

Hosting a milestone

Active Aging Week

Show your support for people leading full, active and engaged lives at any age by planning wellness activities and events to offer during the 20th annual observance

Autumn's arrival typically signals vacations ending, students returning to schools and, for active-aging advocates, celebrating Active Aging Week®. The annual observance held in the early fall promotes active, engaged living for adults 50+. The weeklong celebrations taking place October 3–9, 2022, will mark the 20th Annual Active

Aging Week. How will your organization participate in—and leverage—this milestone?

In settings where missions and business models center on older adults, or where healthy aging is a significant focus, Active

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During Active Aging Week 2021, Shell Point residents set out on an early-morning kayaking trip to support coastal waters cleanup in Lee County, Florida. Image courtesy of Shell Point Retirement Community



At Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Wellness Center staff encouraged participants in an Active Aging Week all-campus walk with colorful signs. Image courtesy of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community

Active Aging Week offers a platform for positive messages and programming that highlight the ability to engage fully in life at any age. At the same time, savvy host organizations realize the opportunities it presents to showcase their services, lifestyles and environments to their communities and neighborhoods.

If you're thinking of taking part in Active Aging Week for the first time, there are no fees for host sites to participate. Also, you may offer as many activities and events as you wish during the week. Local hosts customize their participation—with all the freedom to develop and deliver offerings that address local markets, needs and interests.

Host organizers are best positioned to decide what will work best for their organizations and constituents, and to tailor their offerings accordingly. That's the view of the International Council on Active Aging®. ICAA leads Active Aging Week nationally, with the sup-

port of Presenting Sponsor Humana and national sponsors Abbott Nutrition and Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Aegis Therapies. The sponsors' commitment to this initiative makes it possible to offer free resources and promotional materials via the dedicated Active Aging Week website (see "Resources" on page 76). Their support also helps create broader campaign awareness and increase the reach of its positive messages. Reinforcing these messages are the activities and events that local hosts provide, which showcase individuals engaging in these experiences. Everyone wins!

Planning the week

Past Active Aging Week hosts have delivered all manner of wellness offerings, creating schedules of events ranging from one event for the week to multiple activities every day. Participants revel in opportunities to try a new activity, take part in a new adventure and socialize with others, online or in person. These experiences foster the *can-do*, positive spirit

and camaraderie that so characterize Active Aging Week.

Local organizers often add their own unique twists to their programming, with activities and events that cross the spectrum of wellness. Examples include health fairs, walks and hikes, bocce, cardio drumming, ziplining, activity challenges and dances, cooking demonstrations, trivia contests and crafts, cognitive fitness classes, webinars/seminars on all kinds of topics, plus trips that run the gamut. For example, in 2021 participants visited a salt cave in South Carolina, took the "plunge" in a cranberry field in British Columbia, enjoyed a rail bike adventure in Connecticut and traversed California's Golden Gate Bridge.

ICAA has only three criteria when it comes to Active Aging Week offerings: Activities should take place in a fun, safe, supportive environment; be educational; and be offered to participants at no to low cost.

Tools on the campaign website are available to help you with your planning. There are:

- planning guides (topics include such things as preparing an action plan, setting goals, developing a marketing plan, gaining publicity and soliciting donations)
- downloadable worksheets (e.g., five-month plan, marketing matrix, planning checklist)
- case studies and program examples from previous years

In addition, if you register as an Official Host Site, you will have access to free promotional materials as they eventually all go live online. These include:

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Mark your calendar!

20th Annual Active Aging Week

October 3–9, 2022

#activeagingweek

Encourage people to embrace wellness and engage in life as fully as possible as they age by hosting Active Aging Week® activities and events. Planning materials, case studies, articles on aspects of how to host the week, and past program examples are available

on the campaign website, while free promotional materials will come online in the months to come. Details will also become available soon about this year's Spirit Awards contest.

Visit the campaign's dedicated website, www.activeagingweek.com, to learn more about Active Aging Week and to register your organization as an Official Host Site.

Stay 'in tune'



with successful aging

Strengthen your heart, open your ears and challenge your mind with an invigorating workout that pairs the physical and the cognitive. Maestro David Dworkin's CONDUCTORCISE® gets participants enthused about classical music, and keeps them engaged, thinking, in motion, healthy and having fun!

Conductorcise has been hailed at:

- Conferences of the American College of Cardiology and the Alzheimer's Association
- Parkinson's disease, diabetic and osteoporosis clinics
- American Heart Association's Heart Walk
- Senior living communities and rehabilitation facilities across the globe

"Conductorcise is a wonderful marriage of music, fun, connections and aerobic exercise. It is hard to conceive of a more engaging challenge experience that all people love, learn and get healthy from."

Dr. John J. Ratey, Faculty, Harvard Medical School

For more information, visit www.Conductorcise.com Or call 914.244.3803





At Brightwater in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Active Aging Week participants biked the Heritage Shores Nature Preserve trail, located in Cherry Grove. Image courtesy of Brightwater

- campaign logo in various formats
- press releases, fact sheets and calendar announcements
- social media templates (hashtag #activeagingweek)
- posters and pull-up banners, invitations and flyers
- certificates of participation
- T-shirt designs
- PowerPoint presentation templates

Materials will be downloadable, with numerous items provided in customizable formats. As online offerings have become an integral part of Active Aging Week for many organizations and participants, the website will again offer content to help with planning virtual offerings.

Additionally, turnkey Theme Day resources are available from Active Aging Week's national sponsors to bolster programming.

