

Active Aging Week 2014

hosted many adventures



True to the purpose of Active Aging Week, older adults across the nations laughed, socialized, learned, and challenged their brains and bodies

The theme for Active Aging Week® 2014, “Let the adventure begin,” proved to be a kick-starter for the resourceful hosts and engaged older adults who joined in the weeklong observance. Held each year during the last week of September, Active Aging Week helps spread the International Council on Active Aging® message that adults ages 50 and older are fully participating members of society, while promoting the benefits of leading an active, healthier lifestyle.

And spread the message they did.

At least 3,000 events showcased new products, places and programs during Active Aging Week 2014, making it the campaign’s most successful year to date.

Supporters were found throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. They worked in YMCAs, active adult/ community centers, senior living communities, medical practices, universities, and government departments or senior services agencies. By tracking media coverage, it was clear that many more organizations joined in.

Along with 43 broadcast features on the week’s events, more than 500 articles appeared in the press in the United States and Canada, driving 170 million media impressions, according to a media tracking service. Not to mention robust efforts to spread the message on Facebook sites and through Twitter! In the US, those tweeting about Active Aging Week included the National Institute on Aging’s Go4Life® campaign and the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, among others.

Continued on page 42



In Woodbury, Minnesota, Active Aging Week fun included fishing in the campus pond at Woodbury Senior Living. Photo: Tom Dunn Photography. Image courtesy of Woodbury Senior Living

Active Aging Week 2014 hosted many adventures

Continued from page 40

As a reminder, ICAA promotes Active Aging Week and provides resources for hosts to use. On a local level, hosts decide what activities they will offer to appeal to their local populations, as well as fit within available resources. Whether a single activity or a week of different options, Active Aging Week activities are fun, educational, and reflect one or more dimensions of wellness. Events are welcoming and have a goal of encouraging participation among individuals who are not familiar with the organization or wellness options. Through the years hosts have become adept at dreaming up original or repositioned activities, and cooperating with others to produce remarkable events.

Specialty days focused on key topics

In 2014, for the first time, ICAA suggested focusing each day during Active Aging Week on a specific topic: foot health, walking, falls prevention, bone health, intergenerational activities and walking/group classes. The sponsors embraced the concept and provided free resources to support activities on that day. The Institute for Preventive Foot Health gave free access to several educational videos; EnerG[®] by Aegis opened their annual walk to the general public and any organization that wished to join in; Performance Health Systems provided downloadable infographics on falls prevention and bone health; and Healthways' SilverSneakers[®] Fitness program provided complimentary instructors. ICAA offered a list of ideas for intergenerational activities.

These resources appeared as hosts planned and reported on the week's events. In Wilmington, North Carolina, for example, the Wellness Center at The Davis Community, under the leadership of Wellness Coordinator Joseph Rouse, featured most of these resources throughout the week in addition to the center's other special events.

Interpreting the adventure theme

"We loved the theme 'Let the adventure begin' and used that in programming throughout the week," said dual reporters Jessica Arundel, Wellness Coordinator, and Jamie Martin, Community Life Services Manager, at Canterbury-on-the-Lake in Waterford, Michigan. "We wanted to give the residents a real opportunity to have some adventures and also wanted ... to provide some fun and exciting programs in-house for those who have limited mobility."

Adventures were plentiful. Sailing the *Appledore Tall Ship* down the Saginaw River into Lake Huron; flying high in a hot-air balloon (at age 102, a rider exclaimed, 'I have wanted to do this since I was 100!'); and matching wits during a Roaring '20s Murder Mystery Dinner that featured men in fedoras and flappers with feathered headpieces. The final

adventure was a visit from the animals and reptiles of Exotic Zoo. When they counted the numbers, Arundel and Martin figured that about 90% of the community's residents participated, largely because of events that were free and offered on community property.

