

AGEOPTIONS NOW

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A MESSAGE FROM



Thank You

As the new chair of the **AgeOptions** Board of Directors, I would like to thank Fred Karutz for his leadership over the past two years. Along with the other members of the Board of Directors and the AgeOptions staff, I am grateful for his dedication and service as chair of the Board of Directors and look forward to continuing to work with him in the future.

This issue of AgeOptions NOW is dedicated to our volunteers, who are a crucial part of almost everything AgeOptions does. They serve on our Board of Directors and Advisory Council and work with older adults in many of our programs, such as leading Take Charge of Your Health classes.

On November 19, AgeOptions will once again honor volunteers at our 35th anniversary Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. These dedicated individuals have been nominated by agencies and communities throughout suburban Cook County where they volunteer in a wide variety of programs that benefit older adults. We are also very pleased to honor three communities that have completed the Maturing of Illinois Community Preparedness Assessment.

Thank you, volunteers, for making it possible for AgeOptions to carry out its mission of serving older adults and their caregivers.



Tracy Bousky
Chairperson,
Board of Directors
AgeOptions

Lead Advisor
Financial Strategy Network

Honoring Our Volunteers

Without volunteers, **AgeOptions** and countless other agencies and organizations would not be able to accomplish all we do. Inside this issue of AgeOptions NOW you will read about a few of our volunteers and how they help AgeOptions provide programs and services for older adults and those who care for them.

Variety of Opportunities

AgeOptions offers a variety of opportunities for volunteers, from membership on the Board of Directors and Advisory Council, to advocating for legislation benefiting older members of our community, to working directly with families and their elders. For example, volunteers can help determine if older adults are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to and assist them in the application process.

Volunteers also help fight Medicare fraud and educate their peers about other types of fraud that target older people through the SMP program (formerly Senior Medicare Patrol). In addition, volunteers are now involved in conducting surveys in six suburbs to evaluate their preparedness for the growing aging population.

Volunteers Needed for 2010 Census

We will soon be enlisting volunteers to help us make sure older adults are counted in the 2010 Census. Volunteers are needed to help ensure that suburban Cook County residents know the Census is coming, that it is critical for them and their community, and what they need to do to participate. To volunteer for this once-in-a-decade opportunity, phone Rebecca Burgstahler at AgeOptions: (708)383-0258, or contact her by email at rebecca.burgstahler@ageoptions.org.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at AgeOptions, please call (708)383-0258, (800)699-9043 or TTY (708)524-1653.

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Nan Anderson: “Professional Volunteer” in Aging Community

Nan Anderson, a member of the **AgeOptions** Advisory Council for the last two years, prefers to describe herself as a “professional volunteer” in the field of aging.



Nan Anderson

Ms. Anderson, who held administrative positions in volunteer organizations, still consults occasionally with nonprofits in the aging field. She was already familiar with AgeOptions when Jonathan Lavin, president and CEO, asked her to join the Advisory Council.

Nan describes the Advisory Council as a group that has a sincere interest in AgeOptions. “I wouldn’t show up at every meeting if I didn’t feel I was contributing something,” she said, pointing out that volunteering is a two-way street. “AgeOptions has gotten me involved in things I can do in the community, and I can bring the resulting knowledge directly back to AgeOptions.”

One of her contributions is chairing the Advisory Council’s Community Assessment Committee in which Council members, volunteers and AgeOptions staff are helping six communities assess their readiness for a burgeoning aging population.

She is also a member of the Advocacy Task Force, through which AgeOptions staff, Board of Directors and Advisory Council members and representatives of community agencies promote legislation benefiting older adults.

For Ms. Anderson, who lives in Evanston, one volunteer opportunity often leads to another. She took the AgeOptions Make Medicare Work course and immediately began volunteering through the Evanston Commission on Aging where she assists both older adults and people who are disabled.

Her other volunteer activities include chairing the film night of Evanston’s annual Aging Well Conference. She spends a year looking for films that portray aging positively, as well as “edgy issues that promote discovery.”

