

Plan to host an event in your community during the

3rd Annual AAHSA Homecoming Week

May 31 – June 4, 2010



“who decides?”

Start planning your event today! For more information, contact Lauren Shaham at Lshaham@aaahsa.org.

AAHSA Homecoming 2010: Who Decides?



January 2010

Dear AAHSA Member:

You and your organizations have been creating not only the future of aging services, but the future of aging for decades and generations. You have helped communities answer a crucial question about how we care for our aging population: Who Decides?

And as we begin a new decade that will see a radical shift in the demographics of our country, who better than you to help your communities and our nation answer this question of who should decide what the future of aging in your community should look like? Elders? Government? Providers? Family Members? All of the above?

These are thorny questions being raised in turbulent times. That's why our 2010 theme is "Who Decides?" and why we are encouraging each of you to position yourselves as thought leaders in your community on this essential question.

We launched AAHSA Homecoming two years ago to create a crystallizing focus on the work you do and, more important, the people you serve. And through hundreds of events ranging from Senior Proms to Memorial Day barbecues, you have embraced this opportunity to open your doors and invite your broader community to see your commitment to high-quality aging services.

This year, we encourage you to host a Homecoming event as a call to action. Our residents and clients need to let the people in their community who have the decision-making power about access to services hear what elders think is important. Your Homecoming can be a platform for helping those you serve answer the essential question: What is the Future of Aging in Our Community?

This toolkit contains ideas, statistics, sample invitations and more to help you plan, promote and execute a community forum focused on this question. The pieces are there to help you demonstrate your thought leadership on this most important issue of our times. As always, our AAHSA staff is here to help and to share your outstanding efforts with your peers from across the country. Please visit our AAHSA Homecoming Web site at <http://www.aahsa.org/homecoming.aspx> to register your event and learn how others are planning to mark Homecoming this year. Contact Lauren Shaham at (202) 508-1219 or lshaham@aahsa.org if you need additional information or assistance.

Who decides? You decide. And I know you will decide to make AAHSA Homecoming a central activity in your community this year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Minnix". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Larry Minnix
AAHSA President & CEO

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Inside This Guide

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Helpful hints on getting the media involved

Sample press release

Sample fact sheet

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What Is a “Future of Aging in Our Community” Forum?

A Future of Aging in Our Community forum is a facilitated discussion about people’s attitudes, preferences and needs as our population ages. It can take a variety of different formats, but lends itself to a roundtable discussion where participants are invited to share their knowledge, hear from others and come away with a greater understanding of the community’s focus moving forward.

There are many ways to create and execute a forum. Here are some ideas:

- Invite a small group of key opinion leaders to serve on a panel discussing the topic.

- Invite community members to attend and raise questions.

- Work with your local cable company to make the “Future of Aging in Our Community” a topic of a local public affairs television show at which you join other community leaders in a discussion.

- Publish a series of op-ed columns from different authors in a local newspaper or separate supplement.

- Partner with a local aging task force to host a town hall meeting at your organization.

- Work jointly on media outreach to help spread the word.

- Ask your residents, clients, family members and employees to write up their ideas about the future of aging in your community. Publish them in a collection that is launched at a Memorial Day celebration.

- Gather residents in your community room to write their views on the future of aging and send them to your mayor, local council or members of Congress.

- Invite local high school students and facilitate a dialogue between clients and teenagers about their views on the future of aging.

- Invite residents/clients’ family members and friends to dinner and make the future of aging the topic of conversation. After the meal, ask each table to share what they learned from one another. Invite a local official to come as well to listen and react.

However you structure your forum, don’t miss out on the opportunity to remind your community about the work you do and your mission-driven commitment. The sample fact sheet in this guide provides some ideas for a leave-behind document that you can distribute at an event or to potential partners.

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Who Should Be Invited to Your “Future of Aging in Our Community” Forum?

The goal of your forum will be to create a compelling dialogue that helps your community leaders understand the coming age wave and how current and future elders view aging. Here are some ideas for types of people who can help create that conversation:

Academic experts – Local academics from social work schools, gerontology programs or public health schools can help frame the trends and perhaps even offer a local snapshot gleaned from census data.

Consumer groups – These organizations can offer the perspective of current and future elders. For examples, groups like AARP, the Older Women’s League and retiree associations bring the consumer view to the conversation.

Service providers – Invite some of your peers to be part of the conversation. Focus on organizations that provide services different from your own so you can broaden the conversation.

Government officials – Use our tips below to invite your local, state and federal legislators to give opening remarks and participate in the session. Think about inviting both elected and career officials who are interested in aging and knowledgeable about what your community offers.

Media – Don’t just invite reporters to cover the event. Invite the local newspaper publisher or general manager of one of the television stations to speak. They are very focused on the demographics in your community and on public perceptions of trends.

