,175 in-kind

**Contact:** Susan Curtain
Norwell Council on Aging
Norwell, MA
scurtin@townofnorwell.net
Community Development, Leadership and Intergenerational Honorable Mention

Bridging the Gap

LUTZ SENIOR CENTER, FLORIDA

A new partnership with Learning Gate Community School has opened up an ongoing relationship between the 6 and 8 graders and the seniors at the Hillsborough County Lutz Senior Center. The program initially started with a pen pal program where the students and the seniors began writing letters to each other to introduce themselves. After several exchanges, the students then came over and met their secret pen pal in person and had breakfast. Part II required the students to write a biography of the senior they corresponded with. To prepare for this effort and as a part of their classroom work, the students spent class time learning how to interview, elicit information, how to use leading questions to get deeper information, how to make the subject comfortable enough to share and other communication skills that they would be graded on. The students then had to write a biography that was detailed enough that a person who knew their subject would recognize them even without a name attached. It was a very positive experience for the students who improved their oral and written communication skills and developed a new appreciation for the seniors and for the seniors who were really engaged in helping the students improve their skills and succeed. A bonus for all is that some of these relationships have continued.

This experience afforded the students and the seniors the opportunity to embrace several of the seven dimensions of wellness: Emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and occupational. It has forged relationships that continue and the kids now see the seniors as individuals who have had interesting lives; they were amazed that one of the women served in WW II in England and that they got to meet the first female bus driver in Pittsburg. They have shared that they never thought about the lives seniors had led, including their grandparents prior to this experience, they just saw them as old people.

**Observable measures** Evaluation surveys and oral feedback from the seniors and students to center staff and teachers.

**Number of Volunteers** 4; **Expenses** N/A, **Revenue** N/A, **Net Profit/Loss**

**Contact:** Michael Coleman, Hillsborough County Lutz Senior Center
112 NW 1st Avenue, Lutz, FL, colemanm@HCFLGov.net
Cultural Programs Award Winner

Griswell’s Open Mic and Poetry Slam

J. CHARLEY GRISWELL SENIOR CENTER, JONESBORO, GEORGIA

To celebrate the Black History Month, Griswell’s Open Mic & Poetry Slam was a wonderful opportunity for members to share their experiences and talents about their contributions to Black History.

Participants signed up and showcased their talents in a variety of areas including poetry, singing, dancing, spoken word, and African drum.

Special guests shared little-known Black History facts and how they were a part of Black History themselves. The first African American female to become an Airborne Electronics Technician discussed her experiences. Another guest was a part of the first fifty-five African American students to be allowed to study at Louisiana State University of New Orleans. The program was enlightening for members of all backgrounds because it shared how the African American culture contributed and still contribute to the larger American experience. At the conclusion of this program attendees had a potluck and enjoyed eating African American inspired cuisine, talked, and bonded.

The program was enlightening and inspirational to all members. It brought out so many positive emotions from joy, exhilaration, pride, and hope. People reminisced on how life was in the past and the strides that black people have made. The program was exceptional because people learned aspects of Black History that they were not aware of as well as the gifts and abilities of their friends and peers.

Observable measures After the program, staff completed an evaluation of the program. This gauged the success of the program, evaluate program goals, if there were sufficient resources, any modifications that were made, and enhancements for future programs.

Number of Volunteers Five staff were required to run this program.

Expenses $200.00, Revenue $0.00, Net Profit/Loss $200.00

Contact: Kendra Shepard, J. Charley Griswell Senior Center 2300 Hwy 138 SE, Jonesboro, GA kendra.shepard@claytoncountyga.gov
Cultural Programs Honorable Mention Award

Enjoying Opera and Classical Music

SURREY SERVICES FOR SENIORS, DEVON, PENNSYLVANIA

A knowledgeable volunteer instructor curates YouTube videos and assembles a play list for each week's class. Each class is organized by a specific topic, for example, "Ballet", "Italian Arias" or "Handel". During the weekly, hour-long class, an assistant follows the playlist and displays music and/or video on a screen for class participants to enjoy. The volunteer instructor shares insights, reviews, jokes and other information about the music, composer and performer. Attendees are welcome to ask questions. The playlist is distributed so that attendees can listen to the music again at their leisure.

