



California Healthy Cities and Communities

**The 2007 CHCC Annual Conference:
Building Livable Communities For All Ages**

The California Healthy Cities and Communities 2007 Conference was held on Thursday, April 19, 2007 at The California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities in Los Angeles, CA. With over 90 attendees, the conference was a great success. Attendees represented a diverse cross-section of sectors and disciplines including public health, planning, community development, public administration, urban design and environmental justice.

"We found that a 5% increase in walkability resulted in a 32% increase in minutes of walking and hiking."

Dr. Lawrence Frank

The conference featured keynote speaker Dr. Lawrence Frank, a premier researcher at the intersection of public health and urban planning, focusing on how the built environment impacts travel behavior, obesity and air quality. His presentation described the relationships among community design, obesity, air quality, aging, mobility and quality of life.

Dr. Frank charted the influence of transportation planning, the

degree of connectivity among neighborhood streets and the distance from businesses, schools and parks on people's tendency to walk to their destinations. He also demonstrated the need and public demand for better walkability to address mobility needs of seniors and youth.

The presentation highlighted the potential for neighborhood walkability to impact obesity prevention and improved health through better air quality. The policy implications of Dr. Frank's research are substantial. Dr. Frank also studied how neighborhood walkability influences individual behavior, outside of personal preference.

Recognizing that the aging baby boom, climate change and the obesity epidemic are problems that can partially be solved by improving and incentivizing walkability, changes in the built environment - either through new development or retrofitting - present significant opportunities to improve residents' health and quality of life.

View Dr. Frank's presentation in its entirety on the Center for Civic Partnerships' web site: www.civicpartnerships.org.

The sessions that followed the keynote address were grouped into two thematic tracks. Track I focused on supporting healthy lifestyles, with sessions on facilitating healthier



Dr. Lawrence Frank speaking at the 2007 CHCC Annual Conference in Los Angeles.

eating and physical activity through community programming, neighborhood design and promoting civic engagement. Track II dealt with healthy aging in light of planning, community design, housing and the need for multi-use, intergenerational facilities and programming.

All available PowerPoint presentations are located on the Center web site at: <http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/home/files/07%20CHCC%20Conf%20Files/>

Inside This Issue ...

Page 2 ...

- Citrus Heights and Selma plan for an Older Future
- Time to Renew or Join the CHCC Member Network

Page 3 ...

- Honoring Older Volunteers: The California Senior Leaders Program

Page 4 ...

- Events and Resources

Citrus Heights and Selma Plan for an Older Future

The Center for Civic Partnerships' California Healthy Cities and Communities Program recently made grants to help two cities plan for the needs of their aging population and engage older residents in planning efforts. Both Citrus Heights, in Northern California, and Selma, in the Central Valley, are now crafting surveys and outreach efforts that will solicit ongoing input from older adults regarding the future of their own communities.

Citrus Heights, with a population of more than 87,000 people, is conducting a survey and outreach effort as part of pedestrian and accessibility planning, leading up to the development of a pedestrian master plan. By crafting a survey aimed at the city's rapidly growing senior population, as well as people with disabilities, the city hopes to develop a pedestrian plan that will serve all residents of the community.

"This is critical for the city," says Mary Poole, a management analyst for the City of Citrus Heights. "We are trying to include people who don't come to the table on a regular basis. We're looking for pedestrian input, but more importantly, we're looking at whether neighborhoods are universally accessible."

To reach deeply into the community, volunteers Sue and Raymond Still plan to help present the survey, now under development, to several neighborhood associations for discussion and input. The Stills, both retired, know first-hand the value of accessible transportation. Raymond Still, 67, lost both his legs to diabetes and now uses a wheelchair.

"We're fortunate in that I drive and we have transportation," says

Mrs. Still. But vans that accommodate wheelchairs, she says, are expensive. "A lot of people can't afford them and a lot of people don't have someone to drive them. That's why we thought this was something important to get involved in."


The survey, delivered online and through refuse bills and other vehicles, is expected to reach 5,000 older adults and other residents. "While planners look forward to receiving input from the survey later this year, its most important outcome will be the cultivation of an active, informed body of engaged citizens," says Mayor Jeff Slowey.

