

**New York Community Empowerment Conference
“Community Organizing Tools for Healthy Aging in Place”
Workshop #18**

I. Introduction: The Saratoga Vital Aging Network—Education, Advocacy, and Civic Engagement

A. Objectives of the Workshop

1. To provide information and tools for organizing a community-based model of a Healthy Aging Network
2. To share lessons learned in startup, the first two years

B. Modification of an Existing Model: The Minnesota Vital Aging Network

1. *“The Vital Aging Network builds the individual and civic capacity of older adults to create vital communities in which people of all generations work together to find the right balance between meeting the individual needs of its people and achieving the common good”.*
2. ALVA Leadership Development Program
3. Provides tools, information, and dialogue on the website, www.vital-aging-network.org (extensive resource guide)
4. Distributes an e-Bulletin
5. Provides VAN forums
6. Collaboration: VAN Ventures
 - a) MYR, Inc. Mapping Your Retirement
 - b) Environmental Force
 - c) Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network

C. Saratoga Vital Aging Network: Outcomes After Two Years

1. The Saratoga Institute: role of a nonprofit incubator
2. Board of Founding Directors
3. Fiscal agent
4. Two startup grants
5. Gatherings/Forums
 - a) *Tuesdays with Morrie*
 - b) *Moving Through Maturity*
 - c) *How’s Your Hearing?*
 - d) *Vital Art for Vital Aging*
 - e) *Universal/Single Payer Health Care*
 - f) *SVAN: Who Are We?*
6. Porch meetings
7. Approximately 150 members
8. Email system and website, www.saratogavitalaging.org

9. Strategic Partnerships Established
 - a) Skidmore College
 - b) Empire State University: Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL)
 - c) The Saratoga Public Library
 - d) Saratoga Senior Center
 - e) Saratoga County Arts Council (SCAC)

10. *Saratoga at Home*: The Direct Service Component
 - a) 89% of Baby boomers want to remain in their homes and communities
 - b) \$52,000/year cost of a nursing home
 - c) \$12,000/year cost of coordinated in-home care
(www.elderberryinstitute.org)

II. Building a Community-Based Effort

A. Why is Vital Aging Important?

1. Aging is Changing
 - a) 65% increase in longevity over the last century
 - b) Average 55 year old today can expect to live another 30 years
 - c) Older adults are healthier, better educated, and wealthier than ever before. An important resource!
 - d) We know the critical factors that promote healthy aging: *a sense of purpose*, connections to family, friends and neighbors, diet and exercise

2. The Choice: We're part of the problem or part of the solution

B. A Community-Based Model is *By* and *For* the Community.

1. Advantages:
 - a) It's broadly "owned"
 - b) Easier to recruit volunteers
 - c) Not as financially vulnerable

2. Disadvantage: It takes time and resources to develop.

3. What is a “Community”?
 - a) A geographic area where a variety of associations and participation occurs
 - b) It gives identity
 - c) People share values
 - d) Interdependence characterizes the relationships

4. Community-based organizational structure
 - a) Social Networks: Informal, fluid
 - b) Minimum staff
 - c) Mostly volunteer-based

5. Key players are older adults along with
 - a) Colleges and Universities
 - b) Local Libraries
 - c) Elected Officials
 - d) Business Leaders
 - e) Health Care Professionals
 - f) Nonprofit Organizations
 - g) Faith Community

III. Program Development: Key Steps

A. Recruit Community Leaders: “Natural Leaders”

B. Create a Vision and Core Values

C. Gather Background Information about Your Community

1. Demographics
2. Communication/marketing resources
3. Identification of funding sources

D. What Tools will Determine What the Community Wants

1. Survey to determine community capacity for a Healthy Aging effort
2. Discussion groups
3. Focus groups

E. Tools for Building Broad Community Support

1. Gatherings
2. Forums
3. Porch meetings
4. Volunteer Coordinator

F. Develop a Strategic Plan Including A Financial Development Strategy

1. Mission statement
2. Core Values
3. Decide the organizational structure in the startup phase
4. Goals
5. Task, timetable and who's responsible
6. Main committees
 - a) Executive
 - b) Financial Development
 - c) Programs
 - d) Communications/Marketing
7. Evaluation Plan: Start with process evaluation: Are we creating this initiative in a way that's true to our core values?

IV. Lessons Learned

- A. Inspirational Leadership: Build from the Bottom Up**
- B. Be Focused and Flexible about Realistic Goals**
- C. Be Realistic About Older Adult Volunteers**
 1. "Snow Birds"
 2. Time-Limited Commitment
 3. Caregivers
 4. Injury/illness
- D. Financial Resources: Build a Financial Base *As You Grow***
- E. Keep Up The Momentum**
- F. Structure Collaborations**
- G. Be Clear About Who You Are, The "Value Added" You Bring to the Community**

Attachments:

1. Strategic Plan Retreat Notes
2. Core Values and Brochure
3. Main Components: Work Agenda
4. SVAN Coordinator Job Description
5. Board Member Expectations
6. Committee Structure and Responsibilities
7. First and second surveys
8. Collaboration: Letter to ALL

9. Focus Group Questions

RESOURCES: From the Minnesota Vital Aging website: www.vital-aging-network.org Click on “Vital Communities Toolkit” and “Comprehensive Tools”.

Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments

For this website, Partners for Livable Communities and NeighborhoodWorks collaborated to make resources about Aging in Place available. The site includes articles, reports, and studies about Aging in Place and provides links to other websites. Website at www.nw.org/Network/comstrat/agingInPlace

RE-AIM Framework

Offers a systematic way to approach planning, design, and evaluation of programs. Website at www.re-aim.org

Logic Model Development Guide

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation provides the Logic Model Development Guide which offers an orientation to the underlying principles and language of the logic model. Link to website: www.wkkf.org Link to tool: www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf

SWOT Analysis

To plan effectively, an organization must first analyze its current environment. SWOT is an abbreviation for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, the parts that make up the analysis. Link to website: www.marketingteacher.com Link to tool: www.marketingteacher.com/Lessons/lesson_swot.htm

Asset-based Community Development

Part of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University, this website provides topics in a number of categories: community building and collaboration, community development and planning, education, health and related topics, organizational development, learning, and evaluation.

Website link: www.civicpartnerships.org/toolsRes.htm

Forming a Community-Based Network

Provides information on developing a community support organization for older adults. The handbook is developed by the Elderberry Institute. It helps groups evaluate their community’s commitment to keeping aging adults in their homes.

It helps identify community resources to organize a community-based network for that purpose.

Website link: www.elderberry.org

Handbook: www.FormingACommunityBasedNetwork.pdf

Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide

Offers the means to evaluate a community's capacity to meet the needs of older adults. The AARP developed this guide.

Website link: www.assets.aarp.org

Community Assessment Survey

This assessment tool is not a traditional "needs assessment" tool evaluating specific types or quantities of services. It is a broad tool evaluating the capacity and potential of your infrastructure to provide support to aging individuals. Questions are based on the Declaration of Objectives outlined by the Older Americans Act.

Website link:

www.dads.state.tx.us/services/agingtexaswell/communityassessment

Hope Melton

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hopemelton@hotmail.com

518-727-7553