

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's (PCA's) Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition newsletter covering events and issues of concern to the elderly within the faith community

Spring Clergy & Seniors Day held

Spring Clergy & Seniors Day 2018 focused on how faith can serve as a guide through the journey of aging. Held June 5 at the Courtyard Marriott City Avenue (4100 City Ave.), it drew 225 attendees and featured a keynote presentation by geriatric nurse practitioner Johanne Louis of VA Advanced Geriatrics and a presentation on nutrition and exercise by Stella Volpe, Ph.D., chair and professor of health sciences in the Drexel College of Nursing and Health Professions. An interfaith panel discussed faith and clergy perspectives on aging. The event also included a yoga demonstration and opportunities for participants to network and learn more about aging services in the event's resource room. Sponsors included Always Best Care Senior Services and Health Partners Plans.

Providing hearty soup for seniors in need

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral (23 S. 38th St.) recently hosted a Ralston Center Food & Co. volunteer soup-making project. Food & Co. creates opportunities for social connection through communal healthy cooking events at community locations and produces soup for older West Philadelphians in need.

Volunteers from Ralston Center, the Healthcare Leadership Network of Delaware Valley and Ballard Spahr LLP joined the church's Rev. Sarah Hedgis and Ralston Center Director of Programs Jennifer Russell to prepare healthy soups. A total of 300 portions were made. The soup was shared with participants in the church's communal meal that day. Remaining portions were distributed to residents of the Joseph J. Hill Ralston Mercy-Douglass House and the University Square Apartments.

Ralston Center is a nonprofit organization providing health and social services to older West Philadelphians. For more information, call 215-386-2984, email jrussell@ralstoncenter.org or go to ralstoncenter.org.

New Medicare cards arriving

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is mailing new Medicare cards to Medicare beneficiaries. A randomly assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) replaces the Social Security numbers previously used for identification on the cards. The new cards are intended to help prevent fraud and identity theft and will arrive automatically in the mail. For information about the cards, call 800-MEDICARE (633-4227) or 877-486-2048 for TTY users.

PCA forms council to help African, Caribbean seniors

PCA is forming the African and Caribbean Elders Advisory Council, a group designed to help the agency reach out to elders in African and Caribbean immigrant communities and to identify and address their needs. The council will build on and supplant PCA's African and Caribbean Elders Initiative, established in 2014, which brings community leaders together to share information about PCA and other aging-services resources and advise PCA on issues that African and Caribbean seniors face.

Applications for membership in the future council are being accepted from community leaders affiliated with the African and Caribbean communities in Philadelphia. For more information or to apply, call Sandy Lawrence, PCA interfaith outreach coordinator, at 215-765-9000, ext. 5342, or email Sandra.Lawrence@pcaCares.org.

Saluting a leader in disability services

Rev. Angela Lundy has been selected as the Hamilton Relay Deaf Community Leader Award recipient for Pennsylvania.

The award recognizes her community service work. (Hamilton Relay provides telecommunications relay services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or speech disabled.)

Rev. Lundy, who is deaf, is the founder and executive director of the faith-based program Interfaith Specialty Services. The organization helps faith organizations to raise awareness of disability issues, sensitize people to individuals with special needs and encourage inclusion. Interfaith Specialty Services also donates disability-related equipment to families in need. For more information, email angelalundy@comcast.net.

The PCA Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition

Mission:

Recognizing the contributions of faith-based organizations in the social services and the importance of spirituality in the lives of older adults, PCA formed the Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition in 1998. The coalition is interfaith, intercultural and multi-ethnic in makeup. It includes clergy, lay leaders, senior constituents and professionals from agencies that serve Philadelphia seniors and their families. The coalition advises PCA on the needs of older adults in their communities and helps raise awareness of, and increase access to, PCA services.

Goals:

- Assist religious leaders with building senior programs within their congregations and strengthening existing community-based programs
- Enhance the ability of clergy and religious organizations to function as service providers
- Enable clergy to better identify isolated older adults and communicate unmet needs in their congregations and communities
- Build a stronger coalition to advocate on behalf of older adults
- Provide tools to guide decision-making by older adults and families



Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), a private, nonprofit Area Agency on Aging, was established in 1973 to coordinate social services for Philadelphians who are older or who have disabilities and to assist them in achieving optimum levels of health, independence and productivity. One of the region's largest nonprofit organizations, PCA is funded in part by the federal Older Americans Act and the Pennsylvania Lottery, channeled through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, and Medical Assistance, channeled through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

For information on PCA's services and programs, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or visit pcaCares.org.

To submit comments or suggestions for publication, contact:
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Did you know?: Helpful support, resources are at your fingertips

Energy savings

Members of the Energy Coordinating Agency's programs department are available to present energy conservation workshops to groups of 20 or more. Presentations include advice and tips on energy conservation, water conservation and storm water management. Workshops can be tailored to meet the needs of particular groups, including low-income seniors. For information, contact Katlyn Zulinke at 215-609-1044 or KatlynZ@ecasavesenergy.org.

Foreclosure prevention

SeniorLaw Center has programs available to help save seniors' homes from foreclosure due to unpaid property taxes and/or mortgage bills. The center's staff attorneys can negotiate with the Philadelphia Department of Revenue for affordable tax payment plans and enroll seniors in tax assistance programs. The attorneys will also negotiate with mortgage companies to reduce mortgage payments. For more information or to apply, call the SeniorLaw Helpline at 215-988-1242, Monday through Thursday, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Network for AIDS outreach

Philadelphia FIGHT is a Philadelphia AIDS service organization that provides primary care, consumer education, advocacy and research. Its faith initiatives office tends to the spiritual health of people living with HIV/AIDS.

