

WESTERN RESERVE



WRAAA

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Looking forward...

As we remember our past



MESSAGE FROM CEO, E. Douglas Beach, Ph.D.

As one of the largest AAA's in Ohio, WRAAA has the continued honor of providing innovative programs that take the effective strategies of our past, mobilize and put care and compassion into action in our present, while pursuing our future with optimism and ingenuity.

Did you ever stop to consider that there are more than 10 million older Americans that face hunger each year? Our partnership with Meals on Wheels over the years has helped to meet this growing need. WRAAA specializes in partnering with various agencies and organizations to connect those in need with advocacy, assistance, and answers.

Our legacy is founded in serving the aging and disabled populations of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Medina, Lake, and Lorain counties. As we look forward to the future, we remember our past and are challenged every day to continue to provide choices for people to live independently in the place they want to call home.

As CEO of WRAAA, the definition of aging has continued to change over the years, and I am proud to be in a new facility that will allow us to adapt to these changes and equip our staff to be the resource our community needs.

E. Douglas Beach
E. Douglas Beach, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer



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WRAAA Partners with...

MEALS ON WHEELS

WE DELIVER SMILES



ABOUT MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals on Wheels America is the leading organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network serves virtually every community in America and, with the help of more than two million staff and volunteers, delivers nutritious meals, friendly visits, and safety checks that enable America's seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, education, research, and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America empowers local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time.

OVER THE YEARS

Dick Goddard Wilma Smith



Volunteers deliver
meals to
homebound clients.



1995 Meals on Wheels Conference

GEORGIA ANETZBERGER

Honorary Lifetime Trustee

Beginning at age 16, I wanted to work on behalf of older adults whom I felt were treated inequitably and unjustly. This was a time when nearly 4 in 10 older adults were impoverished and critical policies like Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act had not been enacted.

Although I had no particular direction in mind at the time, I believed social work was the appropriate vehicle for helping to change the lives of older adults. I have been fortunate. For more than 40 years I have done a variety of things, anything from community planning to management to education. In multiple settings, I found working with this population to be worthwhile and fulfilling. I could neither have imagined nor asked for more.

Being in the field of aging for so long exposed me to what growing old might be like, including that its meaning and experience are unique for each individual and that it offers both freedom and opportunity as well as restriction and loss. The ability to embrace change and to feel gratitude is vital at each life stage, but particularly in older adulthood.

The WRAAA has undergone significant change since 1978 when it was my field placement as a social work student from Case Western Reserve University. It then became a small unit within Cuyahoga County government, focused mainly on meals programming, senior center services, and safety issues. Now it is a large, multifaceted, non-profit, independent organization concerned about the broad needs of older adults, but also such other groups as caregivers and adults with disabilities, and heavily focused on long-term services and supports.

Since 1978, I have had many roles within the WRAAA, from a student in field placement to Executive Director, to project consultant to Advisory Council member (then Chair), to governing board member (then President and now Lifetime Trustee). I also have worked in service providing agencies that received funds from the WRAAA. Without hesitation, I can say that it has been an incredible honor to serve the Aging Network.

For adults, advanced age and/or disabilities are among the circumstances more likely to render them vulnerable to harm, loss, or incapacity. On this basis, older adults and adults with disabilities may require our support, assistance, and protection. Not to provide it, in my opinion, is contrary to Constitutional elements to promote the general welfare and ensure the ability to pursue happiness, contrary to the United Nations concept of human rights, and contrary to the ethical principle of justice.



"Having a purpose outside of oneself seems fundamental, responsibly doing something for the benefit of others or society as a whole. This is as important to me now as it was earlier in life."

RON HILL

Former CEO



As WRAAA enters its 42nd year of operation and relocates to new offices in the iconic Reserve Square Building in downtown Cleveland, it's an opportune time to reflect on the Agency's storied past and to reaffirm belief in and dedication to its essential purpose and mission. It is also an excellent time to acknowledge WRAAA's many successes and the underlining strengths and other factors that have enabled it to transform itself to meet current and emerging challenges consistently.

