



Neighborhood Action Initiative

Process Evaluation Report

September 2014

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION INITIATIVE

Introduction

The goal of the Neighborhood Action Initiative is to create and test best practice and evidence-based projects that will help seniors age in place and increase the number of people who are able to remain in their homes and neighborhoods as they grow older. To do this, the Foundation provides neighborhood-based organizations with resources that will enable them to test best practice approaches designed to help people continue to live in their neighborhoods and to share knowledge, ideas and lessons learned with each other.

- Health Foundation for Western and Central New York Website

The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York (HFWCNY) launched the Central New York Neighborhood Action Initiative (NAI) in March of 2011 to improve the quality of care for elderly people in our communities, to postpone the onset of frailty, and to defer its consequences. The Foundation's NAI grew out of its Frail Elderly Neighborhood Project, which was initiated in 2005 in and around Buffalo, New York.

To carry out its NAI, the Foundation partnered with the Gifford Foundation in Syracuse to provide a number of neighborhood-based organizations with \$15,000 for one year to develop strategies for helping seniors continue to live in their homes and to share with one another knowledge, ideas, and lessons learned from their projects. Hereafter we refer to this partnership as "the Foundations" and the funded neighborhood-based organizations as "grantees."

The NAI is grounded in the following premises:

- ❖ although most seniors prefer to remain in their homes and neighborhoods, their living arrangements often become inappropriate for their changing lifestyle and safety needs as they grow older
- ❖ institutionalized care should not be the only alternative to aging in place
- ❖ a localized approach to creating elder-friendly neighborhoods is likely to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes for seniors

Concept Mapping and the AdvantAge Model

The Foundations used two processes to guide their efforts and select target communities and grantees for the NAI. The first, developed by Concept Systems Inc., is called Concept Mapping.¹ It involves collecting written responses from individuals based on one specific question or focus prompt. The process participants organize these responses into themes, which are then analyzed using multi-dimensional scaling and cluster

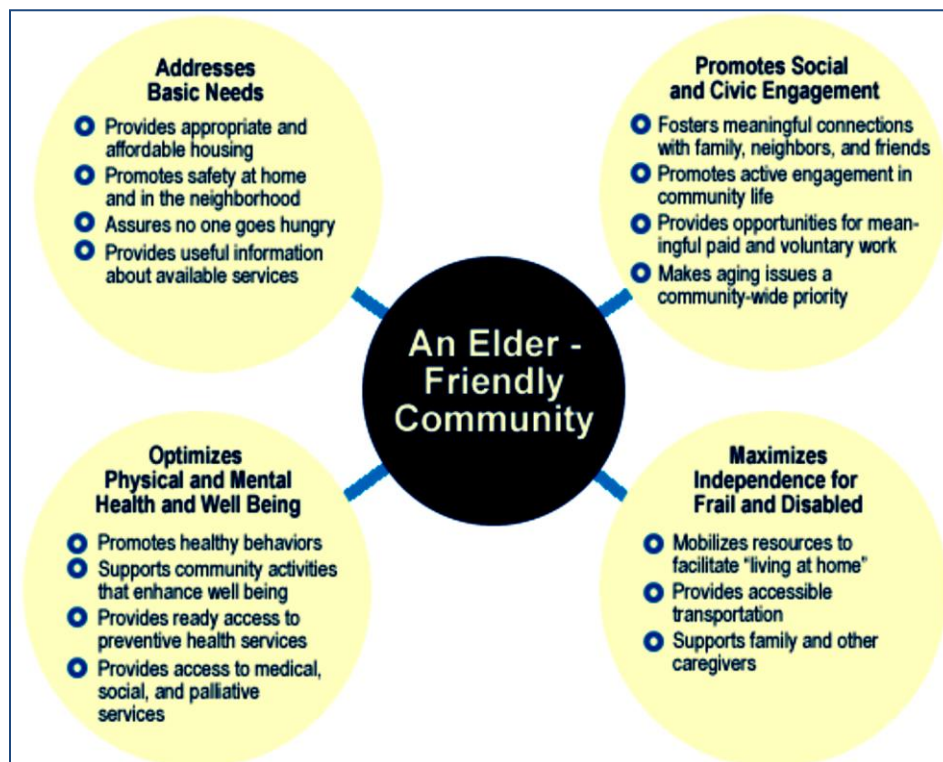
¹ See <http://www.conceptsystems.com/content/view/methodology.html>.

analysis. This analysis results in a visual representation of the ideas and is utilized for the project action steps.

At the NAI Concept Mapping sessions conducted by the Foundations, a total of 303 seniors and other neighborhood stakeholders provided more than 400 responses to the following focus prompt: *One specific thing that would make it more likely for a person to remain in this neighborhood as they grow old is . . .* The responses were then categorized into themes, rated according to importance by a subset of community stakeholders, and analyzed using the statistical techniques described above.

The NAI also employed a model known as the AdvantAge Initiative.² AdvantAge serves as a guiding framework for building *elder-friendly communities* and focuses on four key areas, or domains, where communities can make a difference in the lives of older people: 1) addressing basic needs; 2) promoting social and civic engagement; 3) optimizing physical and mental health and well-being; and 4) maximizing independence for the frail and disabled. Each of the four domains is further divided into a number of domains and indicators (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. AdvantAge Framework



The Foundations worked together to

- ❖ identify urban and suburban neighborhoods in Onondaga County with high percentages of seniors and poverty
- ❖ identify potential grantee organizations

² See <http://www.vnsny.org/advantage>.

- ❖ implement the Concept Mapping process, assess those results, and then meld the results with the AdvantAge model for each of the targeted neighborhoods
- ❖ guide the development of the final work plans for each selected grantee organization

The NAI grantees were all selected based upon the Foundations' assessment that their ideas contributed to elder-friendly communities as described in the AdvantAge Initiative and that each proposal addressed specific indicators from that model.

The Foundations engaged Apter & O'Connor Associates (A&O) in February 2012 to conduct process evaluations for each of the NAI projects. Utilizing primarily qualitative methods, our work sought to document the program's implementation successes and challenges and to formulate recommendations and potential long-term ramifications based on these findings. The evaluation was led by Cynthia O'Connor and included Elaine Wolf, PhD, an A&O associate. O'Connor and Wolf shared responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day evaluation work.

