



AGING WITH ATTITUDE

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Blueprint for Aging's, *A Guide for Organizing Elder-Friendly Neighborhoods with Community Volunteers*, is Now Available on the Web

Ann Arbor, MI – Aging in Place is a priority in the lives of older adults. Higher levels of care, while sometimes necessary, add tremendous emotional and financial burdens on families. A 2003 AARP study indicated that nearly 90% of Americans aged 60 and older want to stay in their current homes for the remainder of their lives. Around the country, many models and organizations have been created to help older adults remain independent and at home. Locally, the Blueprint for Aging piloted one such model.

The Blueprint for Aging recently completed the Community Volunteer pilot project in which trained neighborhood residents served as trusted, familiar, and knowledgeable contacts for older adults living in their communities. Informed by community input, the Blueprint sought to improve access to services and thereby promote aging in place by identifying and training volunteers to be supportive agents in their communities.

Benefits to community members included increased knowledge of support services and a perceived leader who could give assistance needed to link at-risk community members to available services. Volunteers felt a sense of importance, as they became a resource to their neighbors. As for the success of the project, one Community Volunteer states, "Its really – its been – a great experience. I think our whole community has benefited – I'm sure we could have done a lot more than we did... I think we've learned some of the things that work and some that don't."

Now communities interested in helping older people age in place can access a handbook that outlines community features that promote successful outcomes as well as aspects that may prove challenging. The Blueprint for Aging recently published on the web its *A Guide for Organizing Elder-Friendly Neighborhoods with Community Volunteers*. This guide includes "how-to" steps, examples of successes and challenges, and program forms. The guide can be found from the Blueprint's homepage, www.blueprintforaging.org,

The Blueprint for Aging offers hard copy versions of *A Guide for Organizing Elder-Friendly Neighborhoods with Community Volunteers* to help older adults age in place in addition to the on-line version. To order a bound copy, please contact Rachel Dewees, Pilot Project Coordinator, at 734.712.2586.

The Blueprint for Aging is a collaborative of seniors, family members, nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies working to improve services, care, and quality of life for older adults in Washtenaw County. The Blueprint is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Community Partnerships for Older Adults (CPFOA) national initiative. CPFOA helps communities develop leadership, innovative solutions, and options to meet the needs of older adults over the long term.

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