

Celebrate + inspire:

Planning your Active Aging Week[®]

This annual initiative showcases the power of wellness. If you aren't already planning your participation, now's the time to start

As wellness cultures and programs continue to spring up and thrive throughout senior living communities and organizations that serve older adults, Active Aging Week[®] is poised to return this fall to promote engaged, healthier living.

Since 2003, the International Council on Active Aging[®] (ICAA) has organized Active Aging Week nationally, with the goals of transforming traditional assumptions about aging and illustrating the promise of living better longer. The annual campaign spotlights people's potential to grow, contribute to society and flourish at any age. Activities, events

and experiences celebrate the potential and positivity of aging today and showcase the power of wellness, encouraging adults 50+ to adopt a wellness lifestyle. Active Aging Week 2023 will be held October 2–8.

In North America and beyond, host organizations take advantage of the week to promote their services, programs and environments to the local community. Participating organizations typically include senior living communities, seniors centers, health clubs, fitness and wellness centers, YMCAs, hospital wellness programs, recreation centers, public libraries, rehabilitation centers, government departments and Area Agencies on Aging, among others.

Continued on page 66





Residents of Addington Place of Clarkston, a Senior Lifestyle community in Michigan, visited Yoga on the Farm for a fun session of Chair Yoga with Goats during Active Aging Week 2022. Image courtesy of Addington Place of Clarkston, a Senior Lifestyle community

Celebrate + inspire: Planning your Active Aging Week

Continued from page 64



A John Ball Zoo educator introduced a snake (plus a tarantula, a turtle and a hedgehog) to residents during an Active Aging Week visit to Holland Home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Image courtesy of Holland Home

“Over the years, we’ve been so encouraged to witness the increasing awareness of and appreciation for the tremendous impact that wellness can have on older adults,” says Colin Milner, ICAA founder and CEO. “We’re looking forward to all of the creativity, enthusiasm and variety that this year’s Active Aging Week is sure to embody.” Supporting the campaign in 2023 are presenting sponsor Humana and national sponsors Abbott Nutrition and Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Aegis.

There is no fee for host sites to participate. This year, they again have the freedom to select their own themes, a policy that proved popular in 2022. As always, hosts can design a schedule of activities and events that best serves local interests and needs and accommodates organizational resources. The only criteria are that activities (in-person or online) are educational, free-to-low cost for participants, and provided in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere. ICAA invites your organization to participate.

A wealth of wellness

Each year, Active Aging Week inspires a multitude of activities that encompass the seven dimensions of wellness: emotional, intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, vocational and environmental. Host organizations can choose to organize a single event or a week’s worth of ways to embrace active aging and highlight their wellness programs.

Popular offerings range from simple to elaborate, including health fairs, fitness classes, lectures and workshops, recreational competitions, group walks and dances. Some additional activities that draw participants are brain games, birdwatching, plant therapy, cultural arts programs and local volunteer efforts. Hosts often come up with unique approaches to heighten the fun and novelty.

For the more adventurous, some organizations have conducted off-site ventures such as ziplining, stand-up paddleboarding, indoor skydiving, kayaking and hot-

air balloon rides. Participants have also enjoyed a wide range of excursions—everything from parks, attractions and heritage sites, to vineyards, salt caves and beaches.

To get the creative juices flowing, here are just some of the innovative ways that host organizations participated in Active Aging Week 2022:

- **Building wheelchair ramps.** Virginia-based Westminster Canterbury Foundation, which supports outreach projects and access to Westminster Canterbury Richmond’s life care, partnered with the housing nonprofit project: HOMES in their fourth annual Ramp Blitz. More than 200 residents, staff, trustees and family members took part in the four-day event. Together, they built 47 wheelchair ramp components to help older adults with mobility challenges stay in their Richmond-area homes.
- **Grape picking.** Residents of Mary’s Woods life-plan community in Lake Oswego, Oregon, enjoyed grape picking, charcuterie sampling, wine and music at the local annual Grape Harvest Festival.
- **Forest bathing.** Splendido at Rancho Vistoso in Tucson, Arizona, brought residents and staff to experience forest bathing in Honey Bee Canyon, followed by a guided meditation with