Overview of this Report

This report consists of brief descriptions for each of the six sites, an explanation of the evaluation approach, cross-project findings, overall conclusions, and recommendations. It is intended to inform the reader of the program's positive aspects, the initial impact on participants, the challenges and lessons learned, and the potential for sustainability. Findings are those that emerged as common across the six projects. The reader is encouraged to review the six appendices, which include more detailed information about the individual programs and the evaluation of each.

The NAI Program Sites: Summary of Interventions

In April 2012, we met with the Foundations to participate in the process of reviewing proposals from local organizations. Seven organizations were selected for funding. Of those seven, one declined the invitation; another proved to need further groundwork before the implementation of an intervention could take place; and two of them, being different sites for the same organization (Huntington Family Centers), decided to join together and provide NAI services in a single location. Shortly after the project started, the Health Foundation decided to include an organization from Buffalo. This organization, which had previously been funded under the earlier Western New York NAI, expressed an interest in implementing a transportation program for seniors that was consistent with the goals of the Foundation's 2012 NAI. Thus, the final group of grantees consisted of six programs, one of which was delayed until year two. The five Syracuse sites each received \$15,000 grants and the Buffalo site received \$5,000.

Brief Project Descriptions

As noted, the grantees' proposed projects were intended to address different AdvantAge domains and indicators. Two grantees chose to focus on transportation but with different models; two provided intergenerational programming with similar models; one concentrated on increasing home safety; and one strove to improve the use of its Center and to increase awareness of the services offered through an

intensive marketing and outreach campaign. Brief project overviews are presented here.

AdvantAge domain: Maximizes independence for frail and disabled seniors ♦ Indicator: Provides accessible transportation

Canton Woods Senior Center serves the greater Baldwinsville area in the northwestern corner of Onondaga County. It was designed to provide transportation for isolated senior housing sites that had little or no access to public transportation. Canton Woods designed this program in collaboration with the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CENTRO) and the existing Onondaga Senior Call-A-Ride Program. The *Canton Woods Transportation Initiative* targeted seniors living in two subsidized housing sites and began by offering transportation for weekly grocery shopping. After initiating the program at the two original sites in the first half of year one, they added two additional sites with the same criteria of being remote and lacking reasonable access to public transportation. The program ran from October 2012 through June 2014, 12 months longer than originally planned because the funds were not expended as quickly as anticipated. They registered 105 seniors from four housing sites and provided 250 round-trip rides to a total of 85 people. In addition to grocery stores, the program provided transportation to malls, department stores, and area restaurants, based on feedback from the seniors and recommendations from the housing site managers.

The Parkside Community Association in Buffalo identified a need for transportation among frail seniors. In response they developed a program plan to pair volunteer drivers with local senior residents as well as people experiencing disabling chronic illness who were in need of non-emergency transportation to destinations within a 15-mile journey from the rider's home. Rides were intended to include door-to-door trips to medical appointments, pharmacies, social engagements, and routine errands. From September 2012 to May 2013, the *Parkside Community Association Transportation Initiative* recruited and trained 11 volunteer drivers, provided 55 rides—almost exclusively to medical appointments—and served a total of 13 registered riders.

AdvantAge domain: Promotes social and civic engagement ♦ Indicators: Fosters meaningful connections with family, neighbors, and friends; Promotes active engagement in community life

The Huntington Family Centers (HFC) serves the south and west sides of the city of Syracuse. They were awarded NAI funding for an intergenerational program to address their seniors' concerns for increased safety, security, and social cohesion. The staff designed a program for seniors who regularly attend their Senior Center and whom they thought could benefit from positive interactions with youth through social activities and computer mentoring. It was believed that such interactions would validate the knowledge and life experience of older adults as well as provide youth with a sense of increased self-worth and confidence. From August 2012 to August 2013, the *Huntington Family Centers Intergenerational Learning Project* held nine social events or outings, including an ice cream social, apple picking, bowling, bingo, luncheons, dinner with a movie, and museum outings. They also hosted some computer mentoring activities between the two groups. In total, 22 seniors and 14 youth participated.

The Syracuse Northeast Community Center (SNCC) also created an intergenerational project. The program was designed in response to neighborhood seniors' concerns for "more respect for seniors" and the staff's assessment that the neighborhood could benefit by promoting more social and civic engagement. The SNCC's project plan was to implement intergenerational relationship-building activities for older adults and

neighborhood youth. The *Syracuse Northeast Community Center Intergenerational Learning Project* originally began in July 2012. After some delays in hiring staff and enticing participants, it received an extension for their funding period and ran for a second year. As of May 2014, they served a total of 12 seniors and 37 youth and held 18 intergenerational activities including pumpkin picking, apple picking, baking, storytelling, an ice cream social, bingo, a boat trip, lunch with a movie, Lights on the Lake, holiday dinners and parties, museum trips, and a community clean-up.

AdvantAge domain: Addresses basic needs ♦ Indicators: Promotes safety at home and in the neighborhood; housing is modified to accommodate mobility and safety

P.E.A.C.E., Inc.'s Eastwood Senior Center was awarded a grant for their Helping Hands and Hearts (EH³) program. The project began with Eastwood seniors' participation in the NAI Concept Mapping process, in which they identified a need for *increasing the sense of safety among seniors within their own homes*. The *P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood Community Center Helping Hands and Hearts Project* offered educational sessions on emergency preparedness and injury prevention. They also offered in-home safety checks, free or low-cost home repairs, and free emergency safety kits. The program began in December 2012 and, after some initial delays, it operated through May 2014. In total, the program held three lunch and learn sessions, distributed 37 safety kits, conducted 37 home safety-checks, identified 33 home repairs, and completed or arranged for 31 repairs.

AdvantAge domain: Addresses basic needs ♦ Indicators: Provides useful information about available services

Catholic Charities Elderly Services (Mattydale) was selected to initiate a marketing campaign and improve utilization of existing resources and services. The *Catholic Charities Elderly Services Outreach and Retention Campaign* project began with Mattydale seniors participating in the NAI Concept Mapping process, in which many of the identified concerns were the same ones that Catholic Charities believed were being addressed with established programming at their Salina Civic Center. They felt that the problem was not lack of services but rather their inability to reach the seniors who could benefit from the Center and its activities and services. After further inquiries and discussions with the Foundations it was decided to delay the start of the Center's project to allow for more planning and more in-depth feedback from constituent seniors. Catholic Charities engaged Apter & O'Connor Associates, with Health Foundation funding, to administer a survey and facilitate a focused discussion to gather further feedback from area seniors. The findings and recommendations from that inquiry informed the development of a revised NAI plan. The final plan included two main elements: the hiring of a part-time activities coordinator and implementation of a new outreach and marketing campaign.