"Our goal is to build a dedicated, involved stakeholder group, not just for the pedestrian master planning effort, but for overall city planning on an ongoing basis," he says.

At the same time, the City of Selma is planning a survey to help the city better understand the needs and desires of its older population. "As time goes on, there's going to be a large segment of the population entering this age group," says D.B. Heusser, City Manager for this community of roughly 20,000. "We want to be sure we're looking at those needs now, not ten years from now."

Selma's survey explores the future needs of older adults in the areas of housing, transportation and health. It also asks what sort of lives people hope to lead as they age. The survey will include not just current seniors, but also "future seniors"—adults in their late 40s and 50s. "We ask if they plan to seek another career, relax and do nothing, raise grandchildren, or go to college," she says. The city hopes to identify and plan for shifts in the interests and preferred activities of older people. "Years ago the domino room at the senior center used to be packed. Now people want classes like Tai Chi," says Roseann Galvan, Administrative Analyst.

In addition to collecting survey data, the city plans to build a senior advisory committee of at least 20 members to address planning needs. In search of inspiration, the group will visit and assess at least four different senior facilities, housing complexes and senior transportation options in other cities this year. "We want to evaluate all aspects of programs for seniors," Galvan says.

The CHCC Program will be paying close attention to lessons learned in these two cities to see how they can be applied statewide. For more information on Citrus Heights, contact Mary Poole at mpoole@citrusheights.net. Information on Selma's program can be acquired from Roseann Galvan at roseanng@cityofselma.com. 

Time to Renew or Join the CHCC Network

If you are a current California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) Network member – or if you are ready to join – now is the time! The CHCC Network is a membership program created for organizations and groups interested in the principles and practices of healthy cities and communities. Participants have access to an array of services including:

- Funding notices and other important resources
- Priority status for CHCC funding opportunities and publications
- Assistance in addressing local government and community issues.

To join, go to www.civicpartnerships.org and click on the Network link. Network membership runs from July 1 to June 30. 

~ Community Involvement ~

Honoring Older Volunteers: The California Senior Leaders Program

This article is the third in a series on innovative and promising practices that expand upon six domains featured in our recent publication, "A Healthy Community Perspective on Aging Well." The domains are: Varied Housing Options, Transportation, Community Involvement, Employment, Lifelong Learning, and Supportive Services.

While the rapid aging of California's population presents many new challenges to local governments, it also brings tremendous opportunities, particularly in the arena of volunteerism. Not every older Californian will want to, or be able to, volunteer. Nonetheless, many will be seeking new avenues for civic engagement, offering their communities a valuable talent pool.

Research indicates that volunteering can lead to better health, especially among older adults who are particularly vulnerable to illness and depression (The Health Benefits of Volunteering, Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007). The physical and social engagement gained through volunteering can improve the well-being of older adults, and it is a meaningful way for communities to benefit from their contributions. Although older volunteers can't (and shouldn't) be expected to replace needed health and social services, tapping this reservoir of talent will be invaluable as we seek to better address and advocate on behalf of human needs. In this light, there are key lessons from a statewide program on the value of training, networking, and recognition of older volunteers.

"Seniors have been called our only expanding natural resource," said Meredith Minkler, Dr.P.H., founding director of the UC Center on Aging at U.C. Berkeley.

Minkler is principal investigator on a project bringing more attention and support to that resource. The 2002-2008 California Senior Leaders Program, funded by grants from The California Wellness Foundation, provides recognition and training for older volunteers and advocates making a notable difference in their communities.

"We're trying to build a network of senior leaders," Marty Martinson, Dr.P.H. candidate and director of the project, told Berkeley's Public Health Magazine.



Honorees Grace Pacheco and Chizu Iiyama celebrate at a Senior Leaders event.

Recently the program brought together its new class of thirty 2007 Senior Leaders, ages 60-92, for two days of intensive networking and training. Among the honorees was Oakland's Bobbie Bond, who helped create the city's "Feet on the Street" program that organizes walking groups for seniors in high crime neighborhoods. A member of the Mayor's Commission on Aging, Bond also is creating an innovative new program through which low income high school students are trained to be chefs and caterers, preparing and delivering meals to senior centers.