Share the spirit

Active Aging Week

October 2–8, 2023

Active Aging Week® showcases wellness in all of life’s dimensions. Join the effort to transform traditional ideas about aging and help adults 50+ live better longer. Learn more and register online at www.activeagingweek.com



In Virginia, more than 60 Westminster Canterbury Richmond residents volunteered as part of the roughly 200-strong Ramp Blitz team that built 47 wheelchair ramp components during Active Aging Week. Westminster Canterbury Foundation and project:HOMES partner on the yearly initiative. Image courtesy of project:HOMES

a crystal bowl sound-bathing component. Residents of the 55+ life-plan community enjoyed an on-campus meditative nature walk as well. That walk also ended with a guided meditation focused on gratitude and sounds from crystal singing bowls.

- **Home run derby.** A friendly competition had residents taking their best swings in tee ball at The Village of Aspen Lake, a long-term care community in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.
- **Canine gifts.** In Eden Prairie, Minnesota, Flagstone partnered with CHOICE, Inc., a group that supports growth and development for those with intellectual disabilities, on a project to support a non-profit animal rescue. Residents in the continuum-of-care community and CHOICE participants collaborated to make blankets and toys for the dogs at Secondhand Hounds.
- **Wii™ Water Sports.** This class was a fun way to enjoy climate-controlled water sports while staying dry on land

at The Estates at Carpenters, a life-plan community in Lakeland, Florida.

- **Gratitude jar.** Station Hill Church helped Willow Springs & The Arbors in Spring Hill, Tennessee, to focus on a thankful mindset. Residents wrote notes about what they were grateful for, and with the day dedicated to emotional wellness, then shared these thoughts. Each day from Monday to Friday, activities at the assisted living and memory care community featured a different wellness dimension.
- **Goat Yoga.** Addington Place of Clarkston, a Senior Lifestyle community in Village of Clarkston, Michigan, invited residents to find their Zen with a class at Yoga on the Farm. A certified yoga instructor led participants in Chair Yoga with Goats, a seated mind-body practice held in a red barn that was more than 150 years old. In addition to the goats, a friendly pony named Annie visited the group.

What's great about Active Aging Week is that it's a completely customizable plat-

form that encourages older adults to take on new experiences, potentially cross off a bucket list item and learn more about themselves. The possibilities are endless.

Further, host organizations often find that Active Aging Week increases awareness and engagement, enhances community spirit among staff and participants and inspires new programs. Plus, it fosters feel-good experiences that aren't measured in metrics—giving participants, staff and volunteers invaluable opportunities to enjoy camaraderie, share laughter and create memorable moments.

Every year, the Active Aging Week Spirit Awards recognize local host organizations and participants as they strive to redefine aging *actively* by taking up new and different wellness events, activities and experiences (see the sidebar on page 70). Why not plan now to highlight your

Continued on page 68

Celebrate + inspire: Planning your Active Aging Week

Continued from page 67

experiences during the week by entering the awards contest? It's an opportunity to showcase your participants, your organization and your successes.

Theme day programming

Host organizations can supplement their activity calendars by capitalizing on Active Aging Week's Theme Days—programming resources provided by national sponsors.

Now in its 15th year, WALK! with Aegis Therapies has expanded over the last years to include both in-person and virtual physical activity options. Aegis Therapies and EnerG® by Aegis have designed the program to be flexible and accessible to allow participation regardless of physical location or ability.

Typically, recordings of instructor-led workouts, daily activity suggestions and support material for additional wellness activities are available at www.walkwithaegis.com. Aegis/EnerG by Aegis recommend including a second activity each day to add another wellness dimension. Timelines and customizable printable flyers are usually provided online as well.

Longtime sponsor Abbott Nutrition offers online resources highlighting how good nutrition and proper hydration support health and wellness. In turn, better overall wellness helps adults to stay active as they age. Hosts might want to use these resources for health education classes, workshops, presentations and the like, or to provide handouts at health fairs and mini expos. The online content includes links throughout for further information, with additional links to courses, podcasts, videos and infographics offered on the Abbott Nutrition Health Institute website.