The Evaluation Design

Our charge was to work collaboratively with each of the NAI-funded organizations to design and carry out an evaluation that would be useful and address key questions. This evaluation was focused on *process*:

- ❖ the extent to which each program's components were implemented as planned
- ❖ aspects of the process that went well (and why)

- ❖ challenges that were confronted and how they were addressed
- ❖ the achievement of expected outputs (e.g., numbers of people served)
- ❖ initial evidence of impact

This strategy depended heavily on qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, program reports, and open-ended questions in client-feedback and outcome-survey questionnaires. We analyzed these data by coding responses, developing themes, and identifying particularly pertinent quotations for inclusion in our reports. Our analysis for the few quantitative elements that were collected relied on descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies and averages.

Our approach for all of the sites was first to meet with each leadership team separately to explain the evaluators' role (i.e., to help them strengthen their programs) and to finalize their evaluation questions and evaluation plan. These meetings consisted of collaboratively reviewing draft logic models that we developed based on their approved grant proposals, the AdvantAge indicators, and their work plans as submitted to the Foundations. Together we modified the logic models, based on any changes in their programs' components and on the goals of their planned interventions, and identified useful metrics for measuring outcomes. We discussed our plans for evaluating their programs and collaborated with them in drafting data collection forms (e.g., feedback forms, questionnaires for a survey of outcomes, and spreadsheet databases to capture participant demographics and extent of participation in the programs).

After the logic models and data collection forms were finalized (via meetings, phone calls, and e-mail correspondence), we kept in touch with program managers so that we could be updated about program activities and verify that data collection was going smoothly. We provided technical assistance whenever warranted, such as for difficulties in recruiting program participants or problems in implementing the program or collecting data. We have included each site's logic model in its appendix.

Each site, because of its unique intervention, required somewhat different evaluation approaches. We describe these unique aspects in each of the appendices.

Evaluation Challenges

The evaluation data were sufficient to describe the programs' implementation and initial outcomes adequately, although we encountered a few challenges along the way. Getting feedback from programs that were activity-based proved to be relatively easy. For example, the intergenerational programs at the SNCC and HFC required staff to collect self-administered "quick feedback forms" to service recipients immediately after each event. Likewise, the P.E.A.C.E., Inc., home safety check program required the program coordinator to conduct a single telephone survey of service recipients soon after her safety check and the carrying out of any minor repairs that were needed.

The two transportation initiatives at Canton Woods and Parkside, however, had more complicated program designs and required the collection of data from service recipients and site managers at less systematic points in time. One of these sites did not create a database of participants for the evaluation even though it was in the evaluation plan.

Although each program agreed to the evaluation plan and data collection requirements, the evaluators sensed that data collection was not a priority at any of the sites. We met with program coordinators several times, provided them with simple data recording templates, and frequently needed to remind them of the importance of administering the forms we had provided. However, data collection remained a challenge to the staff. At the first learning session³ hosted by the Foundations, the relationship of systematically collected feedback data to sustainability was stressed. Perhaps ongoing reinforcement and training specifically emphasizing the ability of evaluation to lead to program improvement and sustainability would have resulted in more complete and higher-quality data.

As evaluators, we question the melding of the findings of the Concept Mapping exercise with concepts included in the AdvantAge model. It complicated the program and evaluation designing process and, in the words of one site Director, “created unrealistic expectations.” In the end, the evaluation focused on the programs’ successes in addressing the factors from the AdvantAge model that were most relevant to their interventions:

- ❖ promoting safety at home and in the neighborhood to address basic needs (P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood Community Center)
- ❖ fostering meaningful connections with family, neighbors, and friends to promote social and civic engagement (Syracuse Northeast Community Center and Huntington Family Centers)
- ❖ providing accessible transportation so that people can remain (or become) independent (Canton Woods Senior Center and Parkside Community Association)

Evaluation Findings

Fidelity to the Planned Interventions

Did the NAI projects reach the target population?

Each of the NAI funded agencies successfully served their target population of low-income seniors within their identified neighborhoods. As originally intended by the Foundations, a program was implemented within a Buffalo community, in each quadrant of the city of Syracuse, and in two of Syracuse’s northern suburbs.

Three of the six plans specified a number of participants they intended to serve, and two surpassed their expectations: HFC intended to serve 15 seniors and 10 youth and actually served 22 seniors and 14 youth; SNCC planned for 12 seniors and 15 youth and actually engaged 12 seniors and 37 youth; and P.E.A.C.E., Inc., hoped to reach 50 to 60 seniors but actually served 40 households and 48 seniors within the Eastwood neighborhood.

³ The Foundations decided early in the process to fund a facilitator to organize learning sessions, with required attendance for the grantees. These learning sessions were designed to increase knowledge and skill in areas of need related to their work on the NAI and to increase opportunity for grantees to network for support, sharing of strategies, and dissemination of promising practices. The sessions included presentations on relevant topics (identified by the grantees) and became a supportive group for the grantees. Feedback included the following statements: “The investment in shared learning was a good one”; “Each session was helpful”; and “The information was useful in our day-to-day work.” Brief summaries of learning session feedback surveys were shared with the Foundations in June 2013.

The other four programs (Canton Woods, Catholic Charities, Parkside) did not specify numbers in their plans, but each program reached residents within their neighborhoods and within the intended age groups.

Did the NAI projects provide services as planned?

We found that all six of the NAI funded programs were implemented with fidelity and quality, although most made mid-course changes to their interventions. As described in detail in the appendices, a number of programs encountered challenges and impediments to staying on the original schedule. In each case, the Foundations were flexible and provided guidance and technical assistance. Four of the programs were granted extensions to allow for further planning, and additional time to address issues such as staff turnover, attracting volunteers, marketing the program, and developing sound implementation policies and procedures.

Figure 2 offers a schematic picture of key project elements for each of the six grantees along with planned and implemented strategies.