Meanwhile in rural Santa Ynez, fellow Senior Leader Grace Pacheco continues her leadership role with the Chumash Indian community,

working with its health clinics and teaching children the tribal ways. In the words of fellow tribal elder (and former Senior Leader) Adelina Alva-Padilla, "There is not a person in this community who doesn't feel deep love for Gracie...She has been involved in politics here since before the houses were built [and] has done so much for preserving the culture."

Many California Senior Leaders are involved in violence prevention; others run programs to educate youth against racism, advocate for the homeless, foster healthy aging, and promote community-building. In addition to the training and networking event, participants receive 12 months of follow-up support by graduate students at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, who check in regularly with each leader and provide technical assistance.

The Senior Leaders training has already helped award recipient Bond, who is using new fundraising skills to seek support for her intergenerational catering program. Meanwhile, the life stories she heard from fellow Senior Leaders and Japanese internment camp survivors, Chizu Iiyama and Jim Yamaichi, have further inspired her commitment to social justice and community-building.

The lives of the more than 90 California Senior Leaders are a living testimony to the benefits of senior volunteering. Many have noted that their efforts to make a difference in the community have made their own lives richer. In the words of one, "I find my own self through helping others."

To learn more about the California Senior Leaders Program, visit <http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~aging/SeniorLeaders07/index.html>. Additional resources pertaining to civic engagement and older adults may be found on page 4. 

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California Healthy Cities and Communities assists cities and communities with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans, which address environmental, social and economic determinants of health. CHCC advocates a broad definition of health: a shared vision; widespread community participation; system reform; collaborative partnerships engaging local assets; and a means to measure progress and base improvements upon results.

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Connections

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Events & Resources

Events

Generations United's 14th International Conference

July 24-27, 2007

Washington, D.C.

http://www.gu.org/GU_Co12281388.asp

2007 Minority Women's Health Summit

August 23-26, 2007

Washington, D.C.

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/mwhs/>

California Bicycle Coalition's Walk/Bike California Conference

September 11-14, 2007

Davis, CA

<http://www.walkbikecalifornia.org>

Publications

Honoring Age, Honoring Community.

This report honors the participants of the 2004-2006 Senior Leaders Program at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. To obtain a copy of the report, contact Meredith Minkler at mink@berkeley.edu or (510) 642-4397.

Reinventing Aging. This report examines baby boomer civic engagement in the context of working later in life, improved

levels of health and the needs of an aging society. Learn more at: http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/reinventingaging/read_report.html

RespectAbility: Promising Practices in Civic Engagement Among Adults 55+.

This report outlines strategies for creating roles for older adults as they leave work and seek ways to contribute to the social fabric. Read more at: http://respectability.org/PromisingPracticesReport_Final_8.31.06.pdf

Keeping Baby Boomers Volunteering.

This report assesses rates of volunteerism among baby boomers and provides suggestions for how nonprofits can improve volunteerism. Read the report at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#BOOMERS

Generations: The Challenge of a Lifetime for Your Nonprofit Organization.

Peter C. Brinkerhoff. This new book addresses the implications of the aging baby boom on nonprofit organizations and their constituents. To order, visit: <http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/productdetails.cfm?SKU=069555&disccode=BRINK>

Integrating Planning and Public Health.

From the American Planning Association, this publication examines collaborations between planners and public health professionals committed to building healthy communities. Read more about this publication at: <http://www.planning.org/APAStore/Search/Default.aspx?p=3608>

Web Sites

ASA Civic Engagement Program.

These resources pertain to civic engagement and older adults. To view these resources, visit: <http://www.asaging.org/asav2/civicing/reports.cfm>

Civic Ventures. This web site explores ways to maintain civic participation for older Americans. For more information, visit: <http://www.civicventures.org/>

Urban Institute. This site examines the current state of civic engagement of older adults and provides related policy recommendations regarding civic engagement relative to the aging baby boom. Learn more at: <http://www.urban.org/toolkit/issues/retirementproject/civic-engagement.cfm>