The program is significant due to the fact that it was created entirely by an engaged volunteer. The volunteer’s passion for and knowledge about the music is infectious. This is one of the Devon center’s most popular programs and is well attended by a widely diverse audience of different ages and genders. It is truly a community program, created by a volunteer who saw an opportunity to provide a cultural program and embraced by the community.

There are several benefits to the program. Attendees are not typical center members so the programs draws a new audience. They experience socialization and a connection to the group of music appreciators. The program also provides music education. Our organization benefits from participation, volunteer engagement and being able to offer a free program.

Observable measures Measurement for this program is through attendance and member satisfaction surveys. Attendance has grown consistently and averages 50 attendees each week. Members consistently report high levels of enjoyment with the class. Here is one testimonial. "Classical is a delightful class. The instructor is so knowledgeable about the music and so engaging." "It is my favorite class and I look forward to it every week."

Number of Volunteers 1 volunteer, 1 staff person

Expenses 0, Revenue 0, Net Profit/Loss 0

Christi Seidel
Surrey Services for Seniors
60 Surrey Way
Devon, PA
mmcknight@surreyservices.org
The Groton Senior Center plans annual fundraising ideas to help support programming at the center. In 2017, the senior center and Recreation Division planned a unique community event called the Mystic Muddy Mayhem. This was a mud run through the woods that included obstacles as well as plenty of mud. The event drew persons of all ages to attempt the challenge. Staff worked with a local adventure park to have the event go through a portion of their 50 acres of woods. The adventure park offered their skills in setting up obstacles, providing a safe course for all ages and sense of fun. The option for participants to skip an obstacle was part of the plan. Senior Center, Recreation and town Parks staff assisted in developing the trail for the run. Each group also worked on volunteers, registration of runners, set times for runners to start off, waivers for runners and refreshments at the venue as well as sponsors. In 2017, the event drew over 350 participants of all ages. Groups also dressed in themes including a bridal party, a physical therapists office and a 55+ couple in formal wear. In 2018, the event drew 250 participants, due to the cold spring weather. Each year the fundraiser grossed about $10,000. The net profit was divided in half for the Senior Center and Recreation Division.

This project is worthy of an award because it is unique that the Senior Center teamed up with the Recreation division to implement this fundraiser. This way both divisions could utilize resources of volunteers, sponsors and experience to develop a safe, fun program. In addition, the program goal for raising funds was met.

**Observable measures** The indicators used to measure the success of the program was the amount of money raised and post race comments from participants on how they enjoyed the event, did they like the course and would they come again.

**Number of Volunteers** 2 Staff planned the event; 6 additional staff worked 2 hour shifts to take in money and register on that day; 25 volunteers on the day of the event

**Expenses** $7,367.00, **Revenue** $9,260.00, **Net Profit/Loss** $1,893.00

**Contact:** Mary Jo Riley, 102 Newtown Road Groton, CT, mjriley@groton-ct.gov
In April of 2017, the Active Older Adult Community Centers operated by United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA held its 6th annual Seniors Got Talent! Amateur entertainers of any talent age 55 and older living in NorthEastern Pennsylvania are encouraged to audition to compete for prize money. First prize is $500, second is $300 and third is $200. Trophies are also awarded to the top three finishers and all are given a participation medal. Last year an Audience Award which encouraged the audience to vote for their favorite act. During intermission, the audience has the opportunity to stuff a box with dollar bills, corresponding to their favorite act. The winning act is awarded a prize and a trophy. After intermission and while the judges are deliberating, the audience is treated to a few local professional acts who donate their time and talents. Over the six years the judges for the event have included tv news personalities, elected officials, County judges and other local celebrities. This year a QVC host, who is a local high school graduate, came home to serve as one of the three judges. A local celebrity acts as the host for the event. There are opportunities for community involvement by not only attending the event but through sponsorships and ads in the program booklet. Seniors Got Talent! has become a premier event in our area and an afternoon that old and young alike look forward to every year.