FIGURE 2. Summary of NAI Program Plans and Implementation

Organization, Program, Location, and Timeframe	Planned Intervention and AdvantAge Key Domains	Activities Implemented	Population Reached	Fidelity to Original Plan? Progress Toward AdvantAge Objectives?
<p>Canton Woods Senior Center Transportation Initiative</p> <p>Suburban: Baldwinsville</p> <p>10/2/12–6/30/14</p>	<p>- Provide bus transportation for seniors residing within subsidized and remote senior housing with no access to public transportation</p> <p><i>AdvantAge:</i> Maximizes independence for frail and disabled: Provides accessible transportation.</p>	<p>- Partnered with Regional Trans. Authority</p> <p>- Partnered with housing site managers to promote program, registered riders, and scheduled weekly outings</p> <p>- Provided weekly transportation to shopping venues selected by seniors</p> <p>- Provided a total of 250 round-trip outings</p>	<p>- Served the 2 initially targeted housing sites plus 2 additional sites</p> <p>- 105 seniors registered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All 60 yrs. or older - 89 female and 16 male - 102 white, non-Hispanic <p>- 85 seniors utilized service</p>	<p>Yes to both questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program implemented as planned - Very positive feedback from seniors about program and feelings of independence
<p>Parkside Community Association Transportation Initiative</p> <p>Urban: North Buffalo</p> <p>6/1/12–5/31/13</p>	<p>- Offer volunteer drivers to transport seniors to medical appointments, to social engagements, and for routine errands</p> <p><i>AdvantAge:</i> Maximizes independence for frail and disabled: Provides accessible transportation.</p>	<p>- Recruited and trained 11 volunteer drivers</p> <p>- Secured liability insurance</p> <p>- Developed detailed policy and procedure manuals and recruited volunteer ride coordinator</p> <p>- Marketed program</p> <p>- Provided 55 door-to-door rides, 54 of them to medical appointments</p>	<p>- Served 13 riders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average age: 77 - 11 women, 2 men - 10 lived alone - All from catchment area - 12 white - 13 English speaking - 2 used cane; 1 on O2 	<p>Yes to both questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program implemented as planned - Very positive feedback from seniors about program and feelings of independence
<p>Huntington Family Centers Intergenerational Learning Project</p> <p>Urban: Syracuse west and south</p> <p>8/1/12–8/31/13</p>	<p>- Offer intergenerational programming to promote respect and understanding of one another</p> <p><i>AdvantAge:</i> Promotes social and civic engagement: Fosters meaningful connections with family, neighbors, and friends; promotes active engagement in community life</p>	<p>- Recruited seniors and youth</p> <p>- Held 9 intergenerational activities including an ice cream social, apple picking, bowling, Lights on the Lake, bingo, lunch and a movie, 2 museum visits, celebratory luncheon</p> <p>- Provided computer mentoring by youth for seniors</p> <p>- Provided transportation</p> <p>- Included Spanish-speaking staff</p>	<p>- 22 seniors participated, all from target population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age range: 60 to 86 - 12 black, 10 white - 8 Spanish-speaking - Half lived alone <p>- 14 youth participated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age range: 11 to 15 - 8 black, 2 hispanic, 1 white, 3 Other - 1 Spanish-speaking 	<p>Yes to both questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held 9 events—1 more than originally planned - Positive feedback from seniors and youth about activities and events - Youth reported activities changed their comfort level w/ seniors - Seniors found youth respectful from beginning

FIGURE 2, Continued. Summary of NAI Program Plans and Implementation

Organization, Program, Location, and Timeframe	Planned Intervention and AdvantAge Key Domains	Activities Implemented	Population Reached	Fidelity to Original Plan? Progress Toward AdvantAge Objectives?
<p>Syracuse Northeast Community Center Intergenerational Learning Project</p> <p>Urban: Syracuse north</p> <p>7/1/2012–5/30/14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer intergenerational programming to promote respect and understanding of one another <p><i>AdvantAge:</i> Promotes social and civic engagement: Fosters meaningful connections with family, neighbors, and friends. Addresses basic needs: Promotes safety at home and in the neighborhood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruited seniors and youth - Held a dinner gathering with both groups to plan activities - Held a total of 19 activities including pumpkin and apple picking, baking, Lights on the Lake, storytelling, farmers’ market and jam making, ice cream social, bingo, boat trip, barbeque, movie, holiday parties, art gallery, community clean-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 seniors participated, all from target neighborhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 women, 2 men - Age range: 55 to 94 - 8 white, 3 black, 1 bi-racial, 1 primarily Spanish-speaking - All lived alone - 37 youth participated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 26 girls, 11 boys - Age range: 13 to 19 - 11 white, 19 black, 5 bi-racial, 2 Somali, 4 Hispanic 	<p>Yes to both questions. After 1-year delay, implemented as planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held 19 events—more than originally planned - Positive feedback from seniors and youth about activities and events - Youth reported change in comfort level w/ seniors and learned importance of being respectful - Positive feedback from seniors about interacting with youth
<p>P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood Community Center Helping Hands and Hearts</p> <p>Urban: Syracuse East</p> <p>12/1/2012–5/30/14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide 50 to 60 home safety checks and emergency kits - Complete minor fixes and adaptations to homes - Hold quarterly educational lunch and learn sessions <p><i>AdvantAge:</i> Addresses basic needs: Promotes safety at home and in the neighborhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted 37 home safety checks and identified 33 needed repairs - Distributed 37 emergency kits - Completed 29 minor (low-cost) fixes and adaptations - Made referrals to community resources for 1 significant repair/adaptation - Held 3 lunch and learn sessions, 1 regarding safety issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reached 40 households and total of 48 seniors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 22 women, 10 men, and 8 couples - 24 seniors lived alone - 32 owned, 6 rented - All over 60 years; range 60 to 95 	<p>Yes to both questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program implemented as planned - Very positive feedback from seniors about inspections, safety kits, and household fixes - Very positive feedback from seniors about feelings of safety
<p>Catholic Charities Elderly Services Outreach and Retention Campaign</p> <p>Suburban: Mattydale</p> <p>9/1/13–6/30/14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement a new outreach and marketing campaign to reach more area seniors <p><i>AdvantAge:</i> Addresses basic needs: Provides useful information about available services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New signs, banners, promo - Outreach to local churches and community organizations - Employed PT activity coordinator for 10 months; then transitioned duties to existing staff - Held additional social events - Addressed concerns regarding cleanliness and comfort - Convened advisory group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saw increase in participants in ANTS, Project Fix, and financial assistance programs, and in other center activities, including exercise classes, lunches, movies, and special events/outings 	<p>Yes to both questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After 1-year delay, program implemented as planned - Improved feedback regarding knowledge of available services - Improved feedback about center cleanliness and comfort

Positive Feedback and Program Reviews

First and foremost, the activities were described as worthwhile and beneficial and, for the most part, as “fun” and “well organized.” It is noteworthy that both staff and participants enjoyed the activities that were inherent in the project strategies. Each of the six programs received positive reviews and accolades from their participants. Staff and participant perceptions alike were that, for those who participated, the experience was successful and had an impact.