How to build on a theme? At the Highgate Senior Living community in Yakima, Washington, Life Enhancement Coordinator Angie Larrabee offered "Competition Day—Let the Adventure Begin" on Sunday. She followed these games with Adventures on the Move, which brought a race car, fire truck and personnel, and vintage classic cars on campus; and Community Adventure, where residents volunteered at the local Humane Society, donated food at a homeless shelter, or pitched in at Highgate to fold napkins and laundry, set tables, sweep and sort items. Other events included a "Cowboy Adventure & Family Western BBQ" and Kabumba Crunch, an exercise session attracting



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37 Highgate residents and 31 people from the community-at-large, with donations going to the Alzheimer's Association. "Overall, our highest-attended events were the Kabumba Record Crunch and Cowboy Adventure & BBQ," Larrabee said. "Everyone seemed to especially enjoy those days, but they also liked the Community Adventure—helping out, giving back."

At Parc Communities in Marietta, Georgia, "Let the adventure begin" was fulfilled by adding new activities to the usual offerings, with an emphasis on falls prevention and on brain health. For some participants in the "I've fallen and I can get up" balance workshop (offered in partnership with Heritage Rehab & Fitness), practice getting up from the floor was a scary adventure, observed Angela Butler-Hackett, Parc Communities Senior Wellness Director. But, she added, "It is very important for them to realize good balance techniques as well as the correct way to get up off the floor."

A Brain Health Fair encouraged more adventures for residents at Parc's two locations. Butler-Hackett developed the idea, she revealed, after watching an ICAA webinar with memory fitness and brain health expert Cynthia Green, PhD. Among the activities provided were memory screenings, brain healthy foods, art classes, massage therapy, reflexology,

drumming, word scrambles, ball toss, exergames, pet therapy, brain trivia, blood pressure screenings, brain-fitness computer training, and audiological consultations. "We partnered with our health vendors as well as our staff to provide fun games, screenings and raffle prizes," stated Butler-Hackett.

"Let the adventure begin with me" was the theme surrounding the first Active Aging Week offered at The Forum at Rancho San Antonio in Cupertino, California. The campaign kicked off the community's new "8 Dimensions of Wellness" model (physical, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual, environmental, nutrition, health planning), featuring 14 programs created specifically for Active Aging Week in addition to over 20 regular activities. The interactive food demonstration emphasizing olive oil was packed, the crossword puzzle competitors were fierce, and the Alzheimer's walk was stepped by a team composed equally of staff and residents. "Particularly notable," observed Fitness Coordinator Katie Mayers, "were Embodied Meditation, which will become a regular offering, and the Garden Planting Box with medicinal herbs, which continues to be tended throughout the day by residents." All who participated and had their "Passport to Wellness" stamped won a prize (a mesh water-bottle bag, water bottle, fold-up bag for grocery shopping, or clip-on reading light).

Still relatively new to the community, the Brandon University Healthy Living Centre (HLC) in Brandon, Manitoba, also hosted Active Aging Week for the first time. "Let the adventure begin" served as the title for a week that featured presentations on healthy eating, core and balance training, foot care, and maintaining mobility through the aging process. The Canadian center's community partners provided the expertise.

Continued on page 44

Active Aging Week 2015: the adventure continues

Dates: September 27–October 3, 2015

Theme: Live Your Adventure

Resources: www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm

Because of the tremendous response to Active Aging Week's 2014 theme, in 2015 "Live your adventure" encourages people to add more experiences to the adventures they tried, and new ones waiting to be discovered.

Now is a good time to begin planning. Visit the ICAA website for campaign resources. A good place to start is by viewing the recording of "Planning tips and program ideas for Active Aging Week." Presented by three veteran hosts, this webinar discusses partnering with outside organizations, linking with other theme days that occur during September, organizing colleagues, and other very useful tips. Presenters include Ashley Derlago, Health Education & Lifestyle Coordinator at the Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital; Terry Fay, Corporate Director of Resident Programs for Senior Lifestyle Corporation; and Heidi Jenkins, formerly Resident Programming Director for Bellingham/Park Lane at Bellingham.

