

NEW BEGINNINGS Quarterly Newsletter | Summer/Fall 2019











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From the Desk of WRAAA CEO, **Dr. Douglas Beach**

ver the past few months WRAAA has been actively engaged in significant projects and programs that enhance our clients' quality of life. From our impactful advocacy efforts in Columbus to new staff initiatives, we are an organization on the move.



This summer WRAAA kicked off the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).

We ramped up our efforts to provide more than 3,000 WRAAA clients in Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties with \$50 in coupons to purchase fresh, locally-grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey from participating farmers. WRAAA administers the program, which is jointly funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Department of Aging. Also this year, as part of our focus on our customers' overall wellness, we launched a Food is Medicine contest within our community. See the winning recipe on the back cover.

Channel 19 News has been stirring up some excitement in our lower level kitchen. As reported by news anchor, Jen Picciano, Cleveland chefs have whipped up healthy, low-cost recipes that are perfect for seniors to prepare in their own homes. WRAAA is also excited to welcome TownHall restaurant chefs who are gearing up to lead farm-to-table cooking demonstrations for seniors. These cooperative, food-related interactions showcase our modern, fully-equipped community kitchen and provide easy-to-prepare recipes for everyone's enjoyment.

Plans are also underway to recognize outstanding seniors in our community whose active lifestyles and contributions prove that *age is only a number*. We're actively seeking "rock star" candidates for our upcoming Golden Star Award.

WRAAA has planted the seeds for future growth and development. Whether it's advocacy and programming for the betterment of our clients or staff training and recognition, we expect to reap meaningful benefits in the months ahead. 55

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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Ursel McElroy, Director of the Ohio Department of Aging Visits WRAAA

he newly appointed Director of the Ohio Department of Aging, Ursel McElroy, spent May 20th at WRAAA headquarters kicking off the agency's "Democracy in Action" initiative. Director McElroy toured the building and spoke to staff and service providers.

Director McElroy began her Cleveland visit by addressing an All Staff Meeting at WRAAA. Dr. Douglas Beach introduced the new Director, and thanked Gov. DeWine for her appointment to such a pivotal, impactful position.

Director McElroy works closely with Ohio's 12 area agencies on aging, the Ohio Advisory Council for Aging and other state and local partners to address priority issues and opportunities. She also oversees the coordination of long-term services and supports provided in the home, community, and facilities funded by the federal Older Americans Act, Medicaid, and other federal and state dollars.

In her remarks, Director McElroy emphasized the importance of the work being done around the state by WRAAA and other area agencies on aging. "You are in the right business, and we have a lot of business to do," said Director McElroy. "In Ohio 20% of our population is 65 and older. Right now 2.8 million Ohioans need our services and those numbers will continue to grow."

The Director assured WRAAA staff her department is determined to help them get their jobs done so they can provide the best services to older adults, their caregivers and all the other people who rely on agencies like WRAAA.

When caring for older adults Director McElroy emphasized three areas that she termed "non-negotiable."

1. Excellence: 100% excellent service for everyone, all the time. Ohioans deserve nothing less.

2. Customer Service: Providers and caregivers must present their agency well to every client they serve.

3. Respect: Treat each client with dignity. No matter where you are or how old you are, dignity is something we need all our life. It is not optional.



◎ Director McElroy answers questions posed by a WRAAA staff member at the May 20th All Staff Meeting.

Included in the staff meeting was a robust question and answer session. Staff discussed the following challenges they face in the field:

- Hiring and training caregivers
- Providing career pathways for younger people
- Food insecurity for older adults
- Opioid crisis on Ohio's seniors
- · Shortage of trained senior transportation drivers
- · Rising problem of elder abuse, exploitation and neglect

Director McElroy indicated the remarks and concerns voiced by staff were issues her department was actively addressing. "Going out into the field and listening to staff concerns confirms we are on the same page in Columbus," she said.

Following the staff meeting Director McElroy received a guided tour of the WRAAA headquarters led by WRAAA Chief Information Officer, Heather Kelley. She spent the afternoon meeting with service providers in WRAAA's five county area.

Director McElroy concluded her visit to WRAAA with this message: "Protecting the health, safety, security and vitality of older adults should not be an option in Ohio." 54

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⊘ Above: Kate Sommerfeld presenting at AGINGWell Conference on social determinants of health. Right: Dr. Beach awarding Excellence in Volunteerism award to Melanie Hogan, Executive Director of LEAP.