Figure 3. presents a summary of the results of “quick feedback” surveys that were distributed to participants in the program activities. The responses attest to the appreciation participants felt for the activities in which they participated. There were no negative responses and very few suggestions for improvements.

Figure 3. Summary of Participant Quick Survey Results

Canton Woods Senior Center Transportation Initiative, with 85 Participants
<p>Program staff administered an anonymous quick feedback survey to participants</p> <p>N=31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 27 respondents or 87% indicated that the program overall was “great”❖ 29 respondents or 94% reported that the registration process went smoothly; it was “well explained and simple”❖ 14 or 45% noted that the best part was being able to shop or the ability to go to their favorite store❖ 13 or 42% said that the best part was socializing and being with friends <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“It was a very nice experience. I don’t see where it could have gone better.”</p> <p>“I haven’t got a best part. I enjoy the whole trip on the bus, in the store shopping, and our get together when we eat lunch.”</p> <p>“We love our bus driver and she’s very helpful with our packages. Everything is excellent.”</p>
Parkside Community Association Transportation Initiative, with 12 Participants and 7 Volunteer Drivers
<p>Program staff administered quick feedback questionnaires to riders and drivers</p> <p>N=3 riders and 7 drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ All 3 riders noted that the registration went smoothly and was simple, and that drivers were dependable and caring❖ All 7 drivers noted that the program was well run and efficient <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“This is a wonderful service.”</p> <p>“This was great service to find when I was unable to drive after surgery.”</p>

Figure 3, Continued. Summary of Participant Quick Survey Results

Huntington Family Centers Intergenerational Project, with 22 Senior and 14 Youth Participants
<p>Participants were surveyed anonymously at the end of each of the 9 intergenerational events.</p> <p>N=46 seniors across 9 events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 38 questionnaires or 83% indicated that the seniors liked the activity “a lot”❖ 17 or 39% indicated seniors thought that spending time with youth was the best part <p>N=48 youth across 9 events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 27 questionnaires or 56% indicated that the youth liked the activity “a lot”❖ 23 questionnaires or 48% indicated that the youth thought that one or more specific activity was best part (e.g., apple picking, bowling) <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“Loved watching the kids enjoy themselves with us . . . They reminded me of my grandchildren.”</p> <p>“[The best part was . . .] seeing the children have fun.”</p> <p>“It appeared that the children were told to respect their elders and that they did.”</p>
Syracuse Northeast Community Center Intergenerational Learning Project, with 12 Senior and 37 Youth Participants
<p>Participants were surveyed anonymously at the end of each of the 16 intergenerational events.</p> <p>N=42 seniors across 16 events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 28 questionnaires or 66% indicated that the seniors thought the activities were great❖ Spending time with youth was noted most often as the best part <p>N=38 youth across 16 events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 28 questionnaires or 74% indicated that the youth thought the activities were great❖ Learning about things that happened a long time ago was noted most often as the best part <p>Representative quote:</p> <p>“Being in the company of young people was the best part.”</p>
P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood Community Center Helping Hands and Hearts, with 48 Participants
<p>After the home inspection and the completion of any repair work, program staff surveyed participants regarding the implementation of the safety checks.</p> <p>N=22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 22 respondents or 100% indicated the staff was on time and helpful❖ 22 respondents or 100% indicated that safety concerns at home were found and resolved❖ 19 respondents or 86% appreciated their safety kit and noted its value for home safety <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“Very easy to talk to and with. Felt like family visiting with us.”</p> <p>“Safety check was fine. [She] was on time, courteous, fun to visit with.”</p>

“She was very wonderful and very helpful . . . Project assistant was on time.”

“Took time to visit at conclusion of in-home safety inspection. Enjoyed the company.”

Catholic Charities Elderly Services Outreach and Retention Campaign (Participants were not surveyed regarding satisfaction with the outreach and marketing campaign but only regarding impression of impact.)

Factors Facilitating Implementation

Based on interviews with key staff involved with each of the projects, the organizations were for the most part pleased with their programs and proud of the service they were offering to seniors. Based on staff and participant perceptions across the programs as well as our own observations, we noted several factors that facilitated success:

- ❖ The willingness of staff to attend to pre-operation details, such as developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and completing participant needs assessments, contributed to efficient programming. This was especially apparent with the two transportation providers, Canton Woods and Parkside, who had many details to work out before they could implement their services.
- ❖ Having capable and consistent staff made a difference in the organization of and participation in intergenerational programs at HFC and SNCC as well as the Eastwood home safety project.
- ❖ The staff was flexible and committed to working through challenges. They were willing to examine their own mistakes, learn from them, and make needed program modifications.
- ❖ The Foundations’ support was essential. During interviews, staff expressed appreciation for the funding they received for their program and the patience and flexibility the Foundations showed as agencies hired or assigned appropriate staff and fully implemented their strategies. The Foundations’ staff was available for guidance, and allowed modification of project timelines as needed for better planning, mid-course correction, and reasonable changes to strategies when barriers emerged. They mentioned the benefits of the learning sessions offered by the Foundations and said that “they promoted open dialogue and made it okay to explore and share ideas.”
- ❖ The grantees operated their programs efficiently and managed with small budgets. Several noted that they were “frugal with their budgets” and able to stretch the funding to operate for a longer period (Canton Woods) or run more activities than originally planned (Huntington Family Centers and SNCC).

Impact

The initial intent of the Foundations was to pilot interventions that would not only support the ability of seniors to age in place, but also further progress toward the AdvantAge model’s goal of creating elder-friendly communities. Based on those initial indicators, the NAI program was successful in reaching seniors and offering supports.