Next, jump to the "Planning guides." Set your goals with the ideas in the articles posted in this section, and find a few approaches to mapping out a plan, including worksheets and timetables. Read about "Past campaign program examples" for lots of ideas about activities to offer. These resources will get you started, and provide food for thought for your planning committee.

Watch for more resources and a new website in the next few months.



Active Aging Week 2014 hosted many adventures

Continued from page 43

“There were five to eight new faces each day,” said HLC Facility Manager Maureen Bonar, who felt the activities were successful. “We had people attend the sessions who had never set foot in the Centre, so we are hoping their visit will inspire them to come back and utilize this great facility.”

All of the activities at Masonic Homes of Kentucky, located in Louisville, revolved around the adventure theme, according to Glenna Godsey, Corporate Lifestyle Director. “The goal of each activity was to stretch the imagination, exercise the mind, and encourage residents to try something new.” An Intergenerational Safari Hunt partnered residents with students from Sproutlings Pediatric Day Care & Preschool (located on campus), while the Adventure Scavenger Hunt saw residents teaming up to find items. There were biplane rides, a presentation about birds of prey—complete with living examples—and a social hour with Tarzan, Jane and jungle drummers. “All of the week’s activities were very successful,” Godsey noted. “Residents exercised their minds, bodies and spirits by taking part in adventurous activities that were not part of their normal routines.”

Frederick Living, located in the Philadelphia suburbs of Pennsylvania, celebrated the Active Aging Week theme by focusing on each of six dimensions of wellness (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, occupational and spiritual). “We kicked off the week with a ‘Route 66’ Exercise Challenge,” said Jana Alderfer, Community Life Coordinator. In her October report, Alderfer noted that participants in the four-week exercise challenge “are tracing the famous route of legendary highway Route 66 on a big wall map. For each milestone they reach [by accumulating a set amount of exercise minutes], they receive a sticker for the map and a small prize along the way. There will be a raffle for bigger healthy-living prizes,” she promised, “for those who complete the Challenge!”

With nourishment needed to fuel Route 66 exercisers, one of the most popular events during Active Aging Week was a “Cuisines of the World” food demonstration. Frederick Living’s Executive Chef served the flavors of Spain, Thailand and Scandinavia, along with a slice of history about some of the world’s most influential culinary markets. A unique activity encouraged participants to find their own imaginary adventures as community staff took turns reading true-life stories aloud. “Expanding our minds through reading is just one way we like to keep our brains active and spark our curiosity,” Alderfer shared.

To boost attendance, the Kerby Centre for the 55+ in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, held all their adventure activities on a single day. These included a demonstration with the Calgary Horticultural Society on growing microgreen gardens in the bottom of a milk jug; minute-

to-win-it games; and Paintball Picasso shooting. The idea for the paintball art was borrowed from an Active Aging Week activity offered by Westminster Village in 2013, said Chad Geiger, Senior Manager, Facilities. As every event planner knows, activities don’t always work out as planned. The paintball painting didn’t quite go according to plan when the stencils blew apart, stated Geiger, “but people loved shooting the gun.” (A video of the Kerby Centre’s paintball art is available by following the link in the box “Active Aging Week as it happened” on page 45.)

Challenges flourished

In the years since Active Aging Week’s 2003 launch, hosts have offered many types of activities, adjusting their efforts based on the knowledge gained at the end of each campaign. The reports from hosts over the past few years have confirmed that competition—friendly, of



course—is a great addition that inspires participation and fun.

The adventure challenge began at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek (Jacksonville, Florida) with a list of 17 activities (e.g., attend a fitness class; eat a healthy snack; attend a crossword, cards or dominos game; listen to an informational speaker; attend vespers). Each activity was coded to a dimension of wellness and assigned points for a possible 100 points, explained Jeanne A. Lapitsky, Fitness Coordinator. The top winners were entered in a drawing for a restaurant gift certificate or 30-minute massage.