A former member of the executive committee of Meals at Home, Nan volunteers at the Skokie Village Center, is on the program committee of the League of Women Voters and is active in the American Society on Aging/National Council on Aging and is on the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

“It feels very good to be giving my time,” she said. But she saves some for herself: “Every weekend I turn into a folk music freak.”

Leila Ward: “Helping Others Helps You”

The **AgeOptions** Advisory Council is one of numerous organizations and individuals to benefit from Leila Ward’s boundless energy and positive attitude. “I was retired and needed something to do,” she shrugs. At 78, the former nurse practitioner clearly thrives on giving.

Her connection with AgeOptions began around 1996 when, as a volunteer with Catholic Charities, she took the SMP (formerly Senior Medicare Patrol) course and began teaching older adults how to detect and prevent Medicare fraud. Illinois was a pilot state for the program, and Ms. Ward and another volunteer went to Washington, DC, to testify to a congressional committee about its effectiveness. SMP eventually expanded nationwide.

She joined the Advisory Council about seven years ago and has served as chair and vice chair.

Ms. Ward was actively involved in The Red Tape Cutters Program, speaking to groups to educate seniors about how to get the benefits and services they’re entitled to. She has also interviewed personnel in the Chicago Heights police and fire departments and senior citizens center for the Maturing of Illinois project to assess how well communities are prepared for the growing aging population.

Leila also volunteers for the AgeOptions fundraiser and took part in Senior Statesmen’s Advocacy Training in Springfield last year. “We learned how to successfully contact our legislators and work to get laws passed,” she said. She teaches family caregivers how to take care of themselves in the six-week Powerful Tools for Caregivers program and is active in her church, where volunteering in the homeless shelter is one of her many contributions.



Leila Ward

“Helping others helps you,” says Ms. Ward, who once thought she just needed something to do after her husband died. “I have to be involved in things to keep myself alive.”

Leila enjoys her four children and 14 grandchildren and cares for her 98-year-old father. She also enjoys line dancing and travels extensively. Her last trip was to Dubai; she has traveled to Africa three times and twice to Europe with a group of women who also walk together three times a week. “I’m the oldest,” she says. “I’ve been blessed.”

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Welcome Tracy Bousky

Tracy Bousky is the newly elected chair of **AgeOptions**. A member of the Board of Directors since 2004, she became interested in AgeOptions because her work as a comprehensive financial planner often involves issues concerning older people. "The mission is consistent with my work," she explained.

Ms. Bousky assumes her leadership role in challenging times. "With the tough economy, distressed funding sources and a growing need for the services that AgeOptions provides, we are going to have to think out of the box and work as a cohesive Board," she said.

During her tenure, Tracy has seen two interconnected changes: fundraising has become a significant Board responsibility and Board members have become more active.

"Government funding is not as consistent and dependable as it was historically. Therefore, we are focused on cash flow management and diversifying our revenue source," she explained. At the same time, she notes, "AgeOptions has great Board members whose level of commitment, diversity of experience and dedication to the mission are an invaluable resource."

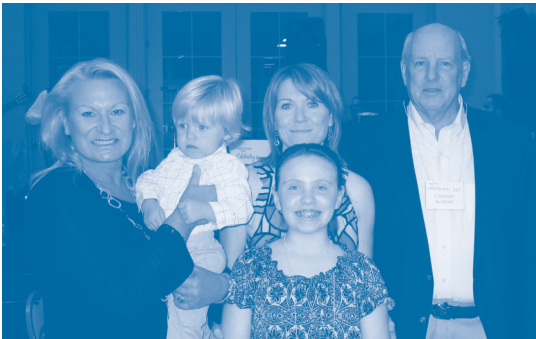
A native of Peoria, Ms. Bousky received her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign and an MBA in finance and non-profit management from Northwestern University. She enjoys gardening, cooking and golf, as well as her family – seven siblings, 13 nieces and nephews and 53 first cousins.

