

Energize participants and revitalize staff

with Active Aging
Week 2021



Local host organizations bridged the COVID gulf to connect people in 2020. In 2021, the 19th annual observance encourages virtual events and safely held activities in person to celebrate aging and engaging fully in life

Active Aging Week® felt especially poignant in 2020. Led by the International Council on Active Aging® and presented by Humana, this observance has brought people together in North America and beyond every fall to celebrate aging, older-adult health and wellness and the ability to live as fully as possible at any age. Local host organizers have challenged themselves to come up with creative and customized low-to-no-cost wellness activities and

events. And they have delivered experiences that energized participants, volunteers and staff alike with their positivity, fun and camaraderie.

Active Aging Week 2019, in early October, was another memorable week. Numerous hosts uploaded summaries and photos afterwards to enter the first Spirit Awards contest (see the sidebar on pages 78–79 for more about the awards and winners for 2019 and 2020). Then, with dates marked on the calendar, thoughts turned to Active Aging Week 2020.

Fast forward to a global pandemic whose impact was immediately felt—and continues to be seen—in older populations.

Continued on page 76



A couple enjoys a dance at John Knox Village life-plan community in Pompano Beach, Florida. Image courtesy of John Knox Village

Energize participants and revitalize staff with Active Aging Week 2021

Continued from page 74

In apartments, family homes, residential communities and long-term care centers, isolated older adults missed their family members, friends and neighbors. Active-aging organizations improvised, stretched and adapted to keep their residents and members not just safe, but also connected and well. Technology helped to ease the way.

Given concerns about the effects of social isolation and loneliness on the physical and mental health of older adults,¹ Active Aging Week seemed particularly needed in 2020. Yet was it still possible to offer programming in such uncertain times given the changing public health guidance and COVID waves?

Local host organizations in North America and beyond stepped up with a resounding *yes*. Programs offered virtually or safely in person gave participants opportunities to connect, to engage in wellness activities and to celebrate aging well even in the most challenging of times. Thank you to everyone who hosted, supported and participated in these life-affirming events at the local level. And thank you to Presenting Sponsor Humana and the 2020 national campaign sponsors—Abbott, Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Aegis, Domtar, Spiro100 and One Day University—for their generous support.

In 2021, as ICAA marks its 20th anniversary, Active Aging Week reminds us how far we have come together. The annual observance also reinforces key messages: The most successful communities leverage the strengths and skills of *all* their residents; and every generation has important contributions to make in vibrant, strong societies.

Encouraging efforts

Older adults are changing perceptions of what's possible as we age. Many are role models demonstrating the benefits of an engaged wellness lifestyle. Through Active Aging Week, individuals are engaging in life's different dimensions—and perhaps trying something new. Such programming

encourages people's efforts to maximize and enjoy their later years.

In 2021, Active Aging Week will take place October 4–10. As always, local organizations choose how they participate. Staff can decide how many days and events/activities to schedule, what kinds of offerings to plan and which formats to use (virtual, in-person or hybrid). This freedom reflects ICAA's belief that each organization best understands its unique constituency and its on-the-ground realities.

With October on the horizon, now is the time to ramp up planning for the week and, for those who have yet to do so, to register as an Official Active Aging Week Host Site (see the box "Get ready for Active Aging Week 2021" on page 77).

Accessing helpful resources

For organizations considering whether to host Active Aging Week for the first time, it's important to know there are no fees for host sites to participate. The goal is to encourage people to act by providing wellness opportunities that are educational, fun and low-to-no cost to the participant, insuring money is not a barrier. A dedicated website (www.activeagingweek.com) offers free promotional materials and resources to support local hosts in planning and delivering their unique celebrations. Among these items are:

- Active Aging Week's campaign logo in different formats
- calendar announcements
- press releases and fact sheets
- social media templates (hashtag #activeagingweek)
- certificates of participation
- posters and pull-up banners
- invitations and flyers
- T-shirt designs
- PowerPoint presentation templates

Numerous materials are available in customizable formats. Organizers can also turn to the following resources for help with planning their schedules and programming:

- planning guides (with topics such as setting goals, gaining publicity and soliciting donations)
- downloadable worksheets (e.g., marketing matrix, planning checklist)
- case studies and program examples from previous years

As happened last year, content will be available to support host organizations that plan to deliver virtual programming.



1



2



3

Bringing people together

Local host organizations bridged the COVID gulf in 2020 with livestreams, video calls and video recordings. From competitions to wellness fairs, brain health lectures to cooking demonstrations, fitness classes to musical performances, and a whole lot more, virtual offerings were plentiful and engaging. Some hosts offered outdoor activities or small group programs, where participants were safely distanced and masked. Whether in their homes or on campuses, participants connected with programming across the dimensions of wellness—and they connected with each other.