Capping off their participation in a Function Focused Care research project through the University of Maryland School of Nursing, Baltimore, 100 assisted-living communities throughout the state were invited to be part of an Active Aging Week contest. Taking up the challenge, Country Acres Assisted Living in Westminster, Maryland, hosted a balloon tennis tournament, complete with yellow and purple-flowered flyswatters to use as “rackets” and Hawaiian leis and pom-poms for spectators cheering on fellow athletes. Prizes included a trip to a restaurant and an ice cream party.



A different approach was taken by Brightview Catonsville in Catonsville, Maryland, which hosted its own “Amazing Race” based on the popular TV reality show. Staff members teamed with residents to complete challenges “around the world” that encouraged use of fine motor skills, lower body mobility, hand-eye coordination, and similar functional needs. For example, they learned a jig in Ireland, broke a piñata in Mexico, and built pyramids in Egypt.

A Community Motorcycle Ride launched Active Aging Week at the Center for Active Living, a community hub for people 55 and over in Worthington, Minnesota. Director Kris Hohensee programmed activities that hadn’t been tried before or were a little different, and two competitions added to the adventures. During the week a Golf Tournament offered cash prizes and the first annual Pickleball Tournament was held (men’s, women’s and mixed doubles play). A health fair, several arts projects, and presentations on medical issues, the value of physical activity, and healthy desserts rounded out the week.

Bringing together many

One way to host Active Aging Week is through collaboration, either within an organization that has many locations, or by partnering among different organizations that work together to host the week.

Bringing together many locations and individuals under a single banner marked “WALK! with Aegis Therapies 2014,” a five-day celebration of health and wellness presented by the EnerG® by Aegis wellness program. The walk itself was the signature event offered at hundreds of locations where Aegis Therapies provides services. In addition, each day of the week focused on a dimension of wellness. “We provide ‘event kits’ to all of our facilities when they register, [pro-

Continued on page 46

Active Aging Week as it happened

ICAA’s official Active Aging Week Facebook site

www.facebook.com/ActiveAgingWeek

Brightview Mays Chapel Ridge Senior Prom

Baltimore Sun

www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-county/towson/ph-tt-brightview-prom-1001-20140929-story.html

Clark-Lindsey Village news story

Illinoishomepage, Nexstar

Broadcasting

www.illinoishomepage.net/ciliving-stories/d/story/active-aging-week-with-clark-lindsey-village/39980/gzt-JzNX6ki6656TXobNyQ

Friendship Village of Schaumburg indoor skydiving

www.youtube.com/

watch?v=Mow508QLljc

Highgate Senior Living zipline adventure

KOIN 6, CBS Affiliate

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hz11rPmD6k&app=desktop

Highgate Senior Living Let the Adventure Continue wrap-up party

www.youtube.com/

watch?v=dDHCbQ0eVcM

Kerby Centre Paintball Picasso

www.youtube.com/

watch?v=izzDYunHivQ

Note: All links were live in January 2015; these links may not be active at later dates.

Active Aging Week 2014 hosted many adventures

Continued from page 45

viding] everything they need for a successful event plus resources on our event website,” said Laurie Taylor, responsible for Sales, Marketing & Brand Management at Aegis Therapies. “We choose 10 facilities to be ‘feature sites’ and they take the event to another level by inviting council members, mayors, university or high school bands to play.”

This year, Aegis Therapies opened the walk to other organizations and individuals, including those being served by home care agencies, enabling them to obtain the resources and add their steps using the online portal. The results were far-reaching. There were more than 1,700 online and site registrations and 61,000 participants at over 760 locations

in the US. “WALK! with Aegis Therapies” participants walked a combined total of 94,000 miles.