Carla J. Rozycki: Moving AgeOptions Forward

Carla Rozycki has played a leadership role on the **AgeOptions** Board of Directors since 2000, serving as vice president in 2002-2003 and president in 2004-2005. She also headed the nominating committee and co-chaired the annual fundraiser in 2008 and 2009 with Linda Siegel.

A partner at Jenner & Block LLC in the law firm's Labor and Employment/Management practice, Carla first became familiar with AgeOptions when she started working with the agency as a lawyer in the late 1970s.

Since joining the Board of Directors, she has seen, and led, some major changes in the agency. "Some of the most fundamental changes include our entry into the world of private fundraising and private giving, as well as increased emphasis on grant monies," she said.



Carla Rozycki (left) and her family at AgeOptions 2009 Celebrating Aging fundraiser.

Carla would like AgeOptions to continue its non-governmental and private fundraising efforts, focusing on corporate backers. "We've had some successes and we will have more in the future, even in a challenging economy," she said.

She points to the agency's rebranding effort in fall 2006 as another positive change. "It has helped everybody associated with AgeOptions look at us in a different way," she explained. "Rather than regarding ourselves as simply an extension of the Department on Aging, we are an independent leader in the aging network. Now we see ourselves as controlling our own future. We are fulfilling our role as an Area Agency on Aging, which is very important and which we take very seriously, but we are also influencing issues in a broader sense."

Carla is proud of the development of the annual AgeOptions fundraiser, which has grown in each of its five years, as well as the agency's initiation of a newsletter. "We need to continue in the direction of having regular communications so the network of people who support us will continue to grow," she said.

The Board of Directors itself is a source of satisfaction. "We have a really great Board and I'm very proud of the members we've been able to recruit," she said. "We have focused on a more diverse Board in a lot of ways, and with that diversity has come a lot of energy and support. We have much more active participation on the Board, which enables us to do more."

Like many volunteers, Carla donates her time and efforts to numerous organizations. She has long done pro bono work for various nonprofit agencies. Her leisure time is busy, too, with everything from swimming, cooking, art and reading to worldwide travel. Perhaps most important is the time with her grandchildren, who "think I'm an artist because I can draw Scooby-Doo freehand."

The members of the AgeOptions Board of Directors and the AgeOptions Advisory Council serve as volunteers. They represent AgeOptions to a wide range of publics and ensure that AgeOptions has the financial resources to accomplish its mission and goals by setting policy and providing strategic direction and oversight for the agency's business.

AgeOptions Fundraiser Exceeds Expectations

More than 250 friends and supporters of AgeOptions filled the beautiful Winter Garden of Chicago's Harold Washington Library on September 17 for the fifth annual AgeOptions fundraiser. The event raised over \$40,000 for AgeOptions programs and services for older adults in suburban Cook County.

Merri Dee, a longtime champion of charitable work, was the guest emcee. One of the first African-American women to anchor broadcast news in the state, and a former anchor at WGN-TV, she now serves as a member of the AARP Illinois Executive Council. Throughout the evening, guests enjoyed the vibrant music and Flamenco dances of the local Chicago group Guitarra Azul.



Guitarra Azul performed at Celebrating Aging.

There was lively bidding for the 115 silent auction baskets that held everything from a stay at Trump Tower to tango lessons. Other favorites included an American flag that had been carried over Iraq in a helicopter, symphony tickets, vacation stays in Arkansas and Arizona, airline tickets, a hotel and spa package, and dinner with Terry Savage, personal finance columnist and author.

As guests enjoyed the hors d'oeuvres, carving table and dessert table, they also donated more than \$4,000 for AgeOptions programs on the

"Pledge Your Support" board. Next to the board, they could watch the premier screening of the new AgeOptions agency video, which was produced and donated by Comcast, the event's Communications Sponsor.



Guests socialize in the Winter Garden of the Harold Washington Library Center.