Holiday Inn

WRAAA 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WRAAA's 2019 AGINGWell Annual Conference, on

August 21, drew 350 professionals to the Holiday Inn, Independence Conference Center. The theme of this year's conference was "Ageism: Reframing the Narrative." Dr. Beach welcomed the guests and thanked Fatima Perkins, WRAAA Director of Community Outreach and Advocacy, for planning the conference.

The morning's first speaker was Kate Sommerfeld, President, Social Determinates of Health, ProMedica, who emphasized the fact that a person's zip code should not determine how well or how long they live.

"In any city in the US you can drive five miles and see a 30-year difference in life expectancy based on the following ten social determinants: financial strain, employment, access to healthy food, behavior health, safe and healthy housing, utilities, education, transportation, childcare and personal safety," said Ms. Sommerfeld. "At ProMedica, through the expertise of community developers in underinvested Toledo neighborhoods, we are working to close that life expectancy gap and give families and seniors the best chance possible to thrive."

The next speaker was Michael Beer of the lobbying firm, Alignment Government Strategies, who spoke about "What's Going on in D.C? A Legislative Update on Senior Issues from Both Sides of the Aisle." The morning also included a Recognition Ceremony honoring outgoing WRAAA Board of Trustee Members Connie Hill-Johnson and Stephanie S. Weaver. The 2019 Independent Living Awards were presented to Ohio Living Breckenridge Village Woodshop Club for their Excellence in Volunteerism and Melanie Hogan, Executive Director of Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP) for Excellence in Leadership. Following an invocation by WRAAA Trustee Edward McKinney, Ph. D., participants enjoyed lunch and a visit to the vendor booths.

Margaret Morganroth Gullette, Ph.D., the awardwinning writer of *Ending Ageism*, or *How Not to Shoot Old People*, presented the keynote address. Resident Scholar at Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, Ms. Morganroth Gullette's lecture was "Defy Ageism, Not Aging."

Rounding out the program was Stacey Easterling, a nonprofit and philanthropic leader who discussed "Effective Strategies to Navigate the Reframing Course." Participants then attended two of six breakout sessions of their choice. The topics covered included isolation and loneliness, the importance of a healthy diet, aging and disabilities, caring communities and food as medicine.

"Our AGINGWell Conference zeroed in on important elements of aging and helped participants learn new tactics and strategies to improve the quality of life for older adults," said Fatima Perkins. S

⊙ Top Left: Rebecca Simon of Capitol Partners, Courtney McDonald, Veronica Morris, Valerie Lewis, and Cyndi Rossi meet with Sen. Sean J. O'Brien. Top Right: Gov. Mike DeWine and Dr. Douglas Beach visit after a successful advocacy day at the Capitol.

TAKING IT TO THE CAPITOL

hirty-eight WRAAA staff boarded the bus to Columbus on May 22, 2019 to advocate on behalf of WRAAA's consumers. Their mission was to ask elected officials to increase the budget for the Senior Community Services Block Grant from the proposed \$6.9 million to \$10 million over the next two years.

The group's first stop was the House of Representatives Chamber where WRAAA staff witnessed democracy in action. "I've never visited our State House before and it was eye-opening to see how the legislative process works," said Stacy Turner, WRAAA Director of Human Resources and Training. "It makes me realize how meaningful it is for us to be here to represent our clients and show our strength in numbers." During their action-packed Capitol visit, WRAAA staff divided into small groups and met with either elected officials or their aides, including Rep. John Patterson of the 99th District, Sen. Kenny Yuko of the 25th District, Rep. Juanita Brent of the 12th District, Sen. Nickie Antonio of the 23rd District, Sen. Sean O'Brien of the 32nd District, Rep. Reggie Stolzfus of the 50th District, Rep. Steve Hambley of the 69th District and Sen. Sandra Williams of the 21st District. Rep. Janine Boyd of the 9th District was responsible for the recognition of WRAAA staff at the House of Representatives Chamber.

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"Advocating on behalf of our agency and the clients we serve was a first time experience for many of us," said Georgina (Gigi) Green, Manager, Performance Measurement and Quality Initiatives. "After our visit we felt confident our voices were heard. It is empowering to have a platform to explain our work to people who will make funding decisions in the future."