Strategizing promotion

While brainstorming and planning Active Aging Week celebrations, it is important to include promotion in discussions. How

will you build awareness and excitement among current constituents? What will encourage individuals who are new to your organization to participate in activities? And what will attract the attention of potential future customers and their family members, an audience that you likely want to reach?

In a 2015 article for the *Journal on Active Aging*[®] (see "Resources" on page 76), public relations executive Jeff Bell outlined an external promotional strategy that organizations could use to gain attention for their Active Aging Week offerings. This strategy centers on goals in three areas:

- **Media relations.** Craft news releases or pitches for stories to gain coverage for the host organization as well as the activity. Aim to influence the message, Bell says.

Frustratingly for those seeking coverage for events such as Active Aging Week, the story *behind* an event often interests an editor or reporter more than the event itself. By figuring out and pitch-

ing potential stories of interest, you may galvanize a reporter into covering your Active Aging Week participation and offerings.

Reach out to what Bell calls "the right organizations" and contacts in the area. Among these he includes newspaper, television and radio editors and reporters; bloggers; and writers with web-only publications. Incidentally, it's important to ensure the contact list is up to date. A release addressed to a long-departed reporter or poorly targeted to a specific department betrays a lack of familiarity with that outlet. So, take the time to check and update information before you send anything out.

- **Technology.** Share stories on social media, Bell advises. For example, post stories on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, and videos on YouTube. "[S]ocial media has added another arm, if you will, to an organization's arsenal for promoting [the week's activities]," he says. "It's a big arm. Use it."

Among social media pluses is the agility it gives you to highlight an event in real time, to control the framing of a story and to use photos and videos to "show, don't tell" your stories. It's also possible to amplify messages and increase awareness inexpensively when others share a post.

Some organizations underutilize or neglect to have an online "Newsroom." Yet a robust media section can provide press releases, media advisories, schedules of events, photos and videos for publication, links to social media stories, quotes, background information about your organization, and contact information. Given the time pressures that many media professionals work under, easy and immediate access to these resources may sometimes make a difference in whether a reporter covers a story.

- **Community partners.** Build relationships and find partners "who can benefit

[the organization] and vice versa,” Bell notes. He advises listing local groups that you view as desirable partners. Then “ask yourself what you’ll gain from partnering with them, as well as what they’ll gain from partnering with you,” he adds. “It’s about finding mutually beneficial partnerships that promote the things you want to promote for Active Aging Week, making those connections, collaborating, and then being able to admire the results.”

Finally, one further benefit of Active Aging Week participation is the platform it provides to counter any negative impressions of aging services and housing providers that the COVID crisis may fuel. Your organization can shine on social media and through local media channels during the week, as well as the periods leading up to and following the observance. Winning an Active Aging Week Spirit Award, for example, could result in additional media mentions after the week is over. [Ed. The

Active Aging Week website includes full details about the Spirit Award. Refer to “Resources” on page 76 for the link.]

Supporting active, engaged lives

Veteran hosts advise it’s never too early to start planning your Active Aging Week participation. The campaign’s planning

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Active Aging Week five-month plan					
Planning stages	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Contact people to plan events.					
Form vision of what your week will look like.					
Choose target audiences, activities.					
Reserve speakers, space, equipment.					
Plan marketing campaign, produce materials.					
Launch marketing program.					
Finalize work that allies, volunteers and others will perform.					
Post posters and other displays.					
Prepare to welcome your participants on October 3.					

Figure 1. Active Aging Week five-month plan. This downloadable worksheet is also available from the campaign website, www.activeagingweek.com.



In Pleasanton, California, a resident jeweler demonstrates his craftsmanship with silver at the Stoneridge Creek resident art show held during Active Aging Week. Image courtesy of Stoneridge Creek Retirement Community

worksheet outlines a five-month plan (see Figure 1 on page 75). Whether your organization began in January or plans to start in May, the reality is the months will go by quickly, especially with so many things to do. That's where another bit of advice from experienced hosts comes in: Spread the work around by creating an organizing committee. Where possible, committee members might include staff from across the organization, volunteers and community supporters.

Finally, be sure to register as an Active Aging Week Official Host Site. By enroll-

ing early, you provide the campaign with measurable support it can leverage when reaching out to media channels and potential partners. Additional coverage and resources, in turn, will heighten the profile of Active Aging Week and support the efforts of local hosts, who can tie their events to the national campaign. Ultimately, the goal is to reach more individuals and inspire them to try a new activity and perhaps choose or continue a lifestyle of wellness.

So, how will your organization celebrate—and leverage—this year's Active Aging Week? How will you use the campaign to

encourage active, engaged living for your constituents and for your communities? At ICAA, we can't wait to hear and to celebrate your successes with you.🌀

Thank you to Presenting Sponsor Humana and national sponsors Abbott Nutrition and Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Aegis Therapies for supporting Active Aging Week 2022.

Resources

Internet

Active Aging Week
www.activeagingweek.com

Active Aging Week Official Facebook page
www.facebook.com/ActiveAgingWeek/

Active Aging Week: What is the Active Aging Week Spirit Award?
www.activeagingweek.com/awards.php

International Council on Active Aging (ICAA)
www.icaa.cc

Print

Bell, J. (2015). Share your adventure: Ensure your Active Aging Week events get the attention they deserve. *Journal on Active Aging*, 14(5), 22–26; July/August issue. Available to ICAA members in the “Articles” library at www.icaa.cc/listing.php?type=articles (search keyword *adventure*).