A different tack was taken by eight communities of Highgate Senior Living, headquartered in Bellevue, Washington. As a group, the communities adopted the “Let the adventure begin” theme and hosted several shared activities. For example, all the communities held a Kumbumba Crunch exercise session to raise money for the Alzheimer’s Association. From that base of shared theme and subthemes, each location customized its activities. For example, on Western Day one location featured s’mores (chocolate and marshmallow between graham crackers) over a campfire, another had a country western singer, while a third included Cowboy Karaoke. There were a lot of barbecues, but menus and activities varied. The host sites reached out beyond their walls and were rewarded with very high participation among fam-

ily members and people from the larger community.

“[W]e were able to engage more people and many residents openly expressed the positive experience they were having,” reported Britt Kane, Community Relations Coordinator at Highgate’s Bellingham location. “It was a great week for all of us!”

Reaching out brought in many members of the larger community to Woodbury Senior Living in Woodbury, Minnesota, according to Margaret Wachholz, Campus Marketing Director. The week began early with the taping of a news segment for the local NBC TV station featuring fitness expert Chris Freytag, who led many “WALK! with Aegis Therapies” events during Active Aging Week. The mayor and county commissioner arrived, along with other guests from the local hospital and high school, plus representatives from the Woodbury Business of the Year, the Athletic Association and the US Marines. Last but not least were special guests John Wayne, Dean Martin, Liza Minnelli and Ponce de Leon (actors, but their performances were spectacular).

Woodbury is a partner with Aegis Therapies, and mid-morning Freytag led the “WALK! with Aegis Therapies” event, held in Woodbury’s healing garden with over 100 participants. “The whole week was a wonderful reminder about relationships with our community—inside and out,” Wachholz concluded.

Happy endings

There were many other organizations and individuals involved in Active Aging Week 2014, and too many activities and stories to relate in a single article. In planning Active Aging Week, whether a single activity or weeklong event, hosts unanimously agree that early planning is crucial. Next most important is recruit-

Continued on page 50

9



10



11

Organizers share their thoughts

"Our company did a great job at assisting us with the planning and implementation of Active Aging Week. None of our communities looked at this event as something we 'had' to do, it was something that we had the privilege of doing for our residents. We began planning a few months in advance so we had a lot of time to build up the week. I think the participation was a success because the residents and team members were encouraged in the weeks before Active Aging Week to participate and were told of some of the fun things that we would be doing. It was clear to our families, residents, team members, and outside community members that something unique and fun was happening at our community."

Keith K. Richstad

Executive Director, Highgate at Wenatchee (Washington)

"Active Aging Week was very successful because it was a collaborative effort between Wellness, Life Enrichment, Spiritual Life, Dietary and Therapy. The wellness team, along with [these] other departments on our campus, came together to provide these great events. They all worked toward a common goal: providing the best programming for the residents."

Lauren Witt

Forte Public Relations, representing Presbyterian Village North (PVN), Dallas, Texas

"I think that everyone who participated in the week's special events has a memorable moment! The week encouraged residents to step out of their comfort zones and learn or try something ad-

venturous. Residents were so enthused about the week's events that they volunteered to host programs they thought would benefit Active Aging Week."

Rachael Keshishian

Account Manager, Rubin Communications Group, for Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay, Virginia Beach, Virginia

"The event was successful before it started because of the excellent support of staff and the generous offering of time by older adults who volunteered. Volunteers can make or break a program, and we have great people with enthusiasm, commitment and dedication who truly value the 'Y' and the experiences they have here. The most memorable moments for participants and staff were those connection moments we made with each other. That is what builds community."

Bernadette Morgan

Staff Lead, Active Older Adults, Mission Valley YMCA, San Diego, California

"One of the personal victories that I witnessed was a resident at a skilled nursing facility who lost his wife of 65 years three months earlier and had not left his room or bed. He finally made an appearance for the WALK! event and received a round of applause and amazing support from the staff and fellow residents. He had a smile all day. This is a testament that our efforts are helping improve quality of life one person, one family and one community at a time."