Active Aging Week 2021 promises to showcase the creativity and commitment of local host organizations once more. In addition to camaraderie and fun, a *can-do* spirit typically characterizes the week, energizing participants and revitalizing staff. And, in the second year of a pandemic, the celebrations this year will serve to highlight something else: what ICAA CEO Colin Milner calls “the resilience, perseverance and innovation of older adults and those who work with them.”

References

1. Wu, B. (2020). Social isolation and loneliness among older adults in the context of COVID-19: a global challenge. *Global Health Research and Policy*, 5, 27. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41256-020-00154-3>

Active Aging Week 2021: thanks to sponsors

The International Council on Active Aging® thanks Presenting Sponsor Humana and the following national sponsors of Active Aging Week® 2021: Abbott Nutrition and Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Aegis Therapies. Their support is essential in making this year’s celebration possible.



Continued with sidebar on page 78

Get ready for Active Aging Week

#activeagingweek
www.activeagingweek.com
Facebook.com/activeagingweek

Active Aging Week® takes place October 4–10, 2021. Led by the International Council on Active Aging and presented by Humana, Active Aging Week is a weeklong observance that encourages adults 50+ to embrace wellness and engage in all areas of life as fully as possible. The 19th annual celebration of aging promotes older-adult health and wellness and spotlights people’s ability to thrive as they age.

Visit www.activeagingweek.com to enroll your organization as an Official Active Aging Week Host Site and access free promotional and planning materials. Information is also available on how to enter this year’s Spirit Awards contest.

Key to photos

(submitted by Spirit Award winners)

1. 2020: Residents were cardio drumming to '50s and '60s music at Heisinger Bluffs
2. 2020: Jerry Heebner won gold for almost completing a 300-piece puzzle in 60 minutes in Acts Retirement-Life Communities’ OlympiActs
3. 2020: Holland Home residents worshipped with PraiseMoves, described as ‘a Christian alternative to yoga’
4. 2019: Therese and Richard showed fancy footwork at the City of Santa Maria’s Active Aging Dance
5. 2019: Three paddlers on Spanish Cove’s dragon boat team were in their 90s, for a combined age of 274 years
6. 2019: Joe Nelan, 81, honed his paddleboarding skills with Asbury Solomons’ wellness team



4



6



5



Energize participants and revitalize staff with Active Aging Week 2021

Continued from page 77

Spirit Awards: stories

“Every picture tells a story...” Each year, Active Aging Week® hosts share their photos and stories of their experiences and what they have done to redefine the term *active*. Out of these entries, 10 organizations receive Spirit Awards, an awards contest supported by Active Aging Week’s Presenting Sponsor, Humana. Highlighting success stories, these awards particularly recognize organizations whose images best capture the spirit of the weeklong observance.

Below are the 2019 and 2020 award-winners. The deadline for entries for 2021 is November 15, 2021. For details, go to www.activeagingweek.com/awards.php.

2019 winners

1. *The Forum at Rancho San Antonio (Cupertino, California)*
“For Active Aging Week, we re-focused our programming on our eight dimensions of wellness: health, spiritual, nutrition, intellectual, social, emotional, environmental and physical. Each day of Active Aging Week is packed with activities that promote each dimension.” <https://theforum-seniorliving.com>
2. *Spanish Cove Retirement Village (Yukon, Oklahoma)*
“Our Cove dragon-boat paddling teams raced in [Oklahoma Regatta Festival’s] OGE NightSprints. Our all-women team won silver. Our co-ed team lost gold by one-third of a second in the most exciting race of the night—and they received a standing ovation. Three of our paddlers were over 90 years old, proving age is just a number.” www.spanishcove.com
3. *Senior Resource Group’s Maravilla Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara, California)*
“We always encourage our residents to have the mindset of “If not now, when?” We give them confidence to say “Yes, I can” and to try things for the first time. By offering Mind, Body and Soul activities, we got a wide range of residents [to participate].... [T]hey turned dreams into reality and accomplished something they never thought possible.” www.srgseniorliving.com/communities/santa-barbara-ca-maravilla
4. *Acts Retirement-Life Communities (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania)*
“Acts Retirement-Life Communities, Northeast Region, redefined active aging with the annual OlympiActs event. More than 150 residents from six communities...competed in 10 events. OlympiActs is a full day of fast-paced contests, friendly competition, food and entertainment. Athletes [bring] supporters and mascots to fly their colors and cheer.” www.actsretirement.org
5. *City of Santa Maria (Santa Maria, California)*
“The City of Santa Maria Active Aging Committee sponsored Active Aging Week. The finale was a Volksmarch (intergenerational community walk) with a 2.5K, 5K and 10K option. Four walkers drove six hours to spend the weekend in Santa Maria to participate and explained they each walk an average of 50 miles per week.” www.cityofsantamaria.org
6. *The Chateau on Capitol Avenue (Sacramento, California)*
“Using a walker doesn’t have to stop anyone from doing something exciting and worthy of a check on the bucket list. We encourage residents to continue to do things that keep them active and enjoying life. [During indoor skydiving], hearing the laughter and watching them let go bodily restrictions even just one minute was an inspiration.” www.srgseniorliving.com/communities/sacramento-ca-chateau-capitol-avenue
7. *Asbury Communities: Asbury Solomons (Solomons, Maryland)*
“An annual event timed in 2019 to Active Aging Week, Riverfest takes advantage of our waterfront location by drawing people to the community’s beachfront. Some residents are capable of enjoying water activities like paddleboarding and kayaking, but others feel more confident if team members are on hand. We took this knowledge and created a full-blown celebration, complete with music and food.” www.asbury.org/asbury-solomons
8. *Brightwater Senior Living (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)*
“Brightwater residents were able to do what they love as well as try new things. Ziplining was one of the many highlights of our Active Aging Week. For many of our residents, this was a first; not only did they get to zipline, but they did so in the company of their friends cheering them on. There is no age limit on fun!” www.brightwater-living.com
9. *Holland Home (Grand Rapids, Michigan)*
“The week provided opportunities to showcase residents’ gifts: The works of resident artists were put on display for all to enjoy and their musical abilities were shared for a special night of entertainment. Visuals of residents participating in all events was an incredible representation of redefining what it means

