

Set your Active Aging Week

journey in motion



Active Aging Week

Theme: Many journeys, many destinations
September 23–29, 2012
www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm

Offer older adults opportunities to find activities of value in their journeys toward active, healthy and engaged living

Each September, Active Aging Week® brings a myriad of wellness opportunities to age 50-plus adults in communities across North America. The annual health promotion event is a time for individuals to explore activities that support vibrant and healthy living in a safe, supportive environment. These experiences may lead to their discovering activities they value—and perhaps meaningful new directions, too.

From seniors centers and senior living communities, to aging services groups and health clubs, host organizations

crank up the creativity to celebrate the message of Active Aging Week: People can live as fully as possible at any age. Offerings are many and varied. Examples include group walks and fitness classes, health fairs and presentations, concerts and contests, dances and demonstrations.

Led by the International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA), Active Aging Week offers organizations maximum flexibility to tailor their participation. As an event host, you can deliver however many offerings you wish on as many days of the week you desire and in any or all of the dimensions of wellness (i.e., physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, vocational and environmental). ICAA

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In Marietta, Georgia, the Parc at Piedmont's line dancing group entertained community members and staff with the Boot Scootin' Boogie during Active Aging Week 2011



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Active Aging Week resources

The International Council on Active Aging® provides Active Aging Week® resources for host organizations.

These include:

- planning guides
- planning worksheets
- program profiles
- logos
- posters
- fact sheet
- press release
- certificates of participation

Check out www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm regularly for updates in the coming months.

has only three guidelines. Activities should be:

- free to older adults, to ensure cost is no barrier
- educational
- provided in a fun, no-pressure atmosphere

This year's Active Aging Week takes place September 23–29. To help you plan, market and motivate participation in your activities, ICAA chooses an annual theme. For 2012, the theme is “Many journeys, many destinations,” which recognizes that older adults and the organizations that serve them all travel individual paths toward their own wellness destinations. As with all things wellness, choices along the way determine the direction.

Early choices

With Active Aging Week participation, early choices include when to start planning and who to involve. Veteran hosts consistently recommend starting early, creating a planning team and collaborating with colleagues across departments.

At the Village at Germantown in Tennessee, for example, six staff members—two from the resident services department and four from wellness—“came up with the theme and planned the activities for the week” in 2011, said Resident Services Coordinator Michelle Webb. The schedule for the last week of September was filled with events to celebrate being “active thru the ages.” Among these were the Sock Hop and Hula Hoop Contest, Daily Trivia and Price is Right game, “Celebrate the Decades” Cocktail Party, Tai Chi, Water Therapy, and Kick-off Party featuring The Navy Band. About 150 people attended the community's biggest offerings, which included entertainment events and a health fair.

“The wellness department has a certain amount allotted for Active Aging Week each year, but we still have to be pretty price conscious so we can spread as far as possible,” Webb explained. As part of the planning team, resident services helped cover the costs for decorations and some of the entertainment, which was a real benefit.

One thing the Germantown staff will do differently this year is to contact sponsors earlier in the planning process. The community usually approaches its food vendors for sponsorships, as well as local pharmacies and hospitals. But, in 2011,

“we actually didn't have as many sponsors for our T-shirt as we normally do, so we had to use some of our money to cover this expense,” Webb stated. “We decided that we need to start asking companies pretty far in advance if they want to be a sponsor, because they have to fit those things into their budget as well and it can't always be done at the last minute.”

Develop goals

An earlier start gives you more time to create a vision and decide your organization's goals for Active Aging Week. By determining what results you want to achieve, you can move ahead with planning to meet your objectives and be flexible enough to add activities along the way if they support your goals.

In 2011, the Kendal at Lexington in Lexington, Virginia, partnered with the Arthritis Foundation prior to Active Aging Week to offer the Life Improvement Series' aquatic and tai chi programs. In fact, Kendal introduced the tai chi program during the week. “Our events for Active Aging Week started out with the Tai Chi for Arthritis Program introduction and demonstration,” said Wellness



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Active Aging Week five-month plan

Planning stages	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Contact people to plan events.					
Form vision of what your week will look like.					
Choose target audiences, activities.					
Reserve speakers, space, equipment.					
Plan marketing campaign, produce materials.					
Launch marketing program.					
Finalize work that allies, volunteers and others will perform.					
Post posters and other displays.					
Welcome your participants.					

Coordinator Sherry Harrill. “Residents participated and learned some of the basic tai chi moves.” Other activities during the week included a step aerobics demonstration class, an “aquatic day,” a presentation by a certified medical massage therapist, and a “trail hike” with 20 residents and two dogs.

“Overall, it was a very successful week in that it encouraged people to try activities that they may not have otherwise considered,” Harrill observed. “It also helped to promote group activity participation, especially with our Tai Chi Program and our ‘Trail Walkers.’” She added that, for 2012, Kendal was considering opening some activities to the community.

Captions

1. *The Kendal at Lexington, Virginia, launched the Arthritis Foundation’s tai chi program during Active Aging Week 2011. Participants learned basic movements of this gentle mind-body practice, which is known to reduce stress and enhance flexibility*

2. *Active Aging Week 2011 meant movies and activities at Capstone Village in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. When Breakfast at Tiffany’s was the theme of the day, events included jewelry making (shown here), a jewelry show, and more*


Getting started

So where do you start? Active Aging Week may seem a long way away, but September will be here before you know it. To aid with planning, ICAA’s Active Aging Week website offers a library of professional resources (refer to the box on page 62), and this will be updated throughout the coming months. Together with these resources, the steps below outline how you can begin your involvement:

1. Go to ICAA’s Active Aging Week website and download the planning worksheets.
2. Form a planning team. Your team might include your colleagues in other departments, involved clients and residents who are your target market, as well as trusted partners, such as vendors and contractors.
3. Establish your goals. Do you want to provide unique activities, or promote a new class or program? Bring in new people who don’t typically visit your location? Give your veteran participants a chance to lead some activities? This is a good time to work with other departments to coordinate goals.
4. Develop the theme. How can you use the Active Aging Week theme of “Many journeys, many destinations” to build the program?
5. Have fun brainstorming with the team. Bring along the overview articles and program profiles from the ICAA website to see what other hosts have accomplished.

6. Register with ICAA as a host site. Registration is not mandatory, but it is the only way ICAA knows you’re participating.
7. Decide how many activities you will offer, covering how many days. Some organizations have one big event, such as a dinner-dance. Others host one special day with a sequence of fitness classes, games and health lectures. Other organizations host special events throughout the week and add twists to the regularly scheduled activities.
8. Assign tasks to team members. One or more people might be in charge of contacting presenters, another person might solicit donations or health fair exhibits, and another, publicity.

Finally, the five-month plan provided above shows planning stages and suggested timelines for Active Aging Week. It’s a useful tool for keeping your efforts on track.

Active Aging Week encourages older adults to live full, active and healthy lives. It’s a perfect way for your organization to support individuals in exploring activities and discovering those that add value and direction to their wellness journeys—and yours. 

The sponsors of Active Aging Week 2012 include Aegis Therapies, Matrix Fitness, New Balance Athletic Shoe and 24 Hour Fitness.