

Successful Senior Community Center Programs

The programs listed below are samples of some “proven” programs that are popular in Centers across Pennsylvania as compiled by the Joint Committee on Senior Centers. Adding some of these activities to your current offerings may help attract new seniors to your center who respond to the Senior Center Marketing Initiative of June 2002. Give some a try!

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Note: Check with your county AAA (Area Agency on Aging) about funding for fitness programs through Prime Time Health.

PEPPI: Trained senior volunteers lead this program. Training and workbooks are available through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

Grief Therapy/ Widow/Widowers Support Group: Can be led by a senior volunteer who has lost a loved one and recovered successfully.

Alzheimer Caregiver Support Group: Contact your local Alzheimer’s Association and offer your Center as a meeting site.

Aerobics/Lifting and Toning Class: Contracted through local Y or health club.

Tai Chi, Chi Gung and Yoga: Look to local health clubs and recreation departments for sources of instructors.

Health Fairs and Health Screenings: Can be customized for certain ethnic/language groups, if appropriate. Suggested screenings: Blood pressure, Osteoporosis/Bone Density, Foot Care, Blood sugar, Cholesterol, Stroke screening

Weight Wise: Weight loss program. Offer your Center as a meeting site for reputable and safe programs such as Weight Watchers or TOPS.

Flu and Pneumonia Shots: Contact visiting nurses, local physicians, or county health dept.’s.

Line Dancing, Ballroom Dancing, Tap Dancing, Folk Dancing, etc.

Food Task Force: Seniors meet periodically with a dietitian to discuss menu planning, holiday meals, special diets, etc.

Regular visits by Podiatrist for foot care

Brain Boosters: Puzzles and games designed for mental stimulation

Cooking Class: Team up with a local hospital or medical group for instruction on cooking for special diets.

Senior Games: Real sports or just fun & games events. Either promotes staying active.



Walking Club: The Mayor of one community pays the Center \$1 for every mile walked by their participants.

ART, MUSIC & EDUCATION

Music/Art/Literature Appreciation: Consider museums, universities, or retired teachers as sources for instructors.

Chorus: Begin with sing-a-longs and work into a performing group as participation grows.

Computer Classes: Instruction at the Center or use local school and business computer labs during off times.

Ceramics, Pottery, Stained Glass classes: Grants are possible through the Pa. Council on the Arts.

Drawing, Painting, Photography classes: Grants may be available through Arts Council. Consider an art show.

Bands and Orchestras: Survey members for interest

Humanities Lectures: Grants available through Pa. Humanities Council

55 Alive Safe Driving Class: Contact AARP for details and instructors

Book Exchange with Library

TRIAD: Local emergency personnel, police, fire fighters and seniors meet to improve safety

Senior Talent Shows: Talent from 1 or many Centers. No prizes necessary.

Lesson on cards and games: Bridge, cribbage, pinochle, scrabble, chess

Financial/Legal/Safety Seminars: Topics: Protecting Your Assets; Avoiding Inheritance Taxes; Self-Protection; Wills Workshops; etc. Contact your local Bar Assoc., Banks, or Police Departments.

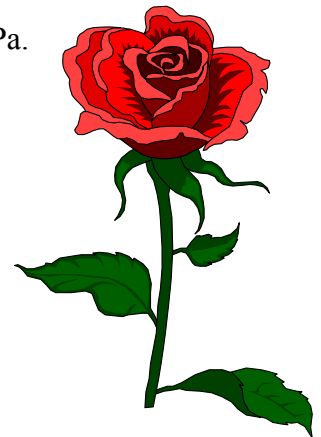
Conversational Foreign Language or Sign Language classes: Check first with your Center members to see who knows a language well enough to teach it to others.

Men's Breakfast featuring topical speakers: Talk about Veterans issues, men's health problems, Cooking for 1, etc.

FUND RAISERS

Senior Expo: Vendors, health screenings and entertainment draw large crowds

Big Band Dances: Can be paired with dinner. Usually an evening program.



Trips and Travel: Encouraging seniors to be on a committee to plan trips increases participation and profits. Invite public to go along. Dinner theaters are very popular.

