Clark County Commission on Aging
1300 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Vancouver, Washington

MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, October 16, 2019
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chuck Green, Amy Gross, Marjorie Ledell, Meghan McCarthy, Linda O'Leary, Larry Smith, Pam Wheeler

Absent: Nancy Dong, Franklin Johnson

1. **Welcome and call to order**
   Larry Smith opened the meeting.

   Approval of agenda
   The agenda was approved.

   Approval of meeting minutes
   The September 18 meeting minutes were approved.

   Excused members
   The commission excused Franklin Johnson from the meeting. The commission excused Nancy Dong from the meeting.

2. **Presentations: The Value of Engaging Older Adults**
   Details on each presentation are available in the CVTV video recording and presentation slides.

   Presentation #1: Senior Community Service Employment Program
   Presenters: Brinda Wood, Goodwill

   Presentation highlights:
   - The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) provides temporary, subsidized, and part-time paid community training opportunities. The training is based on individualized skills and abilities, and personal preferences.
   - The program is provided by the Department of Labor and Goodwill Industries International.
   - Qualifications include: 55 or older, must live in a county where SCSEP services are provided, family income no more than 125% of the Federal poverty level income guidelines, and unemployed for at least six months prior to enrollment.

- The local SCSEP program offers a class at WorkSource the third Tuesday of each month to learn about the program.
- Local host agencies include Luepke Senior Center, Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Community Services, and many others.
- There are training opportunities available through the program, from ESL and GED classes, to a variety of computer classes.
- If you know someone who might be interested in the program either as a participant or host agency, they can contact Brinda Wood at 360-759-4309 or brindaw@goodwilwa.org.

Q&A and Comments from Commission on Aging:

- **Marjorie**: how many people go through the class each year? **Brinda**: I have 18 right now. It's typically about 20 people at a time. Host agency opportunities often include office work.
- **Marjorie**: how do you track long term success? **Brinda**: we track participants for 15-months after they finish with the program. We report program outcomes to the Department of Labor.
- **Amy:** what is soft skills training? **Brinda:** soft skills are things like basic computer usage and training folks to gain skills like that.
- **Pam**: you mentioned the program serves people who are 55 and older. Does the age tend to be on the younger side or spread out? **Brinda**: I have a few participants in the bracket 55-62 with hardly any income, especially those who are not eligible for social security yet. But, it all depends. I had a 93-year old and an 84-year old. One had a senior nursing career and ended up deciding to start a new business instead of finding a job, and is now self-employed selling garage doors and nutrition work.
- **Amy**: do you work with vocation specialists? **Brinda**: yes. When we send a participant to a host agency, if there is a specific thing you are not supposed to do, we write it out and share with the host agency. Some examples might be that the individual should not sit too long, stand too long, stand on stools or ladders, etc.

Q&A and Comments from Public:
None

Presentation #2: The Impact of Volunteerism as we Age
Presenters: Colleen Kuhn, Human Services Council

Presentation highlights:

- Who volunteers? Statistics from the Corporation for National and Community Service:
    - The Silent Generation (1928-1945): 25% volunteer
    - Baby Boomers (1946-1964): 31% volunteer
    - Gen X (1965-1980): 37% volunteer
    - Millennials (1981-1996): 28% volunteer
    - Men vs. Women: 27% compared to 34% volunteer
    - Veterans: 30% volunteer
- Our goal is to reach out to volunteers across demographics, seniors, people with disabilities, etc. A Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015 Report concludes that among the major race and ethnicity groups, whites volunteer at a rate of 26.4%, blacks 19.3%, Asians 17.9% and Hispanics 15.5%.
- Most common forms of volunteering for older adults (Corporation for National and Community Service):

