

# Community Engagement Report

<b>Your Organization/Affiliation:</b> Goodman Community Center	<b>Your Name and Email:</b> Organizer – Gayle Laszewski ( <a href="mailto:gayle@goodmancenter.org">gayle@goodmancenter.org</a> ) Moderator – Betsy Strahin ( <a href="mailto:strahin.betsy@countyofdane.com">strahin.betsy@countyofdane.com</a> )
<b>Community Engagement Activity:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Community Forum or Listening Session – virtual or in person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussions – virtual or in person <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interviews – by phone or in person <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Live or Social Media Virtual Event <input type="checkbox"/> Paper or Internet Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe): _____	
<b>Date/s of Event or Effort:</b> 6/18/2021	<b>Number of Participants or Respondents:</b> 8
<b>Key Issues Discussed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From your personal experiences, what the main issues, problems, and challenges adults age 60 and older are facing in Dane County?</li> <li>- How can Dane County Support older adults in remaining independent for as long as possible?</li> <li>- What does Dane County have to change to be closer to your ideal community to age in? / What do you appreciate most about what Dane County already provides?</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Takeaways/Findings:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The group is very “fortunate” to live in Dane County. They feel very positive about living here and the opportunities that are connected to living here. They also are very thankful for the Goodman Center and adore Gayle.</li> <li>2. Financial burden of aging is the theme they most talked about. As they age, the expenses stay the same or increase and they are on low or fixed incomes. <b>HOUSING/TAXES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The cost of owning a home has forced many of them out of their houses and into apartments or condos. The property taxes are too much for many of them. They fear larger expenses that can occur – needing a new roof, the water heater going, etc. Living in a condo they pay their monthly fee and someone else takes care of that for them.</li> <li>b. It’s hard to move out of your home to an area with lower property taxes because it is a seller’s market and the cost of buying another house is more than they will likely get for their current property (even when thinking of moving out of the city of Madison).</li> <li>c. Living in a condo or apartment means they don’t have to worry about shoveling heavy snow in the winter or mowing the lawn, which can be challenging.</li> <li>d. <b>Needs/Wants:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Financial relief – could property taxes be reduced/have a senior rate? Do they really need to pay the school part of the property tax if their children are no longer attending (most are onto having great-grandchildren by now)?</li> <li>ii. More knowledge of places like AARP that help get money back on taxes.</li> <li>iii. A senior rate on utilities.</li> <li>iv. Possibly connecting Goodman Community Center teens with older adults who need help around their houses to allow them to stay living independently. Could this be a way to have more affordable services for seniors and also benefit the teens?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

3. Long Term Care feels inevitable to them, but also unaffordable. By long term care they mean LTC, nursing homes, assisted living and independent living facilities.
  - a. Without extended family to take care of you, you need to rely on long term care services.
  - b. The cost of assisted living is shocking. Had no idea it could cost from \$3K to \$7K per month to be in assisted living until they were enrolling their parents. It could take someone \$50K or \$60K to live independently per year in some of these facilities but they never made that much in a year their entire life although they always worked. Feel as though they can only afford 3 years or less in these facilities.
  - c. These facilities are understaffed because the people are not getting paid enough to work there, but how can that be when it costs so much to live there.
  - d. **Needs/Wants:**
    - i. State coverage to kick in before they cannot afford to pay the bill for a place like this themselves. Why do they have to run out of money before the state will help?
    - ii. Affordable options for care when you run out of family members to lean on.
4. Financial burden of aging is the theme they most talked about. As they age, the expenses stay the same or increase and they are on low or fixed incomes. **OTHER EXPENSES**
  - a. Financial burden beyond taxes and housing include the cost of food.
  - b. **Needs:** Keep meal programs through community centers and food pantries going
5. There are so many resources that it's uneven in what everyone knows about.
  - a. An example of a desired service was a CPA at the libraries like in Syracuse, NY that would help with filing taxes for free. Made them feel confident in filing because it was a certified professional. Others pointed out that we have something like this at our libraries.
  - b. One mentioned how helpful the Quest card was this past year and how the allotment increased due to COVID. Again others in the group didn't know what that was.
6. There was some time spent talking about how they are susceptible to scams.
  - a. TV ads (e.g. Medicare and other things for "free") and direct, spam phone calls.
  - b. **Needs:** Education on identifying misinformation (beyond digital), how to block scammers from calling you, where to report scams to, how to determine who to trust
7. Another topic that gained traction was the issue of falls and how dangerous they are for seniors. They mention not always having a cellphone on them. One was a veteran and had a wearable button to get emergency help when needed.
  - a. **Recommendations:** Giving a wearable pouch that seniors can carry their cell phones in so they always have it on them. Would be nice if more people could afford or be given buttons.
8. They also really like the senior centers and want to see them continue because they get great benefits from them like
  - a. Socialization – they are a place to gather
  - b. Gives them activities to look forward to and network of people they are excited to see
  - c. Gets them fed – meals and drinks are often part of entertainment, some have home delivery meal programs (they enjoy delivering meals to each other and the socialization then)
  - d. A true sense of community. If people miss a program, attendees and staff notice then reach out to them. --- some have organically made similar networks (call in/check in) through family and neighbors.
    - i. **Moderator thought;** May be something to provide education on how to set up the phone chain for yourself.
  - e. Keeps them active and healthy – really liked the Tia Chi classes. Hope outdoor classes will resume in person because virtual is hard for them (some don't even have computer access)
9. Wish list to be their ideal aging community
  - a. More affordable places modeled after Attic Angels. Like that you can choose how independent you want to be. For example, you can cook for yourself or go to the dining room for a prepared meal. There is always medical staff on duty in case of emergency.
  - b. More libraries outside of Madison, specifically Cottage Grove. They wanted this for access to a computer/Internet
    - i. **Moderator thought:** the library model isn't necessary, an Internet café could also work.

**Planned Response:**

Share this form with AAA of Dane County to inform the drafting of their 2022-2024 strategic plan.