The goal of this event is to showcase the many talents of the older adults living in NorthEastern PA while raising funds to support the programs that already exist at the centers and to offer new and innovative programs to meet the needs of the younger older adults. It is the hope that in doing so, attendance and membership at the centers will increase, and it has. The participants benefit by having a professional venue to showcase their talents. It is an enjoyable and affordable afternoon for all involved.

**Observable measures** One indicator used to measure the event’s success is the net profit. Another measure of success is the number of tickets sold and the number that actually attended the event. In six years we went from breaking even in profits to a $20,000 profit and from 100 people in attendance to close to 500 this year.

**Number of Volunteers** 4 Staff and 10 Volunteers in various roles including a volunteer event committee

**Expenses** $3679, **Revenue** $24,097, **Net Profit/Loss** Profit of $20,417

**Contact:** Laurie A. Fleming  
West Side Active Older Adult Community Center  
1004 Jackson Street, Scranton, PA  
lfleming@uncnepa.org
The ‘Living Well Talk Series’ is designed to empower older adults to live life on their own terms! This program takes place one evening each month and together we explore different areas of the wellness paradigm. This series strives to present fresh, innovative and enlightening topics to enrich the lives of today’s older adult. Some of the topics include: Understanding Your Personality (with the Enneagram), Finding Love Online (Online Dating Tips for Rookies), “The Talk” for Adults (A Conversation on Sex & Aging), Marijuana as Medicine (Is It Right For Me), Creating Body Trust (Intuitive Eating & Embracing Health at Every Size), The Benefits of Hypnosis, Don’t Just Retire-REFIRE, and Aging with PRIDE (Creating a Community of Understanding and Acceptance of Our LGBT Neighbors).

The purpose of the “Living Well Talk Series” is part of an initiative we have to ‘de-stigmatize’ our Center as only be that for ‘old people’. We wanted to appeal to the ‘Boomer’ who is still working and the seniors that are retired. This program has increased our evening attendance by 100%, and has had a 50% increase in male participants! Our goal is not to ‘stereotype’ today’s older adult, but rather honor and celebrate that today’s older adult is modern, active, and thriving!

Our participants benefitted from having ‘after hours’ programming that helped many newcomers familiarizing themselves with our Center while we were able to spotlight the great services our Center provides. Our organization benefitted from having a high attendance of intergenerational adult community members, marketing of our services, as well as developing a community partnership with a local health organization, and increased revenue.

**Observable measures** The tools we used as measurements of success included: Increased Attendance, Very Positive Survey Results and Feedback, Large Waiting List, Numerous Requests for Additional Programming!

**Number of Volunteers** Nicolette Hume, Community Engagement Coordinator at Lake Oswego Adult Community Center

**Expenses** $0, **Revenue** $2500.00, **Net Profit/Loss** $0

**Contact:** Nicolette-Hume  
Lake Oswego Adult Community Center  
505 G Avenue, Lake Oswego, Oregon  
nhume@ci.oswego.or.us
Health and Wellness Honorable Mention

Effects of Play Therapy on Balance and Quality of Life in Older Adults

JOHNSON CITY SENIOR CENTER, TENNESSEE

Eleven older adults, 65 years or older, participated in an eight week study on play therapy, which was conducted by five occupational therapy (OT) students beginning in July and ending in August of 2018. The group met once a week for one hour on Tuesdays. The first and last weeks of the study were designated for pre and post testing. At the start of the study, participants completed an interest inventory to allow researchers to better gauge the personal interests of the group. Once these interests were established, the information was used to select activities. During the six weeks of play therapy, the individuals participated in activities including putt putt, Wii sports, balloon tennis, chair yoga, corn hole, bowling, shuttleboard, lifesize battleship, relay races, movement bingo, dancing, painting suncatchers, adult coloring, card games, and board games. The activities focused on combining balance activities with social participation. The goal of the study was to impact participants through a holistic occupational therapy approach. In previous research, meaningful activity has been proven to produce a greater impact on individuals than exercise alone. Individualized play and leisure activities were utilized to create a greater desire to engage in play therapy, to impact quality of life and balance skills.