- ❖ **It addressed basic needs** through two projects: 1) promoting safety at home through the Eastwood Community Center program’s offering safety checks, minor safety-related repairs, emergency safety kits, and education, and 2) providing useful information about available services through the Catholic Charities project.

- ❖ **It maximized independence** through providing accessible transportation; the Parkside Association offered door-to-door transportation for individual seniors to medical and other appointments and Canton Woods Senior Center ran weekly bus trips for groups of seniors to go shopping and out to lunch.
- ❖ **It promoted social engagement** through fostering meaningful connections to neighbors and friends and promoting active engagement in community life with the two intergenerational projects, Syracuse Northeast Community Center and Huntington Family Centers.

Although the grantees developed strategies to address specified AdvantAge domains, there were additional outcomes that crossed over to other domains as well. For example, by “providing accessible transportation” those two projects also “fostered meaningful connections with neighbors and friends,” and Parkside in particular “provided opportunities for meaningful voluntary work” through the use of volunteer drivers in the program.

In this section of the report we present the outcome data, collected via surveys and interviews with the participants themselves in all six projects. We designed the surveys and interview questions to elicit the seniors’ perceptions regarding the project’s impact on their feelings of independence, safety, and social connectedness.

Figure 4. Summary of Initial Impact

Impact on Seniors’ Sense of Independence
<p>Canton Woods Bus Transportation: Participant Outcome Survey Results</p> <p>N=30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 18 respondents or 60% indicated that they felt a greater sense of independence after having bus transportation to go shopping ❖ 20 respondents or 67% indicated that they would use the service more often if it was available ❖ 16 respondents or 53% noted they had needs for transportation to places other than the grocery store, e.g., medical appointments (6), haircuts (1), and other social outings (5) such as to dinner, the zoo, the fair, and miniature golf <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“This bus service lets me go get my groceries, etc. without bothering my children. It provides me more freedom.”</p> <p>“This has been a fun experience and one that is good for my ‘quality of life’—really!”</p>
<p>Parkside Community Association Volunteer Transportation Participant Outcome Survey Results</p> <p>N =7 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 6 respondents or 86 % indicated that they felt a greater sense of independence <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“It was nice to give family and friends a break.”</p> <p>“I do have a sense of independence—nobody likes to be an imposition on others and this service alleviates bothering exceptionally busy people.”</p>

Figure 4, Continued. Summary of Initial Impact

Impact on Seniors' Sense of Safety
<p>P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood Community Center Helping Hands and Hearts: Participant Outcome Survey</p> <p>N=22 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 18 respondents or 82% stated that they “absolutely” had a sense of feeling safer in their house as a result of the program❖ 19 respondents or 86% expressed appreciation for their emergency kit and noted its value for staying safe in the home <p>Representative quotes:</p> <p>“I feel that the fixing of stair rails and installing handicap bars will change my life. I already feel so much safer”</p> <p>“I went out and bought anti-slip rugs for the bathroom and checked my smoke detectors and fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide detector.”</p> <p>“Actually I do feel safer. I have never considered such a kit. Great ideas, and I am sure I will use everything at some time . . . when lights out, etc.”</p>
Impact on Social Engagement
<p>Huntington Family Centers Intergenerational Learning Project: Three Group Interviews</p> <p>N= 4 English-speaking senior participants, 5 Spanish-speaking senior participants, 3 youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The seniors all reported that they enjoyed the program very much❖ It wasn't clear that this program led to an overall increase in social engagement for these seniors, but they did express great appreciation for the opportunities to socialize with the youth and all agreed that <i>interacting with the youth was “the best part.”</i>❖ The youth reported that they especially enjoyed the more lively activities (bingo and bowling), and that their comfort level with older people had increased as a result of these experiences. <p>Representative quotes from seniors:</p> <p>“What attracted me to this program was the chance to learn from each other—just like with my own grandchildren. They are growing up in a new time so we learn from each other.”</p> <p>“I just love the youth, and I feel very happy when they are around.”</p> <p>Representative quotes from youth:</p> <p>“Sometimes I see one of the seniors in the neighborhood or at the grocery store, and we say hi.”</p> <p>“I'm more comfortable around seniors now. I used to think they were mean and grumpy—'cause I don't have old people around me—but then I talked to them and found out they are nice people.”</p> <p>“I used to think older people were boring but now have a different feeling—I don't say ‘old people’ (with a sneer) any more.”</p>

Figure 4, Continued. Summary of Initial Impact

Impact on Social Engagement, Continued
<p>Syracuse Northeast Community Center Intergenerational Learning Project: Participant Outcome Survey Results</p> <p>N=7 seniors N= 5 youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 7 seniors and 5 youth reported they enjoyed getting to know one another and felt respected by each other <p>Representative quotes from seniors:</p> <p>“The youth have always been respectful to us seniors. The more interaction we have with them, the more familiar we’ll become with each other.”</p> <p>“We should schedule more events so that we can become more familiar with the youth in this community.”</p> <p>Representative quote from youth:</p> <p>“It was nice getting to know the seniors.”</p>
<p>Canton Woods: Participant Outcome Survey N=30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 23 respondents or 77% reported that they had “more social contact with people now” <p>Representative quote:</p> <p>“Getting out meeting different people, great opportunity.”</p>
<p>Parkside Community Association: Survey N=7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 4 respondents reported that they “definitely have more social contact now.”
Impact on Seniors’ Use of Services
<p>Catholic Charities Elderly Services Outreach and Retention Campaign</p> <p>N= 85</p> <p>Survey administered by Executive Director and responses collected by show of hands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 68% indicated familiarity with Center programs❖ 50% reported that they had used one or more of the services in the last six months❖ 100% indicated that they felt comfortable with the Center staff❖ 97% reported that the Center was clean and comfortable <p>The Executive Director reported that there had been a(n)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ 50% increase in movie attendance❖ 30% increase in exercise program attendance❖ Increase in ANTS (Area North Transportation Services)—on average from 30 to 40 seniors per week❖ 10% increase in assistance with entitlement and financial programs❖ Increase in referrals to Project Fix (minor home repairs) and Project Joseph (carpentry)

Lessons Learned

It was important to both Foundations that the NAI projects serve as “pilots” for new strategies and that grantees learn from the experience about effective practices and successes as well as challenges. Each grantee agency was able to articulate the specific challenges they faced, how they adjusted, and the lessons they had learned in the process. These are described more fully for each grantee in Appendices A to F. This section summarizes those “lessons learned” by the projects.

