

A newsletter covering events and issues of concern to the elderly within the faith community

## Fall Clergy & Seniors Day is coming

We are looking forward to the annual Fall Clergy & Seniors Day conference set for Thursday, October 8, from 8 a.m. to noon. The theme for this year's event is "Empowering Faith Communities with Knowledge about Senior Housing Options." It will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Philadelphia West, 4010 City Ave. The event is free, and breakfast is included.

The conference is presented by the PCA Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition, a group composed of clergy, lay leaders in service with houses of worship, community organizations and agencies that serve Philadelphia seniors. Conference sponsors include Always Best Care Senior Services, Gateway Health, Health Partners Plans and the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing LIFE program. Registration is required, and space is limited. For more information or to be added to our e-mail and mailing lists, contact Sandy Lawrence, PCA interfaith outreach coordinator, at 215-765-9000, ext. 5342 or e-mail [salawren@pcaphl.org](mailto:salawren@pcaphl.org).

## Two coalition members honored for service to seniors

Congratulations to Hajji Rafiq (Emilie Harris) and Hajji Farug (Walter Harris) Abdul Rasheed, both active members of the PCA Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition. This dynamic husband and wife duo were named the 2015 recipients of the Pioneer Award, presented by Masjidullah Inc., for their dedicated service to seniors. The award ceremony was part of the Masjidullah Pre-Ramadan Gala Banquet held on June 13 at the First District AME Plaza. Clergy, government and other Philadelphia leaders were among the attendees. PCA was also recognized at the event for its efforts to improve the quality of life for seniors.

## Faith and community leaders attend "End AIDS Summit"

Philadelphia FIGHT hosted a series of workshops at its "End AIDS Summit" on June 8 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. It featured such topics as "Faith, Sexuality and HIV;" "HIV and Islam;" and "How to Set Up an HIV/AIDS Ministry in Your House of Faith." The event drew attendees from various faiths, and many sessions incorporated aging issues. Rev. Dr. Carlethia Dowdy, director of faith initiatives at Philly FIGHT, announced that an HIV/AIDS training course, Faithful TEACH, is given regularly for members of the faith community. For information about the course and/or to join the Philadelphia FIGHT faith-based advisory committee, call Dr. Dowdy at 215-985-4448, ext. 253 or e-mail [cdowdy@fight.org](mailto:cdowdy@fight.org).

## African elders honored

The Victory Harvest International Church on 2536 S. 59 St. hosted Tambason Global Human Services' "Elders Sit Comfortable" events on March 9 and June 13. During these events, the organization provided beautiful new recliner chairs for seniors in Southwest Philadelphia's African immigrant community. More than 50 immigrant elders were escorted to their personal chairs by representatives of African-centered faith communities. Sandy Lawrence, PCA interfaith outreach coordinator, and Kia Gaymon, PCA service coordinator supervisor, also helped to escort chair recipients. African community clergy leaders Rev. John Jallah and Bishop Dr. Carolina Baltazar Harris congratulated Moses Tambason for his organization's efforts to reach out to new African elders in the community.



## Hotline to healthy food

Is your house of worship overwhelmed with food requests by repeat recipients? Houses of worship are often the first and last resource on the battlefield against hunger. The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger has a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Hotline that can assist people in finding food pantries, soup kitchens and other programs and to enroll for SNAP (formerly called food stamps) benefits. For information, call the agency's SNAP Hotline at 215-430-0556 or visit [www.phillyFoodFinder.org](http://www.phillyFoodFinder.org).

## 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, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) formed the Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition in 1998. The Coalition is interfaith, intercultural, and multi-ethnic in makeup and 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.

### Coalition 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 with older adults and families

**PCA**

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Enriching lives, preserving dignity.™

**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 non-profit organizations, PCA is funded primarily through the Older Americans Act and the Pennsylvania Lottery, through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and Medical Assistance, 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 [www.pcaCares.org](http://www.pcaCares.org).**

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## Did you know?

- Free Emergency Safety workshops are available to help houses of worship prepare for disasters. Call Michael Kiley-Zufelt of American Red Cross at 215-299-4067 or e-mail at Mike.Kiley-Zufelt@redcross.org.
- Habitat for Humanity's ReStore shop offers new and gently used furniture, appliances, building materials and more for low-income families. ReStore is located at 2930 Jasper St. For information on current inventory, call Habitat for Humanity at 215-765-6000, ext. 51.
- Need to know where to find services and resources in your area? Dial "211" from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. 211 is a United Way Project.
- Northeast Meals on Wheels prepares its food packages in the Philadelphia Protestant Home kitchen. The program serves residents of the Burholme, Fox Chase, Lawncrest and Rhawnhurst neighborhoods who are unable to cook or shop for themselves. For information, call 215-745-9066.