Rob Frost, Partner, Capitol Partners, who served as one of the group leaders and helped coordinate the visit, was very happy WRAAA staff volunteers had traveled to Columbus. "When members of Congress are making funding decisions, it's impactful for them to hear first-hand the challenges Ohio's seniors face," he said. "Taking care of Ohio's elderly is a bi-partisan issue and is something our lawmakers take seriously on both sides of the aisle." ⊘ WRAAA representatives at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium following a full day of advocacy on behalf of WRAAA clients.

The day concluded with a reception at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium where Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, members of Congress and their aides, stopped by to meet and greet WRAAA staff volunteers.

During the reception, Sen. Matt Dolan, who serves on the Finance Committee and has made frequent visits to WRAAA offices, commended the staff for their advocacy efforts during the reception.

"Thank you for sharing real life stories with our legislatures," said Sen. Dolan. "Your visit matters and I commend your commitment to your clients and your advocacy efforts on their behalf."

SPECIAL NOTICE: As of the printing of this newsletter, The Older Americans Act was still not reauthorized by Congress. To advocate for the passage of this important Act, reach out to your local officials. Contact information is available on the WRAAA website at **www.areaagingsolutions.org/elected-olfficials**.



 ⊘ Above: 15 year anniversary recipients:
Greg Thomas, Regina Smith, and Chris Hall.
Right: Karen Webb, Go Getter award recipient.

WRAAA RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

Go GETTER

t the June 6th WRAAA All Staff Meeting special recognition was given to staff members who have given their all to make the organization a "bestin-class" non-profit. Honors were given to employees for their first, fifth, tenth, fifteenth, twentieth and 30-year work anniversary, and awards were given to go-getters and team builders.

"We work hard every day to improve the lives of the elderly and disabled in our five county area," said Dr. Douglas Beach, WRAAA Chief Executive Officer. "It's through the commitment of our outstanding and dedicated employees and their positive, can-do attitude that we can achieve this goal."

Awards & Recognitions

Go T.E.A.M. Community Services & Supports Department (CSSD) Team Leads

- Erin Baumgartner, LSW (United)
- Amy Coleman, LSW (PASSPORT/Assisted Living)
- Shari Kavlick-Benz, LSW (Buckeye)
- Jessica Kresak, LSW (Ohio Home Care Waiver & SRS)
- Darlyne Redd, LSW (PASSPORT/Assisted Living)
- Gretchen Wilson, LSW (CareSource)

Program Development and Planning Team

- April Anno, LSW, Provider Relations Specialist
- Dwayne Askerneese, RN, Care Coordinator, Family Caregiver Support Program
- · Connie Benedum, Program Assistant
- · Charisse Green, HomeFix Coordinator
- Tamirra Harris, Provider and Resident Service Coordinator
- · Courtney Williams, LSW, Provider Relations Specialist
- Debbie Sacerich, LSW, Care Coordinator, Family Caregiver Support Program
- Elizabeth MacCanon, LSW, Care Coordinator, Family Caregiver Support Program

MORow Best Practice Committee/Team Aging & Disability Resource Center

- Teresa Allerton, LSW, Team Lead
- Tim Kenepp, LSW, Team Lead
- Carla Kowalski, LSW, Resource Specialist
- April White, Resource Specialist
- Courtney McDonald, Resource Specialist

Go Getter

- Renee Banks, Case Aide, CareSource
- Karen Webb, Director, Program Development & Planning







© Kim Kehl presenting at Elder Abuse and Neglect Conference at Corporate College East

Elder Abuse & Neglect Conference

n Saturday, June 15, 2019, the C3A Consortium, which advocates for older adults who may be victims of elder abuse and neglect, held its annual conference at Corporate College East. The C3A Consortium joined forces with the Greater Cleveland Elder Abuse/Domestic Violence Roundtable to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Kim Kehl, Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services Trauma Informed Care Project Coordinator was the keynote speaker. Mr. Kehl discussed, "Exploring Elder Abuse Through a Trauma Informed Lens," to an audience of social workers, attorneys, nurses and elder care providers.

"This conference provides an excellent opportunity for communities to raise awareness about elder abuse and neglect," said Nita Bring-Mazurek, WRAAA's Director of Community and Waiver Services.