to be active to each individual.” <https://hollandhome.org>

10. *Shenandoah Valley Westminster-Canterbury (Winchester, Virginia)*
“We offered seven different events, [which] varied in ability levels and diversity of interests. Active represents all wellness dimensions. Events offered “active” social interaction, the chance to show off individual abilities and skills, and fostered acceptance for meeting everyone where they are for life’s challenges.” www.svwv.org

2020 winners

1. *South Port Square (Port Charlotte, Florida)*
“We ended our week by featuring the inspirational story of our resident John Dorotics, who ran 48 marathons and is actively involved on our campus. It was an invigorating and inspirational week enjoyed by all our residents.” www.southportseniorliving.com
2. *Heisinger Bluffs (Lutheran Senior Services, Jefferson City, Missouri)*
“Residents enjoyed the idea of actively aging so much that we extended Active Aging Week to Active Aging Month. ... The mission was to provide activities that could enhance quality of life no matter where the individuals were on their wellness journey.” www.lssliving.org/communities/heisinger-bluffs/
3. *Tapestry at Wesbrook Village (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)*
“The theme of the week was ‘Crack the Code to Active Aging,’ where residents would earn a word for trying one of the programs offered. ... To us, active aging represents pushing the limit of one’s comfort zone, and showing that one can learn and try something new at any age.” <https://discovertapestry.com/community/wesbrook-village/>
4. *John Knox Village of Florida, Inc. (Pompano Beach, Florida)*
“John Knox Village is acutely aware that continued growth is important at any age. This year was no exception. ... Despite COVID, JKV focused on pivoting as events and programs focused on the 7 Dimensions of Wellbeing.” <https://johnknoxvillage.com>
5. *Holland Home (Grand Rapids, Michigan)*
“Holland Home challenged the perception of aging during Active Aging Week with special physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social programming centered around the theme of the cactus; celebrating its resilient ability to rise up in harsh conditions.” <https://hollandhome.org>
6. *Acts Retirement-Life Communities (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania)*
“Acts Retirement-Life Communities celebrated Active Aging Week with a new spin on its annual OlympiActs event. For the first time ever, the competition was virtual. The highly spirited competition [promoted] community unity with an emphasis on fun, friends and fellowship.” www.actsretirement.org
7. *Shenandoah Valley Westminster-Canterbury (Winchester, Virginia)*
“The variety of activities offered choices between small group participation and individual searches and interactions depending on the preference of the participant. The goal was to keep residents active and engaged with each other and within the community. We did it all within safety guidelines for COVID.” www.svwv.org
8. *VIVA Barrhaven (Nepean, Ontario, Canada)*
“During Active Aging Week 2020, the community members at V!VA Barrhaven participated in a wide variety of activities that clearly depict how they are living an engaged and active life in all facets.” www.mennonitehome.org/sr-living/
9. *Woodcrest Villa, part of Mennonite Home Communities (Lancaster County, Pennsylvania)*
“Although COVID-19 presented unique challenges, Active Aging Week 2020 was a great success due to new and creative resident engagement opportunities. Our week was filled with fun and informative socially distanced outdoor activities.” <https://vivalife.ca/vva-barrhaven>
10. *City of Saint Peter (Saint Peter, Minnesota); Mankato Clinic Foundation (Mankato, Minnesota) and Friends of the Saint Peter Library (Saint Peter, Minnesota)*
“Active Aging Week in Saint Peter, Minnesota...was a week of free events, including a one-mile fun walk, pickleball clinic, make and take craft day, field day with the local preschool, and concluded with a mini-Senior Expo. This was the first time Saint Peter hosted Active Aging Week and the reception was very positive.” www.saintpetermn.gov