

HSTC Aging Services Work Group  
Thursday May 19, 2005  
1:30 – 3:00pm  
MAG Office, Cholla Room  
Meeting Notes

Attendees:

William Arnold, Southwest Community Network  
Beth Fiorenza, Tempe Community Council  
Connie James, City of Scottsdale  
Barbara Knox, DES/RSA  
Susan Neidlinger, DES/DDD  
Sandra Reagan, Southwest Community Network  
Sylvia Sheffield, City of Avondale  
Judy Tapscott, City of Tempe  
Wayne Tormala, City of Phoenix  
Patrick Tyrrell, City of Chandler, HSTC Chair  
Teresa Franquiz, MAG staff

Discussion:

**1. Welcome**

Chairman Tyrrell opened the meeting at 1:40pm and thanked the group for attending.

**2. Update on Arizona Delegation to White House Conference on Aging**

Ms. Franquiz provided an update on the status of the selection of delegates to represent Arizona at the White Housing Conference on Aging in Washington, D.C. scheduled for October 2005. The Governor selected five delegates, while each senator, congressman, and tribal leader was permitted to select one each. The Governor's selections were as follows:

- ❑ Lenore Stuart - Yuma County Board of Supervisors (elected)
- ❑ Anna Jolivet - retired educator; now President of the Pima Council on Aging board
- ❑ Lee Begay - Director, Area Agency on Aging for the InterTribal Council of Arizona
- ❑ Melanie Starns - Policy Advisor on Aging to the Governor
- ❑ Wilma Robertson, retired from Bisbee, alternate.

Other selections known to date include:

- ❑ Kathleen Pagels of the Arizona Health Care Association
- ❑ Dan Taylor of Mesa Senior Services

- ❑ Mary Beals-Leudtka, Area Agency on Aging Director for the Northern Arizona Council of Governments
- ❑ Patricia Carus of Flagstaff

Sandy Reagan asked if there are still spots open. Ms. Franquiz replied that it was not clear if the remaining spots were still unfilled, or if additional delegates had been appointed, but the information had not yet been communicated to the Governor's Office. She said she would follow up with the Governor's Office to confirm this. Everyone agreed that it would be a lost opportunity if some spots were left unfilled.

### **3. Presentation on Life Options Project – Tempe Connections:**

Ms. Tapscott began her presentation by saying that she would like to spark a conversation on how the Life Options projects, and specifically the Tempe Connections project, applies to the aging services work group. Everyone has heard a lot about the aging population and the dramatic impact that it may have, especially here in Maricopa County.

The Life Options project came together through a convening of the Maricopa Commission on Productive Aging, which included Libraries for the Future, Civic Ventures, and the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. The goal was to discover how to tap into this burgeoning population, and see them not as a liability, but as an asset.

The Life Options Blueprint produced four core components: looking at what's next in midlife and beyond (life planning); lifelong learning; connections to the community; re-careering and civic engagement. Ms. Tapscott noted here how difficult the semantics can be when talking about this age group because there are so many terms that can be viewed as derogatory. She also noted that she personally sees an opportunity for this aging services work group to get involved in the area of the fourth component, re-careering and civic engagement.

Tempe Connections is one of four Life Options projects to be funded by the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. It was designed to be a one-stop resource to connect baby-boomers with information, services, and programs they need to be informed. The programming will revolve around a coffee shop at the Tempe Public Library. With over one million visitors every year, this location was seen as a wonderful resource for reaching people. They plan to have the profits from the coffee shop go into funding the program in order to ensure sustainability.

The City of Tempe has been working with some key partners: the Arizona State University Department of Continuing Education, Friends of Tempe Public Library, Tempe Community Council, City of Tempe Community Services, and St. Joseph's hospital, among many others.

Above all, the research shows that boomers want opportunities for when they retire, and the aging services working group can potentially tap into this. There has been much research done by Civic Ventures, who has done a good job of publishing and sharing that information. AARP did a study in 2004 looking at the extent to which boomers may be interested in continuing to work in some capacity after retirement. They found that about 80% want to continue working on behalf of their communities in the retirement years, although most plan to renegotiate their relationship to work.

Ms. Tapscott added that there are many exciting things going on around the country around this topic. She recently went to a Civic Ventures conference and cited one example she learned about there. It is the Transition Network developed by a woman from New York who retired after thirty years of working. She found that she became increasingly isolated after her retirement, so she began the Transition Network, which aimed to keep women connected to each other and their communities, while keeping their minds active and engaged. The organization quickly expanded to over 500 women and is still growing.

