

• Emergency Fund Coalition
Member Highlight: Polish
American Social Services

Founded in 1908, Polish American Social Services (PASS), also known as United Social Services, provides comprehensive benefits counseling, information, referral, and advocacy services to older adults and adults with disabilities in the Polish/Slavic community in Southeastern Pennsylvania. PASS addresses the needs of a largely underserved community, helping consumers with language and cultural barriers connect to resources that can contribute to self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and overall physical and mental well-being.

Each year, PASS connects thousands of area residents to vital programs and services such as rent/property tax rebates; utility assistance, including emergency home heating help; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps); home-delivered meals; immigration and legalization information; and domestic violence prevention programs. It disseminates information in Polish and English on its website and through multiple media outlets, including neighborhood churches and organizations, local newspapers and radio stations.

PASS is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information: Polish American Social Services (PASS), 308 Walnut St.; 215-923-1900; polishamericansocialservices.com or unitedsocialservices.com.



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EMERGENCY FUND COALITION BULLETIN

News and resources for those serving emergency needs of older Philadelphians | SUMMER 2018

• Dear Reader:

As we all know, the winter of 2018 was not kind to older adults, proving, once again, the importance of the Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians. This spring, we have concentrated on ways to replenish the fund, as resources have been extremely low.

The Emergency Fund Coalition for Older Philadelphians drew 259 attendees and raised \$36,000 at its 29th Annual Luncheon and Rose Epstein Silent Auction, held May 17 at the Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue.

During the luncheon, the coalition presented Joe Snyder with its Bright Star of Aging Award to honor his decades of distinguished service on behalf of the city's older adults. Snyder directed PCA's Older Adult Protective Services department for 25 years prior to his retirement in January. In that role, he oversaw a department that receives more than 3,000 reports of suspected abuse, neglect and financial exploitation annually. A driving force behind elder abuse prevention efforts nationally, Snyder serves as the public policy chair for the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) and is a former NAPSA president.

The coalition presented Community Service Awards to Joseph Burke, Jewish Relief Agency volunteer; Lynn Fields Harris, Center in the Park executive director (now retired); and Elisa Zygmunt, Benefits Data Trust programs director.

Many thanks to luncheon host Mindy Mozenter, community outreach director for Home Instead Senior Care, a coalition member agency. Thanks also goes to everyone who attended, to all who donated items for the silent auction, to the coalition members who volunteered that day, and to PCA's community relations and communications staff for making the event a success.

We also wish to thank all those who took part in the Walk Against Hunger on Saturday, April 21, and those who sponsored a member of the coalition's team. The event raised \$3,250 to provide Emergency Fund food assistance.

Last, but certainly not least: Statistics are in for the July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018, fiscal year. The Emergency Fund served 1,613 households and provided more than \$184,000 in assistance for basic needs to low-income older Philadelphians who had exhausted all other resources for help. Total expenditures were up 18 percent over the prior year, mainly due to rising demand and the cost of fuel (including oil).

Sincerely,

Mary J. Fallon,
Emergency Fund Coalition Co-Chair
Executive Director
Unitarian Universalist House
Outreach Program

Mark Weber,
Emergency Fund Coalition Co-Chair
Center Counselor
Center at Journey's Way

Annual produce voucher distribution helps eligible seniors access fresh fruits, vegetables

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 certified farmers' markets throughout the city and surrounding area.

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.

The vouchers are being 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 also offers distribution to a limited number of houses of worship. For further information, call 215-765-9000, ext. 5342, or email Sandra.Lawrence@pcacares.org.



For a list of voucher distribution sites and farmers' markets where the vouchers can be spent and additional income eligibility information, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

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

• CASE STUDY

West Philadelphia Senior Community Center

(Submitted by Samantha Prescott, center counselor)

Ms. W., 82, is a volunteer in her West Philadelphia community and a dedicated member of her church and of West Philadelphia Senior Community Center. She lives alone and often worries about how she can afford to heat her two-story home due to her limited income. Last December, she was out of home heating oil and in desperate need of assistance. I was able to complete an application for Emergency Fund assistance immediately on her behalf. As a result of fund assistance, Ms. W. received a delivery of 100 gallons of oil to keep her warm during the cold months.

"You have no idea how much this helps," said Ms. W. "I often have to choose among which bills I am going to pay, so this is a huge relief." She was initially embarrassed to ask for assistance but now is glad she did. "I had no idea programs like the Emergency Fund existed," she said. "This is truly a blessing."

Help is available to prevent foreclosure

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.

SAVE these dates!

Information and Referral Council meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 18, noon to 2:30 p.m.

PCA, 642 N. Broad St.

For information, call 215-765-9000, ext. 5345, or email tracy.payton-coles@pcaCares.org.

2018 Regional Conference on Aging presented by PCA

Wednesday, Sept. 26, to Friday, Sept. 28

PCA, 642 N. Broad St.

Registration and conference information will be available in mid-August at pcaCares.org.

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