



Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2011

For more information contact:

Carol Mattar, Public Relations Specialist

Phone: (708)383-0258

Cell: (708)601-3730

Email: carol.mattar@ageoptions.org

Event Celebrates Success of Program To Assist Caregivers, Honors Volunteers

Dignitaries and representatives of local churches and community organizations gathered June 28 to honor volunteers and supporters of the Caring Together, Living Better program and celebrate the success of the project. The festive luncheon took place at Adrianna's Banquets in Markham.

Caring Together, Living Better (CTLB) is a faith-based caregiver support network in the near south suburbs. Since the program was started in 2009 by AgeOptions, the Area Agency on Aging of suburban Cook County, eight churches and community organizations have designed and implemented volunteer-based support services to assist members of their communities who care for older adults.

CJE SeniorLife is the evaluator for CTLB and is working with project leadership to create a caregiver training curriculum that meets the needs of African-American caregivers in the south suburbs.

Pastor Barbara Barron, community liaison for VITAS Hospice and a longtime supporter of Caring Together, Living Better, led the opening prayer. State Rep. Will Davis was also among the speakers. Toni Warren, CTLB Leadership Council member, was emcee.

Testimonials were given by:

- Elder Leroy Heath, CTLB project leader for Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale
- Minister Jason Williams of Shekinah Chapel
- Paulette Ragland, volunteer at Kizer Memorial Church of God in Christ
- Tonya Glover, volunteer at Bethel AME Church in Robbins
- Pamela Carpenter, volunteer at Valley Kingdom Ministries
- Rev. Wayne Cunningham, project co-leader for Covenant United Church of Christ in South Holland, who read a thank-you note he received from a caregiver
- Apostle Carl White of Victory Assembly International Ministries

Entertainers were:

- Bridgette Jordan, mime dancer from Victory Assembly International Ministries in Markham

- Kerry Johnson, CTLB volunteer and singer from Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church in Riverdale
- Mopa Kaio dancers from Victory Church: Sister Audery Smith, Imani Barnes, Christian Harris, Nyla McGowan, Nadio McGowan and Ramaih Carter.

More than 200 caregivers have received support since CTLB began through services such as respite care, transportation, friendly visiting and support groups. The participating churches and community organization are:

- Bethel AME, Robbins
- Covenant UCC, South Holland
- Kizer Memorial, Harvey
- Shekinah Lutheran, Riverdale
- Valley Kingdom, South Holland
- Victory Christian Assembly, Markham
- Word Made Flesh, Midlothian
- Metropolitan Family Services, Blue Island

CTLB is funded by a three-year grant from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation to AgeOptions to create a sustainable, faith-based support network for caregivers. AgeOptions recently received a new grant to increase the reach of the program through the Legacy Corps volunteer respite program, which matches trained, older adult volunteers with families caring for older adults.

AgeOptions and its network of community agencies are the principal source of information regarding senior services in suburban Cook County, Ill. A nonprofit organization located in Oak Park, AgeOptions has served the older adults of suburban Cook County and their caregivers as an Area Agency on Aging since 1974. For more information, please visit the Agency website at www.ageoptions.org.

AgeOptions connects adults age 60 and over with resources and service options so they can live their lives to the fullest and remain in their homes as long as possible. In 2010 we met the needs of more than 198,500 individuals in 130 communities within 30 townships that have a diverse population of 460,000 older adults. AgeOptions advocates, plans, develops and funds programs and coordinates a network of community-based senior service agencies to ensure an effective and efficient system of service delivery. Support is provided through the Older Americans Act, Illinois General Revenue Funds, local funds and individual contributions.