

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 6, 2016



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**Aging Care Connections Launches
Aging Well Neighborhood Partner Project to Enrich Opportunities and
Quality of Life for Older Adults in Greater Lyons Township**

LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS - Aging Care Connections, in partnership with Community Memorial Foundation and the Aging Well Neighborhood Initiative, has launched one of the most important initiatives in its 45-year history of serving older adults in the western communities of suburban Cook County. Its Aging Well Neighborhood Partner Project will officially be recognized on Thursday, November 3, 2016 at Palmer Place restaurant from 9:30am to 10:30am in downtown La Grange. The primary focus of this exciting project is to increase the appeal that local businesses offer to older residents of the community and to continually assess where each business stands when it comes to the needs of these older adults.

“We met with older adults and asked them, ‘Where do you go in the community and what helps or hinders you?’ We wanted to know more about what local businesses are doing to provide easy access and enjoyable experiences for their older adult customers,” said Debra Vershelde, Executive Director of Aging Care Connections in La Grange.

The Project members have been working with local age-friendly businesses in Lyons Township to assess their current approach in customer service, store access, signage and printed materials, to name a few. Guidance on developing these capabilities is also offered where needed. Participating businesses receive a window decal that is displayed at their entrances to identify them as an Aging Well Neighborhood Partner.

Key quotes from meeting with older adults in the community revealed many compelling reasons why this project is important.

- “Businesses should train their people so they get to know us better. If we are regulars at a business, get to know our names and some of our preferences.”
- “Smile, talk louder, slower and enunciate.”
- “Elders do not see reality at the same speed that they do. Hey, we are all human. Be patient, and don’t push us too hard. When I panic, I can’t think straight.”

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Aging Well Neighborhood Launches Partner Project

Baby Boomers and older generations account for half of all consumer expenditures, yet only 10% of businesses are targeted toward them. Adults aged 65 and older are the fastest growing age group in the country. However, the oldest (aged 80+) are growing two times faster than the Boomers and four times faster than the general population.

“As an active older adult living in La Grange, it is especially important to me to know that I am a part of this vital community. This means when I go out to dinner, to shop, to visit the local library, banks or other businesses, that I like to be acknowledged. I also love to introduce friends from outside La Grange to my favorite spots,” commented Joan Sessions, an 86 year-old resident of La Grange and proponent of the Aging Well Neighborhood Partner Project.

One of the current Partners spoke about how his business is addressing these issues: “We never want to take customers for granted. Investing the time to learn how to better serve older adults and understand the common sense approaches that the “Aging Well Neighborhood Partner” project has taught us is a win for our business and a win for our customers,” said Steve Palmer, co-owner of Palmer Place Restaurant & Biergarten in downtown La Grange.

About the Aging Well Neighborhood Initiative

Aging Well Neighborhood is a collection of 14 medical, social service and civic organizations that deliver coordinated care built on existing community assets, addressing social issues that affect older adult health. The vision is to collaboratively transform the healthcare of aging adults through the creation of a health neighborhood that assists the whole person and affirms the benefits of a life-long process of wellness and prevention. The initiative is funded by the Community Memorial Foundation. For more information, visit www.agingcareconnections.org/agingwell.html.

About Aging Care Connections

The mission of Aging Care Connections (ACC) is to enrich the quality of life in our community by providing older adults and their families with guidance and support that enhances the ability to age well. Founded in 1971, ACC is a nonprofit organization that is the connection to the most comprehensive, expert information, programs, and services enabling older adults to remain independent and their families to make the best, most informed decisions regarding needed care in their lives. ACC provides comprehensive services to adults 60 years of age and older in five suburban townships located within Cook County and is the lead agency for the Aging Well Neighborhood initiative. For more information, visit www.agingcareconnections.org or email info@agingcareconnections.org.

About Community Memorial Foundation

Community Memorial Foundation (CMF) is a private, independent foundation established in 1995. CMF's grant making and community work are guided by its mission — to measurably improve the health of those who live and work in the western suburbs of Chicago. Throughout 20 years of investing in the region, CMF has proudly awarded more than \$62 million dollars to non-profit organizations in the western suburbs of Cook County and southeastern portion of DuPage County. For more information, visit www.cmfdn.org or email info@cmfdn.org.

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