



Maximize Active Aging Week

with post-event planning

Active Aging Week

Theme: Many journeys, many destinations

September 23–29, 2012
www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm

Actions after this year's activities add value to your efforts—and set the stage for a promising event next year

As September approaches, so too does Active Aging Week®, the annual health promotion observance that celebrates healthy, active aging.

The International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) launched Active Aging Week in September 2003 to give older adults opportunities to explore an ac-

tive lifestyle and learn about its benefits. ICAA promotes the campaign nationally in Canada and the United States, while offerings are organized locally by host organizations.

Over the years, Active Aging Week hosts have delivered a wide range of fun, free and educational events across the dimensions of wellness (i.e., physical, spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, vocational and environmental wellness). From health fairs to singalongs, brain fitness to dances, new and returning



At Capstone Village in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the calendar of Active Aging Week events in 2011 included a golf-themed day

participants experience these activities in an encouraging, friendly atmosphere. And while Active Aging Week spreads the message that people can live as fully as possible at any age, the hope is that people who participate will feel inspired to continue their wellness journeys.

You, too, can maximize the benefit of your Active Aging Week experience by planning what will happen *after* the campaign.

Adding value

With Active Aging Week taking place September 23–29 this year, host organizations like yours are busy arranging and confirming speakers, sponsors, room rentals, and all the other details that will make the week go smoothly. Participation may include one event, several or a calendar full. But whether it's your first Active Aging Week or your 10th, the steps you take once the campaign finishes can add value to your efforts, both this year and next. Here are some areas to consider:

Evaluate. Each organization has its specific goals and constituency. Feedback

is key to knowing if your Active Aging Week events have met these goals and client needs. Besides monitoring responses at events, a feedback form is the best way to collect comments. Among the questions to ask, include those that reflect your programming goals and larger objectives. Do you want to help people initiate behavioral change? Increase their awareness of a brain-healthy lifestyle? Solicit feedback from participants that allows you to evaluate the impact of your offerings.

Once you have tabulated feedback forms, gather your planning committee for a post-event meeting. As a group, evaluate your overall participation in Active Aging Week as well as individual activities. Discuss what worked well, what didn't and why, plus ways to improve those things that disappointed you. Look at what participants had to say. Are there consistent themes emerging in the feedback or recommendations that you could use?

A follow-up meeting will help you analyze and learn from your 2012 events, so you can bring this understanding to next

year's planning. The meeting is also an opportunity to celebrate people's efforts and achievements, and thank everyone involved. (Be sure to extend that goodwill to volunteers by mailing thank-you notes. Individuals will appreciate your acknowledgement and be more likely to volunteer again in the future.)

Communicate. In the months prior to Active Aging Week, you promote the observance and upcoming activities to your organization and clientele, with the goal of encouraging awareness and participation. Like many planners, you also may strive for free publicity through the media to reach older adults who are not currently clients. But the coverage doesn't have to stop with the event. You have an opportunity for further column-space—and the chance to share the week's highlights—with a wrap-up article in your organization's newsletter or a post-event story in the media.

Plan ahead to make sure the necessary materials will be available for a follow-up piece. Enlist staff members who are skilled writers or photographers to cover the week and show participants in action. Or tap clients experienced in these areas and promote vocational wellness, too. (If general model releases are not already on file for participants, make sure photographers secure signed releases so you can legally provide images for publication.)

Ask one person to write an Active Aging Week wrap-up article for your newsletter, or give several people opportunities to contribute. It's important to outline deadlines and expectations ahead of the campaign, to ensure everyone understands what they will be doing. Arrange for someone to prepare a post-event release to send to the media once your event(s) or the campaign is over. To ensure the greatest chance of pickup, this release needs to go out in a timely

Continued on page 46

Maximize Active Aging Week with post-event planning

Continued from page 45

Resources

Active Aging Week

ICAA website

www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm

Active Aging Week on Facebook

Official ICAA site

www.facebook.com/activeagingweek

fashion and include details that make it newsworthy (e.g., numbers of participants, names of prominent guests, prizes awarded, dollars raised for any causes, outcomes of events, and quotes). Be sure to provide some information about active aging itself and why your organization is participating in the campaign. You'll repeat the message that active living is possible at any age.

Report. Once you evaluate your organization's Active Aging Week participation and communicate about the experiences provided to clients, what is there left to do? Write two post-event reports. One is an internal report for your colleagues and supervisor to outline the results of the event, lessons learned, feedback—and analyze them through the frame of the event's overarching purpose, to extract the true meaning for your organization and clients. It is important that you communicate “up” and “across” to reinforce the value of wellness.

The second report, for ICAA, doesn't have to be a lot of extra work. Just combine your internal report and press release/newsletter text, covering key points (see the list in the sidebar “Share your Active Aging Week experience” on this page). And remember to send some photographs. You may see your event covered in the *Journal on Active Aging*® or *ICAA Functional U*®.

Your reports about your Active Aging Week activities and special moments can assist ICAA and your industry col-


leagues with their own campaign efforts. Just as you reinforce the value of hosting Active Aging Week, ICAA needs to be able to evaluate the results and value of the campaign. Your reports are the way the association does this.

Finally, the only way ICAA knows you are hosting Active Aging Week is if you register as a host site. It's free, quick and simple to register. Visit the Active Aging Week section on ICAA's website and fill out the brief form online (refer to “Resources” for information).

Endings and beginnings

As you enter the final stages of planning, take some time to think about how to maximize the impact of your Active Aging Week participation in the weeks to come. Consider new ways you may attract participant attention by using this year's campaign theme—“Many journeys, many destinations”—and the key messages below:

- Choose a healthy lifestyle for better years of life.
- Spend 30 minutes each day in physical activity.
- Discover one new activity that brings you value.

Visit ICAA's Active Aging Week website to download logos, fact sheets, press releases, and other complimentary support materials, including campaign posters. And while you make plans for what you will do before and during the week, go ahead and decide the steps you will take afterwards. Your post-event planning will not only help you make the most of this year's Active Aging Week, but also set the stage for a promising event next year. 

The sponsors of Active Aging Week 2012 include 24 Hour Fitness, Aegis Therapies, Institute for Preventive Foot Health, Matrix Fitness and Thor•Lo, Inc.

Share your Active Aging Week experience

Tell ICAA about your Active Aging Week activities, key moments, results and recommendations. Simply use your internal report and press release/newsletter text to cover points that include:

- your organization's name and location, and if you partnered with others, who they were and/or how many locations sponsored Active Aging Week
- how many people attended
- whether they were new faces or regular participants
- what types of activities you offered, and which activities captured the most attention or received the highest ratings
- whether there were memorable moments for an individual, or a group, and what they were
- what you would do differently next year when planning

ICAA also welcomes your photographs. If you have high-resolution images (needed for publication in the *Journal on Active Aging*®) or many photos, please create a zip file or send images through a free online service such as www.yousendit.com.

Please email materials to patryan@icaa.cc by October 15, 2012. Thank you! Good luck with your events.