Since its beginnings in 1976, WRAAA took on many challenges and quickly grew into a significant community institution and asset. The Agency has functioned as the significant implementing structure for a variety of federal and state aging service programs aimed at providing comprehensive services for older adults, particularly those who have been vulnerable and at risk due to frailty, disability, and isolation. A dynamic and changing environment for serving the elderly has allowed the Agency to experience tremendous growth over the years that has closely mirrored the evolution of aging policy in the state and nation. Most notably, the Agency successfully transitioned from grants manager and community services and supports system builder under the OAA to home and community based long-term care (HCBLTC) system builder and care coordinator under Medicaid HCBLTC Waiver Programs.

Over the years, WRAAA has helped thousands of vulnerable older adults to maintain their health and well-being and to remain in their homes while saving millions of dollars for taxpayers. The Agency has also been a significant source of employment for local aging professionals and an economic engine for the local aging services network and long-term care industry, bringing in millions of state and federal dollars to the region. The Agency was able to make these accomplishments by being highly proficient in a wide range of roles. WRAAA's achievements have also been predicated on a number of critical factors including favorable public policy, organizational strengths, strong public concern for the plight of socially and economically disadvantaged older people in need of care, support, and protection. WRAAA has also initiated active responses from the region's service provider networks and business communities to commercial and humanitarian opportunities in the provision of care and support to older adult consumers.

In 2018, WRAAA continues to operate in a changing and challenging environment. WRAAA will need to continually look to the future and use the past as a source of inspiration and insight. There is no doubt that this is an exciting, challenging time of transformation in the aging network. To maintain its place in a reforming long-term care system, WRAAA must continue to take stock of its current situation, tracking progress, identifying ongoing challenges, and facilitating conversations and collaborations across all levels of the network and with federal, state, and local partners. Moreover, most importantly, it must continue to stay committed to its purpose and mission to provide choices for people to live independently in the place they want to call home.

1960s

Laying the Foundations of Aging Services

The 1960s saw some of the most significant advances in American aging legislation in the country's history. The Older Americans Act of 1965 established funding for the most iconic and essential programs older persons receive to this day, such as "Meals on Wheels." This coupled with the passage of title XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act in that same year led to this period having one of the most enduring legacies of American legislation.

- Congress passes the Older Americans Act
- Title XIX prompts Medicare and Medicaid

1970s

From Washington to Cleveland

While the Older Americans Act granted funds for essential aging services, its federal scale often made delivering those services efficiently challenging. The Comprehensive Services Amendments to OAA created Area Agencies on Aging to implement OAA services on local levels, which eventually led to the creation of WRAAA in 1976.

- OAA establishes the Area Agencies on Aging

1980s

Transition on the Horizon

The 1980s began with groundbreaking research into the effectiveness of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) that allowed older Americans to transition away from living in nursing homes and into a community or home setting. This new frontier led to the foundation of PASSPORT, one of WRAAA's flagship programs. After long, constructive conversations between the Ohio Department of Aging and the Cuyahoga County Commissioners, WRAAA's organizational structure and oversight are completely overhauled, emerging as a fully-independent nonprofit organization.

- Government studies feasibility of moving people out of nursing homes
- Federal Government establishes a waiver program to help ease transitions from nursing homes to home and community settings
- Several Ohio counties experiment with the new PASSPORT program

1990s

Expanding to Disability Services

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 dramatically expanded the types of responsibilities covered by Area Agencies on Aging. PASSPORT's expansion into the 5 counties served by WRAAA opened the floodgates for massive expansion as the region's sole provider.

- ADA Enacted by Congress
- PASSPORT expands to Northeast Ohio
 - ODA Establishes Care Choice Ohio
- Supreme Court affirms rights of people with disabilities to live in community settings

2000s

Removing Barriers to Community Living

A decade after the passage of the ADA, national priorities were drawn to targeting and removing obstacles to independent living elderly people and people with disabilities continued to face. Through federal initiatives through the Older Americans Act and Executive Branch, several existing systems underwent overhauls.