    - Collecting, serving, preparing, or distributing food
    - Fundraising or selling items to raise money
    - Engaging in general labor, like helping build homes or clean up parks
    - Tutoring or teaching
    - Mentoring the youth
    - Collecting, making, or distributing clothing
- Positive impacts of volunteering.
    - 2019 Study by the Corporation of National and Community Services
        - 84% of Senior Corps volunteers (those 55 and older) reported improved or stable health after serving approximately two years in the program
        - 88% of Senior Corps volunteers who first reported a lack of companionship reported a decrease in feelings of isolation
        - 78% reported fewer symptoms of depression
    - Senior Living Blog/A Place for Mom shows that volunteering:
        - Helps bridge the generation gap
        - Helps change the way people think about older adults
        - Is good for mental health and can help prevent Alzheimer's
        - Helps prevent senior isolation and depression
        - Promotes healthy physical activity
    - Video showed testimonials from senior volunteers on how it impacts their life
    - Intergenerational experiences can be really impactful for everyone involved
    - Volunteers in SW WA nonprofits, many of which are all-volunteer orgs, has a dollar value of more than $1 million
- How to find the right volunteer opportunity? Consider these factors:
    - Would you like to work with adults, children, animals, or remotely from home?
    - Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team?
    - Are you better behind the scenes or do you prefer to take a more visible role?
    - How much time are you willing to commit?
    - What skills can you bring to a volunteer job?
    - What causes are important to you?
- Volunteer Opportunities in Clark County
    - Clark County website
    - City of Vancouver website
    - Catholic Community Services website
    - Volunteermatch.org
    - HandsonPortland.org
    - VillagesClarkCounty.org
    - Human Services Council Volunteer Connections
    - Directly with any non-profit (such as YWCA, Southwest Washington Humane Society, etc.)
- New volunteer opportunities at the Human Services Council, the Volunteers in Motion program.
    - Jeannine Edwards, Program Manager of Volunteers in Motion and Connie Pickering, a volunteer driver with the program shared what the program is and how it impacts the volunteers involved and those they are helping.
    - The Volunteers in Motion program provides rides to people primarily for non-medical needs. If we can find a driver, we get to say yes. The program is about 6-weeks old, and the biggest challenge has been matching and finding drivers to meet the demand. Some drivers work full time, others have more time.

- Many of the volunteers who are over 55 have more time and flexibility than younger volunteers. Our older volunteers also often feel comfortable saying yes and no to me.
- Connie spoke about her experience volunteering with the program.
    - It was actually a very smooth and easy transition into the volunteer role. At first, I didn't know where I was going or what I would be doing.
    - The people you drive are so happy to see you. They have genuine needs and they have no idea of how to get those needs met. I get to say, I can take you to the store too.
    - For me, it gets me out of the house, keeps me away from the mall, Costco, etc., and it's fun. I have discovered new places I didn't know existed. I have met wonderful people just trying to live the best they can.

Q&A and Comments from Commission on Aging:

- **Chuck**: I was interested in the slide showing volunteer rates and differences. Is there any research on the barriers to volunteering, i.e. transportation access, time etc? What's causing the differences? **Colleen**: I have heard that both transportation and time can be barriers, but have not seen the research. Sponsoring a volunteer could be a way to help. There are also lots of opportunities to volunteer from home.
- **Marjorie**: do you know the percent of volunteers on particular boards, ie are most volunteer boards made up of people over the age of 65? **Colleen**: we aren't as involved in board and know a lot more about direct service opportunities, typically placing people directly in non-profits. The HSC board is largely made up of older individuals. That doesn't mean we don't want younger volunteers, but things like time can certainly be a factor.
- **Larry**: that video was pretty powerful, and showed the sincerity and compassion of the volunteers.

Q&A and Comments from Public:

- **Arnold Dyer**: do the transportation volunteers use their own vehicles? **Colleen**: they can use their own vehicles, which get inspected, and then be eligible for mileage reimbursement. We also have two vans donated by C-TRAN and volunteers can drive those too. We have an additional wheelchair accessible vehicle coming this winter, which will also be available. Volunteers can be trained on how to drive and secure wheelchairs. We are also working with non-profits to lend out our vehicles as long as the driver has gone through HSC training. We are also working with WorkSource to provide opportunities for folks who want to become professional drivers.

Presentation #3: New Seasons Market Fisher's Landing – Impact on the Aging Community in Clark County
Presenters: Justin Rossman, New Seasons Market

Presentation highlights:

- New Seasons has a mission to be a community-oriented store.
- Some of their initiatives that cater to older adults include:
    - 10% off discount to shoppers 65 or better every Wednesday. Wednesdays are the busiest weekday day for New Seasons stores. Lots of seniors shop on discount day and stores stock more heavily on Wednesdays to accommodate that.