A study by the Independent Sector America's Senior Volunteers showed that if asked, 84% of older adults would volunteer. If not asked, 83% would not volunteer. These numbers show that if organizations ask for their assistance, older adults are eager to help where they can.

One of the implications of this is that people need to know how to give back. Most of the members of the aging services working group work in human services, thus are more aware than many others what opportunities exist for volunteers; however, not everyone has this information.

She gave many examples of organizations that are paying attention to this issue. For example, it was the topic of a White House Conference on Aging public forum. Experience Corps is a national created through Civic Ventures that aims to give opportunities to seniors to help them give back to the community. Bridgestar is another such organization. The International Senior Lawyers Project and the local Executive Service Corps are two other examples.

The Piper Foundation has been wonderful to the four projects that were funded; projects in Scottsdale, Chandler and Mesa also received awards totaling \$1.3 million. Ms. Tapscott said that anyone is welcome to get involved in any of these projects and personally invited this group to participate in the Tempe Connections project. They also will be beginning an Experience Corps in Tempe.

She noted a new version of the Life Options Blueprint that is now available, titled the Blueprint for the Next Chapter. She referenced several other handouts and offered to share them with anyone interested.

Tempe is planning on opening the programming space at the library in January 2006 in conjunction with when the first boomers will begin turning 60.

Ms. Tapscott presented was concluded here and discussion ensued. Ms. Reagan asked what is the most appropriate term for this population. Ms. Tapscott replied that there has been lots of talk about this and many suggestions, although most have some kind of negative connotation. The only palatable term found thus far is “boomers”. The group agreed that they have always identified with this term and felt that it was a positive statement. However, the down side is that those outside the boomer years are not included.

Ms. Tapscott stressed the importance of having meaningful opportunities for this generation if they are to stay engaged. She told a story she heard recently at a conference. It would not be enough to ask a retired doctor, for example, to perform menial tasks. This group of individuals would want to continue to use their talents and skills.

Ms. Sheffield asked what kind of programming would take place around the café. There will be job search and networking resources, a concierge to welcome visitors and direct them, seminars on health careers, education on issues of health that effect us as we age, health assessments, and Elderhostel information. There will also be discussion groups. The Benefits Check-Up program will continue to be available there. There will be a whole menu of services. New Frontiers will be doing life-long learning pieces, including short courses on lots of academic subjects, arts, languages, etc...

Ms. James added that the Life Options program in Scottsdale will be offered through Scottsdale Community College. Partners include Scottsdale Health Care, SCC, and the City. They are currently hiring a coordinator. There will be significant focus on education, as well as on volunteer opportunities. She pointed out that while the four Life Options projects funded by Piper are similar, each has its own niche. For example, Mesa is focusing on peer coaching to help with life planning. The Chandler program is open already and is called Boomerang. They have a website available for more information at [boomerang.org](http://boomerang.org). They just held their first public forum about three weeks ago. Their concept is to hold public forums at their library, and their website will be a great resource. It was noted that seven applicants responded to Piper’s RFP and four were funded. Ms. Neidlinger asked if the funding will be available annually. Ms. Tapscott said she was not certain, though she thought there would be no further funding after the initial grant. In Tempe, they have planned carefully in order to ensure sustainability. She added that Piper is interested in bringing the project into the Phoenix area, as is Civic Ventures, so additional opportunities may come along. Already, some communities are taking the lead on their own. In Glendale, the library has hired a specialist to target this population and held a boomer fair about a year ago.

Ms. James said that they have over 800 mature volunteers in the City of Scottsdale who are an incredible resource. They do tutoring/mentoring, are the main information and referral operators, and run lots of other programs. There is also a group of retired businessmen who began meeting in a discussion group in order to stay connected. Initially the group had fourteen members, then thirty-five, then outgrew the room, and now the group is over 100. Eventually, the wives said they want their own discussion group. She reiterated that there is a huge desire for people to stay connected to each other and avoid isolation.

It was discussed that there is sometimes a disconnect between municipalities and what goes on with target communities. For example, many retirement communities run their own programs. Ms. Reagan pointed out that in Pebble Creek, there is a system to lend out used health care equipment to those who may need it; for example, crutches, wheelchairs, etc. They even keep track of how much money doing this saves. She also pointed out that many cities, excluding Avondale, do not address the issue of aging within one single department, but spread it across many. She suggested that maybe this committee can come up with a blueprint that would be applicable regionally.