"The debilitating results of elder abuse range from physical injury, pain, mental anguish, financial loss, violation of rights, to death," said Ohio Attorney General David Yost. "Elder abuse crosses all racial, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds and reaches families in every Ohio community." 54

TO REPORT ABUSE

- Cuyahoga County: 216-420-6700
- Geauga County: 440-285-9141
- Lake County: 440-350-4000
- Lorain County: 440-284-4465
- Medina County: 800-783-5070 or 330-725-6631

New Senior Tech Classes

A re you comfortable using your smartphone? Are you utilizing your smartphone effectively? Phones today have so many great features that can keep you safe and connected to friends and family.

WRAAA is here to teach you the ins-and-outs of using your smartphone. This class is designed for seniors to learn how to use smartphones and understand the benefits of technology.

Instructors will show you how to download apps, load emergency contacts, access weather, news, Facebook and more.

If you are ready to become smartphone savvy, call 216-727-2425 to register and reserve your spot today.

Senior Tech Class

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 1700 E. 13th St., Lower Level, Cleveland OH, 44114

November 22, 2019 December 13, 2019 January 24, 2020 February 28, 2020 March 27, 2020

Light refreshments will be served. 🔧

105th Birthday Celebration!



 $\ensuremath{\boxtimes}$ Ann DeCaro celebrated her 105th birthday with family and friends.

n 1914, Woodrow Wilson was president, a U.S. postage stamp cost two cents and the world's first red and green traffic lights were installed in Cleveland. And on June 7th of that year, Ann DeCaro was born. During the 105 years of her active and healthy life Ann married twice, worked at Fisher Foods and a neighborhood bakery, raised a family and always found time to volunteer at local hospitals.

"I've never been one to focus on the negative, " said Ann at her recent 105th birthday celebration. "I only focus on the positive and I never get depressed."

Ann's WRAAA assisted living care manager Renee Churnega is in awe of her client. "Ann is a remarkable woman, and inspires everyone around her," Renee said. "Each morning she is impeccably dressed and groomed."

Ann's children credit their mother's longevity to good genes – her father lived to 102 and her sisters lived to 99 and 100½. Ann also believed in making food from scratch using only natural ingredients. When Ann is not entertaining her many visitors, she enjoys music, word search puzzles and watching her favorite TV shows.

"Ann is a true lady in every sense of the word," said Renee. "It's been an incredible pleasure working with her." 🌿



⊙ Dr. Douglas Beach, Sen. Matt Dolan and Rob Frost of Capitol Partners, gather at the Leadership Cleveland meeting at WRAAA offices.

Leadership Cleveland holds Government Day at WRAAA

Seventy members of Leadership Cleveland's Class of 2019 met at WRAAA's large group instruction room for a Government Day seminar. Dr. Douglas Beach welcomed the civic leaders and explained the wide reaching impact WRAAA has on seniors living in the five counties served by the agency. "One out of six seniors is affected by hunger in Ohio," said Dr. Beach. "Figures show that 24% of adults ages 65 years and older in Ohio experiences poor or fair overall health."

The value of providing services to the elderly so they can remain healthy, independent and live comfortably in their own homes was underscored by Dr. Beach. "It makes good economic sense to provide services, like we do at WRAAA, to enable our seniors to age in place, rather than in long-term care institutions."

Other speakers included William Friedman, President and CEO of Cleveland Cuyahoga County Port Authority, who explained how the Port Authority advances regional success, and Sen. Matt Dolan who spoke about the importance of advocacy to enact change. Following the discussion, Leadership Cleveland members toured the WRAAA facility.

"Having Leadership Cleveland hold its Government Day seminar at WRAAA was an effective use of our new Large Group Instruction room and introduced tomorrow's leaders to the work we do at WRAAA," said June Taylor, WRAAA Chief People, Performance, and Quality Initiatives. "We encourage other area agencies and nonprofits to use our conference rooms for meetings and seminars." **S**

Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging **Programs and Services**

Aging and Disability Resource Center

The experts of the ADRC provide information, assistance, and referrals to help connect you to long-term services and support.

Assisted Living

Designed to help individuals who may need a range of assistance but desire to maintain a level of independent living in a setting that feels like home.

Family Caregiver Support

Designed to help identify individuals' needs as a caregiver and connect them to supportive resources.

Farmers Markets

Coupon eligibility to purchase fresh locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey from participating farmers.