Laurie Taylor

Sales, Marketing & Brand Management, Aegis Therapies

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Founding Partners



Active Aging Week 2014 hosted many adventures

Continued from page 46

ing colleagues and participants to help with the planning and implementation. Third might be to try something new, change a set routine, go out on a limb. Participants value something new and that keeps hosts fresh, too. Planning, teamwork and new experiences lead to successful events (see “Organizers share their thoughts” on page 47 for some perspectives).

In keeping with the theme of Active Aging Week 2014, hosts challenged themselves to “Let the adventure begin” and excelled by offering a plethora of creative events. From biplane rides to culinary adventures, the weeklong observance afforded opportunities aplenty for older adults to explore life’s possibilities. Participants reaped the benefits with fun, educational wellness experiences that fostered quality of life. 🌀

Thank you to sponsors

ICAA is able to provide resources for hosting Active Aging Week thanks to the sponsors. The sponsors of Active Aging Week 2014 were Aegis Therapies, EnerG® by Aegis; Falls Free, National Council on Aging; Performance Health Systems; SilverSneakers® Fitness; and The Institute for Preventive Foot Health (IPFH), Thor•Lo, Inc.



Key to Active Aging Week photos

Picture 1

Many objects became percussion instruments during Active Aging Week at Episcopal Homes in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Picture 2

Getting ready to tape the NBC Kare 11 morning news show with fitness expert Chris Freytag, residents at Woodbury Senior Living in Woodbury, Minnesota, were joined by Mayor Mary Giuliani-Stephens, Executive Director Allan Barr and members of the Woodbury Ambassadors Royal Family. Later, Freytag led a ‘WALK! with Aegis Therapies’ event.

Picture 3

‘Play on the Bay’ was the flagship program for Active Aging Week at Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Along with residents from another local senior living community, teams from Westminster-Canterbury spent the day in friendly competition. Participants competed in table tennis, corn hole and Wii bowling.

Picture 4

Gull Creek Senior Living in Berlin, Maryland, hosted a Hawaiian ‘cruise’ for Active Aging Week. Events included, among others, a Captain’s Dinner & Dance, luau and hula dancing, shuffleboard, water games, musical entertainment, and, of course, happy hour. The assisted living community took part in the week through a Function Focused Care research project at the University of Maryland School of Nursing.

Picture 5

Amber Shadwick of Fitside gave a stand-up paddleboard yoga demonstration at Sun City Hilton Head in Bluffton, South Carolina, for Active Aging Week. Shadwick and helpers are pictured here at the start of the demo. Photo: Denman Bennett.

Picture 6

Active Aging Week included an interactive food demonstration at The Forum at Rancho San Antonio in Cupertino, California. The format was a big hit with residents, particularly those who came to the cooking table.

Picture 7

Norma enjoyed her first ride on a bicycle—an adventure at age 91 years—organized at a Highgate Senior Living community. Active Aging Week events took place in eight communities provided by the Bellevue, Washington-based organization.

Picture 8

A social hour with Tarzan and Jane was a fitting end to a week that began with an intergenerational safari on the Louisville campus of Masonic Homes of Kentucky.

Picture 9

Combining elements of The Amazing Race and Minute to Win It television shows, the Adventure Trek at Masonic Village at Elizabethtown in Pennsylvania challenged participants mentally and physically. Residents sharpened their minds, reflexes and fitness levels with challenges that included balloon volleyball, puzzles, sensory experiences, and more. All participants were entered in a grand prize drawing.

Picture 10

Biplane rides continued the adventure in Louisville for residents of Masonic Homes of Kentucky.

Picture 11

Residents from Gettysburg Lutheran Retirement Village performed a flash mob when they joined residents and staff of Luther Ridge Retirement Community for an outdoor adventure at Caledonia State Park. The executive directors of both Pennsylvania communities joined participants for a walk, guided meditation, picnic and games.