

Discover the possibilities

of Active Aging Week



Mark your calendar

Observance: Active Aging Week®

Theme: Discover your community

Dates: September 22–28, 2013

Format:

- Activities chosen and presented by local hosts
- Free to older adults
- Emphasis on fun, camaraderie and education

For campaign details and support materials, visit www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm.

This year's event invites hosts to build their programming around the theme of discovery—and to discover the broader benefits of participating

When older adults discover active aging, they discover an approach to aging that recognizes people can live as fully as possible regardless of age or health conditions. The active-aging philosophy emphasizes what individuals *can* do, rather than what they can't. It also celebrates society's older members as full participants in the cultural, civic and personal domains of life.¹ Each year, through Active Aging Week®, organizations across North America encourage

age 50-plus adults to be active and lead healthier, more vital lives, providing a wealth of wellness opportunities for them to explore. These organizations take part in the health promotion event for any number of reasons. Among them is the chance to make a difference and help older adults improve their quality of life.

Launched by the International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) in 2003, Active Aging Week is held annually in the last full week of September; in 2013, the observance takes place September 22–28. And while ICAA spearheads the week-

Continued on page 26



Active Aging Week included a day at Tuscarora Scout Reservation for residents of Good Shepherd Village at Endwell, New York

long campaign, local host organizations decide how they participate.

As an Active Aging Week host, you can provide a smorgasbord of events, a daily offering or a single activity, and highlight any or all of the dimensions of wellness (i.e., physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, vocational and environmental). Among the array of activities and events showcased during the week, frequent favorites include contests, dances, health fairs, fitness classes, educational seminars, and walks of all kinds. Settings are also diverse. In places such as seniors centers and malls, wellness centers and Ys, parks and senior living campuses, participants engage in fun, educational events offered to them at no (or low) cost, as per the campaign's guidelines.

ICAA chooses a theme each year to help hosts plan and promote their Active Aging Week activities. For 2013, that theme is "Discover your community."

Focus on discovery

The active-aging philosophy views older people as "a vital resource to their families and communities," stressing that many continue to contribute to society in both formal and informal ways.¹ Active Aging Week 2013 encourages older adults and host organizations to contribute to developing a more active community as part of an overall wellness objective.

Chosen for the rich potential it offers, the "Discover your community" theme invites you to plan offerings focused on all the possibilities of "community" and community connections. What is a "community"? Communities are both places and people. A campus, neighborhood or city is a community; so, too, is a group of people with similar interests, or those united by geography or profession. When framed by the dimensions of wellness, opportunities to discover new

places and people will enrich the Active Aging Week experience for participants.

Reasons to host

Beyond its benefits for older adults, Active Aging Week offers value-added opportunities for local host organizations. Veteran hosts have told ICAA about the broader benefits of participating in the event. Here are some of their reasons for getting involved, as shared in post-event comments over the years:

- Bring in new people. After Active Aging Week 2011, the Kendal at Lexington's Wellness Coordinator, Sherry Harrill, noted that the event had "encouraged people to try activities they

may not have otherwise considered." In addition, participants included several residents of this Lexington, Virginia, community "who do not regularly use the fitness center or attend classes"

- Test or introduce new classes and activities. Also in 2011, Director of Resident Services Shelley Tsao from Piedmont Gardens, Oakland, California, observed, "Some of the activities we've done during Active Aging Week become ongoing programs here." At Parc Communities, a senior living group in Atlanta, Georgia, Fitness & Wellness Director Angela Butler-



1

2

Hackett described Active Aging Week in 2012 as “a prime opportunity to begin a new class or educational activity for our residents. Having ICAA backing the new program as an Active Aging event makes it even more credible to our residents, staff and public,” she explained.

- Extend your reach into the community. For Active Aging Week 2010, Montclair Estates in Garland, Texas, “sent out invitations to all senior centers within a 15-mile radius, senior adult groups at our local churches, all inquiries in our database, and direct mail,” according to Executive Director Kimberly Brawley. The community sent press releases to local media

outlets as well. In the end, “we had a participation level of 50–75 [individuals] each day,” Brawley revealed, “with about 10–15 from outside the community.”

- Form partnerships with other organizations that can extend into year-long associations. La Loma Village in Litchfield Park, Arizona, partnered with the Arthritis Foundation for Active Aging Week 2011, with the week’s activities including a presentation by Foundation speakers. “Since we got the Arthritis Foundation on board as a partner, that carries a lot of weight in Phoenix,” commented Lifestyle Fitness Coordinator Linda Schmidt. People from the community-at-large were invited to participate in the presentation, she added, as were residents from three Sun Health senior living communities. The result was “a very successful event.”