Current Residents and Clients – Remember your most important asset, the people you serve. They offer wisdom, perspective and real-life experience that can make your forum unique. Offer them a seat at the table and urge others to listen carefully to what they say.

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Sample Event Planning Timeline

Three Months Before

- Form a committee to plan and implement the event.
- Develop the program theme or concept and list of participants.
- Decide who will serve as host for the event. Possibilities include your administrator/CEO, the chair or other member of your board or a civic leader who understands your mission and message.
- Choose a date.
- Develop a budget of projected expenses for your event. Remember: you don't need a lot of money to create an outstanding Homecoming forum.
- Invite speakers and any other participants who might require advance notice.
- Create the invitation list.
- Determine the on-site team/staff meeting schedule, assigned tasks and required attendance list.

Two Months Before

- Ensure that development of any materials to be printed is underway.
- Design media (local TV, radio, newspaper and bloggers) advertisements and announcements. Arrange for publication and distribution.
- Follow-up on any speaker arrangements and the participant list.
- Update Web site to include event information.
- Book a photographer, if budget allows. If not, identify someone who can take photos and compile a list of the types of pictures you want to be sure to capture.
- Mail invitations or announcements.

Preceding Month

- Meet with your team to explain roles and responsibilities.
- Copy/print all materials needed for the event.
- Call photographer and speaker to confirm details.
- Confirm catering arrangements.
- Create signage.
- Prepare badges/name tags if needed.
- Confirm/prepare other staging props/decorations.
- Distribute press release.

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Day Before

Complete set-up at location.
Check that all your back-up plans are ready to go.
Touch base with team one more time.
Follow up with local media for publicity. Continue pitch calls.

Day Of

Enjoy your well-planned event.
Take plenty of pictures

Day After

Conduct a post-event review, discuss lessons learned and reconcile your budget.
Send thank you letters to speakers, other participants, your team and others, as needed.

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Statistics on Aging

Use these statistics to frame your talking points or accent marketing materials for your forum. For local statistics on aging, try the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics at www.agingstats.gov or the Census Bureau at www.census.gov.

In 2006, [there were 37.3 million people 65 years and older in America](#). [There will be an estimated 86.7 million people 65 years and older in 2050](#).

Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Older Americans 2004, page 2

In 1900, there were 122,000 Americans age 85 and over. For 2002, that number was more than 4.5 million. By 2020, it is estimated there will be over 6.5 million Americans at least age 85.

U.S. Census Bureau. For 1900, "Table 42, Single Years of Age: 1880 to 1980," 1980 Census General Population Characteristics, United States Summary, pages 1-26. For 2002, "Table NP-T4-B, Projections of the Total Resident Population by 5-Year Age Groups, Race, and Hispanic Origin with Special Age Categories: Middle Series, 2001 to 2005." For 2020, "Table NP-T4-E, Projections of the Total Resident Population by 5-Year Age Groups, Race, and Hispanic Origin with Special Age Categories: Middle Series, 2016 to 2020."

Since 1900, the life expectancy at birth of Americans has risen from 47.3 years to a projected 77.8 years in 2004, due mostly to lower infant mortality rates. Persons reaching age 65 could expect to survive almost to age 77 in 1900, but can now reasonably expect to celebrate their 83rd birthday.

National Center for Health Statistics, Health, United States, 2002, "Table 27." Life expectancy at birth, at 65 years of age, and at 75 years of age, by race and sex: United States, Selected Years 1900–2004," <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/07.pdf#027>

In 2004, one in five American households had an informal caregiver (family member or friend) for persons over the age of 18.

National Association for Home Care & Hospice, Basic Statistics About Home Care, 2008, http://www.nahc.org/facts/08HC_Stats.pdf, page 6

By the year 2020, 12 million Americans will need long-term care.

National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information, http://www.longtermcare.gov/LTC/Main_Site/Understanding_Long_Term_Care/Basics/Basics.aspx.

By the year 2050, approximately 27 million Americans will need long-term care services. *Department of Health & Human Services, The Future Supply of Long-Term Care Workers in relation to the Aging Baby Boomer Generation, Report to Congress, 2003,*

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/ltcwork.htm#section4>, Figure 3. *Estimates of Future Demand for Long-Term Care*

An estimated 44.4 million Americans, or more than 1 in 5 (21 percent) adults in the U.S., provide unpaid care to another adult age 18 or older.

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National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP (April 2004), Caregiving in the U.S. National Alliance for Caregiving, Bethesda, MD and AARP, Washington, D.C.

Ninety percent of individuals who receive care at home get help from family and friends, and 80% rely solely on these individuals for assistance.

Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, Washington, D.C., 2008

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Inviting Elected Officials

Inviting elected officials to your event — and getting them to come — takes organization and persistence.