As we are all aware, falls are a number one fear for older adults. This program provided a different approach to addressing the fall issue and ways to improve one's balance by providing a fun, play environment along with a social aspect in a group setting. After reviewing the TUG test pre and post times, a majority of participants showed significant decrease in TUG times from pre to post test in the amount of time it took to stand, walk 20 feet, and sit back down at their starting position. Participants also reported feeling happier and felt as if they had established a stronger sense of community at the conclusion of the study.

**Observable measures** Testing was separated by an 8 week time frame. The Time Up and Go Test (TUG) was used to measure improvements in balance and coordination as well as the Older People's Quality of Life Scale (OPQUAL35) to determine if there was any impact on psychosocial components through play interventions and social interaction.

**Number of Volunteers** Five master's of occupational therapy students led activities with occupational therapist, Christy Fellers, OTD, OTR/L, C/NDT assisted the students in administering the TUG test.

**Expenses** $112, **Revenue 0, Net Profit/Loss**

**Contact:** Deb Fogle, Johnson City Senior Center
510 Bert Street, Johnson City, TN
Nutrition Award Winner

DCSL’s Top Chef

DURHAM CENTER FOR SENIOR LIFE, NORTH CAROLINA

Members of Durham Center for Senior Life battled it out in front of a live audience in the senior center’s inaugural healthy cooking competition. The center partnered with Whole Foods and The Chef’s Academy culinary school to provide the senior competitors with fresh salmon, chicken, veggies, and spices to create their one of a kind dish. They were offered two hands-on cooking workshops prior to the event to sharpen their culinary skills. They had no idea what they would be preparing or the ingredients that they would be given until the day of the competition. They each had 35 minutes to prepare their healthy meal. Contestants were judged by a panel of four judges, one of whom was a chef and culinary educator. They were judged on their creativity, presentation, taste and use of ingredients. The winner received a $50 Whole Foods gift card and kitchen items donated by Williams Sonoma. All participants received $25 Whole Foods Gift cards.

Every March our nation celebrates National Nutrition month. This event sought to educate and inspire our seniors to continue making lifestyle and diet decisions that will keep them happy, healthy and active for years to come.

Outcomes from the event included:
- Competitors were able to create a healthy dish in 35 minutes with a combination of protein and fresh vegetables.
- Members of the live audience were able to learn how to prepare a healthy meal by watching the live demonstration.
- The center established an ongoing relationship with a major grocery chain and a culinary school for future wellness and nutrition events.

Number of Volunteers 10

Expenses $20, Revenue 0, Net Profit/Loss 0

Contact: Janae Brown
Durham Center for Senior Life
410 Rigsbee Avenue, Durham, NC
janae.brown@dcslnce.org
Nutrition Honorable Mention

Social Supper

PLAINVILLE SENIOR CENTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Twice a month, the center lists a local restaurant for seniors who are widowed, alone, new to the area, or just want to meet new friends to meet for dinner. Many seniors enjoy going out to eat but do not like eating alone.

This program was unique because the center would make the reservation at the restaurant and negotiate a “fixed” menu just for the seniors, the prices would be very reasonable, and they usually included a salad, dessert, and coffee/tea. Each person would be given an individual check so they weren’t “paying for other people’s food and drinks”. These dinners give those living alone and others a chance to meet new friends, enjoy the company of other seniors and given them an opportunity to dress up and wear their “fancy” clothes out again. Those living alone and widowed especially look forward to these dinners and friendships have blossomed.

Loneliness is prevalent in seniors. Often, seniors that attend the center do not have much to do after the center closes for the day. This program invites those that may be experiencing loneliness to enjoy a low-cost dinner and have the company of other seniors that are in their same situation. Attendees feel connected. Friendships are formed and seniors have something to look forward to on a regular basis.

Observable measures The obvious positive changes in the people attending, the positive feedback, and the pictures that are taken are indicative of a fun experience.

Number of Volunteers 1 to 2

Expenses 0, Revenue 0, Net Profit/Loss 0

Contact: Lisa Cogliano
Plainville Senior Center
9 School Street
Plainville, MA
lcogliano@plainville.ma.us

(left to right): Sandy Germano, Jane Lovie, Joan Boyle, Judy Molloy, Maureen Headd, Ellen Elson, (seated) Cathy McGuiness, Mary Broe, and Cathy Garrity.
How many of us has said goodbye to a lifetime of stories, generations of family love and important history as we have lost a parent or grandparent?