## News briefs

- Philadelphia Protestant Home at 6500 Tabor Ave. held its annual Wellness Symposium for residents and their families on March 27.
- Solid Rock UMC, located on 199 E. Tabor Rd., held a "Feeding the Community Dinner" on May 24. Food and clothing were distributed during the coffee-and-dinner event. Attendees received information about resources for low-income Philadelphians. Rev. Margaret Powell is church pastor.
- The Community Enrichment Fitness Network held a Senior Gala on June 12 at the H&H Community Center & Banquet Hall. More than 230 seniors enjoyed dancing, door prizes and lunch while learning about health resources. Sherry Hill serves as the network's executive director.
- Congratulations to Chaplain Phyllis Taylor, who was honored for her efforts on behalf of incarcerated women at the "I'm FREE Annual Partners in Freedom" awards event on June 16.
- The Bethel Golden Seniors Ministry of Bethel Presbyterian Church, 1900 W. York St., held a workshop about Alzheimer's disease on June 29. Rev. Willie Keaton Jr. is church pastor.
- Congratulations to coalition member Rev. Michael Robinson of Greater ENON Missionary Baptist Church on his third pastoral anniversary. The church marked the event with a three-day celebration, complete with guest preachers and choirs, at its 1854 N. 22nd Street location.

## Senior benefits underutilized in Philadelphia

PCA is working to increase awareness of the PACE & PACENET prescription assistance programs, which offer low-cost prescription medication to qualified Pennsylvanians age 65 and older. Another underutilized senior benefit is the Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975.

The prescription assistance and rebate programs are sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging through the Pennsylvania Lottery. Coalition members are encouraged to inform congregants and have ample copies of information and enrollment forms available for seniors and caregivers. To receive this information or to schedule a presentation about these and other senior programs at your senior event, call Sandy Lawrence, PCA interfaith outreach coordinator, at 215-765-9000, ext. 5342 or e-mail [salawren@pcaphl.org](mailto:salawren@pcaphl.org).

## Good food for all

The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger teamed with the Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) for the "Good Food for All" conference held on May 14. The event took place at FLP's Parkway Central Library, Culinary Literacy Center at 1901 Vine St. Many members of the clergy, faith-based meals ministries, and other faith and community organizations were in attendance. The conference included cooking demonstrations and a workshop entitled "Holistic Hospitality for Community Food Programs."

## Local house of worship focuses on community assistance

On July 24, Sweet Union Baptist Church, located at 1536 N. 59th St., held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Carroll Park Center for Hope, Help and Healing. State Senator Vincent Hughes was among those in attendance. Sweet Union now doubles as a church and as a community center, where community and nonprofit groups can host meetings and other activities. According to Pastor Zack Ritvasky, the debut of the new Carroll Park Center for Hope, Help and Healing caps a nine-year effort by church and community members to renovate the church facility and make it fully accessible.

## "Rebuilding Together Philadelphia" assists seniors

"Rebuilding Together Philadelphia," a home repair program that helps seniors and disabled residents upgrade their homes, was started by Wharton School of Business students who cared about low-income families. About 70 homes are upgraded annually through the program, which is manned by 100-plus volunteers with carpentry and plumbing experience. Services to help seniors with health and safety improvements include installing handrails and ramps, plumbing repairs, removing old carpet, and more. The program works with eligible homeowners from zip codes 19104, 19122, 19138 and veteran homeowners in all city zip codes. The application hotline is 215-568-5044.

## Mercy Neighborhood Ministries hosts Alzheimer's disease seminar

On March 31, Mercy Neighborhood Ministries hosted an "Alzheimer's and the Faith Community" seminar. Elder Michael Beauford, of Beloved St. John Evangelistic Church, provided a moving account of how he and his siblings share caregiving duties for his nearly 100-year-old mother. Keynote speaker Rev. Jay Broadnax, pastor of Mt. Pisgah AME Church, provided biblical inspiration and stories from his own experiences as a caregiver for his late mother. That experience has motivated him to create a special outreach for congregants who live with Alzheimer's and to find ways for clergy and lay leaders to help support them. Sister Ann Provost, executive director of Mercy Neighborhood Ministries, provided an inspirational address. Rev. Barbara Jones, faith outreach coordinator for the Delaware Valley Alzheimer's Association, presented an overview on Alzheimer's. Elder Beauford is co-chair of PCA's Clergy-Aging Interfaith Coalition along with Sister Therese Saetta.

## Milestones newspaper

*Milestones* newspaper, published by PCA, has a readership of 168,000 older Philadelphians each month. This free newspaper is aimed at reaching senior citizens with news, features and information on activities and opportunities for involvement. Copies are distributed at more than 900 locations throughout Philadelphia, including senior community centers, senior living facilities, libraries, doctor's offices, pharmacies and conveniently located honor boxes. *Milestones* is available for free delivery to faith institutions that order 50 or more copies. Contact PCA at 215-765-9000, ext. 5050.

*If you are interested in having your program or special event featured in the Elder Gatekeeper, please invite us to attend, so we can cover it for our newsletter. Call PCA's Interfaith Outreach Coordinator, Sandy Lawrence at 215-765-9000, ext. 5342 or mail requests, invitations or announcements to Sandy Lawrence at PCA, 642 N. Broad St, Philadelphia, PA 19130 or email [salawren@pcaphl.org](mailto:salawren@pcaphl.org).*