Corporate and Individual Sponsors

A total of 32 corporate and individual sponsors, along with donors, ticket buyers, purchasers of ads in the program book and silent auction winners, helped ensure that AgeOptions will continue to meet the needs of older residents.

For the second year, Project P.R.O.T.E.C.T., a charitable organization in Chicago Ridge, donated all proceeds from its 5K run to AgeOptions. The October 4th run raised \$5,035 this year.

Celebrating Aging was dedicated to raising awareness and support for the growing and diverse aging population of suburban Cook County. It saluted the strengths, diversity and experience of older adults and paid tribute to the community agencies, local governments and others committed to the well-being of aging members of our suburban Cook County communities.

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

35th Anniversary Recognition Luncheon

Twenty-five "Outstanding Volunteers" from throughout suburban Cook County are being honored November 19 at the 35th anniversary AgeOptions Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.

The volunteers, themselves older adults, are being celebrated for their dedication to helping seniors in their communities. They were nominated by organizations in their communities where they provide a broad range of services benefiting older people.

AgeOptions will also honor three communities that have completed the Maturing of Illinois Community Preparedness Assessment, recognizing their commitment to planning livable communities for residents of all ages: Chicago Heights, the City of Des Plaines and the Village of Wheeling.

The 2009 Annual Luncheon and Volunteer Recognition is made possible through the generous support of Aetna Medicare.

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New Partnership Supports Caregivers

There was a spirit of friendship and joy as representatives of 30 churches and community organizations came together in Dolton September 29 for the kickoff dinner of Caring Together, Living Better. The new program is a community partnership through which **AgeOptions** and south suburban churches and organizations will develop programs to support the family members and friends who care for older adults.



Apostle Carl L. White (left) of Victory Christian Assembly Church and State Rep. Will Davis addressed the Caring Together, Living Better kickoff dinner on Sept. 29.

Address Caregiver Needs

The participants shared stories about caregiver issues and their eagerness to relieve the burdens of caregivers. Many also related personal caregiving experiences. Ministers and other church representatives told of parishioners who couldn't attend services because of their caregiving responsibilities. They spoke of people who had to spend a great deal of their resources to care for a loved one, and of the accompanying stress.

Apostle Carl L. White of Victory Christian Assembly Church, a keynote speaker, related his own very moving experiences as a caregiver and also as a pastor with caregiving parishioners. Noting one church member who has not been to church in months because she is afraid to leave her mother at home alone, he called the pastors and other community leaders to action on behalf of caregivers.

State Rep. Will Davis also spoke, and the Rev. Kirsten Peachey, director of Congregational Health Partnerships at Advocate Health Care and a member of the AgeOptions Board of Directors, gave the invocation.

Increase Caregiver Support

Caring Together, Living Better will use grant and local funding to strengthen caregiver support, including the development of outreach and training materials to meet the needs of African-American caregivers.

The partnership-based program is funded in part by a three-year, \$515,357 grant to AgeOptions from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. It will be guided by a leadership council of south suburban residents and community leaders including Catholic Charities South Suburban Senior Services, Metropolitan Family Services Southwest and CJE SeniorLife, in collaboration with AgeOptions.

Volunteers will be key to the program, helping raise awareness of caregiver issues and available services and making it possible for the churches and organizations to assist caregivers through respite care, transportation and other services.

New Program Participants

The seven churches and one community program selected to receive funding to take part in Caring Together, Living Better were announced at the kickoff. They are:

- Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Robbins
- Covenant United Church of Christ, South Holland
- Kizer Memorial Church of God in Christ, Harvey
- Metropolitan Family Services, Blue Island
- Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church, Riverdale
- Victory Christian Assembly Church, Markham
- Valley Kingdom Community Development, South Holland
- Word Made Flesh Worship Center, Midlothian



AgeOptions NOW is a publication of AgeOptions, a nonprofit organization. As the Area Agency on Aging of suburban Cook County, AgeOptions serves 130 communities within 30 townships.

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