

Program Coordinators Meeting Report
April 30th, 2013

Focusing Statement:

What are the challenges and opportunities facing you in 55+ programming?

Challenges discussed:

➤ **Transportation**

- Biggest challenges are cost, mobility, availability and flexibility
- Transportation Options Network
 - Great resource – education, linking, resources, etc.
- Volunteer drivers program:
 - Rural – Cost of gas and parking (i.e. Stonewall to the St. Boniface Hospital)
 - Lack of volunteers
 - Cost to volunteers (i.e. wear and tear, gas, time)
- Handy Van:
 - Affordable for older adults
 - Rural - \$ 25.00 / hr
 - City – availability/schedule is not flexible
- Winnipeg Transit:
 - Kneeling bus
 - Bus tutorial
 - Reduced fare
- Taxi:
 - Costly
 - Not all drivers will help our members in and out of the car
 - Not all cars are accessible for wheelchairs/walkers, etc. (unless requested otherwise)
- Beaver Bus Line:
 - Costly
- Sponsorship is available for rural and city
- Day trips:
 - Not all accessible
 - Not everyone can afford the programs
- Shuttle accessibility
 - Cost, timing, and mobility
 - i.e. Safeway, Sobeys, Walmart, Pharmacy

➤ **Recruiting volunteers**

- Young families
- Transportation for those who are retired and no longer able to drive
- Better advertisement (more interesting description)
- Need to advertise more (Senior's Scope, Metro, Winnipeg Free Press, Growing Old Column, in the community, etc.)

- Create a “Volunteer Board” where all the information is posted on this specific board for opportunities
- Clearly advertise on centre’s website (separate page)
- Mention the volunteer opportunities at luncheons and programs

➤ **Attracting and retaining younger and new members**

- Not enough fitness classes
- Not or little opportunity for evening programming for those who are still working
- Need for leaders/instructors for the evening programs
- Lack of insurance coverage for all members outside of the Centre
- Lack of information on interests of activities, etc.
- Younger seniors do not consider themselves as “seniors”
- Not enough interest in participating in as many programs because they still have a spouse
- Different generations, different interests
- Subjects that interest the “retirement age” are travel, educational, technological

➤ **Programming Space**

- Talked about the challenges faced by many centres when it comes to running a wide variety of programs with limited space resources at hand.
- Some solutions included:
 - Trying to reconfigure existing space to enable the group to still accomplish what they need to.
 - Seek out a local partner that can help you. A school, a church a business that has space that they can spare. If funds are tight see if there is something that you can help them with and that way are able to share different resources.
 - Explore different funding options to acquire more space or to renovate existing.

➤ **Attracting male members (male programming)**

- Men seems to be less interested in participating in most programs
- Organizing the following program may help them register and become more involved:
 - Men’s Chat group
 - Story telling
 - Pool tables
 - Sing Along, Karaoke, Choir
 - Bowling
 - Golf
 - Breakfast
 - Presentations
 - International Day
 - Computers

- Drop-ins for woodcarving and model making
- Socialize over crafts or open activity
- Language class

➤ **Funding for seniors on fixed incomes**

People are embarrassed to say they are unable to afford things. Do any of the Centers have a low income rate? Strategies that are currently in place are:

- transportation is subsidized at the Seine River Seniors Centre
- Barber Senior Centre provides a breakfast with a jar for contributions. Frequently the seniors attend regularly but don't contribute until cheque day.
- Barber Centre negotiated free tickets for the Symphony. They use the New Horizons grant money to pay for the transportation for volunteer drivers or bus tickets.
- they offer volunteer opportunities in exchange for fee for an activity or event.