Planning and promotional resources

The Active Aging Week website (www.activeagingweek.com) features a comprehensive toolkit of information to

help host organizations plan and implement their celebrations. Among the resources:

- long-term and immediate planning guides (preparing an action plan, setting goals, gaining publicity and soliciting donations)
- downloadable worksheets (monthly-month plan, marketing matrix, planning checklist)
- case studies and program examples from previous years

Plus, organizations that register as an Official Host Site can access more customizable, downloadable materials to promote their offerings. These resources include:

- campaign logo in various formats
- press releases, fact sheets and calendar announcements

- social media templates (use #activeagingweek)
- posters and pull-up banners, invitations and flyers
- certificates of participation
- T-shirt designs
- PowerPoint presentation templates

Check the website for updated materials for 2023, which continue to come online.

Since 2019, short summaries of Spirit Award winners (and applicants) also appear on the site to applaud their successes and highlight their activities and experiences. Another resource is the Active Aging Week Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ActiveAgingWeek), where ICAA promotes the campaign and organizations share details and images about their activities.

1



2



3



5



ICAA also acknowledges host organizations' efforts to support the mission of redefining how we age, with participation highlighted on the campaign's website and Facebook page and in the *Journal on Active Aging*®.

Getting started

Active Aging Week is a powerful reminder that people have the potential to live healthier, fuller, more active lives at any age. Pursuing wellness as a lifestyle engages body, mind and spirit, so individuals can thrive, contribute to the community and ultimately live longer.

If you have yet to do so, now is the time to add Active Aging Week to your organization's calendar. The first step is to register as an Official Host Site at www.activeagingweek.com/register/php. This gives your organization access to all resources and enables ICAA to track participation, quantify support and forward media inquiries.

What's next? Veteran participating organizations suggest creating a committee of staff and volunteers to help solicit the best ideas and support successful planning and execution. The Active Aging Week initiative offers opportunities for outreach—think local media, businesses

and community groups, for example—all of which can lead to beneficial long-term relationships/

At ICAA, we're excited to see how your organization positively impacts your community during Active Aging Week. We wish you well in organizing activities and events that engage participants (and staff) in fun and friendship. By imparting a sense of what's possible, these experiences may not only promote healthier, engaged living but also inspire individuals to choose wellness as a way of life. 🍷

ICAA thanks presenting sponsor Humana, and longtime national sponsors Aegis Therapies/EnerG® by Wellness and Abbott Nutrition for their generous support of Active Aging Week®.

Continued on page 70

Active Aging Week 2022 photo key

1. Residents of WellQuest of Elk Grove, California, became kids again as they raced go-karts.
2. A professional dance instructor led residents in some moves at Shenandoah Valley Westminister-Canterbury, Winchester, Virginia.
3. The Exercise Science Program at Youngstown State University, Ohio, hosted exercise sessions for participants from local seniors centers.
4. A health fair included sound therapy and massage at Heisinger Bluffs in Jefferson City, Missouri.
5. Detroit's Hartford Village won the PVM Team Spirit Award at the 17th annual Presbyterian Villages of Michigan Village Victory Cup.



4



Resources

Active Aging Week
www.activeagingweek.com

Campaign tools
www.activeagingweek.com/toolkit.php

Official Host Site registration
www.activeagingweek.com/register/php

Spirit Awards
www.activeagingweek.com/awards.php

Theme Days
www.activeagingweek.com/themes.php

Additional Active Aging Week websites

Abbott Nutrition Health Institute
<https://anhi.org/ca/en>

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

Aegis Therapies
<https://aegistherapies.com/>

Humana
www.humana.com

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

WALK! with Aegis Therapies
www.walkwithaegis.com

Spirit Award winners

Heisinger Bluffs
<https://hbrhc.com>

Holland Home
<https://hollandhome.org>

Shenandoah Valley Westminister-Canterbury
www.svwc.org

WellQuest of Elk Grove
<https://wellquesteg.com>

Westminister Canterbury Richmond
<https://wcrichmond.org>

Celebrate + inspire: Planning your Active Aging Week

Continued from page 69

Award-winners share their Active Aging Week experiences

Among its most uplifting impacts, Active Aging Week® enlivens communities and organizations with a boost to community spirit. Shared experiences of camaraderie, positivity and purpose can weave stronger bonds between staff and participants, with family members sometimes joining in as volunteers or supporters. The wellness activities and events that local host organizations deliver also provide a platform for redefining what it means to age actively.

