

NEW JERSEY FOUNDATION FOR AGING

Ten Years and Moving **Forward**





10 Years Thanks

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

We're excited to be celebrating our 10th anniversary! In 1998, the founding trustees of the New Jersey Foundation for Aging recognized that aging services needed to address the new and changing realities of aging in our state. Usually, foundations that serve a specified geographic area focus most of their efforts on funding community-based programs and initiatives. But we wanted to do more – to take a broader approach.

It's reasonable to ask: "what difference has NJFA made?"

This report is our answer to that question. Here are just a few touchstone moments:

Prior to 2000, no organization in New Jersey worked to explore the relationship of social engagement, alternative health remedies and exercise on wellness and longevity. NJFA sponsored a conference on just this topic in 2000 and invited John Rowe, M.D., a noted MacArthur Fellow to discuss his research.

Also in 2000, we convened the first employers' forum on "mature workers as a key to addressing labor shortages," with the Conference Board presenting the impacts of the baby boomer retirement wave.

In 2002, NJFA undertook the first extensive look at how medical transportation affected senior consumers, the transportation providers and the healthcare providers. In 2004, we widened the conversation to include older drivers and road safety.

In the pages that follow, you'll read about the integrated approach NJFA takes to improving the lives of older adults in New Jersey. You'll also be introduced to our plans as NJFA moves forward.

We're proud of the differences we have made. Even the smallest pebble will create a ripple. It's time to make bigger waves and ask more people to help us ensure that aging well is a reality for everyone in New Jersey.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie Doremus
President, Board of Trustees



Taking a **Comprehensive** and **Integrated** Approach...

The New Jersey Foundation for Aging is not a typical foundation. NJFA's area of interest lies in improving the lives of older adults in New Jersey. Indeed, to that end, through its Community Grant Program, NJFA funds innovative services that directly and intensively benefit older New Jerseyans. But in addition, NJFA takes a broad approach that enables the Foundation to use its resources to reach far beyond those programs.



Approximately 11,000 people received services directly from the programs funded by NJFA's Community Grant Program.

An estimated 30,000 seniors and their families have been helped each year by the 2,000 social workers, nurses, and other professionals who learned new skills at NJFA's conference.

More than 200,000 people have become better informed as a result of the NJFA publications and website.

NJFA works to have all NJ residents benefit from safer roads, better senior transportation, improved caregiver options, and increased senior employment opportunities resulting from NJFA's advocacy efforts.

The Foundation's approach is integrated and comprehensive when addressing specific issues. One example of this approach is the challenge of senior transportation. NJFA has:

Funded a community grant in which volunteers drive seniors to appointments.

Included senior transportation as a topic in its 2003 conference on Best Practice Models.

Published its report on senior mobility on its web site.

Advocated with the NJ Department of Transportation to address senior safety when planning road construction.

Supporting and Expand

NJFA's COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

Most services provided to older adults in New Jersey are financed by county, state and federal sources. Unfortunately, these sources are underfunded and are not keeping pace with older people's needs. The NJFA Community Grant Program funds non-profit agencies to initiate, support, and expand innovative and replicable programs that are driven by local needs and resources.

NJFA has given 33 grants to organizations throughout New Jersey and allocated more than \$300,000. The average grant has been \$8,900. Grants focus on a variety of pressing concerns of older New Jerseyans, and have served 11,000 older adults.

Congratulations to all 33 grantees for their contributions to the lives of older New Jerseyans and their families.

Four brief program profiles exemplify the innovation and accomplishments of all our grantees.



PARISH NURSE PROGRAM

PROMOTES ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE, SCREENINGS & EXERCISE

The Cape Regional Medical Center administers the Parish Nurse Program. Volunteer nurses at more than 50 area churches promote access to healthcare within their own congregations. In 2004 and 2005, NJFA funded the purchase of portable equipment and supplies so the nurses in this rural area could screen for fracture risk and cholesterol levels. To date there have been more than 4,500 screenings.