1. **Always allow for pre-program implementation planning and organization.** The importance and time allowed for planning and organization cannot be overemphasized. Grantees expressed appreciation for the flexibility and openness of the Foundations in allowing them to adjust their timelines. In most cases, the persons implementing the projects were not the persons who wrote the grant applications, so time was needed for orientation before preparing to initiate the program.

Frequently the staff encountered rules, regulations, and policies of their own agencies and their partners that delayed hiring and purchasing of materials. In general, the staff time required for the start-up of these NAI projects was underestimated. Additional time was needed to reorganize and/or reassign staff to implement the project. Finally, there needed to be time to poll the participants for their specific input to project activities. Following are examples from the grantees:

- ❖ Canton Woods staff learned quickly when operating a multi-site project that they had to be persistent with their communication, to respond to ongoing feedback from the housing sites, and to make programming adjustments as needed. In general, it was important to be flexible because each of the four sites had different approaches and they had “various personalities” to contend with. They needed time to develop memorandums of agreement with CENTRO and to poll the seniors to identify their preferred shopping sites.
- ❖ Parkside staff underestimated the time it would take to do the necessary background work before full implementation could occur. Obtaining liability insurance—critical to a program with volunteer drivers—as well as recruiting and vetting drivers took more time than originally estimated.
- ❖ Syracuse Northeast Community Center faced inconsistent leadership and staff turnover (the Center lost two Executive Directors and had other staff turnover), which resulted in some gaps in implementation. However, with the allotted extension to their original timeline the two staff members from senior and youth services were able to work together to jointly plan intergenerational activities.
- ❖ Huntington Family Centers also dealt with a change in program leadership. Once hired, the new Director needed time to become familiar with the program’s design and plans. She then needed to reorganize the program-planning model to involve representatives of Senior Services and Youth Services in the decision-making process and to institute clear communications procedures. The Huntington staff felt rushed to implement and noted that they would have preferred to spend the first few months in planning, getting a feel for the groups, recruiting participants, and identifying things that prospective participants preferred to do for the program activities.
- ❖ P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood needed additional time to gain a more thorough knowledge of neighborhood demographics and housing stock in order to serve the appropriate seniors within the proposed zip code. Once this was accomplished, strategies were modified to serve this group (which included those in rented as well as owner-occupied residences).

- ❖ The Catholic Charities Elderly Services Salina Civic Center originally planned to improve the use of their services. The Center offered services but the seniors were not aware of them and participation was low. After discussions with the Foundations, it was decided to delay the start of the NAI project at the Center. With A&O assistance, they took the time to administer a survey and facilitate a focused discussion to gather feedback from area seniors. The findings from that inquiry informed the development of a revised NAI plan.

2. Developing trust with participants and partners proved crucial to the success of several projects. This was an important, yet sometimes unexpected, aspect in several of the projects. The importance of efforts to build trust with their clients as well as partners was an important lesson learned and contributed to the successes observed in these programs:

- ❖ Canton Woods discovered that in addition to the time to arrange logistics, the staff needed to negotiate relationships with multiple sites and a collaborative transportation provider. Staff learned early on to be persistent with their communication and to review and respond to ongoing feedback from the sites to be able to work through the issues with each site and maintain a responsive and smoothly run service. The staff was committed and skilled at collecting feedback from their partners and the participating seniors. As a result, they added two housing sites midway through the program and added several additional destinations
- ❖ Parkside staff reported they learned they would have to commit time to gaining the trust of potential participants so they would utilize the program.
- ❖ P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood staff learned early on it was critical to the success of the program to gain the trust of the seniors. Seniors needed information and references up front about the Center, the staff, and the overall purpose of the program to feel secure allowing strangers into their home. Program staff adjusted the process for reaching seniors for safety checks. They allowed for more “getting to know you” time before scheduling visits.

3. Targeted, effective marketing is key to building program participation. Most of the programs had recruitment and participation issues. In the end, thorough planning for outreach and marketing contributed to robust programs with active participation. They quickly understood, as one staff member noted, that it was all about “marketing-marketing-marketing.” The projects used many avenues to increase participation.

- ❖ Canton Woods staff originally anticipated filling the buses to near capacity (16) for each scheduled trip, but in fact averaged 7 to 8 people or about 50% of their capacity per trip. Although this average utilization rate was lower than expected, they still feel strongly that the program was a success and will continue to be critical for those taking advantage of it. They have developed outreach materials, have received publicity in local publications, and are seeing an increase in “word of mouth” referrals. They hope that all of this will lead to an increase in ridership.
- ❖ Parkside also had difficulty with recruitment of riders. They discovered some of their targeted health facilities had their own shuttle services or that many of their target population had families offering support. Staff members reported that they were puzzled by the low demand for rides “since every village reports that rides are the number one need.” Some marketing strategies occurred during the project time period and others are planned:
 - recruiting riders by targeting a mailing using voter rolls
 - distributing information through Meals on Wheels
 - publicizing the program in the *North Buffalo Rocket*

- recruiting more drivers by putting up posters in community spaces and mailings using voter rolls
- ❖ Huntington Family Centers was successful in their recruitment and marketing. They drew from the already strong participation at the Center.
- ❖ Syracuse Northeast Community Center found that they needed to adjust their outreach and visibility in the community at large, not just for this particular project. The Foundations' funding helped them think through population shifts and needs in their community and plan accordingly. They instituted "community days" on Wednesdays and invited neighborhood people and vendors in, provided information about community resources, and offered refreshments. One consequence of this is that more seniors began showing up at the Center, especially on these community days. They plan to continue to hold Community Days to get the seniors and youth involved and hope that will increase participation in future intergenerational events.
- ❖ Eastwood Community Center greatly underestimated the difficulty they would face in marketing the program. The outreach and marketing methods they ultimately developed proved to be very successful and included distributing flyers, contacting churches and other community agencies, utilizing local TV news, mailing background and referral information to Eastwood Community Center members and households in the target zip code, providing informational brochures to seniors themselves to share with family and friends and promoting the service through "word-of-mouth."
- ❖ As noted, Catholic Charities conducted a needs assessment with their clients through a focus group and survey, which provided useful information for designing promotional strategies. These were some of their strategies:
 - developing a consistent message regarding "why should I come to this center"
 - designing and distributing a new brochure
 - purchasing and installing new and improved signage, banners, informational posters, and fliers
 - issuing mailings and conducting outreach to faith-based organizations, pharmacies, agencies serving seniors, groceries, and other places that seniors tend to congregate
 - distributing new promotional items like key tags and magnets
 - hosting a monthly supper at the Center and promoting all of the programs and resources each time

4. Intergenerational program staff learned specific lessons that helped strengthen their programs. The two intergenerational programs faced particular challenges in meeting the needs of both the seniors and the youth.