OAA creates the National Family Caregiver Support Program and New Freedom Initiative promotes independence for people with disabilities

Ohio Commission to Reform Medicaid is founded
WRAAA selected to implement Ohio's first ADRC project

2010s

New Frontiers of Aging and Disability Care

The passage of the Affordable Care Act renewed attention of legislators in reforming the services provided by Medicare and Medicaid. States like Ohio began to experiment with approaches to consolidating these services through programs like MyCare Ohio, which offers one-stop services for Ohioans who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. More recently, WRAAA dramatically expanded the range of services it offers, allowing consumers to more effectively use WRAAA as a "hub" for diverse age and disability-related services.

2010s continued

- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is signed into law
- Ohio budget includes comprehensive Medicaid reforms
 - MyCare Ohio launched in Northeast Ohio
 - WRAAA contracts with CareSource
- Grassroots initiative Advocacy in Motion launched
 - HomeFix emergency repair program launched
- How Sweet it is Diabetes awareness program created
- HOME Choice Transition coordination services begin

thank you

A special thank you to WRAAA staff, board members, partners, and friends. Each decade brings new partnerships and new challenges. As we look to the future, WRAAA recognizes that our past holds milestones that have shaped our future. We look forward to continuing our advocacy work together and achieving even more advancements in our new, modern, state-of-the-art facility that we now call home.



Thank you for your dedication to serve our community.



Over the Years...WRAAA Staff, Board Members, Partners, and Friends

EYAD



HOME CHOICE SUCCESS STORY

Is life what you expected? For Eyad, life was humming along on a steady path to success. Every facet of life looked promising. Each day welcomed new opportunities, and day-to-day concerns and challenges were chased away with drive and determination.

What if all that changed? What if suddenly your life took an extreme, disabling turn? Where would you go for help? What would you do? For Eyad, discovering he had a rare blood clotting disorder started him on an unexpected journey from uncertainty to hope.

Uncertainty

The feeling of not knowing how to live with this new reality of disability was unsettling. Now each new day looked different than before. Even the view was different. The place that Eyad now called home was a nursing home. He was grateful to have the care he needed, but as the days pressed on, he longed for his independence and a place of his own. Eyad's drive, determination, and positive attitude helped him stay the course. Three years passed before Eyad was connected to WRAAA. This was when a transformative experience occurred.

WRAAA provides choices for people to live independently in the place they want to call home. Eyad was thrilled to know that there was an agency that could produce such an opportunity. WRAAA secured an apartment, helped with initial rent monies, utilized a financial allowance to purchase needed furniture, and provided Eyad with the resources he needed. All continuation of medical care, transportation needs, nutritional needs were considered and taken care of.

Hope

"Being connected to WRAAA means a new beginning. A new start. The old Eyad is gone, but the new one is here. As much as I may want the old Eyad back he cannot come back. However, WRAAA provides me with a new path toward success with a new life and something to look forward to. A drive for something new. I have been doing well since becoming connected with WRAAA because WRAAA provided me with a different view of life. When I was in the nursing home I started to lose hope, but WRAAA came around and helped me find hope again." – Eyad

Eyad's journey to independent living is inspiring. "I'm so proud to be a part of an organization that strives to live its mission every day to help people live in the place they want to call home." – **Kim**, Clinical Manager of Interventions. Eyad now has a renewed sense of independence. He can push the uncertainty aside and face each new day with hope. WRAAA is so glad to be a part of his story.





Western Reserve
Area Agency on Aging

IMPROVE ANSWERS TRAIN INTEGRITY MEDINA CUYAHOGA PROGRESS **VISION LORAIN COMMUNITY GEAUGA** **ADVOCACY VALUES DEVELOP MISSION LAKE THINKING ASSISTANCE SUSTAINABILITY**





Western Reserve

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