Submit your invitations as far in advance as possible, in writing, by letter or fax. Be ready to follow up by phone in order to get in direct touch with the staff member who handles the schedule of events and appointments for the elected official.

In your invitation, describe your event, the date and time you have selected and how many people are expected to attend. You should give elected officials the opportunity to speak at your event. Be sure to include how much time will be allowed and what topics or issues you would like to have addressed.

If you are asking an elected official to be a part of your program, be prepared that you might not get an immediate commitment. Decide early whether or not you will accept a surrogate in place of the elected official and how long you can wait to get a commitment. Having a staff member represent an elected official still allows you the opportunity to educate a policy leader.

Names and addresses

If you need help locating the names and addresses of your federal and state legislators, simply visit Contact Congress <http://capwiz.com/aahsa/home/> on AAHSA's Web site. Click on the tab "Elected Officials" and enter your nine-digit zip code to get a listing of all of your legislators. Click on each of the legislators' names to view their "bio and contact" page, which includes office addresses and telephone numbers.

More information

If you are looking for more tips, visit www.aahsa.org/advocacy.aspx and click on "Grassroots Tools." The toolbox contains helpful information on putting together a "Congress-to-Home" visit.

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Media Relations

Obtaining media coverage is one of the best ways your organization can draw broad attention to your Future of Aging in Our Community forum and your organization's commitment to community. Elected officials are interested in receiving media coverage so be sure to let your invited guests know that media will be invited.

Earned media, or placing stories in print, electronic, broadcast media outlets, is more credible and less expensive than advertising. But as its name suggests, it requires you to "earn" coverage through strategic thinking and hard work. The following steps provide an overview of how to establish and sustain media relations that support your organization's efforts:

Step #1: Choose Your Target Audiences

Successful outreach requires you to identify the audiences you want to reach and get the outlets that reach them interested in your story. To select your target audiences, ask yourself, "Who would be an ideal person to read a story about our Homecoming event?"

Step #2: Develop Your Key Messages

Next, you should determine what you want the public to know about your event and your organization. A message is a succinct statement of concern, impact or a potential solution or change surrounding an issue. Make sure your messages focus on why "real people" should care about your event and your organization. Make them more powerful and persuasive by including data or personal stories that emphasize the value of your work for older adults and in the greater community.

Step #3: Develop a Media Contact List

Keeping your targeted audiences in mind, create a list of local print, broadcast, and online and media outlets that would be interested in your celebration. AAHSA's Contact Congress media database, <http://capwiz.com/aahsa/dbq/media>, is a great place to start. You can also search for local magazines, trade publications and radio programs that may be interested.

Don't neglect online media. Many communities have Web sites with event calendars, message boards and listservs where you can publicize your celebration. You should also search for other local Web sites, such as caregiving blogs or retirement guides that are focused on issues affecting seniors and those who care for them.

Step #4: Create Media Materials

Now it's time to tell the media your story, but how? Advisories are useful to help publicize an event in an efficient way. News releases summarize the main conclusions of an event. Fact sheets provide additional background and perspective. Samples of each resource are in the toolkit's appendix for you to use.

Step #5: Get Your Message Out

You've got your plan in place. Now's the time to start putting it into action. That means pitching to your targeted media. Never pitched before? Not to worry. We'll help you get started:

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Contact #1: Email your media advisory to reporters and editors from local newspapers, radio and television stations. Don't forget local bloggers and community listservs. Be sure to provide a phone number in addition to your email address for follow up.

Contact #2: If you don't hear from an individual within a few days, try calling. Practicing your pitch and keeping notes in front of you are also good ways to prepare for pitching.

Contact #3: Email the information again, including any updates about attendees or involvement by local newsmakers. Try marking the email to receive a "read receipt" when the message is opened so you can know if the recipient has opened the message.

Step #6: Follow Up

After pitching, you should have a clear idea of who is interested in covering your celebration. Place follow-up calls to make sure these individuals have the information needed to craft their stories and/or attend your special event. Also, offer to provide follow-up information if they cannot attend the event.

Step #7: Monitor and Evaluate Your Coverage

One of the most important, and often overlooked, steps in media relations is monitoring and evaluating your coverage. Monitoring enables you to evaluate your work, build relationships with members of the media and increase the likelihood that you'll get coverage in the future.

Your coverage is also valuable to AAHSA. Send it to Sarah Mashburn, communications manager, at smashburn@aahsa.org. We'll feature it in our Daily Clips (www.aahsa.org/listserv.aspx) and other publications.

Step #8: Provide Media with Feedback

Ask your board and staff as well as the people you serve to help you respond to favorable coverage. Encourage them to write letters to the editor, call outlets or respond to online media so your contacts know that readers saw and appreciated their work.

And Don't Forget....

