Faith organization reaches out to serve the community

Beloved St. John Community Development Corporation (BSJCDC) held its first annual Health Fair May 21. The event, held in the city’s Logan section, offered workshops on caregiving, financial planning, financial exploitation, mortgages and insurance. More than 150 people attended, including many seniors and caregivers. Attendees enjoyed numerous giveaways, a healthy lunch and snacks. BSJCDC is nonprofit faith-based organization whose mission is to identify resources and develop programs addressing the social, economic, educational and health needs of specific North Philadelphia and Logan communities.

Houses of worship assist PCA with annual produce voucher distribution

PCA’s Community Relations Department reached out to several houses of worship this past summer to assist with the annual Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program produce voucher distribution. These faith institutions distributed vouchers immediately following their weekend morning worship services, with the aid of PCA staff who volunteered to be on hand that day. These houses of worship were a convenient distribution site, since many older adults are dedicated to attending services and transportation is often available for them to do so. More than 1,200 vouchers were distributed altogether, excluding each recipient to purchase $20 worth of locally grown fruits and vegetables from certified farmers’ markets. The vouchers must be used by Nov. 30.

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), a private, nonprofit Area Agency on Aging, was established in 1973 to coordinate social services for Philadelphia 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, 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.

To submit comments or suggestions for publication, contact Sandy Lawrence Philadelphia Corporation for Aging 642 North Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19130-3409 Phone: 215-765-8000, ext. 3342 Fax: 215-765-9066 E-mail: salawren@pcaphl.org © 2016 Philadelphia Corporation for Aging. All rights reserved.
Did you know?

- Benefits counseling services are offered, free of charge, at 21 senior centers supported by Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA). Older adults do not have to be a member of the center to get help. Senior center counselors and social workers can help individuals apply for employment; access programs to assist in the purchase of food; learn ways to save on Medicare, other health insurance premiums or prescription drug costs; and find out about resources for assistance in the home, such as home-delivered meals, PCA’s Care at Home programs, and private-pay home care agencies. To find a convenient senior center, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or visit the PCA website, www.pcaCare.org and click on “Senior Services.”

- Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia offers a special Home Repairs for Veterans Program for veterans who reside in West and Southwest Philadelphia. For information, call Jayce Borkay at 215-765-6000, ext. 18 or email JayceB@habitatphiladelphia.org.

- The Community Enrichment Fitness Network (CEFN), founded and led by Sherry Hill, empowers individuals to make permanent healthy lifestyle changes. It provides nutrition and fitness education programs for adults, older adults and children through six-week workshops in Philadelphia and elsewhere in the Delaware Valley. A Nutrition Awareness and Healthy Cooking Demonstration Project is scheduled on Thursdays from Sept. 29 through Oct. 27 at Grace United Methodist Church, 7101 N. 20th St. For information, call Sherry Hill at 215-838-4957.

- Philly Food Bucks are available to help eligible Philadelphians save money on fruits and vegetables. Participants can use their ACCESS benefit card at participating farmers’ markets in Philadelphia and receive a $2 Philly Food Bucks coupon for every $5 they spend. For a list of participating farmers’ markets, call 3-1-1.

- The District Attorney’s office provides a special presentation for seniors about recognizing, preventing and reporting scams. For information, call Thomas Carter Jr. at 215-686-6301.

HIV/AIDS and the faith community

Philadelphia FIGHT is a comprehensive health services organization providing primary care, consumer education, research, and advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS and those at high risk. Philadelphia FIGHT’s Office of Faith Initiatives, directed by Dr. Caslenhia Dowdy, addresses the spiritual health of people living with HIV/AIDS; disseminates information; and provides training to faith leaders and their congregations. It holds a Faith Leaders Network meeting, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, the fourth Wednesday of every month at St. Luke’s Church, 330 S. 13th St.

Last June, as part of National AIDS Education Month, the office sponsored a Faith Leaders’ Summit to educate faith leaders about HIV/AIDS and its impact. The summit was followed by a gospel concert. Rev. Jay Broadnax and Rebecca Alvarez chaired the events.

For information about the Faith Leaders Network meetings or the Philadelphia FIGHT Office of Faith Initiatives, call Dr. Dowdy at 215-983-4448, ext. 253 or email cdowdy@fight.org.

Are you ready for emergencies?

The Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management (OEM) wants communities and individuals to be prepared for emergencies. This includes houses of worship, which are often utilized as safe havens during emergency situations. OEM can provide an instructional workshop for your congregants and neighbors. Topics include family emergency plans; where to go if you need to evacuate; and special planning considerations for seniors and/or people who are disabled. OEM can also train people to prepare “go-bags,” which are easy-to-carry supply bags of essentials for three days. For further information or to schedule a training program, call 215-683-9261 or email oem@phil.gov.

The American Red Cross of Eastern Pennsylvania also offers free educational workshops on emergency preparedness. To schedule a workshop at your organization or house of worship, call Michael Kiley-Zuñel at 215-296-9076 or e-mail Mike.Kiley-Zuanel@redcross.org.

PA property tax/rent rebate application deadline extended

The deadline for older adults and people with disabilities to apply for rebates on rent and property taxes paid in 2015 has been extended to December 31. The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65-plus; widows and widowers age 50-plus; and people with disabilities age 18-plus. The income limit is $35,000 a year for homeowners and $15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded. Applicants may obtain Property Tax/ Rent Rebate claim forms (PA-1000) and related information online at www.revenue.pa.gov or by calling, toll-free, 1-800-222-9190.

Program supports caregivers

The PCA Caregiver Support Program (formerly known as the Family Caregiver Support Program) offers assistance to primary unpaid caregivers who are providing daily hands-on care to a friend or relative. This support can include access to resources and information; financial assistance to help families who qualify financially for caregiving supplies and services; and care management and respite care services. Services are also available for relatives age 60 or older who are raising a child age 18 or younger. For information, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or visit PCA’s website at www.pcaCare.org and click on “Services.”

PCA seeks ambassadors

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) seeks volunteer “Ambassadors” – adults of any age – who can help reach out to the community with information about PCA programs and services. Ambassadors will receive training and will be encouraged to seek opportunities to share PCA information with their communities in a wide variety of settings, including places of business, houses of worship, fraternal, social, and community organizations and among their own families, friends and neighbors. PCA Ambassadors will be training about the many services available to older Philadelphians, including transportation services, care in the home, support for caregivers, home modifications, senior community centers, property tax rebates and other benefits. For information, contact 215-765-9000, ext. 3340 or email rjector@pcaphl.org.

Milestones newspaper

Milestones newspaper, published by PCA, has a readership of 170,000 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.