Other challenges mentioned:

- Website
- Limited (not enough) funding for paid staff
- Knowledge on writing effective funding/grants
- Not enough program leaders or facilitators
- Programming for all ages of seniors (i.e. 55+ to 90+)
- Get younger members aged 55 to 60
- Recruiting volunteers for program, committees, etc.
- Involve members to volunteer
- Room/office space
- Transportation
- Need more casual social event opportunities to mix members
- Refund policy
- Registration limits/problems
- *New Senior Centre*
- Fitness participation
- Participation in specific programs
- Navigating seniors to register in programs
- Expansion of programming hours (i.e. evenings and weekends)
- Fundraising for general costs to run the centre
- Low enrollment numbers
- Location of the centre
- Finding different event ideas that are successful and new
- Board approval
- Reaching seniors through social media
- Amalgamating all the 55+ centers to utilize the talent in front of them
- Policy and procedures (i.e. human resource issues, coordinator's job description)
- Personality, conflict, and Board relationship issues

- Program directory
- Our mandate
- Criminal record checks
- Funding for programs
- No shows

Opportunities Discussed:

- **Expanding the Centre's hours (i.e. evenings and weekends)**
 - Multiple request to expand hours from the general public and members
 - Expanding hours would increase membership
 - Easier to recruit younger members
 - Create partnership for intergenerational programs (you need to keep in mind on financial agreement – i.e. registration costs, profit is split?)
 - Intergenerational programs get everyone involved
 - Provide free workshops (i.e. bring a guest for free, 2 for 1)
 - Expanding hours will cost more (i.e. instructor) – perhaps the Centre can find a reliable volunteer or board member to unlock and lock the doors)

- **Health services overwhelmed**

Mental Health Services are Overwhelmed A Centre Coordinator vented feelings of inadequacy re: his lack of skill and knowledge in dealing with the many issues and concerns expressed by individuals at the Centre. Individuals frequently verbalize concerns re: depression, abuse of all kinds, poverty, addictions, isolation, loneliness, etc. for themselves or others. Senior Centre Coordinators require a list of appropriate resources and need guidelines re: making referrals.

- **Information sharing**
 - Watch for info on May 31st
 - Meet quarterly with program coordinators
 - Newsletter quarterly for programs
 - Repetitive programs
 - Email and post upcoming trips
 - Sharing newsletter within 55+ centers
 - Place to share (i.e. Intergenerational Manitoba)
 - Email the link of newsletter to all members
 - Newsletter section or email list part of MASC (website)
 - Invite other centers to your programs or outings to diversify the social component
 - Invite groups (centers) and MLA to a big year end part
 - Send an email list

- **Partnerships (i.e. U of M, schools, City of Winnipeg)**
 - More partnerships/networks equals to more opportunities
 - U of M has a program called *Lifelong Learning*

- Programs: Muscles & Bones, Food Production
- Experts in the field lead the series
- Series vary from 1 to 8 approximately
- The registration cost only includes the cost of the instructor, professor or expert, space, refreshments
- Provide series once a week vs. twice a week (helps with those who have a challenge with transportation and it sounds more appealing for the price)
- Schools:
 - Intergenerational reading programs (there are schools that are falling behind in learning how to read) – perhaps a group can go for an hour a week and help teach the students one-on-one

➤ **Attracting and retaining younger and new members**

- A question was asked in regards to which programs provide opportunity and attract younger members?
- Physically active programs that include more mobility from the members
- Outdoor activities during the evenings and weekends (i.e. urban poling, fishing, and cycling groups)
- Using technology and media to advertise
- More technology classes

Other opportunities mentioned:

- Create a website
- Website expansion/development
- Photographer/videographer (i.e. maintaining photo and video files)
- *New Senior Centre*
- Educational lectures
- Technology based classes
- Fundraising programs and events
- Promotion/outreach
- Funding and grant opportunities (i.e. neighborhoods ALIVE, Healthy Together Now)
- Expand program and membership
- Multi-centre programs or outings
- Life stories and writing stories
- Utilizing community, businesses and sponsors
- Intergenerational programs (i.e. raised garden beds that are built and maintained by members and students)
- New fitness class ideas
- Social networking classes
- Trips outside of Winnipeg (i.e. Kenora, Grand Forks)
- Folklorama pavilions
- Pole walking