My Journey captures stories of our elders for perpetuity. Inspired by the NPR program StoryCorps, Friendship Centers (FC) developed My Journey is a portable recording studio that guides the interview with both chronological/linear questions, as well as experiential and family-values conversations.

When the interview is completed (@ 30 minutes) the recording is edited and emailed to either the older adult and/or their children. They can then forward the recording to other family members and friends, without the hassle of reproduction (think: burning CD’s).

The beauty of this program is that one gets to hear the older adult’s life story, in their voice. Friendship Centers has completed more than 100 interviews since the project began in 2016.

This program addresses several issues.

- For families, they learn about their elder’s and family history in their parent’s/grandparent’s voice.
- For the Center, it provides a valuable service and generates earned income. Friendship Centers asks for a donation of $75; however, no one is ever turned away because of a lack of funds. This process also honors the elders in our society and captures our diverse heritage: stories from Holocaust survivors, those who endured discrimination during the Jim Crow, those who fought for rights for women, people of color and those who led the charge in coming out.
One issue that is prevalent in Florida is that older adults move here for the weather; but they leave their social safety net (their families, friends from work and their neighborhoods, etc.) behind. The demographics of Florida will fuel family separations and estrangements The older adults that make the recording see My Journey as a unique way to resolve this issue, on one level. FC benefits by providing yet another program that addresses very real issues for our clients, and My Journey provides a source of revenue.

**Observable measures** The older adults are surveyed after their recording, and they are unanimously excited and positive about the experience. One interviewee said that the recording was the first time he had spoken about his late wife, and it felt good to "share the load." FC approaches this program as it does most of the programs offered: in a manner where expectations are laid out to determine if it is viable to continue offering. A target number of interviews are decided at the beginning of the fiscal year, with marketing and "specials" (e.g., Christmas recordings as a gift for the family) structured to achieve the desired number of interviews.

**Number of Volunteers** 1-2 staff; FC uses one person, but he is the only one who conducts the interviews.

**Expenses** $3,400 (staff @ $20/hour, doing 50 interviews each taking 2 hours PLUS Overhead

**Revenue** $3,750 (50 interviews annually @ $75)

**Net Profit/Loss** $350

**Contact:** Erin McLeod
Friendship Centers
1888 Brother Geenen Way
Sarasota, FL
emcleod@friendshipcenters.org
Special Events Honorable Mention

Journey Into Space

PARKVILLE SENIOR CENTER, MARYLAND

“Journey Into Space” was designed as a four part intergenerational summer program series that seniors could bring their grandkids to over the summer to connect and share in the joy of learning about space, space exploration and related STEM topics as well as sharing in the senior center experience where learning never stops.

- The program kicked off with a distance learning program produced by NASA featuring a virtual trip through outer space, a flyover of earth and a variety of interesting images of earth from above.
- In session two, “Simple Rocket Science” participants learned how rockets work with a science experiment and were then able to make and take their own rockets.
- Session three was “STEMonstrations from Space” we learned about STEM activities and research on the International Space Station, Newton’s Laws of Motion, surface tension and more.
- The final session connected the imaginations of the generations with a viewing of Star Wars.

The “Journey Into Space” program brought generations together as kids of all ages learned about the universe we live in, the rules of science that impact our lives in countless ways as well as advances not only in space exploration but how man has explored space and uses space to continue to learn about the universe. The program also highlighted to both the kids and seniors how learning is a lifelong process that can be shared.

Participants learned about space, laws of the natural universe the effect us in many ways, the scientific method and the reality that learning is both fun and a lifelong endeavor.

**Observable measures** While the focus of this program was to highlight learning as an enjoyable process and thus no testing was done we observed the enjoyment of generations learning together. It is our hope as well that a better understanding of the other was gained for both the senior and children.

