

CAFE: The Center for Age-Friendly Excellence

Advancing Livable Communities for all Generations



CAFE Focus Group Report Daly City April 15, 2019 Older Adult Parishioners at St. Martin's Church

Transportation

In this focus group, a grandson provides transport to his grandmother with whom he lives. Several members take Uber and Lyft and had good experiences. At least one woman was afraid to take Uber/Lyft alone.

No one in this group wishes to take or takes Redi-Wheels. They explained that Redi-Wheels show up very late for doctor's appointments and keeps even very disabled persons in wheelchairs waiting for hours for pick ups and returns. The pattern is repeated and poor or no service is the norm.

One man related his experience of a typical outing to the VA Hospital. Once he is picked up, he then has endure pick ups for several other riders before getting to the VA Hospital. After his appointment, he again waits a long time for the return ride, more stops for other riders, and then he is finally taken home. A one-hour doctor's appointment takes 6 hours of this elder's time.

The Daly City focus group had high praise for the transportation system in San Francisco. There is a service for \$30 a month where seniors can utilize unlimited rides. The value of the service is \$150. In addition, SF Muni has free transfers within the system. They would like to see something similar in Daly City.

Housing

Everyone in this focus group is a homeowner, at the same time, they shared that rents are too high in Daly City. They told stories of fellow church members who were forced to move away from the Bay Area, because it was too expensive. They also said that housing was too expensive for students.

Focus group members explained that they know of elders who need help to get ready for the day (in the morning) and cannot get help. They fear for their independence. One focus group member told of seniors who are living in their cars with grandchildren. They said that shelter time is limited, so homeless seniors retreat to their cars. Focus group members said that they had not heard of the concept of safe parking lots, and would like to learn more about this idea.

Social Participation

The group said it was important to guard against isolation. They said that Westlake has a very good senior program in the park, but you have to find transportation to get there in the first place. They especially enjoy the computer classes and tai chi.

They reflected on the struggle to get to the senior center that many seniors face. These are the “hassle factors” that slowly erode the ability of older persons with dependencies in the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL’s) to remain engaged in the community. These hassle factors contribute to the growing threat of isolation and loneliness. Community-based long-term care is an expressed and unmet need among members of this focus group.

Like many cities, faith communities attempt to keep track of older members. In at least one case, there is a church task force that follows up when older members have not been seen in church for several Sundays. (This is likely a good place to start in developing a transport service to church and the senior center. There may be a creative way to also launch a pilot intergenerational project for grandparents who are caring for grandchildren and cannot get out of the house; perhaps develop a reading group with the local library or senior center).

This focus group said that seniors need a break from constant caring for grandchildren. They expressed a wish to visit a casino and enjoy adult recreational activities. Once again, the problem is transportation. (This is a possible opportunity for a high impact, four times a year, senior center activity. Perhaps charge a small fee to help cover the cost of a charter bus, gas and one day driver. One could explore the cost being defrayed by the casino itself).

Respect and Social Inclusion

Focus group members think that long-term senior residents are not aware of programs and services available to them. They think the needs and wishes of the old-old are not being captured. The group promoted the idea of a minimum monthly allowance provided to low-income seniors. (This idea is gaining traction in some northern European countries).

Civic Participation & Employment

The focus group members acknowledge a vast and variety of volunteer opportunities. They cited in particular the Peninsula Food Runners, the Bread Program, the list of opportunities at the church, and Doelger Senior Center. Once again, the wish is to volunteer, but the

problem is transportation to and from the site. They specifically mentioned Transfiguration Church as a site that cares for homeless people.

At least one member of the focus group expressed a wish to earn money.

Communication and Information

Linking back to employment and earning money, the group expressed a need for a one-stop employment office.

They were aware of community information available at the library, city hall, senior centers and newspapers, particularly the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner.

Many shared that they don't have internet access and that only a few have computers. At least one focus group member obtains information from friends and the church. At least one person gets information from Facebook.

Community & Health Services

Unlike prior focus groups, this one reported that dental care was "OK" and that there is an annual health fair at the church.

While health care is available, the need is for medical gap or supplemental insurance. Members of the group shared that this kind of health insurance is very expensive.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Focus group members reported that many bus stops do not have covers, or shade and riders routinely are exposed to the elements. Rain is particularly difficult for older riders. In addition, not enough bus stops have benches so one can sit and wait for the bus.

This focus group asked for more affordable, senior housing and rent assistance. They need lower prices for senior lunches and recreational activities. And again, they stated the urgent and over arching need for transportation to access any outdoor spaces and community or government buildings.