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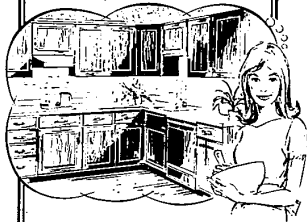


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Age no longer bothers the elderly

By SHERRY KAHAN

Twenty years ago elderly persons in the area often lived isolated, lonely lives, with limited opportunities for socialization and few to go to bat for them.

Today they spend hours each week in senior citizen clubs and centers, go on trips, take classes and have discount privileges.

Not only do they have new ID cards, they have a new identity as a potent force in their communities. The taxes they have been paying all their lives are coming back to them in the form of free medical checkups, subsidized housing, hot meals, some help with difficult chores, and meals on wheels when homebound.

If any statement characterizes the new spirit felt by our older friends, it was one made by Loretta Conway, senior adult supervisor of the combined Farmington and Farmington Hills program for seniors.

While enjoying events at the center, a man said: "Before I knew about this place I'd sit home alone, depressed about being old. Now I don't think about age. I'm having such a good time. What does age matter? I don't think about it any more."

Vi McKenney, program director for Garden City senior citizen clubs, believes seniors have a greater sense of freedom today.

"They also have their own identity rather than being identified through their children. No moss grows under their feet. There is something for all of them if they are willing to try."

IN SEVEN COMMUNITIES surveyed, certain programs were carried out common to them all. In Livonia, Garden City, Westland, Plymouth, Farmington, and Farmington Hills, and Redford and Canton townships, low cost hot lunches, federally funded, are offered to persons over 60.

Meals on wheels for the housebound are offered in some areas. All the areas have at least one center where the elderly gather for classes and programs of all kinds. The age of admission is usually 55.

THE ACTIVITIES in Plymouth are centered around two main locations. About 50 seniors are involved in two social clubs which meet in the Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer, for cards and potluck dinners.

The federally funded hot lunch program is served in Tonquish Creek Manor, 1160 Sheridan. A social club also meets in the manner, which is the senior citizen apartment house of the city. It has 60 residents, and there is a seven-year waiting list.

Health screening by the county is set at the manor once a year. The county's office on aging also sees to it that meals-on-wheels are delivered to the housebound.

Through a federal grant, the local YMCA is able to offer some home maintenance work to those who need it. Seniors may also attend adult education classes at no cost any time a class is not filled.

Two other clubs are active in Plymouth. One called the American Association of Retired Persons meets in First United Presbyterian Church. Another called the Creeds meets in the Plymouth Community Federal Credit Union building, 500 S. Harvey.

For information on Plymouth services, call Terry Carroll, senior citizen program coordinator at 453-1234.

THE CITY OF WESTLAND already has 15 clubs with more than 1,000 members, and a new club is being formed. Members of these clubs as well as other seniors in the city are

offered the chance to take nine area trips during the year. Ten special events are planned, and 15 education classes are scheduled.

Tele-care offers daily contact to 60 residents who want a check on their wellbeing. Since 1969, Red Holman Pontiac has donated a van for transportation.

Counseling is available as well as a chance to obtain help in doing minor home repairs. The county office on aging gives this service in cooperation with the National Honor Society Service Group, and its 22 student volunteers.

Westland has a loan center for medical equipment and a gift shop where residents can supplement their income through making saleable articles.

A class for the visually impaired is given by Detroit Society for the Blind. The elderly may also attend adult education classes.

In Westland hot lunches are available in the Cooper Community Senior Center, Ann Arbor Trail and Middlebelt; Kirk of Old Savior United Presbyterian Church, 3660 Cherry Hill, and in J Building at the Wayne County Office on Aging, which is part of the Wayne County General Hospital complex. Meals-on-wheels are available if needed.

Classes such as sewing, arts and crafts, dancing, exercise and woodshop are held in the Westland Senior Friendship Center, 37095 Marquette, or the Cooper Center.

For information on the programs in Westland, call Sylvia Kozorok, deputy director of the department on aging at 722-7828. Westland housing for seniors includes Westgate Towers.

IN CANTON TOWNSHIP, three clubs meet at the township recreation building, 44237 Michigan at Sheldon. Another club (private) made up of residents of Royal Holiday Park meets in the park clubhouse, while the North Canton Area Senior Citizen Club meets in St. Michael Church, 7000 Sheldon.

Arts and crafts classes are held in the recreation center and senior citizen bowling takes place on Monday at 9:30 a.m. at Super Bowl, 4500 Ford. Speakers are booked and trips are arranged.

A large print library has been sent up in the center, which is also the location of the hot lunch program. Reservations should be made in advance by calling Marie Napier at 397-2777.

Dial-A-Ride is available, but call the day before the ride is needed. The number is 728-2710.