**Number of Volunteers**: 3

**Expenses**: $300.00

**Revenue**: $0 No fee charged

**Net Profit/Loss**: $-300.00

**Contact**: Bonnie Riehl/James Slone
Parkville Senior Center
8601 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD
jslone@baltimorecountymd.gov
Technology Award Winner

Making Technology Easier for Seniors Expo

ROBERT AND PEARL SEYmour CENTER, NORTH CAROLINA

The “Making Technology Easier for Seniors Expo” was created to bridge the gap between modern day technology and older adults. This event offered a variety of workshops designed to help approximately 100 seniors move beyond their anxiety and intimidation of computerized devices and programs. The objective of this effort was to enhance their overall technological awareness in a fast-paced growing world. Community experts shared practical information and conducted hands on demonstrations which enabled participants to maximize the benefits of modern technology.

The sessions were as follows:

- How Smart is Your Smartphone: Androids and iPhones
- The ABC’s of Computers: iPads, Laptops and Tablets
- Funtastic Fun with a Smart TV
- Stay Connected with Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
- The Wonderful World of Mobile Banking
- Get Moving with Uber and Lyft
- Lock Down with Privacy, Passcodes and Security Tips
- Understanding Cell Phone Plans
- Keeping up with your Fit Bit

This well received and timely learning experience facilitated the participants’ understanding in the following ways:

- Understanding basic computer applications in Word
- How to connect to social media
- Innovative and interactive ways of viewing television
- Establishing strong passwords and simple ways to stay safe online
- Getting the best use out of one’s cell phone
- Introduction to online banking
- Exploring the use of Uber and Lyft
This groundbreaking technology event specific to senior adults in Orange County, North Carolina, helped attendees to transition more easily into the 21st century. Many participants were empowered and inspired to continue exploring their new found interest in the digital age. These leading edge sessions opened up a whole new world of communications, skill sets, unlimited opportunities and created confidence. Seniors now have the tools needed to be more self-reliant, productive in maintaining their day to day living and contribute to their communities.

The Technology Expo paved the way for the development of several new ongoing programs.

- To maintain momentum, the first program was a one-on-one mentoring program called Tech Knowledge. This unique partnership between seniors and local tech savvy high school students provides free personalized assistance to address specific needs and inquiries of the participant for 45 minutes to an hour, every other Saturday by appointment at the center.
- The second benefit was an increased interest in the utilization of the existing on-site computer lab staffed by seniors, which offers a wide range of classes year round.
- Another new offering was the collaboration with Kramden Institute, a local nonprofit organization, which taught basic skills such as, saving and organizing document files, word processing, using the internet and social media. This incentive program was opened to seniors who did not have access to a working home computer. At the end of the 4 week course, each senior received a certificate of completion and a free laptop.
- The newest offering is an offsite program called Edventure with Mirosoft Store which is designed to expose older adults to informative and creative experiences such as the Online Safety Series and Creating Magical Moments with photos.

As you can see, the participants, as well as, the senior center, have continued to benefit richly from new programs and services that were the result of the Technology Expo.

**Observable measures** Participants were given a survey to evaluate each session that they attended. The responses were tabulated for each session and the feedback was shared with the instructors. In addition, the information was also used to access future needs and programming.

**Number of Volunteers** There was 3 staff and 25 adult and 15 student volunteers.

**Expenses** $329.13, **Revenue** $0, **Net Profit/Loss** -$329.13

**Contact:** Cydnee Sims  
Robert and Pearl Seymour Center  
2551 Homestead Road  
Chapel Hill, NC  
csims@orangecountync.gov
Technology Honorable Mention

Get Your Feet Wet with Technology

CATONSVILLE SENIOR CENTER, MARYLAND

Our senior center partnered with the area library to provide a 4 week technology course. The course included:

- Week one focused on Fitness and Nutrition applications.
- In week two, participants learned about U Tube, music and movie applications.
- During week three, photo editing and Instant Messaging were covered.
- Online shopping using Amazon, Ebay and Paypal were discussed during the fourth class. We were also able to show the participants how to use tablets for their searches because the senior center received a grant from a community organization to purchase seven tablets to help our members learn the latest in technology.

After completing this workshop, participants were more confident exploring the world wide web. They were also more confident with connecting with family and friends using technology. Their self confidence also improved because they didn’t have to rely on family members to show them how to navigate the world wide web and applications.

Our organization gained a new partnership with the library and we have implemented other programs with their assistance.