With most screenings completed at church health fairs, the nurses provide thorough follow up for medical care. The nurses also are trained to implement Project Healthy Bones (PHB), an exercise program designed to build bone strength. Almost 300 clients with low bone density have taken PHB classes in their own churches; and use weights purchased with NJFA support. At one church, four women who were enrolled in PHB classes needed joint replacement surgery. The PHB program prepared them for surgery and helped them with recovery. Within weeks, all four were walking without canes or walkers.

ing Innovative **Services...**

SENIOR WELLNESS ACTION TEAMS (SWAT) CONNECTS HEALTHY LIVING IDEAS DIRECTLY TO OLDER ADULTS

The Senior Wellness Action Team (SWAT), run by Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, is a fitness and motivation program in which three Senior Ambassadors-- ages 59, 62 and 76-- and a staff nurse go to senior housing complexes, churches, and senior centers in Essex and Union counties to provide health education, nutrition, and exercise instruction to predominantly lower income older adults. In 2005 and 2006, NJFA funded the exercise portion of SWAT.

Since the program's inception, attendance at SWAT classes has topped 3,500. With NJFA support, SWAT produced an exercise video, enabling students to continue their program after class.

SWAT has helped community residents have a better quality of life, with regular exercise, making it easier to do daily tasks.



"I am able to touch my toes in the shower, which I never did!"

"I can get around doing my everyday activities."

"I have more energy to do things."



"It's so important to reach out to others at an older age when so many of our long-time friends have moved far away or left our earthly home. I get a sense of belonging from Reflections."

"Reflections is tops. We share our joys and sorrows and have become close friends."

REFLECTIONS PROVIDES PERSONAL SUPPORT AND FOSTERS CONNECTION

In 2001, NJFA helped Senior Services of the Chatham to expand Reflections, a network of support groups for older women. Since the program started, four groups were established in Morris County, with approximately 200 women, most in their 70s and older, participating. With professional counselors facilitating meetings, participants help one another cope with daily challenges as diverse as loneliness, difficulty with transportation, and sleep problems. The participants also give and get support in dealing with difficult losses, including the loss of loved ones. Moreover, they have fun and form lasting friendships. The women speak to the powerful impact these groups have on their lives:

AMERICA: A NEW HOME INTEGRATES FOREIGN-BORN SENIORS INTO AMERICAN LIFE

Plainsboro, NJ has a growing population of foreign-born seniors. These seniors face challenges adjusting to life in America due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with the culture. In 2004, Plainsboro received funding from NJFA to start America: A New Home to help immigrant elders become integrated into their new community. Through America: A New Home older immigrants take part in:

English as a Second Language classes offered throughout the year. Participants build their language skills and form new friendships.

Discussion groups examine aspects of American lifestyle. Participants talk about the nature of interpersonal relationships, social conventions, and practical considerations like using public transportation and ordering in restaurants.

Socialization activities with American-born seniors. Immigrant elders attend the local senior center and are integrated into the community. Cultural exchange. Senior immigrants participate in Traditions, an annual showcase of cultures from throughout the world.



America: A New Home has helped hundreds of foreign-born senior residents of Plainsboro gain confidence and independence, establish friendships, and increase their connection to their community. Thus far, more than a dozen participants in America: New Home have attained American citizenship.

Cindy Capritti
Coordinator
Plainsboro Township



Raising **Awareness** and Promoting Professional **Education**...

Since its founding, NJFA has convened annual conferences for providers in health and social services, such as social workers, nurses, and senior center staff. These sessions provide both educational programming in

aging and opportunities for providers to discuss ideas to improve quality of life for older adults in New Jersey. More than 200 professionals from throughout

the state attend these conferences every year. NJFA has consistently received enthusiastic feedback from participants who develop new skills, learn about available resources and gain new ideas to strengthen their practice.



Informing to the Broader **Community**

NJFA seeks to raise public awareness of services available to older New Jerseyans and their families and to share informed perspectives on issues important to their lives. Through 2007, NJFA published *Renaissance*, a magazine focusing on a range of topics of interest to older adults. There is high reader satisfaction and appreciation for *Renaissance's* local focus, its objectivity and variety as noted in

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reader satisfaction surveys. With more than 100,000 readers, *Renaissance* had the 7th largest magazine circulation in the state.

As we move forward, the information on our web site at www.njfoundationforaging.org is being enhanced. Visitors will find links to aging resources in every county, articles from *Renaissance*,

and downloadable reports on key issues. In 2007 and 2008, the online visits to NJFA's website will exceed 400,000.

NJFA believes it is important for the business and corporate community to be aware of issues affecting older adults. Our newsletter, *Aging Insights*, highlighting key resources, is directed to corporate and human resource leaders throughout New Jersey.