- ❖ It appeared there was some "creaming" of the youth that failed to address one of the problems that the programs were designed to mitigate: seniors' fear of kids on the street.
- ❖ Both had scheduling difficulties and learned that holidays and summertime works best for coordinating activities around the incompatible schedules of teens in school and seniors who preferred being home in the late afternoon and evening.
- ❖ SNCC struggled with consistency of participation by youth and seniors so the groups could really get to know each other. The staff also noted that it was a challenge to meet the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs and preferences of the seniors (e.g., frail versus active older adults) as compared with the youth.

- ❖ Huntington Family Centers drew from a group of seniors and youth who were already connected to the Center and regularly participated in age-specific activities. SNCC efforts to open up their Center every Wednesday to offer activities and services to their community may be a first step in attracting a more connected population.
- ❖ The Youth Services Director at Huntington invested time in preparing the youth for being around older people (e.g., not to take offense if seniors mispronounced their names) and promoting the program as a good opportunity for youth who had little or no contact with grandparents.

Sustainability Outlook

Canton Woods Senior Center Transportation Initiative

We anticipate that this project has a good chance of continuing. Its staff has established policies and procedures, developed outreach materials, and formed solid relationships with CENTRO and the managers of the senior housing sites. They are, however, concerned about the need for increasing ridership in order to ensure “full” buses. Without extra funding to supplement the ridership cost to CENTRO, there may be a need for modifications and/or reductions in particular routes.

Parkside Community Association Transportation Initiative

Staff report that the Parkside Community Association lacks the resources to sustain the program, and the donations from riders will be insufficient to cover its costs, especially the cost of liability insurance. They conclude that for the program to continue, it will be necessary to hold fundraising events, seek other grant funding, and solicit private donations. Despite the effort it will take, they are optimistic about the future. They feel confident that they have a strong infrastructure in place and have planned specific next steps:

- ❖ going forward with \$1,500 they received from private donors and income from rides
- ❖ conducting other fund-raising activities such as soliciting and selling donated gifts (at their 50th anniversary gala)
- ❖ recruiting more drivers by putting up posters in community spaces and sending mailings using voter rolls
- ❖ recruiting riders by sending out targeted mailings using voter rolls; distributing information through Meals on Wheels; and publicizing the program in the *North Buffalo Rocket*

Huntington Family Centers Intergenerational Learning Project

Huntington staff recognized the effectiveness of intergenerational activities in encouraging seniors to connect with the Center and the value that the seniors placed on having opportunities to socialize with each other and with youth. As a result, they reported that they plan to include such activities in the future. They noted that they would seek inexpensive or free activities, such as the Skiddy Park Jazz Festival or the La Casita art event in order to make this programming feasible.

Syracuse Northeast Community Center Intergenerational Learning Project

Based upon the assessments of program staff, we are optimistic that the SNCC will continue to develop and offer intergenerational programming. Staff members credit the Foundations with helping them think through population shifts and needs in their community and to plan accordingly. They began to hold “community days” on Wednesdays and invited neighborhood people and vendors to participate, provided information about community resources, and offered refreshments. They concluded that because of these community days, seniors began to frequent the Center, so they plan to continue to hold them. They also intend to devote some effort to involving seniors and youth in the planning of community days, hoping that will increase participation in future intergenerational events. The staff feels that they have learned a lot about organizing successful activities and have found that the program is inexpensive to run. Therefore, there is a strong chance this program will continue.

P.E.A.C.E., Inc., Eastwood Community Center Helping Hands and Hearts

We are optimistic that this project could continue, with further funding, to conduct the home safety checks. The staff has well-developed policies and procedures in place, good outreach materials developed, strong relationships in the community, and a “word of mouth” positive reputation. These outcomes make it likely that with some guidance the program could attract financial support from other funding sources.

Recommendations

More planning time. Future projects funded by the Foundations would benefit from having additional time to recruit, organize, and train staff; secure partnerships; and publicize in the community the goals and activities to be implemented. Three or four months of financial and technical support in addition to the year (for example) of implementing the intervention would have helped several of these projects to get up and running, ready for enrolling and serving participants.

Clear expectation for data collection. To increase the likelihood that funded projects will adhere to expectations regarding systematic data collection, the Foundations could require proposals to identify a person (or position) who is experienced in the collection and management of data and who will be responsible for ensuring that evaluation-related data are collected and entered properly. Such an arrangement would provide a dependable contact person for the evaluator and ultimately strengthen the evaluator’s, and the Foundations’, confidence in the reliability of the data used to produce findings.

Assistance with marketing and outreach. Requiring a line item in the program’s budget for marketing and outreach would increase the likelihood that programs would recognize these activities as an integral part of program implementation, resulting in their devoting more systematic thought and planning for them.

Continued opportunities for professional development (e.g., learning sessions) and peer support. Attendees regarded the learning sessions as valuable opportunities to learn about best practices with senior populations; to brainstorm and network with colleagues; and to feel supported by and connected to the Foundations.

Consider providing further support for transportation programs and home safety checks and repairs. Of the six programs funded under the NAI, the three that addressed transportation and home safety bore the most direct relevance to factors identified by the AdvantAge model for promoting the likelihood of successfully aging in place.

- ❖ The provision of transportation services seems to be a critical factor in enabling seniors to feel independent. The Parkside intervention utilizing volunteer drivers might be less expensive to replicate or sustain, while the Canton Woods model seemed to offer more opportunities for socialization among seniors. It might be worthwhile to implement both models on a larger scale and plan for more rigorous outcome evaluation.
- ❖ Implementing the program of home safety inspections and repairs was labor intensive but seemed to offer a promising and very practical approach to improving seniors' safety, both perceived and actual. It would be worthwhile to explore various models for staffing and implementing an ongoing and larger scale program of this type.