Take pictures! Keep a digital camera handy at all times to capture that "special moment." Before the event, staff as well as residents and clients should complete release forms for photographs.

Collaborate and discuss joint projects with other AAHSA members.

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Sample Press Release

June 1, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: James Stafford, (321) 555-1822, jstafford@good-valley.org

Good Valley Hosts Future of Aging in Our Community Forum

Good Valley – What will the future of aging look like in Greensburg? Good Valley Retirement Community hosted a community conversation today where residents, business leaders and policy makers came together to discuss our community’s aging population and how it will transform the place we call home.

Mayor Susan Benson shared statistics about Greensburg’s aging population to get the conversation started. Then, panelists including Maria Nunez from the Greensburg Chamber of Commerce and Jack King with AARP offered their insights on how the community could evolve to meet changing needs and expectations. Good Valley residents Joe Buckley, Greensburg’s former fire chief, also discussed his own experience moving into a retirement community.

Good Valley held the forum this week as part of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging’s (AAHSA) homecoming celebration. Across the country, AAHSA members are hosting forums where communities can come together and discuss the challenges and opportunities that come as our population ages.

“As Greensburg’s demographics change, we must come together and decide what the future of aging should look like,” James Stafford, Good Valley’s administrator, said. “I hope this event is just the beginning of our community’s work together.”

For more information, visit Good Valley’s Web site at www.good-valley.org.

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About Good Valley

Good Valley Retirement Community is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization committed to providing compassionate care and services to Greensburg’s seniors. Founded in 1967, Good Valley offers the continuum of aging services, including skilled nursing care, independent living, affordable housing and adult day services for nearly 500 seniors every day.

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Sample Fact Sheet

At Good Valley Retirement Community, we strive to make the town of Greensburg a better place to live by . . .

Promoting Economic Development

More than 110 of Good Valley's staff members are Greensburg residents.

This year, our organization will pay approximately \$9.2 million in wages and benefits to staff members who reside in or near Greensburg.

Providing Quality Care and Services for Older Adults

The Good Valley Retirement Community serves 178 residents.

Our organization sponsors a variety of programs, services and activities for Greensburg's older adults, including:

- Weekly dance and aerobics classes at the Greensburg Community Center.
- Monthly cholesterol and blood sugar screenings at Good Valley.
- An education session about the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

Good Valley also offers the following services or programs to help older adults and their family members in the Greensburg community:

- An information booth at the annual Greensburg Health Fair.
- A monthly "Savvy Senior" column in the *Greensburg Gazette*.
- Regular aging-services financing seminars in partnership with the Green County Credit Union.
- Quarterly open houses and community tours for Greensburg residents.

Providing Access to Educational Opportunities

Last year, the Good Valley Retirement Community provided \$24,000 in tuition assistance for 12 of its staff members.

Good Valley offers staff members the opportunity to attend nine different training programs each year. Additionally, the organization sponsors quarterly professional development programs for all employees on the organization's campus.

More than 150 volunteers donate their time to our organization.

The organization coordinates an internship program for four of the University of Greensburg's nursing students.

Good Valley also encourages students to consider careers in aging services. Last year, the organization:

- Participated in the career fair at Green Community College.
- Hosted a tour and "shadow day" for Greensburg East High School students.

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Helping Community Members in Need

In 2007, the Good Valley Retirement Community's residents, board members and employees volunteered 542 hours in the Greensburg community. These individuals donated their time to the following organizations:

- Greene County Alzheimer's Association
- The Greensburg Children's Hospital
- The Greene County Humane Society

Good Valley also offers a variety of free or discounted services to Greensburg's community members, including:

- Free weekly shuttle trips to the Greensburg Shopping Center for older adults.
- Discounted wellness screenings at Good Valley's health center.
- An annual disaster preparation seminar.

Serving as Active Community Members

The Good Valley Retirement Community purchases products and maintains service contracts with the following Greensburg businesses:

- Nuts and Bolts Hardware
- Green Valley Café and Catering
- Capital Staffing Solutions

Good Valley's residents, employees and board members are active members of the Greensburg community. They are affiliated with several organizations, including:

- Greensburg Chamber of Commerce
- Green County Council on Aging
- The Greater Greene County Lions Club
- Greensburg School Board
- Green Community College
- Green County Youth Athletic Association
- Greensburg Interfaith Council

As an organization, Good Valley has developed partnerships with the following community organizations:

- Greensburg Elder Affairs Committee
- The Greene County United Way
- The Greensburg Tigers Baseball Team

We work together to ensure that Greensburg is a great place to live for people of all ages.

For More Information:

Good Valley Retirement Community, 518 Main Street, Greensburg, US 55555

Phone: (321) 555-2331, Fax: (321) 555-1392

E-mail: info@good-valley.org, Web Site: <http://www.good-valley.org>