NJFA believes it is important to take a broad look at systemic causes and solutions to challenges facing New Jersey seniors. To that end, NJFA selects challenging issues and partners with experts to conduct original research and review existing data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. This has resulted in several in-depth reports highlighting findings and recommendations to address that issue. These documents have been distributed to key policy makers, such as the leaders

Advancing Policies that Support Aging Well in New Jersey

of state departments and municipal, county and state elected officials, and to the public through press releases and NJFA's web site.

To date, NJFA's policy advocacy efforts have addressed the following topics:

Enhancing access to social and healthcare services

Promoting cultural sensitivity

Improving transportation and providing alternative transportation

Providing continuing education to staff of senior centers, senior housing, faith-based programs and county offices on aging

Engaging in strategic planning for an aging workforce

Supporting caregivers through access to services and to online assistance

Encouraging safe mobility for all



Influencing and affecting public policy can be a challenging and lengthy process. NJFA is proud that the work begun in 2003 on safe senior mobility continues to make New Jersey roads safer for senior drivers.

In 2003-2004 NJFA organized six forums on Safe Mobility for All Ages. Altogether, 25 experts served as panelists exchanging ideas with 350 stakeholders, including representatives of AAA, AARP, County Offices on Aging, the NJ Dept of Transportation and a variety of medical disciplines. This discussion brought to light crash and safety data that had been commissioned by the New Jersey Dept of Transportation but not previously released.



NJFA's **Recommendations** for Safe Mobility Are Becoming a **Reality**

Conference proceedings were consolidated into a report that included 16 recommendations to improve safe mobility. The report was distributed to all members of the NJ Legislature, Area Agencies on Aging, Governor's Office, and NJ Commissioners and key staff at various state agencies. NJFA representatives testified about transportation issues to the NJ Senate Committee on Senior and Veteran Services.

The report continues to have impact. The NJ Department of Transportation is coordinating road changes for left turn intersection in three pilot locations.

NJFA's advocacy efforts for safe senior transportation continue. We are presently advocating that access to transportation be a criterion when licensing health and social service facilities.



Ten Years and **Moving Forward...**



Several **key issues** continue to challenge our ability to **live well.**

We are about to embark on an exciting partnership to deal with the challenge of economic security. In 2008, NJFA was selected as the New Jersey convener for the National Elder Economic Security Initiative. This project will produce an economic index to illustrate the basic costs seniors face and how their financial security is affected when their life circumstances change. The index will be a tool for statewide advocacy in such areas as housing, retirement security, health, long-term care, and taxes. In order to age well in NJ, seniors must be able to afford to live in New Jersey, have access to services and remain viable participating members in our communities.

NJFA has opened many important discussions over the last ten years. NJFA is committed to innovative services through the Community Grant Program and the expansion of the Internet and other media outlets to keep seniors, boomers and professionals informed.

NJFA is unique in its efforts to build partnerships and coalitions of funders and agencies to take action on aging issues such as ensuring safe transportation, recognizing the value of mature employees in the workforce and supporting family caregivers. Through conferences, forums and seminars, the Foundation provides continuing education to professionals who work with our aging population.

In order to grow our efforts, we need your help. We depend on financial support from individuals like yourself who believe in and benefit from our work.

We hope that the Foundation may continue to rely on your thoughtful generosity. Please help us to spread the word and encourage others to support our work.

Ten years and moving forward, there is so much more to be done.

Your support matters.

Aging is everyone's business!!

On behalf of the Department of Health and Senior Services, congratulations to the New Jersey Foundation for Aging on its 10th anniversary of helping to improve the lives of millions of older people and their caregivers in New Jersey. Since its inception, the Foundation has always led on important senior issues like caregiving, elder abuse and older drivers. Its community grants have directly benefited the state's growing number of aging residents in their support of independence, dignity and choice. The Department shares a common vision with the Foundation and applauds its efforts in strengthening the aging network and enhancing the quality of life for older adults.

Patricia A. Polansky
Assistant Commissioner
NJ Department of Health & Senior Services
Division of Aging and Community Services



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NJFA has shown stellar leadership in addressing the crucial need to expand philanthropic support for aging programs through collaboration and coalition building.

- Nina Stack
President
Council of New Jersey Grantmakers



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