Ms. Sheffield said they are currently opening a new community center in Avondale that is based on the Mather Café concept. There are several in the Chicago area, where Ms. Sheffield recently visited. She said it is essentially a storefront that includes a small restaurant with an open kitchen. They are usually open until 3:00, are reasonably priced, and serve all day breakfast with free coffee, and are beautifully decorated. Adjacent rooms offer exercise classes, computer rooms with Internet connections, and a thick program of classes. Not all visitors are seniors, so there is a distinct inter-generational feel. Because Maricopa County will have a regional library opening right next to the Avondale City Hall, there will be another opportunity for Avondale to explore and possibly give the residents of Pebble Creek more resources. She said that the goal of the new center is to try to create a center that makes your life better, but it's not your life. In senior centers now, seniors are often dependent upon them for their livelihoods. Ms. Tapscott agreed that it was clear from Piper that they did not want applicants to just put a new coat of paint on an existing senior center building. The goal was to try to create something different.

#### **4. Focus Groups**

Mr. Tormala suggested that in discussing focus groups, we might lean toward taking an inter-generational approach. As for the City of Phoenix, they recently looked at a program in Iowa called Circles of Support, which has some similar features to what has been discussed here today. The premise of this program is that there are three kinds of poverty, and only one is financial poverty. The others are poverty of purpose and relationships. People may have money, but still feel impoverished in other areas of their lives.

Ms. Fiorenza said that the Tempe Community Council has used this same model in the past, but is not currently, as they are seeking a longer-term mode. Mr. Tormala said that Phoenix had explored using it in conjunction with faith-based programs, but the City had concerns about liabilities when thinking about training people to be para-professional counselors.

Ms. Franquiz said, in going back to Ms. Reagan's comment about a possible blueprint for the entire region, that that could potentially be the focus of this group. This would be a good opportunity to take a product to the MAG Regional Council and on a topic that the regions mayors and city managers would like be receptive to. In order to proceed with such a project, it would be necessary to solicit public input into the process. She reminded the group that at their last meeting in March, they had discussed holding focus groups with older adults; possibly one for seniors who have been retired for some time and another with the younger boomer generation. She said that these types of focus groups would not only serve to inform the work of this aging services working group, but also to inform the update to the MAG Human Services Plan, to be published in January 2006.

Ms. Neidlinger suggested having two sessions in different parts of the Valley. Mr. Tormala pointed out that the topics may be different. One might focus on what the needs are, in a more traditional way. The other might center more around the issue of giving back to the community. Essentially, one session would focus on needs, while the other would be looking at human capital/assets and how best to tap into that resource.

Ms. Reagan asked if we would be doing an assessment or if we could look at information that has already been gathered. Ms. Franquiz said that she has been working to gather as much information as possible on studies and research that has already been done locally in order not to duplicate efforts. These include the AdvantAge Initiative done by Piper in 2003, the senior center survey done by MAG in 2001, the State Aging 2020 public input forums done in 2004, and the series of focus groups held by Piper in advance of publishing the Life Options blueprint. Ms. Tapscott added that while there is ample national data on this topic, it always helps to have local information.

Mr. Tormala said that a focus of discussion for those who are already actively engaged in their communities might be what made the difference for them and what made them decide to volunteer. Another group of people who do not volunteer as much might be asked why they have not. Ms. Tapscott said that Civic Ventures has done a lot of good research on this which can be found on their website. For example, nearly 60% of those surveyed said that they got involved because they wanted to give back in order to help other people. Mr. Tormala said then that there is a potential for tapping into that desire and an opportunity for matching this available human capital to the many needs that are already identified in the MAG Regional Human Services Plan. The question becomes

what does that match look like and how to do it. How do we get people of this age group to help with those other areas of highest need.

Ms. Tapscott suggested that another possibility might be to hold focus groups with non-profit organizations to identify ways in which older adults could be useful within their organizations and what meaningful services they might provide.

Ms. Fiorenza said that Tempe did a focus group, the results of which might still posted on Tempe Community Council's website. It would include what questions were asked, who was involved, and results.

Ms. Franquiz said that at least two volunteers per focus group would be needed; one to facilitate the discussion and one to act as notetaker. Ms. Knox asked where these focus groups could be held. Ms. Franquiz said that that is up to this group to decide, but she suggested that we think about groups that are already meeting and who might be receptive to the opportunity to provide their opinions. The goal would be to complete all focus groups by the end of July, though the earlier the better.

She asked the group to get back to her with suggestions for focus group locations, and information on volunteers June 5. Mr. Tormala said that the City of Phoenix could send someone to assist with facilitation.

**5. Next Meeting Date/Agenda**

Final focus group questions will be decided at the next meeting on Thursday June 16; however, because there will be limited time available that day, she asked the group to be thinking ahead of what questions they might like to ask of these two groups.

**6. Other Business**

No other business was discussed at this time.

**7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.