

## **Blueprint Highlights-By Project Initiative January 2007**

### **Foundation Building**

Core Leadership Team conducted its monthly meeting. Major agenda items included a review by Jill Kind of the Blueprint financial report, a presentation by Dale Fitch of the Blueprint Evaluation Plan, and a presentation on the Community Volunteer Blueprint Pilot Project by Rachel Dewees. Ad hoc committees were formed to work on specific issues of evaluation and financial management.

Community Awareness and Education Committee monthly meeting was held with progress reports on positive aging projects and on the RSVP Leading for Legacy ad hoc committee. In addition, the committee discussed publicity needs for the Community Volunteers pilot project. Kelly Hicks of HelpSource presented an Alzheimer's educational project their staff is beginning in area public schools. The committee discussed possibilities for a collaboration of Blueprint partners in this project

Blueprint staff with the new Alzheimer's Association Education Coordinator to discuss Blueprint and Alzheimer's Association points of mutual concern.

Blueprint staff met with Randy Ross of the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan to discuss a collaboration that will help CFSEM with an exploratory grant to find ways to foster volunteer commitments in community members of the Baby Boomer generation. Funding beyond the planning stage may offer opportunities for the Blueprint through financial resources and collaborative activities.

The Blueprint director consulted with the Washtenaw County Health Organization regarding their upcoming site visit from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Blueprint staff are developing policy on the distinction between Blueprint association, endorsement, referral or sponsorship. Requests for Blueprint involvement are numerous and welcomed but demand clarification on the level of Blueprint oversight.

The Blueprint director attended the orientation meeting of the Community Collaborative of Washtenaw 's Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Group is made up of leaders from Washtenaw County formal initiatives and have the charge to represent relevant agencies and constituencies. The Coordinating Council is part of the reorganized structure and operates between the Executive Committee and ongoing initiatives and workgroups.

## **Senior Leadership**

### *Senior Advocates of Washtenaw (SAW)*

SAW met on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, and heard a presentation by Carolyn Grawi, Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living; Sue Hart, Disability Network Leaders for Action Housing Advocacy Group; and David Esau, Cornerstone Design, regarding universal design and visitability issues in Michigan.

New officers were elected for 2007. Suzanne Shaw and Roger Spooner were reelected to Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Josh Ard was elected as Chair of the Planning and Legislation Committee and LuAnne Bullington was elected as Chair of a new committee, Membership and Publicity. New members were recruited to the Membership and Publicity Committee.

The Planning and Legislation Committee provided an update on its activities. After deliberation, the committee decided to present SAW with the plan to focus on one advocacy issue for 2007: "Money Follows the Person". The committee is also in the process of planning an educational program to be taken to the community in a series of interactive presentations. This presentation will focus on thinking about and making choices for housing and long-term care. This presentation will also have an advocacy component, with SAW members explaining the concept of "Money Follows the Person." Speakers will present the SAW position on the issue and distribute letters that program participants may mail to their legislators expressing support for "Money Follows the Person."

*Third Age Civic Council (TACC)*-An ad hoc committee of the Blueprint Core Leadership met to develop criteria for outcomes of TACC and for community members who will serve as TACC members. Key outcomes include: input and information from all areas of the county and identified constituencies will be gathered and shared; Blueprint initiatives, goals and progress will be disseminated; needs strengths and utilization of services will be incorporated into Blueprint evaluation and goals.

## **Technology Innovation**

Dale Fitch and Blueprint director met with Catholic Social Services technological staff to identify fields from service information to be moved to the shared database when appropriate. Catholic Social Services is one of four agencies, which will contribute data and participate in prototype testing.

Catholic Social Services experienced considerable difficulty in explaining the benefits to consumers of electronic referral to volunteers who help seniors with taxes. Individuals who are not caseworkers and those unfamiliar with releases of information clearly need significant training to understand the securities in place. A single skeptic who is uninformed may generate negative influence.

## **Aging in Place Initiative**

The Community Volunteers Pilot project began in four Washtenaw County neighborhoods on January 1, 2007. Most neighborhoods developed and distributed flyers. All Community Volunteers will meet with the Pilot Projects Coordinator in February to more fully develop outreach activities tailored to their communities. Neighborhoods will also create benchmarks for success in publicizing their programs

Friendly Aging Neighborhoods Group (FANG) will receive ongoing assistance from the Blueprint's Community Awareness and Education workgroup ad hoc committee addressing publicity. This will include publicity within the Community Volunteers neighborhoods as well as publicity for the pilot projects and their importance to Aging in Place one of the four initiatives of the Blueprint as a whole.

FANG met on January 26th for an update on the Community Volunteers pilot project and to begin work on a second pilot project, the Transportation Voucher Pilot. Over the next month, FANG membership will be expanded to include transportation providers and experts to help in identifying parameters of the project and implementation of activities.