Observable measures Participants requested more programs like this one immediately after the workshop. All programs have been well attended.

Number of Volunteers 1 staff person from the center to coordinate with the library and 2 staff from the library were utilized.

Expenses 0, Revenue 0, Net Profit/Loss 0

Contact: Nicole Sheehan
Catonsville Senior Center
501 N. Rolling Road
Catonsville, MD
nsheehan@baltimorecountymd.gov
Preventing Isolation Program Award Winner

Senior Shopping Mall

SENIOR SERVICES ASSOCIATES, INC.,
ELGIN, ILLINOIS

Recognizing the profoundly negative impact isolation has on seniors, and the challenge involved in motivating those who are isolated to become engaged with others, Senior Services designed its “Shopping Mall” program. It provides motivation to seniors to participate in year-long programming; thereby reducing their isolation, by way of reward points. While the program serves all seniors, components specifically target our sizable Hispanic and Laotian minority population to assure their participation. Points earned are used to shop for gifts, currency-free. This program is especially vital to underserved seniors including Latinos, frail seniors, Laotians, older seniors (80+), seniors living alone, and those who are financially challenged.

By visiting our Senior Center frequently, participation helps alleviate isolation, so seniors may “Viva Bien” – LIVE WELL. Classes include exercises, nutrition ideas, dancing, posture techniques, recuperation tips, lowering anxiety and high blood pressure, and more. These activities promote interaction and collaboration. Seniors interact with peers who are similar to themselves, while meeting new friends from varied backgrounds. Points earned are used to purchase gifts; many of which are donated by generous supporters, making this program extremely low cost. Our seniors count upon the Shopping Mall to provide gifts for their families; ones that some may not be able to afford, or may not have the ability to shop for independently. We are dedicated to providing activities which promote mental and physical well-being, while providing social interaction, wrapped into a program that seamlessly supports these objectives.

1. The Senior Companion Program specifically targets the issues of isolation. Many seniors are reluctant to request help but will accept a friend, a companion. The program matches carefully screened volunteers with local seniors who are socially isolated, lonely, or home-bound. The need for positive social contact is met through these relationships, which are characterized by deep respect and mutual regard. Volunteers must meet with their senior companion at a minimum of once a week. In 2008 our Senior Companion program was recognized as one of the finest advances in programming for seniors by the Area Agency on Aging. The companion may help with household chores, celebrating holidays, including the senior in daily plans, while communicating love and a sense of self-worth towards the senior. This relationship can make a significant positive impact on the mental health of both the senior and the volunteer companion.
The program provides a much needed purpose for volunteers too, by offering socialization, enhanced self-esteem, and a reason for being. Volunteers go through an intensive screening and application process. Matches are supervised by the program director, who provides guidance and support. The program provides consistent encouragement and reassurance through regular contact.

2. Senior Services’ Health Promotion programming invites and accepts referrals from many underserved communities, using the point system as a motivator. We offer the following classes sequentially; “A Matter of Balance”, “Fit & Strong”, “Chronic Disease Self-Management Program” (CDSMP) and “Tomando Control de su Salud”, a Spanish Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (Spanish CDSMP). These are all first-tier evidence based programs rotated continuously throughout the year to promote physical strength, mental health and fall prevention. The University of Illinois, Chicago, asked Senior Services to co-present this method during the 2012 ASA Chicago Convention. We included information about the Senior Shopping Mall to this very interested audience. Because these classes require effort and commitment and result in many physical, mental and social benefits to the participant, the highest number of points are awarded to participants. Learning to avoid falls, take medication correctly, exercise and create a healthier diet increases in effectiveness with social connections. Maintaining physical and mental health allow seniors to take steps to stay active in their community and avoid isolation.

3. Seniors on the Go is a multi-ethnic council specifically formed as a means of locating and assisting isolated seniors, always keeping in mind the needs of our diverse population. They meet monthly, more often if necessary. These volunteers advise staff and management of senior needs, individuals in need and problems in our senior community. They advise us about new programming to appeal to varied interests and a diverse populous. They notify staff of challenges and help the center to evolve, change and grow. Programming enhancements such as a prayer shawl group, baby blankets for new community arrivals, art classes, shared transportation, educational programs of interest to seniors and much more, have become a part of our schedule because of this council.