Since 2019, the Active Aging Week Spirit Awards have highlighted host organizations and participants as they strive to redefine *active* through the wellness activities and events they take up. Participants and staff alike can challenge preconceptions, reimagine aging and embrace vitality—regardless of any health issues—inspiring others to see aging as a time of possibility.

Below, the five Spirit Award winners for 2022 summarize what they did during Active Aging Week to redefine *active*:

- 1. WellQuest of Elk Grove (Elk Grove, California):** Stepping outside what's considered "normal" criteria for older adults, WellQuest of Elk Grove focused on staying active and engaged during Active Aging Week by "stepping up into endless possibilities! From kayaking with residents who use walkers daily to becoming a kid again and racing go-karts." WellQuest believes "there are no restrictions when it comes to age—only modification when there's a will!" The community offers independent living, assisted living and memory care services.
- 2. Westminster Canterbury Richmond (Richmond, Virginia):** Expanding the programming to create Active Aging Month, Westminster Canterbury Richmond (WCR) provided "a full set of activities that included cultural arts programs, pastoral care concerts and workshops, excursions, a health and wellness fair, and a Walk to End Alzheimer's—and so much more." Posters listed over 25 special events, in addition to regularly scheduled programming. Departments across the WCR campus "partnered to make these events possible and successful," with staff encouraging residents to attend as many activities as possible. "We received great feedback and look forward to continuing many of the activities," the life-plan community said.
- 3. Heisinger Bluffs (Lutheran Senior Services, Jefferson City, Missouri):** Heisinger Bluffs residents also celebrated active-aging events all month. As part of Active Aging Week, "we discussed the perceptions of aging, learned about bone health, played wellness bingo, sponsored a community-wide health fair with 16 local vendors, and wrapped up the week with music and memory." Daily exercise classes took place throughout October, along with themed dress-up days for Wellness Wednesday. As Jefferson City prepared for the Walk to End Alzheimer's, the life-plan community held its own walk, inviting a guest speaker from the Alzheimer's Association. An autumn festival closed out the month, leaving everyone buzzing. "At Heisinger Bluffs, we believe aging is living! We strive to push past the 'ordinary' and truly enjoy every moment of living."
- 4. Holland Home (Grand Rapids, Michigan):** Holland Home residents showcased their passions and abilities with an Active Aging Week variety show, among other things. A trash pickup saw residents clean up neighborhoods to give back to the community; and the John Ball Zoo and Blandford Nature offered engaging presentations with animals (including a slithery reptile). To help redefine aging, residents and staff teamed up to compete "in friendly games of pool volleyball, basketball and Family Feud" (based on the TV game show). The life-plan community also hosted a neighborhood block party plus a wine and cheese reminiscing social for residents. "Each day, but especially so during theme weeks, Holland Home strives to implement events across all levels of care that meet the residents where they are, bring everyone together as one vibrant community, and redefine what aging and senior living can look like."
- 5. Shenandoah Valley Westminster Canterbury (Winchester, Virginia):** Located in Northern Virginia, Shenandoah Valley Westminster Canterbury (SVWC) "routinely provides active movement activities such as lawn bowling, swimming, hiking and putting green golf." With a goal to offer various activities for all abilities and interests during Active Aging Week, the life-plan community offered an activity every day. "We highlighted our local area with a Civil War history presentation, followed by a trivia game about the facts. Brain health was an important aspect of the offering, and involved dance, movement and brain wellness games." SVWC encouraged everyone who participated to engage in the week's celebrations and to socialize.

ICAA looks forward to seeing submissions for this year's Active Aging Week Spirit Awards. Visit www.activeagingweek.com/awards.php to find out more about how to apply and to register as an Official Host Site.