

### ***The Aging Together Partnership – Sallie Morgan, Chair***

Aging Together, a broad consortium of over 100 organizations and individuals in the 5 counties of the Rappahannock Rapidan region, is a collaborative effort to help our localities prepare for an unprecedented growth in the older population and to assure that local residents will have the services and supports they need as they age. Partners include all 5 departments of social services, the Regional Commission, local governments, a wide variety of service providers, both community hospitals, United Way, AARP, civic organizations, schools, the faith community, older citizens, and caregivers in Fauquier, Culpeper, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock counties. The Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board/Area Agency on Aging is the lead agency for the partnership.

The recipient of a highly competitive 4 year Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant, Aging Together has not only put this region of Virginia on the national map in terms of aging services, but also represents a new way of doing business:

- Pooling resources to do things no one group could do on its own
- Speaking with one voice on aging issues
- Working together to generate new resources and expand services
- Working both locally and regionally
- Providing expertise to help communities plan for the future

**With its broad participation and emphasis on collaboration and coordination, Aging Together is exactly the kind of local long term care coordinating mechanism the recent Commission on Healthcare Reform has recommended be developed throughout the state, and could serve as the model for developing such coordinating councils across Virginia.**

Aging Together does not operate direct services but rather the partners work together to design long term care system improvements and to generate new resources to build supports for older persons which are then delivered through various partner organizations. To this end **Aging Together has to date generated \$1,365,654** from public and private sources outside the region, and has mobilized an additional **\$216,050** in cash match from local sources (including partners, local governments, and area businesses). **Especially in times of tight budget constraints, such local initiative to develop new sources of funding and expand services is crucial to augment what state and local funds can accomplish.**

Examples of regional service expansion that Aging Together has accomplished in the short time since beginning to implement its strategic plan in May 2006 include:

- **Adult Day Care Expansion**
  - As 4 of the 5 counties had no adult day care program, Aging Together partners collaborated on the opening of DayBreak, a new regional Adult Day Care Center.
- **Rural Transportation Enhancement**
  - *Volunteer Driver Networks are being created in each county* to help older persons who don't drive get to medical appointments, etc.
  - *Human services mobility plan*
    - Collaboration with the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission to develop a consolidated Human Services Mobility Plan that will position this region to secure additional federal and state transportation funding
- **Health, Wellness and Caregiver Supports**
  - *Medication Assistance Program*

- Aging Together helped the RRCSB/AAA secure funding from the Virginia Healthcare Foundation to assist low-income adults to obtain free prescription medicine. (Have helped 210 individuals obtain \$309,944 worth of medications in the first 12 months of the project))
  - *Geriatric Assessment*
    - Given lack of geriatricians in the area, AT is providing tool for primary care physicians to use in assessing the special needs of older patients.
  - *Caregiver Training Series offered in every county this fall*
- **Information for consumers and for decision-makers**
  - *No Wrong Door - Aging and Disability Resource Center Initiative*
    - Owing to the work done by Aging Together, this region has been selected to be a pilot in the state's No Wrong Door initiative.
  - *Data and consultation for local government*
    - Aging Together has been asked by several localities to provide information related to planning efforts that will affect older adults.
  - *Senior Navigator database of all local and state resources*
    - Aging Together has assured local providers get detailed local resource information posted on the state's Senior Navigator website, which will also be the source for print guides to services.
- **Long Term Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention**
  - *Healthcare Institute*
    - Aging Together has collaborated with Germanna Community College to offer a series of classes for supervisors and direct care staff, designed to promote retention of long term care workers.
  - *Annual Outstanding Health Care Professional Awards*
    - Aging Together initiative to recognize front line long term care staff
  - *Volunteer Development*
    - Aging Together is coordinating major campaign with the Piedmont United Way and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program to recruit volunteers of all ages to help support new and existing aging services in the region.

#### ***National and State Recognition for the Aging Together Partnership***

- 2006 - *Community Partnerships for Older Adults grant* from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (over 500 applicants vied for funding, only 8 projects in USA selected).
- 2006 - Senior Navigator's *Community Spirit Award*
- 2007 - Virginia League of Social Services Executives *Spirit of Collaboration Award*
- 2007 - Commonwealth Council on Aging *Best Practices Award*

***Recognizing that by 2020 one in four persons in the region will be over age 60 and that communities must work together to be prepared for this age wave, Aging Together is requesting \$75,000 per annum from the Virginia General Assembly in FY 2008-2010 to support the work of the Aging Together partnership as a model of community collaboration and local initiative to expand aging services and supports in Virginia.***

Each dollar of the **state funds requested will bring in more than three dollars in national foundation funding and local matching funds** for a total annual budget of \$326,111, and will enhance Virginia's national reputation as a provider of cutting edge aging services and collaborative efforts.