The township also boasts two active kitchen bands made up of seniors who perform on gut buckets, kazoes, washboards, ukuleles and guitars.

There is no senior housing. For information on the Canton programs call Delores Edwards, assistant coordinator of the township senior citizens, at 397-2777.

REDFORD TOWNSHIP OFFERS its older residents an activity headquarters in the Redford Community Center, 12121 Hemingway at Capitol.

Here are some of the things that take place there. Card games are big, along with square dancing, sing-alongs, a drop-in lounge and day and overnight trips.

Greenwood Villa, which is just about finished, and Central City Park Towers, which will be completed in about a year. There is now a waiting list of 3,000 for these buildings.

IN LIVONIA there are three social centers to serve the elderly. One is the Senior Citizen Activity Center, Farmington and Five Mile. Others are in Jefferson Center (formerly Jefferson Elementary School) at Henry Ruff and W. Chicago and Pierson Center, 32625 Seven Mile.



A smiling Bud Schwartz accepts a nutritious meal from Betty Fuller at the Senior Citizens Activity Center in Livonia. Daily hot lunches, funded federally, are served in a number of senior centers in the area. (Staff photo)

Hot lunches are served in all three centers every weekday. A host of activities are scheduled at the various centers, making it possible for the Livonia senior set to take part in such activities as bridge, modern western dancing, square dancing, wood-carving, knitting, folk dancing, small appliance repair and free blood pressure tests.

Check with the Senior Citizen Center, 421-3240, to see which center features the activities in which you are interested.

Other services or programs established for seniors are legal aid, home services, lectures by physicians, an exercise class, health screening by the county department of health once a year, and transportation in a mini-bus driven by volunteers.

Housing for the elderly includes the 160-unit McNamara Towers and Trinity Park with 44 units. Under construction are Silver Village with 108 units, and an apartment built by Forest City Dillen with 140 units. St. Edith Church also has about 100 units under construction.

To apply for housing in McNamara Towers or Silver Village, call the city housing office at 477-7086. However, there is a long waiting list. To apply for Trinity Park call Trinity Baptist Church, Call St. Edith for information on its project.

GARDEN CITY, through its parks and recreation department, sponsors two senior citizens clubs, one with 187 members, the other with 105 members. Residents can belong to only one of the clubs. The organizations feature card playing, dancing, day and overnight trips.

Through these clubs, Garden City seniors have taken area trips to such places as Frankenmuth, Belle Isle and the Renaissance Center. In addition, they have packed their bags to jet to Alaska, Hawaii and the Canary Islands.

Parks and Recreation sponsors a senior drop-in center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday at the Log Cabin in Garden City Park. Activities include arts and crafts, crocheting, knitting, and rug hooking.

Hot lunches are served there, and free notary service is available. So is the county's free health screening and free blood pressure testing.

The Telephone Reassurance Service is housed there, along with the loan closet. Counseling service is extended for retirement planning, family relationships and adjustment to being widowed.

Various adult education classes meet there, including those teaching self defense, communication skills and calligraphy. Information is offered on a rent subsidy program as well as one on low interest mortgages. Home chore service is offered.

Dial-A-Ride carries seniors around the township and to the Livonia Mall and Wonderland Shopping Center.

There is no city sponsored senior housing. However, Presbyterian Village, for seniors, maintained by the Presbytery of Detroit, is located in the township. It has a waiting list.

For information on activities, call senior citizen advisor Faye Ross at 531-3110.

FARMINGTON and Farmington Hills residents, when looking for fun and socializing, pop over to the Gathering Place located at the Mercy Conference Center, 28600 Eleven Mile.

More than 1,000 seniors have registered there. The two cities also have about 250-300 involved in various church and social clubs.

The center is where it's at as far as hot meals are concerned, also health counseling by a nurse, blood pressure checks, movies, lectures, and day trips. Other activities include a Sunday dinner every two months, free legal aid, and classes in basic auto maintenance, drama, weight control and crime prevention.

Besides all this there is an exercise class, ethnic dancing and dinner dancing.

Transportation by taxi, from 50 cents to \$1, is available.

The cities sponsor no housing for the elderly. Private senior housing in the area includes Marian Oakland West and Detroit Baptist Manor.

For information on services for the elderly, call Loretta Conway at 474-6115.

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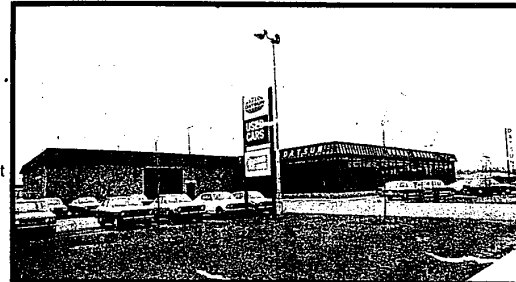
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