One aspect of the office's work is the faith leaders network. Participating faith leaders share information and strategies about reaching out and ministering to people with HIV/AIDS in their houses of worship and communities. The network is looking to expand and welcomes new members.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at Mother Bethel AME Church (419 S. 6th St.) from 10:30 a.m. to noon. For information, contact Calenthia Dowdy, Ph.D., Philadelphia FIGHT director of faith initiatives, at 215-525-3055 or cdowdy@fight.org.

Older Adult Sunshine Center

PCA's Older Adult Sunshine Center, a senior community center in Southwest Philadelphia, has moved to temporary quarters at the Community of Compassion Community Center (6150 Cedar Ave.) from its previous home at 137 South 58th St. Its current space is owned and operated by the Church of Christian Compassion, which is located across the street. Sunshine's hours of operation (weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) and phone number (215-472-6188) remain the same. Updated information will be provided as it becomes available.

Produce vouchers

PCA has begun its annual distribution of Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) produce vouchers to income-eligible Philadelphia seniors. The distribution will continue while supplies last. Eligible Philadelphia seniors may receive \$20 worth of vouchers once per year and use them to purchase seasonal Pennsylvania-grown produce at any of 55 certified farmers' markets throughout the city and beyond. Income-eligible Philadelphia residents who will be 60 or older by year's end may receive the vouchers. The 2018 household income limits are \$22,459 for an individual and \$30,451 for a couple. Proof of age and Philadelphia residency are required. For additional income eligibility information, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

The vouchers will be distributed at PCA (642 N. Broad St.) on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and at other sites throughout the city, including senior community centers. PCA offers distribution to a limited number of houses of worship. For further information, contact 215-765-9000, ext. 5342, or Sandra.Lawrence@pcaCares.org.

The vouchers are made available through funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.



Adaptive smoke alarms

The Philadelphia Fire Department's (PFD's) Fire Prevention Unit recently received a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to purchase 4,000 residential adaptive smoke alarms to distribute to hearing-impaired Philadelphians.

Help PFD spread the word to hearing-impaired city residents who could benefit. PFD representatives will install as many such smoke alarms per household as appropriate and also can conduct home safety inspections at the time of the installation if desired. For more information, contact firefighter Namor Brown at 215-686-1382 or Namor.Brown@phila.gov.

PCA food programs help to 'Defeat Malnutrition Today'

PCA recently launched "Defeat Malnutrition Today with PCA." The goals are to feed seniors and provide them with the nutrition necessary to lead a healthy and independent lifestyle; raise awareness and advocacy around malnutrition through outreach and education; and create a local network of like-minded organizations to meet a shared goal of defeating malnutrition. PCA is also proud to be a member of Defeat Malnutrition Today, a national coalition of more than 75 organizations and stakeholders working to defeat malnutrition among older adults.

"Solving senior malnutrition means strengthening federal and local programs that already exist," said Louis Colbert, PCA's vice president of operations. "These meal programs can be used to help the elderly remain in the community and out of the hospital."

Houses of worship can be a vital resource in combatting senior hunger, since clergy and senior ministries are active in reaching out to homebound and other seniors at risk. PCA offers meal programs that can help.

PCA's home-delivered meals

PCA's home-delivered meals program serves more than 4,800 older Philadelphians each week. To be eligible, individuals must be 60 or older; live in Philadelphia; be unable to cook, food shop or attend meal programs, such as those at senior centers; live alone; not have someone available to help prepare meals; and lack the financial resources to meet their nutritional needs. PCA professionals assess applicants for eligibility for this and other care-at-home services. Case managers for the five organizations administering PCA's

In-Home Support Program also assess participants' eligibility for home-delivered meals.

Home-delivered meals are nutritionally balanced to support older adults with a variety of health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Kosher options are available. All meals include an entrée, side dishes that include fruit and/or vegetables, and milk.

The meals are provided at no cost to seniors who qualify. Recipients have the opportunity to make an annual contribution to support the program, but it is not required.

Neighborhood lunch spots

PCA's senior community centers and satellite meal sites, which serve lunch to attendees, provide a total of more than 450,000 meals to seniors each year. Meals include an entrée, fruit and vegetable dishes, dessert, milk, and juice. They provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowance of vitamins and minerals and are appropriate for seniors with a variety of health conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Senior center meals are free to those 60 or older and to younger seniors with a spouse who is 60-plus, though there is a suggested donation. Anyone 59 or younger may purchase meals at a center. Information about PCA's home-delivered and senior center meal programs and senior center locations is available by calling the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or at pcaCares.org. Click on "Services for Seniors," then "Senior Centers."

PCA also distributes produce vouchers each summer. (See article on previous page.)

Milestones newspaper

Milestones newspaper, published by PCA, has a readership of more than 175,000 older adults each month. This free newspaper aims to reach seniors with news, features, and information on activities and opportunities for involvement. Copies are distributed at more than 950 locations throughout Philadelphia, lower Bucks and eastern Montgomery counties. Distribution sites include senior community centers, senior living facilities, libraries, doctors' offices, pharmacies, houses of worship and conveniently located honor boxes. Milestones is available for free delivery to faith institutions that order 50 or more copies. To receive Milestones, contact PCA at 215-765-9000, ext. 5050.

Get in touch

PCA Interfaith Outreach Coordinator Sandy Lawrence is available to attend programs and events and to provide information about PCA. She can be reached at 215-765-9000, ext. 5342, or at the email below.

Announcements and other information to be considered for the Elder Gatekeeper can be mailed to Sandy Lawrence at PCA, 642 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130; or emailed to Sandra.Lawrence@pcaCares.org.