Home Choice

Helping eligible Ohioans transition from institutional settings to either home or community-based environments.

MyCare Ohio

A managed care program designed for Ohioans who receive BOTH Medicaid and Medicare benefits.

Nutrition Program Services

Nutrition programs including home-delivered meals, congregate meals, as well as nutrition education and risk screening.

Ohio Benefits Long-Term Care

Improved access to community-based, long-term services, and supports.

Ohio Home Care

A waiver program serving individuals on Medicaid with long-term care needs who may need to depend on a hospital or nursing facility.

Older Americans Act Services

Title III of the Older Americans Act provides funding for supportive services, nutrition services, and family caregiver support.

Ombudsman

An advocate for individuals receiving care in nursing homes, assisted living, adult care homes and more.

PASSPORT

Various support services for eligible older persons who wish to remain in their own homes.

Preadmission and Level of Care Screenings FAQ

Preadmission review process for individuals seeking access to Medicaid-funded, long-term care.

Specialized Medicaid Recovery Services

A program available through Medicaid for individual diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness.

To learn more about services coordinated through WRAAA call our Resource Center (800) 626-7277.





About WRAAA

The Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging "WRAAA" is a private nonprofit corporation organized and designated by the State of Ohio to be the planning, coordinating and administrative agency for federal and state aging programs in Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. Building upon four decades of experience in providing services and support to elderly and disabled individuals in need, WRAAA continues to expand its service portfolio in the long-term and healthcare delivery systems.

Our Mission

We provide choices for people to live independently in the place they want to call home.

Our Vision

We aim to create a community that provides aging individuals and people with disabilities the opportunity to have their needs met with optimum choice, dignity and maximum independence.

Need A Meeting Room?

WRAAA has full service meeting rooms with up-to-date technology and can accommodate 6 to 100 people. Numerous amenities available. Interested? Contact ecallahan@areaagingsolutions.org.



⊘ Partner advocates with Ohio Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko.

Advocating for Ohio's Food Bank **Insecure Seniors**

On May 7, 2019, Senior Hunger Advocacy Day, 60 advocates from across Ohio, including representatives from WRAAA, came to Columbus to be the voice for older adults who experience food insecurity on a daily basis. WRAAA partnered with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a), Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, Council of Older Persons, Senior Transportation Services, and the City of Solon to increase funding for vital senior-focused services such as home-delivered meals.

The day began with a training session held at the Sheraton at Capitol Square. The group then walked over to the Statehouse to meet with their assigned legislators. The busy day included 26 meetings scheduled with legislators or their legislative aides.

"What a great reflection on Ohio's aging and food bank networks to join forces to address this important issue," said Cyndi Rossi WRAAA legislative liaison. "WRAAA's goal was to advocate for an increase in the Senior Community Services line item in the State's budget. WRAAA uses these funds to support home delivered meals. We are very appreciative of the elected officials who met with us and heard our message."







Food is Medicine Contest Winners Alaxandra White and Cheryl Forror

Alaxandra White and her mother Cheryl Forror won WRAAA's summer **Food Is Medicine** contest with their whole-food plant based recipe, which is packed with fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes, nuts/seeds and whole grains.

Alaxandra is a registered dietitian and mother of two young boys. Cheryl is a proponent of a healthy diet to provide necessary nutrients, prevent disease and increase energy. Both mother and daughter hope you enjoy this nutritious farmto-table recipe.

Bon Appétit! 🎀

Rainbow Salad Ingredients

1-2 large tomatoes diced, or 20-30 cherry tomatoes halved or sliced 2 carrots diced into thin rounds 2 cups of yellow corn 1 lemon (juice of) 2 cups of spinach or kale leaves torn or cut into small pieces 2 green onions diced small with white part too! 4 large purple cabbage leaves chopped into small pieces ¼ cup of red onion chopped very small ¼ cup of roasted sunflower seed (kernels) 2 teaspoons of black sesame seeds Spices: ¼ teaspoon of sea salt, 1/4 teaspoon of black pepper, and 1/4 teaspoon of garlic powder. Makes 8 servings, 1 cup each.

⊙ Top: Food is Medicine Contest Winners



Area Agency on Aging

CONTACT US

For more information regarding this newsletter please contact the Performance and Quality Measurement Department at pmqi@areaagingsolutions.org

Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

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