    - Veteran discount day is on Tuesdays
    - Seating area with easy access and designed for a variety of mobility challenges
    - Smaller carts with high baskets to avoid bending over
    - Free nutrition fliers, ie eating on a budget, low sodium, gluten free dient, holiday cooking, etc.
    - Two motorized shopping carts in every store, which sometimes is not enough on Wednesdays
    - Assist customers with their shopping needs
    - Age friendly hiring practices, tailor job to specific skills
    - New Seasons Market won awards and was certified by Elder's in Action, an organization that promoted age-friendly businesses
    - Like community feedback through in store customer service or online
- Fisher's Landing store:
    - Offers a community room to any non-profit or community group free of charge
    - Seating area is welcoming and a community gathering spot for seniors. Every Tuesday, a walking group meets at the store to visit and have breakfast.
    - Live music every other Wednesday in seating area from 11am-1pm
    - Deliver Meals on Wheels on a weekly basis to homebound seniors facing social isolation in the Fisher's Landing community.

Q&A and Comments from Commission on Aging:

- **Larry**: The New Season's business manager is on the Meals on Wheels board and has been very active and supportive. **Justin**: You can donate meals to seniors through our stores. It is one of the only times we allow "tabling" at our stores.
- **Marjorie**: you're in my neck of the woods, I'll see if what you say is true and give you feedback.
- **Chuck**: thank you for the focus on nutrition. Earlier this year we heard from other groups, one about farmers market and local food nutrition. One topic that came up during that meeting was about food insecurities and may be related to whether or not what we're buying is really nutritious. Do you have someone on site if they have a food nutrition question? **Justin**: we do not have a nutritionist on site. One store does a once a month nutrition cook class using seasonal foods that focuses on what's economical to buy, batch cooking, and wellness attributes. The nutrition flyers may be useful as customers get older and their doctor says lower this, don't eat that, etc. We do have a nutritionist on staff who could answer some questions, but we are not allowed to give nutrition advice.
- **Amy**: You have 10% discount opposite days as Chuck's Produce.

Q&A and Comments from Public:
None

Debrief: What have we heard? Potential recommendations? Request(s) for more information?

- There are tremendous benefits of volunteering, working, etc, but we are not always able to match people well, i.e. younger volunteers don't necessarily want to sign-up for commitments.
- **Marjorie**: Colleen said that volunteers over the age of 55 contribute more than $1 million to the economy in SW WA based on hours worked. That could be a good way to toot our horn.

- **Chuck**: I would be interested in finding out more about barriers to volunteerism and what we do to provide better access to volunteer opportunities, ie carpooling opportunities. **ACTION ITEM - Colleen will follow-up with Jacqui.**
- **Larry**: senior wisdom and ability is so valuable and youth can learn from their experience. If we can get more seniors involved with education, in classrooms, etc., I think that would be great. I participate at my grandkids' school and I volunteer with a 95-year old! We listen to the kids as they read and the seniors talk about their experiences. These are stories the kids won't hear from younger adults. We want to encourage this as much as we can. I have talked to superintendents and principals in the area about it. Kids learn to respect seniors through increased interaction. We don't do as well honoring our older population as some other countries. We don't want to lose that wisdom and talk about history, ie local history.
- **Amy**: I was impressed with the way different organizations are working with other organizations, the synergy in getting people what they need, where they need to get it, both volunteers and the SCSEP program.
- **Linda**: I was impressed with the Goodwill SCSEP program which has been around a long time, since the Older Americans Act, and can help a very important subset of people.

3. **Public Comment**
    - **Arnold Dyer**: I am here to talk about a new program called Vancouver Men's SHED. Men's SHED started in Australia in 1995 and dovetails with what we were hearing today. The idea is to promote the health and wellbeing of older men, especially as related to social isolation and loneliness. It was developed in part through the Federal Department of Health and Rotary International. There are now more than 1500 Men's SHEDs in Australia serving more than 100,000 men. We saw earlier the positive effects of getting connected. Surveys show over 95% of men in SHEDs are happier, healthier, and more connected. We are trying to get one off the ground here. Our first general meeting is on November 9 at the CDM services building. I have fliers if you can post one or share with someone who might be interested. In the first couple of meetings, we will be deciding what we want to do. One last item about it: we are a bit different than other volunteer organizations because the goal is to develop long-term relationships. Men don't talk face to face, they talk shoulder to shoulder. The goal is to start talking about the things that really matter. Anything you can do to help us spread word would be great. A surprising number of wives have been the motivating force to get men involved, so feel free to share with them too. We do not have a website yet.

4. **New Business, Updates and Announcements:**
   The next Commission on Aging meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 and the presentation will be on older adults and pets.

5. **Adjournment**
   The meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership and creates community engagement in addressing the needs and opportunities of aging.