Homemade candy sale: Raised \$8,000

Nearly New Shop: Can generate up to \$100 a week

Pancake Breakfast with Santa: One center joins forces with the local Lions Club to put on this annual event. Profits are split...about \$400 each. Good community PR.

Fund Raising Auction: Merchandise and gift certificates are donated from merchants and individuals. Food sold at the event. Raises about \$3,000.

Antique Appraisals: “ Road Show” type of program that may or may not include a meal or food sales. Charge admission and/or a fee per appraisal. Contact local antique dealers and associations for experts.

Other: Longeberger Basket Bingo (or any kind of Bingo), Sub Sales to local businesses on a regular basis (weekly, monthly)

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

Pen Pals: Seniors and elementary students exchange notes and visits.

Line Dancing: Have Seniors teach the kids a few steps or vice-versa.

Computer Classes: Older kids make great instructors and work for free! Younger kids can demonstrate games.

Monthly visits to juvenile detention center

Adopt a Grandparent: Popular with pre-schools

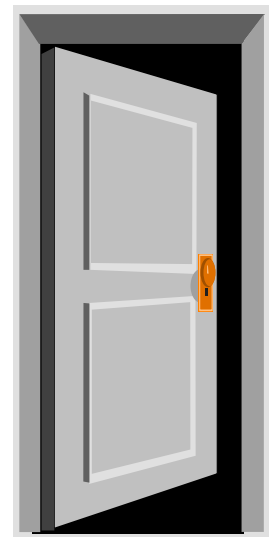
Proms & Dinners: Sponsored by Senior High Council

Cosmetology students provide free services

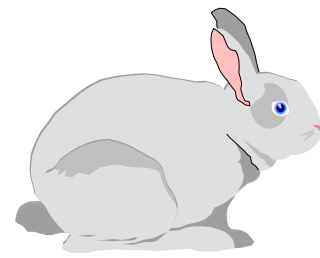
Scholarship program for high school seniors

Cooperative Art/Literature Projects: Create a mural; Record “Living Histories”; etc.

Panel discussions with high schoolers: Possible topics: Drug use; Quality of Education; Dress Codes. Helps Seniors to understand the kid’s perspective. Reverse roles with a senior panel to talk about things like “Active Aging”, “Living on a Fixed Income”, etc.



JUST FOR FUN



Pet Therapy: Contact your local Humane Society or animal shelter.

Mardi Gras Party: features banjo players, Jambalaya, history of Mardi Gras and selection of King and Queen.

Tour local churches and other buildings to learn historical and architectural significance.

County wide picnics

Day trips in van or bus to see fall foliage, holiday lights, bird sanctuaries, or go to lunch.

Making a float for a parade

Wine Tasting: Call local wineries & restaurants for information..

SERVICE PROGRAMS

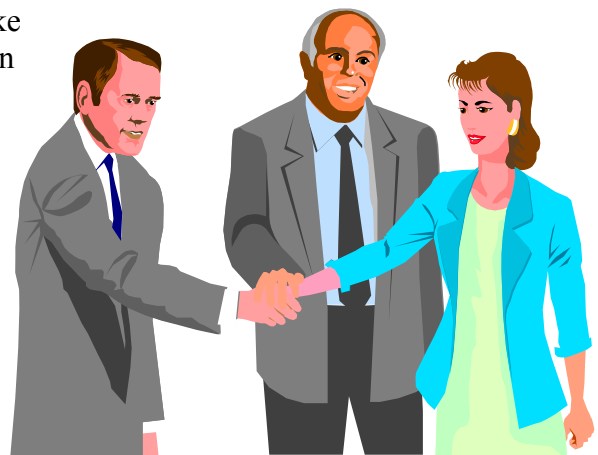
APPRISE: Helps seniors with insurance questions. Contact your AAA for info.

Assistance with tax forms: AARP and other organizations provide trained volunteers.

Legal services/information: Available through your AAA or AARP.

Pa. Senior Environment Corps: Contact EASI to sponsor a corps in your area. Seniors perform chemical water monitoring, teach environmental education, plant trees and more. Wonderful for involving people who would not normally attend senior centers.

Special Forums: Could be discussions about issues like Medicare changes or “Meet the Candidates” at election time.



The Joint Committee on Senior Centers is comprised of members of the Pennsylvania Association of Senior Centers, the Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.
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