

## **BFA Convenes Washtenaw County Senior Center Leadership: February 27, 2008**

### **Summary Report to the BFA Core Leadership Team March 13, 2008**

#### **A. Rationale for Convening Senior Center leadership**

The BFA Senior Center/Recreation Center Work Group convened a meeting of Senior Center/Recreation Center leadership. The group was brought together for the following purposes:

- (1) to increase awareness about current BFA initiatives and work group structure,
- (2) to increase knowledge of Area Agency on Aging 1B data and resources,
- (3) to participate in a focus group to identify current and potential intersections between the work of the Senior Centers/Recreation Centers and the work of the BFA.

#### **B. Agenda**

- Virginia Boyce provided an orientation to BFA initiatives and work groups.
- Jim McGuire presented results from the June 2007 Day of Dialogue
- Sue Ann Savas, BFA Evaluator facilitated the focus group (themes are presented on page 2)

#### **C. Participants**

Senior and Community Center Representatives in attendance:

- Sue Laity, Northfield Township Senior Center
- Kim Martini, Dexter Senior Center
- Jennifer Michalak, Milan Senior Center
- Pam Molascon, Saline Area Senior Center
- Tina Patterson, Chelsea Senior Citizen Activities Center
- Monica Prince, Ypsilanti Senior Center
- Pam Simmons, Ann Arbor Senior Center
- Carolyn White, Turner Senior Resource Center (and BFA Work Group member)
- Yolanda Whiten, Ann Arbor Community Center

Washtenaw County Murray Recreation Center representative was invited, but could not make the meeting. Representatives of the following Senior and Community Center representatives were invited, but were unable to attend:

- Bryant Community Center
- Jewish Community Center
- Lincoln Golden Ages Seniors
- Northside Community Center
- Pittsfield Township Senior Center
- Ypsilanti Township Senior Center

Blueprint for Aging Representatives in attendance:

- Mark Lindke, Washtenaw County Veteran Affairs (BFA Work Group)
- Jim McGuire, AAA 1B, BFA Core Leadership Team (BFA CLT)
- Virginia Boyce, BFA Project Manager
- Sue Ann Savas, BFA Project Evaluator
- Susan Sweet Scott, Washtenaw County ETCS (BFA Work Group)
- Emily Farber, UM Student Intern with BFA

## **D. Focus Group Themes**

*To further develop Center infrastructure, participants identified the following needs:*

- Logic model development, evaluation of recruitment strategies and utilization rates
- Grant writing (half-day, 3-day by AAA), Stories of impact
- Managing volunteers, database for matching
- Support for strategic planning (currently, centers are operating from one-year plans)
- Develop Washtenaw County Senior Center Directory (programming, fees) on paper and on web (maybe via BFA site). Map of Senior Center location in the County.
- Master Calendar of Washtenaw County Senior Center events (maybe via BFA site)
- Learn more about funding options: Township, City and/or County for Senior Centers

*To further develop Center programming, participants identified the following needs:*

- Support articulating “best practices” to guide activities, programming, continuity of staff
- Develop model community center with senior focus
- Reframe activities as “enrichment” (music, writing, arts) and “prevention” or “delay” (of depression, dementia, malnourishment, falls) through activity, nutrition, and socialization (perhaps linked to HIP outcomes) *Could be seen as too clinical, though--VB*
- Nutrition: food and companionship, hot meals by community volunteer groups
- Need subsidized transportation for members (to/from center and med appointments)

*Participants identified the following ideas to promote “across-center” sharing:*

- Sharing volunteers and “program experts” across centers
- Shared data base (clients and services)
- Staff development and training opportunities
- Membership or network dues to increase use and reduce competition
- Develop multi-site grants (i.e. Rislov music therapist, transportation, operations)
- Educate reporters about appropriate language to describe seniors, marketing messages
- Bus with 3 wheel chair spots currently available
- Senior Program available on TV/Cable
- Formalize relationships with current community partners (Food Gatherers, Community Gardeners)

## **E. Next Steps**

Senior Center Directors will:

- Consider formalizing the “Senior Center Collaborative”
- Continue to meet monthly at a Senior Center (rotate location)
- Share and update Senior Center Directory
- Establish Yahoo group to increase communication among the center staff
- Contact those unable to attend and include them in future meetings, correspondence
- Report and get involved with BFA committees/work groups

Area Agency on Aging can:

- Write grants for collaborative efforts
- Offer training on fund development opportunities

BFA can:

- Communicate these results to the Core Leadership Team and Work Groups in order to identify Center work that intersects with BFA work