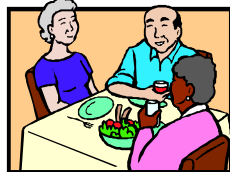


PROGRAMMING IDEAS FOR SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTERS



Newsletter: Partner with local high school students to completely redesign the senior center newsletter as well as provide a quality newsletter using computer technology. In addition to redoing the newsletter, students also teach the seniors how to use technology to continue to update the newsletter.

Variation: Have students design an on-line version of a newsletter and teach the seniors how to update the site.

Investment Club: Club members invest in the stock market and learn how to maintain a profitable portfolio. Members contribute money to the group in order to provide the capital with which to invest. A research subcommittee meets each month to examine various stocks, and decide which might be good prospective buys or sells. The club then meets to vote on the recommendations presented by the subcommittee.

Variations: Club invests on-line

Invite local stock brokers/investment people to come educate the group

Run a women only, men only or couples only investment group

Call the Cops: Invite a local police officer to come present programs to seniors on various topics. For example, robbery prevention, telemarketing fraud prevention, and home security just to name a few.

Variations: Hold the session in the evening and invite the public

Tour the 9-1-1 communications center of the police department

Fitness Walking: Begin a workout with a 5-minute warm up and 20 minutes of stretching. After 40 minutes of various levels of walking, stretch and then be guided through a ten minutes progressive relaxation period. Hold sessions for 4-6 consecutive weeks. Use a certified fitness instructor, use videotapes, or design a program.

Variation: Connect completion of the session with a field trip to go hiking at a local park

Meet and Eat: For a fee to cover transportation, participants take a bus to a different restaurant each month and are able to order off the menu at their own cost. This can be done at lunchtime as well and partnerships can be worked out with local restaurants, especially on their slow days.

Around the World: Bring in different films, movies, or books about different areas of the world. Try to create a meal with the country in mind.

Variations: Partner with local elementary schools and study the same cultures as the children. At the end of their study of a particular country, invite the children for a sharing day

Invite foreign exchange students from the high school to come talk about their home country.

Stamp It Up: Group of seniors organize an evening session that brings people together for discussions, trading and other activities to area residents who are interested in collecting stamps. Could meet in various locations, but have it ‘sponsored by the ABC Senior Center.’

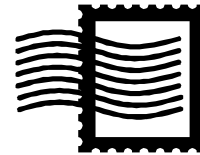


Photo Phun: Group of seniors interested in sharing their love of photography with others meets in the evening at the senior center with others photographers of various experience levels.

Variation: Provide photos to sell during community events, i.e. kids riding a carnival ride

Wood Carvers: group of seniors interested in sharing their love of carving with others meets in the evening at the senior center with other carvers of various experience levels.

Variation: Partner with local craftsmen if available

Partner with a store, i.e. home depot, and have them give a demonstration of tools, etc. that are available for carvers

Sell products at fundraisers

Classic Café: each month feature a different ‘artist’ or genre of music in a café type setting. This can be done either by record or by live band. For example, jazz, rag-time, etc.

Variation: Charge a small fee and serve dessert of the month

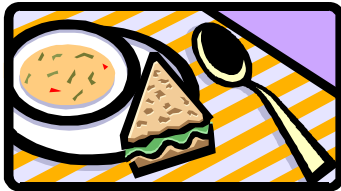
Invite a local band to play, many high schools have jazz bands

Have participants host the party and bring in their favorite records to play

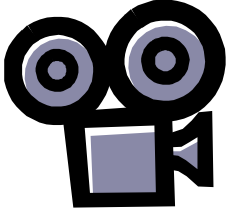
Open the area up to the community over lunch hour—like a mini coffee house

Community Chili Supper: hold a community-wide event selling chili. Volunteer cook the chili and sell tickets.

Guest Chefs: invite local ‘celebs’ to come share and prepare their favorite recipes at the center. Some ideas are local council people, school principle, fire chief, etc. Not only does this allow them to show off their talents, it also gives them an opportunity to visit and connect with the center and for participants to connect with their community leaders.



Lunch with ... series: invite local speakers, dignitaries, and celebrities to come enjoy a lunch and have them do a presentation after lunch in their topic area.



Showtime: hold an afternoon, mid morning, or evening movie. Rent a movie from the store and show a different one each month or more frequently.

Masquerade Ball: come dressed in a costume and enjoy a mysterious night of dancing and refreshments. Open the session to those 50 and older

Senior Center Shirts: add your logo and a clever caption and sell shirts at a reasonable cost.

Woman's Road Trip: poll the women at the center and plan trips for their favorite destination. Include areas such as college exhibits, museums, and libraries.

Variation: put an intergenerational twist to it and have them invite their daughters or granddaughters for a day out

Newcomers Social: once a month, or more depending on how many new people are joining, host a social to welcome them. Have participant guides and activities in which they can participate.

Memoir Writing: guide participants through exercises designed to help them tell their life story. Plenty of books are available that present good questions and ways of completing such tasks.

Variations: Involve the use of computers in the writing phase

Involve the use of scrap booking to include pictures as well as written stories
Work with local high school, colleges, or cable stations for use of their video equipment for recording memories.

Compile short stories together in a book telling about the growth and change in the community and sell it in local bookstores

Men's Breakfast: once a month, host breakfast and a movie for men. Poll the group for what type of movies they want to see. May also want to involve a speaker instead of a movie

Theater: partner with the local theater to offer a senior subscription series of their plays for the session.

Newcomer's Coffee Hours: every week host a coffee hour geared towards seniors new to the area, those that have never visited a center, or those recently becoming a 'senior.' Have current participants host the event and provide information and sharing for those who attend.

Gardening for Apartment Dwellers: ask a local horticulture teacher or greenhouse manager to share the types of gardening that can be done indoors. Learn about principles of design and plant selection, proper soil, watering and fertilization, soil types and helpful gardening tools and containers. Charge a small fee and allow participants to leave with some plants all ready to grow.



Strength Training Partnership: partner with a local fitness center to offer introduction to strength training for seniors. The seniors get a chance to learn from a personal trainer at the fitness center about the equipment and develop a personal fitness routine suitable for them. The fitness center offers a discount to the seniors who are members of the senior center. The seniors get access to a great fitness center and the senior center acquires new members by enticing them with a discount. Could be especially attractive to younger seniors.

Pre-retirement seminars: discuss financial issues, lifestyle issues and how to plan for retirement. Encourage a panel of current retirees to present the sessions. Have it in the evening to attract those seniors still working.

Lunch and Learn: focus on topics such as adult children caring for their parents-communication, services and resources, support groups, etc.

Bicycle Club: schedule bike trips on a regular basis Spring through Fall or longer if the weather is good. Make it a variety of lengths and locations. Have a participant do all the scheduling.

Mayor's Health Challenge: the mayor challenges all older adults to get more active and healthy by exercising, attending health fairs and screenings, nutrition programs, etc. They accumulate points and those who get a certain number of points within a time period get to have breakfast with the mayor. Different age groups or different senior centers can also challenge each other. Involve local media people in the challenge.

