News

Steve Gurney, publisher of the "Guide to Retirement Living SourceBook" and Reston resident, outlines concepts of Phase II of the initiative

Photos by Jean T. Jianos/The Connection

Living in Reston for a Lifetime

Grassroots effort moves forward with making Reston a better community for all ages.

By Jean T. Jianos

The Connection

Reston for a Lifetime, formerly known as Aging in Reston, has begun Phase II of its initiative to "facilitate making Reston a better community to live a lifetime," given the complex issues facing suburban elderly. At a standing-room-only, community planning meeting held on Saturday afternoon, July 16, at the Reston Community Center, Lake Anne Plaza, it was announced that from June through December of this year, a focus of the grassroots initiative will be to organize Neighborhood Network structures in three Pilot Neighborhoods: Newport Shores, which consists of townhouses; Village Ridge condominiums; and the single-family home neighborhoods of Bishopsgate, and of Timberhead Lane, Burgee and Spinnaker Courts. Volunteer "Village Coordinators" will be needed to coordinate and promote the concept that "a key resource to making Reston more livable for a lifetime is the ability for neighbors to help each other."

IN SUMMARIZING a portion of the report on Phase I of the initiative, speaker Pat Williams, owner of the Reston-based, home care agency GraceFul Care, Inc., said, "we need to focus on the resources that we are to each other."

Presenter Steve Gurney, publisher of the "Guide to Retirement Living SourceBook," noted that in Phase II, the pilot projects will be testing, "how we can come together in an intentional way."

In his introduction of Fairfax County District Supervisor Catherine "Cathy" Hudgins (Hunter Mill), Gurney thanked Supervisor Hudgins for her support of the Reston for a Lifetime Initiative, and acknowledged her role in hosting a variety of organizational and planning meetings on Reston's aging in place issues over the course of the past three years.

Fairfax County District Supervisor Catherine "Cathy" Hudgins (Hunter Mill) speaking at the unveiling of a report on Phase I of the Reston for a Lifetime Initiative.

One of Supervisor Hudgins' goals has been to "see a connection of ideas and resources for seniors in the northern and western parts of the county." In her remarks, she added that the "ability to connect people, to build a community spirit, is not just about aging."

Also as part of Phase II, the Advocacy Working Group will continue to conduct research and engage in community education on a variety of topics and issues, including affordable housing, transportation, and incorporating universal design features in housing construction.

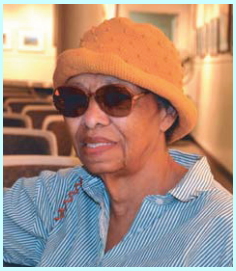
The report on Phase I unveiled at the event contains the finding that "for the most part, housing in Reston is neither affordable nor accessible to Reston's aging population, especially for those on fixed incomes and/or with physical limitations or disabilities…. Taking into account current zoning regulations, developer attitudes and the economic outlook, it will require a major change in priorities and culture in both public and private sectors to make Reston a place where a significant portion of its aging residents may continue to live."

Speaker Bonnie Whyte, convener of the Phase I Transportation Working Group, emphasized that "with Metro coming, it will mean big changes for all of us. There is a need for advocates wherever seniors need to be represented."

THE NEXT MONTHLY meeting of Reston for a Lifetime, held on the second Wednesday of every month from 2 until 4 p.m., will be Aug. 10 at the Reston Association Offices on Sunrise Valley Drive.

Aging Gracefully

Reston residents on issues important to those seeking to live a lifetime in Reston.



Rosa McDaniel, Retired, 15-year resident of Reston

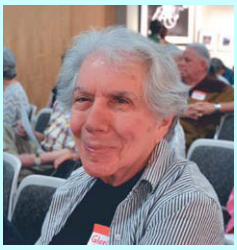
"There is a gap between assisted and independent living resources. Housing, transportation and other services are big issues for people who can live independently, but who don't have a lot of money or who may have physical ailments, especially if they don't have family support."

Sharon Greene, Fairfax County employee eligible for retirement in 2012, 22-year resident of Reston

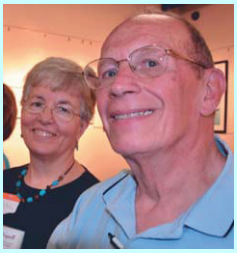
"I hope that housing expenses for seniors do not increase with the extension of Metro to Reston."

Ken Reinfeld, Sr. Policy/Program Analyst, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Reston resident for almost 30 years

"I am very desirous of having Reston be a place that can address a whole myriad of needs that seniors here may have, and in a way so that you are not isolated, but integrated in to a vibrant community."



Gloria Sussman, Instructor, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (George Mason Univ.) at Lake Anne, 40-year resident of Reston



Kathy and Don Boileau [Kathy is a retired registered nurse and Don is a professor of communication at George Mason University], moved to Reston a year ago

"We wanted a multi-age community. The sound of kids playing is part of living."

Dr. Craig Clark, Family physician, currently on disability, Reston resident since 1986

"One of the most important things for us to do is staying connected in useful ways throughout our life. When we ask ourselves what it is that makes us happy, it is to contribute in a meaningful way."

Photos by Jean T. Jianos

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