4. Senior Services Outreach, Connection and Involvement – We have found that involvement helps seniors to become more active, while feeling a part of something larger. Direct outreach into the neighborhood allows Senior Services to find more seniors who may be isolated, depressed and in need of companionship. Through this program, we provide them with a sense of belonging to a community of their peers. Our center is decorated lavishly for seasons and holidays. Seniors not only do the decorating, with the planning and assistance of our director, but frequently donate many decorations. At this time, two of our home-bound and disabled members make decorations at home for the center and another makes craft items for our Senior Shopping Mall. This program provides discounts for trips and parties (fees are waived for those who cannot pay). There is a portal on our website providing needed information and lists of activities which yield points. Our newspaper, “The Senior Voice”, is mailed to their homes 6 times a year, as is our newsletter. These mailings have information important to seniors, notification of upcoming events, articles about services available, time sensitive benefits information and, more importantly, a link to other area friends. Folkloric Dance Classes, as well as Spanish and Laotian socials bring marginalized populations to our centers. There is a very large Laotian population in
the Elgin. The leadership of this population selected a representative to serve this population on our Board of Directors and help expand our programming to the community. Seniors are able to gain Shopping Mall points while reducing loneliness, isolation and depression by way of these 4 programs/events. Senior Services has even more to offer; yet we chose to highlight these for your review and consideration.

Senior Services benefits by having healthier, happier seniors in our Elgin Senior Center. Also, we benefit by our generous supporters in the community, who donate much needed gifts for our Shopping Mall. Our seniors benefit when they become more social, by interacting with peers, laughing, exercising, talking, sharing old and new memories, and smiling more often. Some of our seniors look at this as a 'friendly competition' - wondering who can do more and gain more points. Isolation and depression can be greatly reduced when seniors have a social schedule to maintain, and friends to see. Via our Outcome and Quality of Life Assessment Tool, we’ve found that 79.5% of the seniors surveyed feel happier/more satisfied in their lives. And, 76.6% see their friends more often, and make new friends via the programs.

**Observable measures** Our Activity Director manages the points/vouchers that are awarded. She maintains a list of active seniors in Excel. She also assigns a point’s value to each activity. With statistics and historical data, she has found that year-over-year, the Shopping Mall program has gained traction and has grown in interest. Senior Services measures all programs, including the Shopping Mall, via an outcomes based tool, on an annual basis. This tool aids Senior Services by determining the success of our offerings. We send a Quality of Life survey annually. We also personally hand out the survey to clients during in-person visits. We review this input, then we apply enhancements and changes to address any challenges identified. Additionally, we send out a Senior Companion survey annually. The data is reviewed and applied to future programming. One happy participate stated: “My grandchildren really look forward to receiving the gifts from Grandma and Grandpa, because they know we earned the points, and we stayed active and involved with others. They cherish the gifts we earn”. Through our surveys we measure: the extent to which we were effective in deterring nursing home placement; whether or not our services resulted in a reduction in stress for clients and caregivers; if our services resulted in the caregiver missing less work; if benefits accessed allowed clients money for utilities, rent, repairs, food and medication. Survey results conclude that 80.1% of seniors feel more able to stay independent, while 79.5% feel happier and more satisfied with their lives.

**Number of Volunteers and Staff Involved** There are 2 staff members and approximately 10 volunteers who assist with the program, throughout the calendar year, and during the actual final event - the Senior Shopping Mall day.

**Expenses** Negligible, as most gifts are donated; **Revenue** Not applicable; we do not charge for the program

**Contact:** Adele Larsen
Senior Services Associates, Inc.
101 S Grove Avenue
Elgin, Illinois
alarsen@seniorservicesassoc.org
Thank You!

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- **Kris Orluck**, Coordinator, 55 Forward, Maple Grove Parks and Recreation, WI
- **Bob Pitman** former director of the Mill Race Center, Columbus, IN (retired)
- **Susan Curtin**, M.S., Gerontologist/Director, Norwell Council on Aging, MA
- **Laura L. Kopp**, MS, President/CEO, Center for Active Seniors, Inc., Davenport, IA

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