- Gain free publicity for your program and organization. Parc Communities’ Angela Butler-Hackett commented in 2012, “We always host Active Aging Week because it is a great marketing opportunity for Parc, but it also is an excellent campaign to focus on for our residents specifically.” Linda Schmidt from La Loma Village recounted the publicity achieved for the Arthritis Foundation presentation during Active Aging Week 2011. “[W]e used our corporate marketing department to get word out through the media concerning this event,” stated Schmidt. The result? “[S]everal small local papers around Phoenix ... ran the information on their community calendars” Some printed articles as well.
- Give volunteers a creative project and purpose. Cheryl Gillette, Service Coordinator for Bartlesville Senior Citizens Apartments in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, hosted Active Aging Week 2012 “to get the residents *involved*,” among other reasons. To achieve that goal, she included the Bartlesville residents in the event planning.
- Build bridges with other departments. For Active Aging Week 2012, Masonic Village at Elizabethtown’s Wellness Department “worked in tandem with Retirement Living Activities to coordinate ... activities for the week,” according to Jennifer Berlet. “We were fortunate enough to be able to incorporate Pastoral Care Services, Nutritional and Food Services, Volunteer Services and even a group that the residents organized themselves, into the different dimensions of wellness throughout the week.” Berlet added that it was “a wonderful opportunity” to show residents of this community in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, what was available to them to improve their wellness.



3



4

Continued on page 28

- Add diversity to programs and activities. At The Terraces at Los Altos in Los Altos, California, Active Aging Week 2012 was a success due to “the variety of different activities, especially the first-ever cooking demonstration and nutrition facts by our dining room manager,” shared Cathy Jensen, Director, Residential Activities & Lifestyle. “We are now going to schedule one demo a month.”
- Gain funding through sponsorships and in-kind contributions (e.g., advertising or printing) to support program goals. In 2007, a local newspaper donated free ad space for Active Aging Week events, revealed Michele Skeele, Coordinator of Livable and Senior Friendly Communities for the Council on Aging of Henderson County, Hendersonville, North Carolina. According to Skeele, additional sponsors were “all members of the Healthy Aging Coalition of Henderson County, a collaborative group of service providers and businesses that the Council on Aging pulled together to work on aging issues.”

Finally, because Active Aging Week is a way to demonstrate this more positive view of aging, hosts have frequently mentioned that participating helps meet their mission of quality of life for older adults.

Start strong to maximize potential

So how can you make the most of Active Aging Week? Prior hosts advise the following to get a good start:

- begin your planning early
- create a planning team
- work with colleagues across departments

As a first step, visit ICAA’s Active Aging Week website (www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm) for a library of support materials. Among these you’ll find planning guides

and worksheets, examples from past campaigns, resources for activities, and promotional materials for the 2013 campaign. Check back, too, throughout the coming months, as ICAA will continue to update this section. And while it’s not required, registering online as a host site is recommended—it’s the only way the association will know you’re taking part.

When you host Active Aging Week, you help spread the encouraging message: People can live fully at any age. Your participation can make a difference. The activities you offer this September may not only help individuals discover their community, but a new way of living as well. ☺

The sponsors of Active Aging Week 2013 include 24 Hour Fitness, Institute for Preventive Foot Health, Healthways SilverSneakers® Fitness Program, EnerG by Aegis™, and Thorlo.

Reference

1. World Health Organization. (2002). Active Ageing: A Policy Framework. Retrieved on March 20, 2013, from http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/active_ageing/en/index.html.

Key to Active Aging Week photos

Picture 1

Individuals from Covenant Village of the Great Lakes explored the five senses with a guided nature hike at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, Hastings, Michigan

Picture 2

At Frederick Living in Frederick, Virginia, memory support residents gave a concert in the Rotunda, with one man serenading the audience with his trumpet

Picture 3

Volunteers from Aberdeen Heights in Kirkwood, Missouri, helped a fourth-grade class from Robinson Elementary School clean up an outdoor area, which included overgrown gardening plots

Picture 4

Residents of Good Shepherd Village at Endwell, New York, hiked the trails at Tuscarora Scout Reservation

Picture 5

Tying in with last year’s ‘journeys’ theme, Marsh’s Edge on St. Simons Island, Georgia, incorporated a tai chi class to represent the continent of Asia

